

Structure or agency? Explaining Armenia's foreign policy evolution

John H.S. ABERG*, Aram TERZYAN**

Abstract

The article scrutinizes Armenia's foreign policy trajectory since its independence. It applies a model of foreign policy analysis that takes into account structural, dispositional, and intentional dimensions and outlines a more dynamic structure-agency interplay. By contrast to reductionist system-level explanations, the argument is that individual-level factors such as the perceptions and beliefs of Armenia's presidents are central to understanding why Armenia embarked on a foreign policy path where it became economically and militarily absorbed by Russia. The case study of Armenia's foreign policy serves as a plausibility probe that illustrates the relevance of individual-level factors in foreign policy decision making. The article thus offers insights into the foreign policy of a small state.

Keywords: structure, agency, small state, Armenia, Russia, foreign policy, post-Soviet space

Introduction

Commentators and scholars view Armenia's decision to join Russian-led regional cooperation organizations as an unsurprising consequence of Armenia's geographic location and material weakness, which invites Russian coercive policies (Popescu, 2013; Giragosian, 2013). This makes Armenia's foreign policy hardly surprising and, perhaps, not even worth studying since its actions all follow system-level theoretical expectations and present no puzzle. Yet, we beg to differ.

Armenia's foreign policy is more puzzling than what appears at first glance. First, the fact that other states in the post-Soviet space – most notably Georgia and Ukraine – have resisted Moscow's interference and not tied themselves to Russian-led security and development trajectories indicates that there is room for agency, even for small states, and that the fate of countries in the post-Soviet space is far

* John H.S. ABERG is Senior Lecturer at the Malmö University, Sweden; e-mail: john.aberg@mah.se.

** Aram TERZYAN is Visiting Researcher at the Malmö University, Sweden; e-mail: aramterzyan@gmail.com.

from inevitable. Second, all Armenia's presidents have, in fact, demonstrated significant vacillation regarding its foreign policy priorities, and all have sought to diversify its foreign relations, seek closer cooperation with the West, and reduce its dependence on Russia. Third, even though structural factors certainly cannot be ignored, "no coherent explanation of human action bypasses mental processes" (Parsons, 2010, p. 29). More than merely being structurally induced, individual-level factors such as perceptions and beliefs can be sufficient in themselves to explain outcomes, or part of causal complexes that suggest a more dynamic structure-agency interplay (Carlsnaes, 1992; Hudson, 2005). Indeed, Armenia's presidential system endows Armenian presidents with considerable autonomy to decide the country's foreign policy priorities, which goes to the heart of actor dispensability frameworks (Dyson, 2009). Fourth, Armenia's so-called foreign policy "u-turn" in 2013 – the sudden abandonment of the planned Association Agreement with the European Union and the joining of the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) – is not merely the outcome of structural constraints, but also involves matters of agency. In any case, accounts of foreign policy change, however modest, must take agency seriously (Carlsnaes, 1992; Gustavsson, 1999).

The research question that we address in this article is the following: What explains Armenia's foreign policy trajectory since its independence? We argue that it is necessary to inject agency and individual-level factors in order to convincingly explain Armenia's foreign policy trajectory since its independence in 1991. Factors such as perceptions and beliefs of Armenia's presidents are crucial to understand why Armenia embarked on a foreign policy path where the economy became absorbed by Russia and the military partnership significantly intensified.

Our case study of Armenia's foreign policy trajectory serves as a plausibility probe that illustrates the empirical relevance of individual-level factors (Levy, 2008, pp. 6-7). Yet, we do this by applying Walter Carlsnaes (1992) analytical model of foreign policy analysis that takes into account structural, dispositional, and intentional dimensions to explain outcomes. In this way, we outline a more dynamic structure-agency interplay where individual level-factors have to be considered in order to generate a more comprehensive explanation of Armenia's foreign policy evolution since its independence. By doing so, we contribute to the literature on small states' foreign policy (Elman, 1995; Kotchikian, 2008; Kassab, 2015; Gignoux, 2016) and challenge the notion of structural inevitability.

1. Structure, agency, and foreign policy outcomes

Although Kenneth Waltz (1996) famously argued that "international politics is not foreign policy", system-level theories serve as good analytical starting points for thinking about the explanatory factors that might affect foreign policy outcomes. They set clear theoretical expectations, and unless the empirical case contradicts system-level accounts, their explanations work just fine. One strand of neo-classical

realism justifies its theoretical existence based on this logic: system-level factors should *only* be complemented by intervening state-level or individual-level factors *when* state behaviour deviates from what systemic theories expect (Schweller, 2003).

A good illustration is offered by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. Structural realism expects moderation from poor and weak states because great powers will punish reckless behaviour (Waltz, 1979; Mearsheimer, 2001). Given Iraq's weakness, together with the fact that territorial annexation is illegal, its invasion of Kuwait defied system-level expectations and must be explained by other factors at other levels of analysis. The ensuing punishment of Iraq clearly showed what it costs to defy or being ignorant of the systemic imperatives.

Conversely, when it comes to Armenia, it is easy to think that its state behaviour indeed follows what system-level theories lead us to expect. However, the fact that certain states in the post-Soviet space – most notably Georgia and Ukraine – have resisted Moscow's interference and not tied themselves to Russia economically or security-wise indicates that there is room for agency. In other words, it is not always clear what to expect. Even if threats and opportunities are obvious, the environment might provide little information about the most appropriate response (Beach, 2012).

Fareed Zakaria (1992) offers another neoclassical realist perspective and argues that a good account of foreign policy should *always* include a range of explanatory factors. The argument goes that multiple factors in combination offer richer explanations. An illustrative example is the US intervention in Iraq 2003. Here, an explanatory cookbook emphasizes “a variety of systemic, national, and individual” factors (Jervis, 2006, p. 17) – all playing significant parts in the explanatory whole. As such, it is crucial to “pay more attention to interactions between international and domestic politics and less to making assertions about the ‘primacy’ of one or the other political arena” (Snyder, 1991, p. 319).

A vulnerable government or an executive with low autonomy might need domestic actors to prop up support, which forces scholars to open up the black box of the state and consider the effects of domestic-level factors and interest groups. Yet, if an uncertain environment is coupled with an executive power that enjoys a high level of autonomy, it *ipso facto* opens up for the individual-level of analysis. This actor centric focus on decision-making, whether the focus is on groups (state-level of analysis) or leaders enjoying high autonomy (individual-level of analysis), is also what underlines the unique theoretical and analytical characteristics of foreign policy analysis (Hudson, 2005; Kaarbo, 2015).

Walter Carlsnaes (1992) offers an instructive explanatory model that provides a practical solution on how to bridge the agency-structure problem in foreign policy analysis. He outlines a model consisting of three dimensions: a structural dimension (objective conditions and institutional setting), a dispositional dimension (perceptions and values), and an intentional dimension (preference and choice). These dimensions are connected through causal relationships; that is, the structural

dimension has causal effects on the dispositional dimension, and the dispositional dimension has causal effects on the intentional dimension. However, we do not necessarily “buy into” the causality of Carlsnaes model, instead we use it as a heuristic device that neatly disciplines the analysis of our study object. By outlining the various factors, we argue that individual-level factors, especially during Robert Kocharyan’s presidency, have been crucial to explaining significant developments in Armenia’s foreign policy, which thus hold explanatory weight in accounting for Armenia’s subsequent trajectory.

The structural uncertainty and foreign policy fluctuations have been the unmistakable characteristics of the conflict-prone South Caucasus since the break-up of the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, the rapidly changing landscape of the region, markedly intensified during Russia’s Putin-led ‘updated’ post-Soviet policy, would hinder the Armenian policy-makers from comprehending an ‘objective material reality’ and ‘read the signs of change’ accurately (Thorun, 2008, p. 148). Furthermore, the structural uncertainty would engender strategic uncertainty in the form of lack of knowledge about most efficient strategies to achieve objectives. Admittedly, the absence of clear ‘external focal points’ on which to devise foreign policy strategies prompt policy makers to put more reliance on the internal focal points offered by their own subjective beliefs about the nature of the political universe and the most effective means for fulfilling political goals (Schafer, 2009, p.4). Therefore, in order to comprehensively assess the extent to which the individual-level factors have impacted Armenia’s foreign policy behaviour, it is essential to scrutinize foreign policy beliefs and perceptions.

The framework of the operational code as a set of general philosophical and instrumental beliefs about fundamental political issues has been frequently employed to study individual dimensions of foreign policy behaviour (Dyson, 2009; Post, 2003). It is premised on the assumption that policy makers’ beliefs and perceptions considerably influence the ways they choose and shift among different courses of action (Hermann, 2003). Two crucial conditions, which, if satisfied, can prompt to posit that an individual has been important to an outcome. The first condition is that of ‘action dispensability’. If the actions of an individual are removed from the events to be explained, do the events still occur? Therefore, the actions of an individual are indispensable to the outcome as long as their removal would lead to considerable changes in the outcome. The second condition is that of ‘actor dispensability’. Would any individual, confronting the same set of circumstances, have taken broadly the same actions? Again, this is a function of two factors. First, the degree to which the individual holds strong and distinctive beliefs and predispositions concerning the matter at hand. Second, the clarity of the situational imperatives is key (Dyson, 2009, pp. 15-16).

The post-Soviet transition in Armenia has been marked by the accumulation of strong presidential power at the expense of two other branches of the government. Armenia gradually shifted to a hyper presidential system in early 2000s, finding itself

in a situation where the President had immense power to make strategic foreign policy choices single-handedly. The biggest challenge involves explaining how the varying degrees of Armenian Presidents' power motivations may have influenced their foreign policy behaviour. Notably, Armenia's first President, Levon Ter-Petrosyan resigned chiefly because of the staunch domestic opposition to his foreign policy agenda. On the other hand, Ter-Petrosyan's successor, Robert Kocharyan, solidified his political base by hardening his position on sensitive foreign policy issues, such as the Karabakh conflict, rapprochement with Turkey and, most importantly, opting for the path to 'Russia-sponsored regimes'. The fact that, throughout his presidency, Armenia was economically and politically absorbed by Russia raises a number of unanswered questions. As noted earlier, the structural factors per se are insufficient in explaining Armenia's Russia-led foreign policy shift. Yet, the application of 'authoritarian learning' seems amenable to accounting for Kocharyan's foreign policy decisions.

The authoritarian learning literature is concerned with learning from both internal and external experience. In the analysis of the post-Soviet region, the literature has chiefly focused on the fostering and promotion by Russia of authoritarianism in other states (Ambrosio, 2009; Vanderhill, 2013). While authoritarian learning literature has not touched on individual learning, prospect theory puts attention on how decision makers formulate choices by using past reference points (Hall, 2017, p. 163), which makes prospect theory relevant to understanding the Kocharyan case. Each individual weighs up gains and losses of a possible decision. Presumably, individuals with pronounced power motivation are likely to make decisions, including foreign policy ones, that would be conducive to maintaining their power. Thus, we assume that the lessons Kocharyan learned from his predecessor's decline, coupled with those learned from the steady survival of Russia-sponsored regimes, have considerably influenced the strategic choice of the Russia-led trajectory, as well as the simmering tensions with Armenia's foes – Azerbaijan and Turkey.

Overall, our analysis of the Armenian Presidents' political agendas and approaches reveal a series of insights into the significance of agency and individual-level factors in Armenia's foreign policy trajectory. We gain this insight by applying Walter Carlsnaes's (1992) analytical model of foreign policy analysis and offer a more comprehensive explanation for the predicament of a small state's foreign policy. What follows is our scrutiny of the interplay of structural, dispositional, and intentional dimensions and how it has affected Armenia's foreign policy evolution since its independence.

2. Foreign policy pragmatism and fragile agency: the failure of Ter-Petrosyan's foreign policy agenda

“Certain well-known powers demanded my resignation. Considering that, in this situation exercising the president's constitutional powers may cause a

serious destabilization of the situation. I accept this demand and announce my resignation”¹.

The first Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan’s resignation speech seems to candidly avow his insufficient agency in fulfilling his political agenda. He has been widely characterized as a pragmatic politician – in pursuit of injecting rationalism and pragmatism into Armenian political thinking (Mirzoyan, 2010, pp. 72-73). Yet, the following factors profoundly distinguish Ter-Petrosyan from his successors: fragile agency and strong internal opposition; overly pragmatic approach to Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution and low regard for identity-related issues; and a foreign policy agenda with a pronounced focus on building resilience against Russia. During his presidency, Ter-Petrosyan confronted the arduous task of getting the post war transitioning Armenia on its feet. Internally, he was crippled by staunch opposition from nationalist hardliners, and was significantly bound by the Yerkrapah union of Karabakh war veterans led by the then Defense Minister Vazgen Sargsyan (Ademmer, 2016, p. 88). Notably, his foreign policy agenda was the principal cause of the storm of criticism unleashed on him and ultimately leading to his resignation.

Contrary to the prevailing mood in Armenia concerning the Nagorno Karabakh conflict resolution and Armenian-Turkish rapprochement, Ter-Petrosyan strived to swiftly break the logjam on troubled relations with his neighbours. Petrosyan’s discourse suggests that the acute challenges, stemming from the double blockade imposed by Azerbaijan and Turkey and the hardships of economic transition, called for a pragmatic foreign policy approach to move beyond the hostilities with the neighbouring countries (Ter-Petrosyan, 1998, p. 48). Thus, he consistently sought to push the historical conflicts to the background, and move the economic and political benefits of cooperation with both Azerbaijan and Turkey to the forefront. Ter-Petrosyan’s discourse suggests that he viewed the conflicts as self-destructive and that they would push Armenia into the Russian arms (Ter-Petrosyan, 2006, p. 634).

Our interpretation of Ter-Petrosyan’s foreign policy speeches further suggests that he saw identity and collective memory as detrimental to the country’s development and not amenable with a pragmatic political and economic agenda. Therefore, Ter-Petrosyan’s administration did not push the issue of Genocide recognition, given its potentially negative repercussions for Armenian-Turkish relations. Given the central place of Turkey in Armenian collective memory and the fact that many Armenians take for granted that all Turkish governments, no matter their political colour, pose acute threats to Armenia (Terzyan and Galstyan, 2015), Ter-Petrosyan’s reframing of Turkey and Azerbaijan from historical enemies to Armenia’s ‘most natural allies’ (Ter-Petrosyan, 2006, pp. 553-554) was indeed a radical foreign policy move. Notably, Ter-Petrosyan’s mild approach to Turkey and

¹Ter-Petrosyan (1998). *Ter Petrosyan Resigns* (retrieved from <http://asbarez.com/34995/ter-petrosyan-resigns/>).

his refusal to recognize Karabakh put him at odds with the Armenian foreign minister R. Hovhannisyan, which led to Hovhannisyan's removal from his post in 1992.²

In the early stages of his political career, Ter-Petrosyan had espoused an overly critical stance on Russia. He regarded the reliance on Russia as delusional and self-destructive, while the Russian imperial policy was conceived as the most acute obstruction to Armenia's independent and democratic development (Ter Petrosyan, 2006, p. 34). Even though the anti-Russian rhetoric steadily crumbled in the wake of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict escalation, Ter-Petrosyan did not tend to treat Russia as an indispensable ally and prioritized a non-Russian foreign policy agenda. There was marked pessimism about the feasibility of a symmetric Armenian-Russian partnership. Rather consistent with its imperial traditions, Russia would pursue to absorb Armenia into its ranks. No wonder Ter-Petrosyan invariably stressed that as long as Russia was chiefly preoccupied with domestic issues, Armenia would have to exploit the opportunity to increase its manoeuvring space, especially by achieving speedy conflict resolution. In doing so, Armenia would make the most out of regional cooperation and thus build resilience against a possible 'return' of Russian imperial ambitions that would leave Armenia isolated, with little to no room for manoeuvre (Ter-Petrosyan, 2006, p. 634).

However, to be succinct, Ter-Petrosyan's efforts to redefine the images of Azerbaijan and Turkey in Armenian political thinking did not resonate with the Armenian political elite and post-war Armenian society. His pronounced emphasis on the inevitability of concessions in the Nagorno Karabakh conflict gained him notoriety. The leadership of Karabakh and that of the Armenian armed forces, as well as the diaspora, media, opposition, and intellectuals subjected him to heavy criticism on the ground of his pro-Turkish and pro-Azerbaijani sentiments.³ Ter-Petrosyan was eventually forced to resign in 1998 and was succeeded by Robert Kocharyan, one of the prominent leaders of the Karabakh war, which showcases Ter-Petrosyan's fragile agency and the failure of his pragmatic foreign policy agenda.

3. More agency, less pragmatism: Robert Kocharyan's foreign policy shift and the absorption into Russia's orbit

Research suggests significant differences between Kocharyan and Ter-Petrosyan in terms of their agency. The divergence is manifested in the following factors. First, in contrast to Ter-Petrosyan, whose agency was bound by the Yerkrpah union, the assassination of its leader V. Sargsyan substantially increased

²Latimes (1992). Armenia's Foreign Minister Quits Post : Caucasus: Fresno-born Raffi Hovannisian was asked to resign after clashes over foreign policy with newly independent country's president (retrieved from http://articles.latimes.com/1992-10-17/news/mn-226_1_foreign-policy).

³News.bbc (1998). Armenia: president falls victim to Nagorno Karabakh dispute (retrieved from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/world/analysis/53239.stm>).

Kocharyan's agency and contributed to the formation of a presidential system with ever-greater autonomy for the president. Secondly, in contrast to Ter-Petrosyan's pragmatism, Kocharyan 'emotionalized' Armenian foreign policy, raising the issue of Genocide recognition and thus striving to 'bring Turkey to justice'. Thirdly, Kocharyan gradually securitized the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and set impervious red-lines for conflict resolution, much in contrast with his predecessor.

It is worth noting that, from the outset, Kocharyan adopted a pro-Western (European) policy, putting a strong emphasis on Armenia's integration into European organizations. Moreover, he favoured a broader foreign policy agenda that included both political and military rapprochement with the West. In April 1999, Kocharyan attended the celebration of NATO's fiftieth anniversary in Washington, which Armenian Communist Party Leader S. Badalyan labelled as a betrayal of Russia (Terzyan, 2016, p. 150). Kocharyan hailed the European path as Armenia's "civilizational choice," which would provide the best opportunity for the country's development. He welcomed Armenia's membership in the Council of Europe, a crucial milestone in Armenia's full scale 'homecoming' to Europe. As Kocharyan put it: "Armenian society, which has deep European roots, was isolated from European political, economic and legal realm because of the ideological confrontation of the 20th century [...] Today our goal is to comply with EU standards" (Kocharyan, 2011, p. 253). In effect, in the early stages of his presidency, Kocharyan was largely perceived as a pro-European politician who strived for European integration to increase its manoeuvring space in relation to Russia. This was accurately captured in the notion of 'complementary foreign policy' put forward by Kocharyan, with the view of conducting a well-diversified foreign policy (Terzyan, 2016, p. 149). Overall, the banner of complementarity alluded to the willingness of achieving a breakthrough on the path to European integration, without 'disregarding' the long-standing partnership with Russia.

Nevertheless, over time and particularly in the wake of Russia's Putin-led engagement with its 'near neighbourhood', Armenia plunged into the orbit of Russian influence. Yet, there is a tendency in existing studies to fall prey to reductionism of structural constraints in explaining Kocharyan's choice to embark on the Russian-led path. Therefore, the following analysis of the structural, dispositional and intentional dimensions of Armenia's foreign policy during Kocharyan's reign will outline various factors at various levels of analysis, yet emphasizing the significant role played by individual-level factors.

3.1 Structural dimension

The paramount structural factor that provided constraining conditions for advancing the European foreign policy agenda has been Russia's Putin-led foreign policy with its mounting involvement in what Russia considers its 'near abroad'. The shift in the Russian leadership's foreign policy thinking from 'liberal ideas' to

geopolitical and particularly pragmatic geo-economics realism in the early stage of Putin's presidency (Thorun, 2009, p. 28) significantly determined policy priorities towards the newly independent CIS states. The ambition to restore Russia's 'greatness' and in particular to consolidate control in its traditional 'sphere of influence' prompted Putin to renew and promote the so-called 'CIS project'. It came down to tightening the Russian grip in its backyard, with the view of shielding it from 'unwanted intrusions' and suppressing the CIS states' pro-Western foreign policy pursuits (Skak, 2011).

To this purpose, the Russian leadership emphasized the necessity of expanding Russian capital, strengthening ties with political leaders, as well as retaining and reinforcing its military presence in CIS countries. Putin threw his weight behind the takeover and monopolization of strategic economic and energy infrastructures in the CIS countries as a powerful tool for influencing their behaviour and punishing 'disobedient' political leaders (Secrieru, 2006). Essentially, by offering huge militarisation-oriented support to power-hungry leaders, Kremlin sought to resonate with their pursuit of building up security forces and pro-regime groups against unwanted political and social attacks. In effect, the promotion of authoritarianism in CIS countries, with the goal of producing autocracies and absorbing them into its ranks, has been placed at the heart of Russia's renewed post-Soviet policy. Even though it is hard to assess the extent to which the rise of authoritarianism in Armenia and Kyrgyzstan has been correlated with the Russian mechanisms of its diffusion (Brownlee, 2017, p. 1335), the fact that both countries eventually signed up to the Russia-led trajectories suggests that Putin's 'packages' considerably appealed to Armenian and Kyrgyz leaderships.

The renewed 'CIS project' worked out particularly well in Armenia where, unlike neighbouring Georgia, it produced significant outputs over a relatively short period of time. More precisely, Armenian and Russian Presidents came up with the so called 'mutually beneficial' 'assets-for-debt' swap that would gradually but immensely step up Russian influence in the Armenian economy since the fall of 2001⁴. The recipe is simple: in exchange for a write-off of its around \$100 million debt incurred since 1991, Armenia agreed to transfer strategic state-owned assets to Russia, including six hydroelectric power plants⁵. Moreover, in 2003, Armenia ratified an agreement that allowed Russian RAO Unified Energy Systems (UES) to take over the financial control of the Medzamor nuclear power plant, accounting for about 40 percent of Armenian electricity production⁶. Overall, Russia took over

⁴Eurasianet (2002). *Yerevan Moscow Debt Pact Extends Russia's Caucasus Influence* (retrieved from <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/business/articles/eav073002.html>).

⁵Eurasianet (2003). *Russia Tightens Grip on Armenia with Debt Agreements*. (retrieved from <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/business/articles/eav050703.shtml>).

⁶Azatutyun (2003). *Russian Parliament Ratifies Debt Deal With Armenia* (retrieved from <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/1571472.html>).

around 90 percent of Armenia's power generating capacities. Besides, within the 'assets-for-debt' swap arrangements, Kocharyan's government handed over Armenia's largest cement factory to the Russian ITERA gas exporter in payment for its \$10 million debt for past gas deliveries.

It is noteworthy that both Georgia and Ukraine similarly had huge debts to Russia, yet Armenia was the only one to make substantial concessions for its write-off. Indeed, the tightening economic grip on Armenia gave Russia political leverage to influence the country's behaviour. In October 2002, Armenia, along with Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, signed the founding documents of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), thus confirming the strategic choice of the Russia-led trajectory. The Armenian-Russian military cooperation significantly intensified in the fall of 2003. On the eve of the Georgian 'Rose' revolution, Armenia signed a series of military agreements with Russia (Secrieru, 2006).

However, as far as we are concerned, the biggest question is whether Putin's policy alone can explain Armenia's compliance, or if other factors influenced the choice of the Russian-led path. With this in mind, we now turn the analysis to the dispositional factors.

3.2. Dispositional dimension

The argument that, in Armenia's hyper-presidential system, Kocharyan's personality and beliefs influenced Armenia's foreign policy outputs goes to the heart of the actor and action dispensability framework. Regarding the 'actor dispensability' in Kocharyan-led Armenian politics, it is worth noting that the post-Soviet transition led to the accumulation of presidential power at the expense of the parliament and the judiciary, neither of which had sufficient power to balance the presidential one or even properly perform their constitutional functions (Payaslyan, 2011, p. 110). The presidential power got immensely solidified after the assassinations of Prime Minister Vazgen Sargsyan and Head of Parliament Karen Demirchyan in 1999, especially as both limited Kocharyan's power and tended to explicitly disagree with him on many principal issues (Papazian, 2006, p. 235). As noted earlier, the head of the Yerkrpah union, Vazgen Sargsyan, was strongly supported by the Armenian military forces and widely viewed as Armenia's most influential politician of the time. His assassination provided a fertile ground for immense consolidation of Kocharyan's power. Freedom House reports further notes a range of abuses of Kocharyan's presidential power in the form of massive crackdown on the opposition and media, and the tendency to suppress dissent and pluralism.⁷

⁷ Freedom House (2005). *Freedom in the World: Armenia* (retrieved from <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2005/armenia>).

Hence, the absence of checks and balances and lack of a viable opposition rendered Kocharyan the core policymaker or, say, the 'indispensable actor'. The consolidation of his power significantly impacted Armenia's foreign policy outputs as Armenia shifted from pro-Western agenda to the Russia-led trajectory. The critical unanswered question is why Russia's 'renewed' expansionist policy appealed to Kocharyan and prompted a foreign policy change. Particularly by contrast to Georgia, which was almost equally dependent on Russia, Armenia jumped further into Russian arms. The search for the answer to this complex question leads us to investigate the indispensable actor's personality – his dispositions and beliefs.

Media reports and accounts from Armenian politicians suggest that Kocharyan has been characterized by a marked penchant for concentrating power in his hands and making decisions single-handedly. He has been broadly regarded as a tough and unyielding politician in pursuit of his political goals⁸. In terms of political psychology, the above-mentioned could be interpreted as power motivation and a marked need for power. Received wisdom posits that individuals with high need for power tend to require greater personal control and involvement in policy and are more likely to insist that policy outputs match their personal preferences rather than represent consensual group decisions (Dyson, 2009, p. 30). Overall, they are reluctant to delegate power and are inherently drawn to an authoritarian governance. The evidence, ranging from international reports about the plight of democracy in Armenia to a number of Armenian politicians' observations, support this argument about Kocharyan (Payaslyan, 2011, pp. 205-206, Kostanyan, 2011). In effect, Putin's pursuit of promoting authoritarianism in CIS countries significantly fit Kocharyan's ambitions.

The "success stories" of Russian-supported incumbents in Central Asian countries and Belarus and, by contrast, the mounting challenges facing the political elites in other CIS Western-oriented democratizing countries, such as Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, have reportedly contributed to Kocharyan's choice of the Russian path. The concept of authoritarian learning seems amenable to account for Kocharyan's actions, significantly arising out of his power motivations. As indicated above, the authoritarian learning literature analyses learning from international examples with a focus on adaptability, lesson-drawing, emulation and persuasion (Hall, 2017, p. 162).

Kocharyan drew a range of lessons from the Rose Revolution in Georgia in 2003 and the Orange Revolution in Ukraine in 2004. First, the perception that the Russian-supported regimes, such as Belarus and Kazakhstan, have been shielded from Colour revolutions was reinforced. During the Georgian political crisis in November 2003, Armenia gave in to Kremlin's urges for intensifying military

⁸ News.bbc (1998). *Robert Kocharian - Armenia's new president?* (retrieved from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/world/analysis/72058.stm>).

cooperation and signed a series of military agreements with Russia (Secrieru, 2006). In further letting Russia tighten its grip on Armenia, Kocharyan reportedly believed that the label of ‘Russia’s true ally in the South Caucasus’ would create a bulwark of stability and predictability for his regime’s survival.

The second lesson for Kocharyan was that in order to avoid the destinies of former Georgian and Ukrainian presidents, opposition movements and media freedom needed to be limited. By using his hyper-presidential power, Kocharyan controlled institutions and the political system, coerced the opposition, built-up security forces and pro-regime groups. Besides, he launched a crackdown on independent media, and irreversibly shut down the popular A1+ television channel. Overall, the country smoothly plunged into authoritarianism, with all its attributes, such as rigged elections, toothless opposition, fragile civil society and censored media (Hess, 2010). Not surprisingly, the Freedom House Reports noted downward trends in Armenia, featuring mounting political repression and the authorities’ increasingly unresponsive and undemocratic governance (Freedom House, 2005).

With the dispositional factors outlined, we will now show how they affect the intentional dimension of Armenia’s foreign policy.

3.3. Intentional dimension

Regarding the intentional divergence between the first two Presidents’ foreign policies, it is worth noting that from the outset of his presidency, Kocharyan securitized the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and clearly distanced himself from his predecessor on this issue. In contrast to the first President who was invariably emphasizing the necessity of speedy conflict resolution, Kocharyan adopted a much harder position. He blamed Ter-Petrosyan for unacceptable concessions that would potentially be detrimental to Karabakh’s security (Astourian, 2000, p. 32). He went as far as to question the ethnic compatibility of Armenians and Azerbaijanis: “The Armenian pogroms in Sumgait and Baku, and the attempts at mass military deportation of Armenians from Karabakh in 1991-92 indicate the impossibility for Armenians to live in Azerbaijan in general. We are talking about some sort of ethnic incompatibility” (Azatutyun, 2003). Such a belief about the ethnic antagonism of conflicting societies may shed light on his hard-line stances on NKR Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution.

Moreover, being the man who led the war effort against Azerbaijan in the disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh and becoming its first President, Kocharyan would unlikely take steps that would undermine his reputation as ‘a symbol’ of Karabakh war victory. And as a politician who gained public and political support due to his staunch opposition to Ter-Petrosyan’s discourse on concessions, Kocharyan was faced with path dependence. Essentially, his powerful backers – the Armenian army, the nationalist party Dashnaktsutyun, as well as the voters who were particularly sensitive to Karabakh conflict would preclude him from stepping down

Ter-Petrosyan's path. Overall, his discourse suggests that Nagorno Karabakh was the issue of utmost importance on the Armenian foreign and security policy agenda, meanwhile the room for concessions to 'aggressor' Azerbaijan was rather limited. Kocharyan ruled out the possibility of any concession regarding the 'independent' status of the disputed territory (Papazian, 2006, p. 244). The securitization of NK conflict may explain why he smoothly shifted from a pro-Western foreign policy agenda to the Russia-led path. Russia's 'warm welcome' into the Armenian economy was synchronized with increasingly intensifying and deepening bilateral political and military partnership. Thus, the critical importance initially assigned to Armenia's rapprochement with Europe in Kocharyan's discourse, would be eclipsed by the growing emphasis on Armenian-Russian strategic relationship and security alliance. Russia was largely framed as the most pivotal security partner (Kocharyan, 2011, p. 272).

Arguably, by establishing a strategic partnership with Russia, Kocharyan believed that it would lead Moscow to adopt a more benevolent stance on the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict. The Russian foreign policy discourse of that time suggests Kremlin's resolution to considerably develop partnership with Azerbaijan into a strategic alliance (Mirzoyan, 2010, p. 45). Russia's strengthening of its military and political partnership with Azerbaijan would provoke fears across the Armenian leadership. The nightmare scenario of Russia-Azerbaijan strategic rapprochement would devastatingly militate against Armenia's policy in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. In effect, Kocharyan was forced to make decisions in conditions of sheer structural and strategic uncertainty, given the insufficient knowledge of Russia's possible foreign policy outputs and their implications for Karabakh-sensitive Armenia. The fears provoked by Russia's choice of Azerbaijan as a strategic partner in the South Caucasus would reportedly prompt Kocharyan to convince Russia to opt for Armenia. Thus, he would drop the European foreign policy agenda and give in to the expansionist Russian policy 'package'. Therefore, along with the dispositional dimension, the intentional dimension, which pertained chiefly to the strive for at least maintaining the status quo in Nagorno Karabakh conflict, may explain the choice of the Russia-led path. Alternatively, the securitization of the NKR conflict could be attributed to Kocharyan's disposition and his sensitivity to the disputed territory as its first President and a 'symbol' of the war victory. Moreover, having witnessed Ter-Petrosyan's decline due to his insensitive approach to the conflict resolution, Kocharyan would have learnt lessons from his predecessor's failure.

4. Unfulfilled expectations and path-dependency: confirming the strategic choice of Russia

Kocharyan's successor, Serzh Sargsyan, can be viewed as somewhere in between the two previous Presidents both in terms of his foreign policy agenda and

agency. Sargsyan came to power in 2008 with a strong rhetoric focused on rectifying the acute shortcomings confronting the country and on achieving foreign policy breakthroughs. The latter was inextricably linked to breaking the logjam on the troubled relations with neighbouring Azerbaijan and Turkey as well as profound advancement towards the EU – as Armenia’s ‘irreversible and civilizational choice’⁹. Notably, the very outset of Sargsyan’s presidency coincided with major geopolitical fluctuations in the South Caucasus region due to the Russian-Georgian five-day war, as well as the EU’s mounting engagement with the region following its 2007 enlargement. The reluctance to experience the spill-over of instability into Armenia, coupled with the acknowledgement of the tremendous opportunities arising out of the EU’s intensifying neighbourhood policy, led Sargsyan to come up with an ambitious status-quo challenging foreign policy agenda. Improving Armenian-Turkish relations as well as moving closer to the EU were placed at the core of his policy efforts.

Sargsyan largely framed Armenia as a small and vulnerable state which could not shift from survival to development as long as it would be subjected to severe blockade by its neighbours. As Sargasyan put it:

Just take a look on what’s going on around our country, in the region and in the constantly shrinking world. Armenia, like a small boat, has again found itself in the very midpoint of turbulence. A war right next door, closed borders, problems with external communications, convoluted regional relations, clashing interests of great powers – this is the world Armenia faces today.¹⁰

Thus, the admission of Armenia’s ‘smallness’ in the face of crippling external constraints prompted him to take measures that would radically alleviate the country’s plight, and most importantly, shift it from a sinking ‘small boat’ to an indivisible part of the European family of prosperous states. Yet, the conception of the EU evolved and eventually changed. What follows is an outline of how this crucial dispositional factor underwent transformation.

4.1. Dispositional dimension: the (r)evolution of the EU’s conception

Sargsyan’s discourse suggests a pronounced emphasis on Armenia’s Europeanness and European identity. In his words, the Armenian heritage, values, culture and identity make Armenia an indivisible part of Europe and motivate the

⁹ Sargsyan (2011), *Statement by the President of the Republic of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe* (retrieved from <http://www.president.am/en/statements-and-messages/item/2011/06/22/news-91/>).

¹⁰ Sargsyan (2008), *Speech delivered by President Serzh Sargsyan in the United States at the official reception hosted by the Embassy of Armenia to the US, Permanent Mission of Armenia to the United Nations and leading Armenian-American Organizations* (retrieved from <http://www.president.am/en/statements-and-messages/item/2008/09/24/news-18/>).

European integration policy. Therefore, the path towards the EU was associated with 'homecoming to the European civilization and cultural realm, to which we belong, and where we have been ever-present'¹¹. Meanwhile, consistent compliance with EU norms would enable Armenia to gain the long-desired status of a modern European state¹². Overall, Armenia's deep and comprehensive rapprochement with the EU has been widely depicted as a top identity-driven foreign policy priority and most importantly, a path towards prosperity, stability and democracy. The Armenian President warmly welcomed the launch of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) in 2009, noting that it could produce exceptional stability and peace-building results in the conflict-laden South Caucasus region¹³.

Thus, for the Armenian political leadership, the European foreign policy strategy seemed to be both prudential – since Armenia needed the EU to alleviate the effects of blockade and gain access to lucrative European markets – and 'natural' due to the perception of common identity and shared values. Apart from domestic reforms, deepening the partnership with the EU was deemed critical to radically improving small and isolated Armenia's geopolitical position. Sargsyan initially contended that the EU-Russia balance could be achieved and saw no discrepancy between the pursuit of the Association perspective and Armenia being a CIS and CSTO member, and Russia's strategic partner¹⁴. The EU itself has been broadly regarded as a normative and peace promoting actor, which could profoundly contribute to conflict resolution by promoting democracy and laying ground for democratic interstate dialogue between Armenia and Azerbaijan (Terzyan, 2016b, p. 168). In Sargsyan's discourse (2010), peace promotion has been closely linked to democracy promotion in the region and particularly to putting the authoritarian regime of Azerbaijan on the path to democracy. This would be the core mission of the Eastern Partnership as 'an efficient tool for the establishment of peace and security in the region'.

Nevertheless, over time, a series of events began to steadily diminish the mounting optimism. First, contrary to the Armenian leadership's EU-related expectations about the remedial effects of its policy on the hostile political landscape of the South Caucasus, the zero-sum approach remained intact in Armenia–Azerbaijan

¹¹ Sargsyan (2011), *Statement by the President of the Republic of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe* (retrieved from <http://www.president.am/en/statements-and-messages/item/2011/06/22/news-91/>)

¹² Sargsyan (2010), President Sargsyan's working visit to the Kingdom of Belgium and European structures (retrieved from <http://www.president.am/en/foreign-visits/item/2010/05/25/news-158/>).

¹³ Sargsyan (2009), *Statement by President Serzh Sargsyan at the EU Eastern Partnership Summit* (retrieved from <http://www.president.am/en/statements-and-messages/item/2009/05/07/news-40/>).

¹⁴ Sargsyan (2010), Statement by President Serzh Sargsyan on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Republican Party of Armenia (retrieved from <http://www.president.am/en/statements-and-messages/item/2010/12/18/news-81/>).

relations. This was vividly manifested in Azerbaijan's staunch opposition and ensuing efforts at obstructing the Armenian-Turkish rapprochement in late 2008 and 2009. In essence, Sargsyan's willingness to redefine relations with neighbours had not resonated with Azerbaijan. Moreover, the latter perceived Turkey's steps towards healing the relations with its foe as a 'stab in the back' and resorted to blackmailing its ally. More specifically, Azerbaijan played its energy card and brought up the issues of revising gas prices for Turkey and setting a transit regime for the export of its gas through Turkey. The dispute between Azerbaijan and Turkey was settled as the latter stepped down from establishing diplomatic relations with Armenia. The Turkish energy minister, Yıldız, stated outright that: "Political issues, such as Armenia, will not hinder a conclusion with our brother country, Azerbaijan" (Kardas, 2011, p. 68).

The setback in the Armenian-Turkish reconciliation smoothly turned his initial optimism to mounting disillusionment. Over time, Sargsyan came to the conclusion that the Ottoman nature of Turkey largely remained unchanged, while Azerbaijan's belligerence towards Armenia crossed the boundaries of hostility. Thus, Armenia would be bound to survive among irremediably hostile and aggressive neighbours: 'We are living in a region entangled in a web of consistent hatred and warmongering rhetoric, a region full of threats and hazards. Some countries even question the right of the Armenian people to live on their historical land. The probabilities of military conflicts in our region are rampant'¹⁵.

The marked disillusionment with neighbours' bellicosity extended to Sargsyan's EU-related expectations for regional cooperation and peace promotion. Sargsyan would later regard the Eastern Partnership as an inappropriate project in terms of fostering regional cooperation. Thus, he blamed the EU for its incapability of prompting Azerbaijan and Turkey to tone down their belligerence towards Armenia and lift the crippling blockade¹⁶. Besides, he questioned the effectiveness of the EU's democracy promotion efforts across the South Caucasus, alluding to the intensifying energy partnership with Azerbaijan despite its blatant disregard for democracy and human rights¹⁷.

¹⁵Sargsyan (2012). *Statement by the President of Armenia, Chairman of the Republican Party of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan at the 14th RPA Convention* (retrieved from <http://www.president.am/en/statements-and-messages/item/2012/12/15/Address-by-Serzh-Sargsyan-at-the-14th-Republican-Convention-speech/>).

¹⁶Sargsyan (2014a). *Statement by the President of the Republic of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan at the High-Level Meeting on the 5th Anniversary of the Eastern Partnership*. (retrieved from <http://www.president.am/en/statements-and-messages/item/2014/04/25/President-Serzh-Sargsyan-speech-Eastern-Partnership-Prague/>).

¹⁷Sargsyan (2013). *President Serzh Sargsyan participated at the Summit of the EPP Eastern Partnership Leaders in Chisinau* (retrieved from <http://www.president.am/en/press-release/item/2013/07/11/President-Serzh-Sargsyan-participated-in-EPP-summit-Moldova/>).

Notably, in 2009, shortly after the intensification of the EU-Azerbaijan negotiations, contrary to its commitments assumed within the Eastern Partnership, Azerbaijan embarked on constitutional reforms which abolished presidential term limits. Sargsyan frequently noted that the growing relevance of Azerbaijan's energy resources would inevitably reinforce its assertiveness and hinder the compliance with EU rules. Even worse, Azerbaijan would smoothly translate the energy revenues into military build-up against Armenia. Thus, he alarmed that the biggest achievement of the EU-Azerbaijan energy cooperation – the Southern Gas Corridor – could become 'a new source for nourishing war'¹⁸. A close scrutiny of Sargsyan's discourse suggests that the shift in the EU-Azerbaijan energy partnership considerably intensified his scepticism about the EU. The latter was implicitly blamed for low regard for Armenia's security needs. Namely, at the third Summit of the European People's Party (EPP) Eastern Partnership Leaders in July, 2013 he touched upon the dire consequences of the energy partnership, and particularly Azerbaijan's penchant for 'translating energy cooperation into energy dictate' with the obvious intent to hurt Armenia.

Overall, Sargsyan's discourse is suggestive of the declining image of the EU and its shift from an authoritative peace and democracy promoter to an incoherent and two-faced actor in the Armenian political thinking (Terzyan, 2017, p. 198). This is especially related to the EU's incapability of rekindling its energy interests with its broader development policy agenda and particularly the double standards displayed vis-à-vis Azerbaijan. Arguably, the intensifying energy partnership, termed as a strategic one, would have repercussions with Armenia's treatment of the EU. In essence, labelling Armenia's fiercest foe as a 'strategic partner' would be deemed at odds with the country's lofty expectations about the EU's policy. Therefore, the irremediably hostile landscape of Armenia's neighbourhood, with no tangible hope for a change, smoothly led Sargsyan to prioritize the strategic alliance with Russia and treat it as 'the pivot of Armenia's security'¹⁹.

4.2. Intentional dimension: justifying Armenia's foreign policy 'U-turn'

The explanations of Armenia's U-turn – its shift from the Association Agreement with the EU to the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union – are characterized by structural reductionism, pertaining chiefly to Russia's coercive policy. It is taken for granted that there would be a lack of choice for small and fragile

¹⁸ Sargsyan (2011), *Statement by President Serzh Sargsyan at the EU Eastern Partnership Second Summit* (retrieved from <http://www.president.am/en/statements-and-messages/item/2011/09/30/news-111/>).

¹⁹ Sargsyan (2013), *Statement by President Serzh Sargsyan at the extended meeting held at the RA Ministry of Defense* (retrieved from <http://www.president.am/en/statements-and-messages/item/2013/01/15/President-Serzh-Sargsyan-speech-session-Ministry-of-Defense/>).

Armenia to resist to Russian bullying as it had put itself in a situation where it could not say no to Russia (Popescu, 2013). Indeed, Russia's increasing assertiveness in the wake of the Association Agreement's advancement should not be overlooked. Meanwhile, the vast economic and political dependence on Russia would prescribe Armenia to take the brunt of Kremlin's preventive coercion. Similarly, the discourse held by the Armenian policy-makers leads to the conclusion that there was lack of choice for Armenia in avoiding the U-turn. The underlying assumption is that abiding by the rules determined by Kremlin would conveniently shield Armenia from unwelcome political and economic repercussions, such as potential intensification of the military partnership with Armenia's enemy Azerbaijan, increasing gas prices or even mistreating the Armenian community in Russia²⁰. Therefore, the shift to the Eurasian Economic Union is depicted as the only possible output in the given set of circumstances.

Clearly, in contrast to his predecessor, who had sufficient agency to make a choice, Sargsyan has had far less room for manoeuvre. Nevertheless, this study suggests a more dynamic structure-agency interplay. The argument is that, rather than experiencing asymmetric coercion, the perceived rationality and beliefs of the agent has had a significant role in making the U-turn. First of all, as noted above, the EU-related security expectations started to steadily diminish, meanwhile the increasingly belligerent tones emanating from Armenia's neighbourhood, prompted Armenia to put heavy reliance on Russia. The absence of any clear-cut security guarantees offered by the EU, coupled with its negligible influence on energy-rich Azerbaijan's behaviour, led Sargsyan to give greater weight to the security alliance with Russia. The latter has been largely regarded as a viable counterweight to the Turkish-Azeri tandem 'formed under the "One nation, two states" slogan' (Sargsyan, 2013). Not surprisingly, the very traditional security challenges and concerns have been pivotal to justifying Armenia's U-turn.

Arguably, the far-reaching conclusions that President Sargsyan made about the neighbour's irremediable belligerence and the strategic choice of Russia as a security ally have been considerably influenced by ideational factors – collective memory and beliefs. More specifically, Turkey's hardening position on lifting the blockade on Armenia, led the Armenian President to transfer the Ottoman Empire's image to modern Turkey and, as noted earlier, contend that its imperial, coercive and unreliable nature had remained unchanged. Meanwhile, the mounting traditional security challenges facing Armenia, reinforced the deep-rooted perception of Russia as a 'friend in need' and 'saviour' (Terzyan, 2017, p. 187).

With respect to other agent-related factors, it is worth noting that the very fact that Sargsyan frequently exemplified the Ukrainian scenario (Sargsyan, 2014) as a convenient excuse for the U-turn indicates his unwillingness to end up as his former

²⁰ A1plus (2014), *We mustn't play tricks with Russia: S. Sargsyan* (retrieved from <http://en.a1plus.am/1201812.html>)

Ukrainian counterpart, Yanukovich, did. Similarly, the representatives of the Armenian political elite often cited the Ukrainian scenario as a justification for the U-turn and implicitly noted that Armenia would rather abstain from provoking Russia (Terzyan, 2017, p. 198). Arguably, the perception of the 'Ukrainian scenario' from the Armenian leadership's perspective is chiefly related to the 'Euromaidan', with a highly unwanted outcome for incumbents. Notably, the opposition Heritage Party's former Vice-Chairman, Armen Martirosyan, noted that the Armenian incumbent's strive for staying in office had been instrumental in opting for the EAEU, given the Russian guarantees that he would be safe within the Russian-led union.²¹ Similarly, the party leader, Raffi Hovhannisyán regarded Armenia's U-turn as a deplorable stride towards perpetuating the illegitimate power of President Sargsyan and his regime, in the name of serving national interests.²²

Even though it is hard to clearly measure the role of the agent's power motivation and its impact on the foreign policy output, it would be misleading to dismiss the agency-level variables. It is highly likely for an Armenian-style agent, with immense power in its hands, in the absence of checks and balances, to act out of self-interest in determining foreign policy outputs. Thus, the emphasis on the dynamic structure-agent interplay would provide a more holistic explanation for Armenia's foreign policy ups and downs in general and the U-turn in particular.

Conclusions

We admit that it is tempting to fall prey to reductionist thinking and argue that Armenia's foreign policy trajectory is self-evident given Russia's military, political, and economic influence in the post-Soviet space. From this perspective, Armenia simply gave in to the prerogatives of its great power neighbour. Despite such analytical temptation, we have tried to demonstrate how a more dynamic structure-agent interplay offers a more convincing explanation.

Ter-Petrosyan, Armenia's first president, exhibited a markedly pragmatic stance; yet, his agency was undercut by domestic actors hostile to his foreign policy approach. Even Kocharyan's policies, which opened up for Russia's overwhelming presence in Armenia's economic and security affairs, were to a great extent the product of 'authoritarian learning' where Kocharyan drew lessons from both internal and external political processes in order to secure his power. While we argue that individual-level factors were prominent in explaining Kocharyan's foreign policy manoeuvring, Sargsyan's policies confirmed the path staked out by Kocharyan, and hence showcase a great deal of path dependency in Armenia's foreign relations. Even

²¹Martirosyan (2014), *Heritage: Armenia's problems will deepen because of Eurasian Union* (retrieved from <https://news.am/eng/news/245840.html>).

²²Hovhannisyán (2014), *Opposition Party Condemns Eurasian Union Entry* (retrieved from <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/26642964.html>).

so, it is important to keep in mind that both Kocharyan and Sargsyan initially regarded the EU as Armenia's 'civilizational choice.' Moreover, the hostile relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan and Turkey are neither destined to reign in perpetuity, and as shown in our analysis, rapprochement and reconciliation were serious options that were being considered. Hence, the uncertainty about which foreign policy pathway that offers the best development opportunities and protection guarantees for a small state in an unfriendly and uncertain environment opens up for domestic and/or individual level factors in explaining Armenia's foreign policy.

Overall, this study prompts a rethink of a small state's foreign policy behaviour in the post-Soviet space by highlighting the significance of dispositional and intentional dimensions rather than the taken-for-granted assumptions of structural perspectives.

References

- Ademmer, E. (2016), *Russia's Impact on EU Policy Transfer to the Post-Soviet Space: The Contested Neighbourhood*, 33, New York: Routledge.
- Ambrosio, T. (2016), *Authoritarian Backlash: Russian resistance to democratization in the former Soviet Union*, New York: Routledge.
- Astourian, S. H. (2000), From Ter-Petrosian to Kocharian: Leadership Change in Armenia, *UC Berkeley: Berkeley Program in Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies* (retrieved from <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/0c2794v4>).
- Beach, D. (2012), *Analyzing Foreign Policy*, Palgrave.
- Brownlee, J. (2017), The limited reach of authoritarian powers, *Democratization*, 24(7), pp.1326-1344.
- Carlsnaes, W. (1992), The Agency-Structure Problem in Foreign Policy Analysis, *International Studies Quarterly*, 36(3), pp. 245–70.
- Dyson, S.B. (2009), *The Blair identity: leadership and foreign policy*, Oxford University Press.
- Elman, M.F. (1995), The Foreign Policies of Small States: Challenging Neorealism in Its Own Backyard, *British Journal of Political Science*, 25(2), pp. 171–217.
- Gigleux, V. (2016), Explaining the Diversity of Small States' Foreign Policies through Role Theory, *Third World Thematics: A TWQ Journal*, 1(1), pp. 27–45.
- Giragosian, R. (2015), Armenia's Eurasian Choice: Is the EU Integration Still at Stake, *Heinrich Boll Foundation* (retrieved from <https://ge.boell.org/en/2015/04/02/armenias-urasian-choice-eu-integration-still-stake>).
- Gustavsson, J. (1999), How Should We Study Foreign Policy Change?, *Cooperation and Conflict*, 34(1), pp. 73–95.
- Hall, S.G. (2017), Learning from past experience: Yanukovych's implementation of authoritarianism after 2004, *Journal of Eurasian Studies*, 8(2), pp.161-171.

- Hermann, R. K. (2003), Image Theory and Strategic Interaction in International Relations, in: Sears, D., Huddy L. and Jervis. R. (eds.), *Oxford handbook of political psychology*, 1st ed. Oxford University Press, pp. 285–314.
- Hess, S. (2010), Protests, parties, and presidential succession: Competing theories of Color Revolutions in Armenia and Kyrgyzstan, *Problems of Post-Communism*, 57(1), pp. 28–39.
- Hudson, V. M. (2005), Foreign Policy Analysis: Actor-Specific Theory and the Ground of International Relations, *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 1(1), pp. 1–30.
- Jervis, R. (2006), The Remaking of a Unipolar World, *The Washington Quarterly*, 29(3), pp. 7–19.
- Kaarbo, J. (2015), A Foreign Policy Analysis Perspective on the Domestic Politics Turn in IR Theory, *International Studies Review*, 17(2), pp. 189–216.
- Kardas, S. (2011), Turkish–Azerbaijani Energy Cooperation and Nabucco: Testing the Limits of the New Turkish Foreign Policy Rhetoric, *Turkish Studies*, 12(1), pp. 55–77.
- Kassab, H. S. (2015), *Weak States in International Relations Theory: The cases of Armenia, St. Kitts and Nevis, Lebanon, and Cambodia*, Springer.
- Kocharyan R. (2006), *Eluytner ev harcazruycner {Speeches and Statements}*, Yerevan.
- Kostanyan, H. (2011), Spillovers from the Arab Revolts: Is Armenia Next in Line? *CEPS Policy Briefs* (retrieved from <https://www.ceps.eu/publications/spillovers-arab-revolts-armenia-next-line>).
- Kotchikian, A. (2008), *The Dialectics of Small States: Foreign Policy Making in Armenia and Georgia*, Saarbrücken, Germany: VDM Verlag, 2008.
- Levy, J. S. (2008), Case Studies: Types, Designs, and Logics of Inference, *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 25(1), pp. 1–18.
- Mearsheimer, J. J. (2001), *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, New York: Norton.
- Mirzoyan, A. (2010), *Armenia, the regional powers, and the West: between history and geopolitics*, New York: Springer.
- Papazian, T. (2006), From Ter-Petrossian to Kocharian: explaining continuity in Armenian foreign policy, 1991–2003, *Demokratizatsiya*, 14(2), pp. 235–251.
- Parsons, C. (2010), *How to Map Arguments in Political Science*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Payaslian, S. (2011), *The political economy of human rights in Armenia: Authoritarianism and democracy in a former Soviet republic*, 75, London: IB Tauris.
- Popescu, N. (2013), Behind-and beyond-Armenia's choice, *ISSUE Alert*, 35 (retrieved from https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/Alert___35_Armenia_U-turn.pdf).
- Post, J.M. (2010), *The Psychological Assessment of Political Leaders: with Profiles of Saddam Hussein and Bill Clinton*, Michigan: University of Michigan Press.
- Schafer, M. and Walker, S. (2006), *Beliefs and Leadership in World Politics: Methods and Applications of Operational Code Analysis*, Springer.

- Schweller, R. L. (2003), The Progressiveness of Neoclassical Realism, in: Elman, C. and Elman, M.F. (eds.), *Progress in International Relations Theory: Appraising the Field*, Cambridge: MIT Press, pp. 311–48.
- Secieru, S. (2006), Russia's Foreign Policy under Putin: CIS Project, *UNISCI Discussion Papers*, (10), (retrieved from <http://www.redalyc.org/pdf/767/76701018.pdf>).
- Skak, M. (2011), Russia's New "Monroe Doctrine", *Russian foreign policy in the 21st century*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 138-154.
- Snyder, J. (1991), *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Ter-Petrosyan, L. (2006), *Yntrani: Eluytner, Hodvacner, Harcazrucner* {Selected Speeches, Articles, Interviews, Archives of the First President of the Republic of Armenia}, Erevan.
- Terzyan, A. (2016a), The Evolution of Armenia's Foreign Policy Identity: The Conception of Identity Driven Paths. Friends and Foes in Armenian Foreign Policy Discourse, in: Kakachia, K. and Markarov, A. (eds.), *Values and Identity as Sources of Foreign Policy in Armenia and Georgia*, Universal, pp. 145-183.
- Terzyan, A. and Galstyan, N. (2015), The Portrayal of "The Other" in Foreign Policy Discourse and Public Consciousness in Armenia (2008–present), in: Terzyan, Aram et al., *Identity, Norms and Beliefs in Foreign Policy*, Caucasus Analytical Digest, 77, pp. 2-6.
- Terzyan, A., (2016 b), The Evolution of the European Union's Conception in the Foreign Policy Discourse of Armenia: Implications for U-turn and the Path beyond the Association Agreement, *Eastern Journal of European Studies*, 7(2), pp.165-184.
- Terzyan, A., (2017), The EU vs. Russia in the Foreign Policy Discourse of Armenia: the Fragility of Normative Power or the Power of Russian Coercion?, *Eastern Journal of European Studies*, 8(2), pp. 185-203.
- Thorun, C. (2008), *Explaining change in Russian foreign policy: the role of ideas in post-Soviet Russia's conduct towards the West*, Springer.
- Vanderhill, R. (2013), *Promoting authoritarianism abroad*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Waltz, K. N. (1979), *Theory of International Politics*, Reading: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co.
- Waltz, K. N. (1996), International Politics Is Not Foreign Policy, *Security Studies*, 6(1), pp. 54–57.
- Zakaria, F. (1992), Realism and Domestic Politics: A Review Essay, *International Security*, 17(1), pp. 177–198.