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HUMAN SECURITY AS A FACTOR OF SUSTAINABLE SECURITY IN POST-WAR ARMENIA: GLOBAL RESPONSIBILITY OF SMALL STATES

MICHELE BARBIERI[*] iD
University of Naples "Parthenope"

NANE ALEKSANYAN[**] iD
University of Tuscia

Abstract

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

[*] **Michele Barbieri** is a PhD in Law and Social-Economic Institutions at University of Naples "Parthenope". He is an Adjunct Professor of Politics of Privacy and Surveillance and Post-doc Research Fellow at the University of Salerno. He is also a lecturer in the Department of Modern Languages and literatures, history, philosophy and law studies (DISTU) at the University of Tuscia. He is a Member of the Italian Political Science Association (SISP) and a Member of the Observatory on Italian Independent Regulators' Impact Assessment (Osservatorio AIR). Email: mibarbieri@unisa.it. ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4748-093X.
[**] **Nane Aleksanyan** is an Erasmus+ MA student of Human Rights and Security at University of Tuscia, Italy. She is a MA student of Law at Eurasia International University, and she holds a Master's degree in Public Administration from the Yerevan State University. Email: nane.alexanyan@gmail.com. ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8692-2641.

Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2020 became the year of the contemporary most serious human biosecurity challenges for the countries of the world, the reasons for which were the spread of the new coronavirus and its negative consequences for national security, public safety, and the right to private life and quality of life (The Government of the RA 2021a; The Government of the RA 20121b).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Theory of human security management

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Challenges sustainable security and human development

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Quantitative and qualitative measurements of personal security

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Figure 1. Political stability and absence of violence/terrorism in the South Caucasus
(Kaufmann and Kraay 2023)
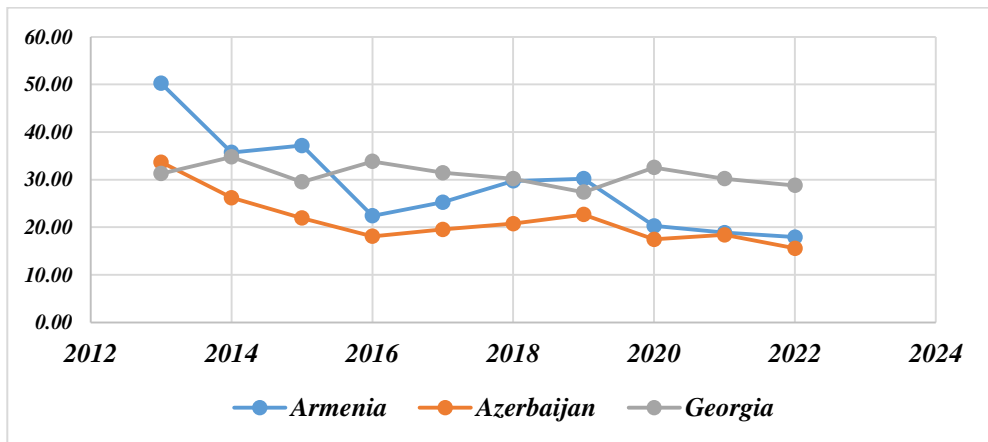
   A comparative analysis of the decline in political stability indicators of Armenia with Azerbaijan and Georgia for the period 2013-2022 shows that sustainable security and ensuring sustainable development of political and economic systems is one of the priority issues in post-war Armenia (see Table 2 and Figure 2). This problem has been attracting increasing attention in the political agenda of Armenia from 2013 to 2023 due to the growing discussions about the growth of military threats, risks of military escalation and war. In 2013, Armenia found itself in a dilemma of choosing between the EU and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), thus in 2013 Armenia abandoned the Association Agreement with the EU, joining the Customs Union (CU) of Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus, and then becoming a member of the EAEU. In 2017, Armenia signed the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with the EU, thus European integration became one of the directions of Armenia's foreign policy

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

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

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

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

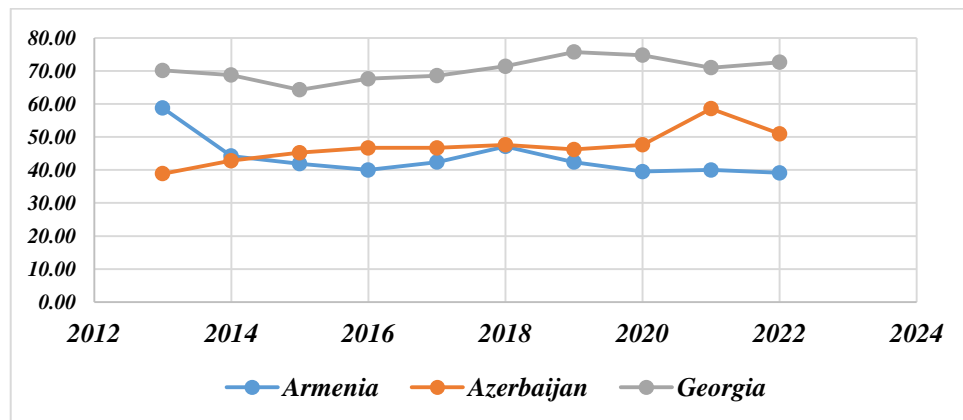| *Country*	*2013*	*2014*	*2015*	*2016*	*2017*	*2018*	*2019*	*2020*	*2021*	*2022*
Armenia	58.77	44.23	41.90	40.00	42.38	47.14	42.38	39.52	40.00	39.15
Azerbaijan	38.86	42.79	45.24	46.67	46.67	47.62	46.19	47.62	58.57	50.94
Georgia	70.14	68.75	64.29	67.62	68.57	71.43	75.71	74.76	70.95	72.64

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

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

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

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

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

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

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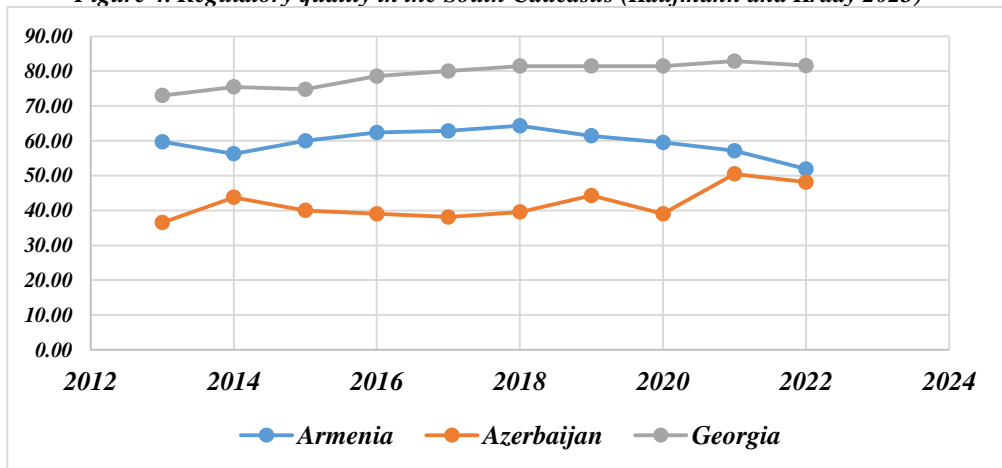

Table 4 and Figure 4 show that Armenia's Regulatory quality index scores have declined compared to Azerbaijan and Georgia over the period 2013-2022. The reasons for this situation are difficulties in the areas of quality of public services, quality of development and implementation of domestic public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

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

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

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

Discussion and conclusion

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

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

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

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

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

Conflict of interests

The authors declare no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in this research.

Ethical standards

 The authors affirm this research did not involve human subjects.

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