



IBSU

International Black Sea University

School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences

American Studies Periodical

15th Edition

American Studies International Research

Conference Materials

Tbilisi

2025

Chief Editor: Prof. Dr. Tamar Shioshvili,
The Dean of the School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences
International Black Sea University

© International Black Sea University, 2025

UDC: 908 (73)

A-47

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION I: POLITICS, HISTORY

How the US Involvement in WW1 Changed its History LEVANI ADAMIA	1
The Role of U.S.–Georgia Strategic Partnerships in Strengthening Georgia’s Psychological Defense Capabilities GEORGE ARABULI	8
Examination of Key Events and Turning Points in President Biden’s Foreign Affairs to Russia ANAA ROSHIDZE	18
World Order in the Shadow of Russia-Ukraine War: The US-led Negotiations as the Turning Point? TATO BEZHITASHVILI	27
From Sedition to Social Media: The Historical Trajectory of Hate Speech in the United States LASHA KURDASHVILI	36
Dynamics of the Search for the Reasonable Ethics to Protect Public Confidence in the US government TAMAR SHIOSHVILI	46
Redefining Alliances: The Transformation of U.S.–Arab Relations Amid Geopolitical Shifts and Economic Diversification SAMIN USTIASHVILI	52

SECTION II: CULTURE, SOCIAL ISSUES

The US Socio- political and cultural values highlighted through Modern Art in Arab Countries IRINA BAKHTADZE, FERYAL ABDULLAH MOHAMED ALHAZANI	62
Beyond Reforms: Assessing the Efficacy of Post-Katrina Disaster Relief Policies in Enhancing U.S. National Security Resilience (2005–2025) IRINA BAKHTADZE, NYASHA FOSTER	68
A Comparative Analysis of Mainstream Media Influence in Georgia and the United States BARBARE BAKRADZE	74
The Influence of American Culture on the Georgian Media Space TSITSINO BUKIA	83
Nobel Peace Prize – Legacy of the US Presidents MAIA KUTATELADZE	90

Changes in the Family Structure of Whites in the U.S.	
MEDEA KUZANASHVILI	101
The Role of Industrialization and Migration in Shaping American Corporate Structures and Labor Markets	
EKA MELADZE	107
A Key Role of Vocational Training in Preparing a Skilled and Job-Ready Workforce in the US	
SOPO REVAZISHVILI, IRINA BAKHTADZE	117
Methodism: The Way from the State to Free Church	
GEORGE SHADURI	125
 SECTION III: LITERATURE, WOMEN’S ISSUES	
Teaching American Values through Literature at IBSU	
SOPHIO CHAREKISHVILI	134
Philosophy of Transcendentalism by Ralph Waldo Emerson	
BARBARE IOSEBASHVILI	140
The Search for Meaning: Walker Percy and Christian Existential Thought	
NATIA BUTKHUZI	147
Psychological Characteristics of Women during Pre and Post-Divorce; Relationships with Environment	
TAMAR MGELADZE	155
Ten Days in a Mad-House: An Analysis	
LIKA MIRUASHVILI	164
In Search of America, Past and Present: A Journey with John Steinbeck from the 1960s to 2025	
NATIA MSHVIDOBADZE	169
Theoretical Framework of the Work-Family Conflict (WFC) for Understanding 21st Century American and Georgian Women’s Lives	
SALOME TCHARBADZE	176

SECTION I: POLITICS, HISTORY

How U.S. involvement in WW1 changed history

LEVAN ADAMIA^{1*}

Over the last two centuries, the foreign policy of the United States has undergone a dramatic transformation, evolving through two distinct and defining phases: isolationism and expansionism. In its formative years, the U.S. largely adhered to a policy of non-involvement in the political and military affairs of other nations, particularly those in Europe. This approach was not merely circumstantial but ideologically rooted in the warnings and principles laid out by the nation's earliest leaders. Chief among them was George Washington, the first president of the United States and a revered Founding Father, who, in his Farewell Address in 1796, famously cautioned against "entangling alliances" with foreign powers. His statement, "It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world," became the ideological cornerstone of American diplomacy throughout the 19th century. This doctrine encouraged national focus on internal development, the settlement and expansion of the American frontier (Manifest Destiny), and the consolidation of political stability. For over a century, the United States avoided European conflicts and prioritized hemispheric security, especially through doctrines like the Monroe Doctrine (1823), which opposed European colonialism in the Americas. However, with the dawn of the 20th century—marked by industrial growth, increased military capability, and geopolitical ambition—this cautious policy gave way to a more assertive and interventionist role. The transition was gradual but decisive, setting the stage for the U.S. to become a dominant player in global politics, reshaping not only its own national identity but the broader architecture of international relations.

The clearest break from traditional American isolationism came during the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt at the turn of the 20th century, when the United States began to embrace a more aggressive and proactive role in international affairs. Roosevelt, a forceful and charismatic leader, was a firm believer in American exceptionalism—the notion that the United States held a unique responsibility to lead the world through strength, moral purpose, and democratic ideals. He viewed the U.S. not as a distant observer of global events but as a rising power whose influence should match its growing industrial, economic, and military capabilities. Roosevelt's vision reshaped American foreign policy by establishing the idea that the U.S. should actively shape the world around it, especially in regions of strategic and

^{1*} Junior Student of American Studies BA Program, School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, International Black Sea University, Tbilisi, Georgia.

economic interest.

Central to Roosevelt's foreign policy was his principle of "Big Stick" diplomacy, encapsulated in his famous phrase: "Speak softly and carry a big stick; you will go far." This approach emphasized calm, measured negotiation supported by the credible threat of force. Roosevelt believed that peace could be maintained not through appeasement, but through strength and preparedness. Under his leadership, the United States began engaging more directly in global affairs, often employing both diplomatic leverage and military power to protect its interests. His administration witnessed a transformation in the role of the U.S. Navy, which he expanded and modernized, making it a critical tool in projecting American influence overseas.

One of the most significant accomplishments of Roosevelt's presidency was the construction of the Panama Canal, which symbolized both American engineering prowess and strategic foresight. The canal drastically shortened maritime routes between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, enhancing both U.S. commerce and naval mobility. Roosevelt took a hands-on approach to the canal's development, supporting Panama's independence from Colombia in 1903 and swiftly securing a treaty that gave the United States control over the canal zone. This bold move demonstrated his willingness to intervene in foreign matters to serve national interests and reinforced the idea that the U.S. could assert itself as a dominant power in the Western Hemisphere.

In addition to overseeing massive infrastructure and military developments, Roosevelt expanded the scope of the Monroe Doctrine through what came to be known as the Roosevelt Corollary. While the original Monroe Doctrine had warned European powers against interfering in the Americas, the Roosevelt Corollary went a step further by declaring that the United States had the right to intervene in the domestic affairs of Latin American nations to ensure stability and prevent European intervention. This policy was used to justify American involvement in countries like the Dominican Republic and Cuba, and it signaled a shift from a defensive posture to one of hemispheric management. Through this lens, Roosevelt saw the United States as a stabilizing force—a "policeman" of the Western Hemisphere. Roosevelt also took steps to enhance America's standing in global diplomacy. He negotiated the end of the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, earning the Nobel Peace Prize, the first ever awarded to an American. His role in mediating the conflict between two non-Western powers showed that the U.S. was no longer a secondary participant in global affairs, but a central actor in resolving major international disputes. His dispatch of the Great White Fleet—a powerful naval demonstration that toured the world from 1907 to 1909—further solidified American prestige abroad. The fleet's mission was not only to showcase naval strength, but to announce to the world that the United States was a mature, capable, and assertive global power.

Through a combination of military expansion, infrastructure projects, and diplomatic achievements, Theodore Roosevelt transformed American foreign policy from passive isolation to confident internationalism. His assertive vision and policies laid the foundation for the United States' rise as a global power in the 20th century, setting the stage for greater involvement in world affairs and the eventual emergence

of the U.S. as a dominant force in international politics. The foundational policies initiated under President Theodore Roosevelt—emphasizing military readiness, assertive diplomacy, and expanded American influence abroad—laid the intellectual and strategic groundwork for a more interventionist foreign policy. Though often couched in the language of moral obligation and global stewardship, these policies also reflected a growing belief that the United States could not remain detached from international affairs without jeopardizing its national interests. When World War I erupted in Europe in the summer of 1914, the United States initially clung to its traditional stance of neutrality. President Woodrow Wilson declared that America would remain “impartial in thought as well as in action,” a phrase that captured the nation’s general reluctance to be drawn into what was viewed as a distant and entangled European struggle. However, despite this official position, the war’s economic and geopolitical realities increasingly challenged American detachment.

As the war progressed, several developments began to erode the feasibility of U.S. neutrality. American banks and industries began providing significant loans, goods, and military supplies to the Allied Powers—particularly Great Britain and France—creating a financial stake in their victory. While officially nonbelligerent, the U.S. economy was becoming deeply enmeshed in the Allied war effort. At the same time, German submarine warfare threatened not only the lives of American citizens but also the freedom of international trade, which the United States viewed as a core principle of its foreign policy. Germany’s policy of unrestricted submarine warfare, intended to cripple British supply lines, resulted in attacks on civilian and commercial vessels. The most infamous example occurred on May 7, 1915, when the RMS *Lusitania*, a British passenger liner, was sunk by a German U-boat off the coast of Ireland. Of the nearly 2,000 people who perished, 128 were American citizens. Though Germany claimed the ship was carrying war materials—and it was—the loss of civilian lives deeply shocked the American public and inflamed anti-German sentiment. Wilson, still committed to peace, attempted to negotiate with Germany to limit their submarine warfare and protect neutral shipping. For a time, Germany scaled back its attacks under pressure. However, in early 1917, facing starvation from the British naval blockade, Germany resumed unrestricted submarine warfare, hoping to force Britain to surrender before the United States could respond militarily. This renewed aggression significantly raised tensions. Then, in March 1917, British intelligence intercepted and revealed the Zimmermann Telegram—a secret diplomatic communication from German Foreign Secretary Arthur Zimmermann to the German ambassador in Mexico. The telegram proposed that if Mexico allied itself with Germany and attacked the United States, Germany would, in return, help Mexico reclaim the territories of Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona lost during the Mexican-American War. When this message was made public, it caused a national uproar. The idea that a foreign power was inciting a military attack on U.S. soil shattered any remaining illusions about American immunity from global conflict. In addition to these provocations, a broader ideological and moral argument began to form within Wilson’s administration and among the American public. The war was increasingly framed as a battle between democracy and autocracy, between the values of liberal governance and the militarism of the Central Powers. President Wilson began to articulate the need for U.S. involvement not only to defend its own citizens and commercial rights, but also to shape the postwar world in accordance with American values. In his April 2, 1917 speech before Congress, Wilson declared, “The world must be made

safe for democracy.” With this moral imperative, he requested a declaration of war against Germany. Congress granted the request just four days later, on April 6, 1917. The decision to enter World War I marked a seismic shift in American foreign policy. It signaled the abandonment of over a century of isolationist tradition and the formal entry of the United States into European power politics. It also marked the moment when America transitioned from being a largely reactive, inward-looking nation to a proactive shaper of global events. For the first time, the U.S. mobilized a large conscript army for deployment overseas, undertook a vast domestic propaganda campaign to unify public opinion, and engaged in international diplomacy with the clear intent of influencing the global postwar order. Though the war itself would last only another 18 months after U.S. entry, the psychological, political, and diplomatic implications of that entry were profound and long-lasting. The road to World War I may have begun with economic interests and foreign provocations, but it ultimately led to a fundamental redefinition of America’s role in the world—a transformation that would echo throughout the 20th century and beyond.

The entry of the United States into World War I proved to be a critical factor in shifting the tide of the war. The arrival of over two million American troops on European soil—often referred to as the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF), led by General John J. Pershing—provided much-needed reinforcement to the exhausted Allied armies. Beyond the military presence, America’s vast industrial capacity and financial resources dramatically altered the war’s trajectory. The U.S. supplied the Allies with weapons, food, vehicles, and loans, reinforcing their endurance and operational capability. American involvement not only boosted the morale of the Allied forces but also demoralized the Central Powers, who recognized the overwhelming potential of this new adversary. Within eighteen months of U.S. involvement, Germany and its allies were in retreat, culminating in the armistice of November 11, 1918. The U.S. had demonstrated its capacity to tip the scales in global conflict, and its role in the final phase of the war gave it unprecedented influence in postwar diplomacy. For the first time, the United States had emerged as a true superpower on the world stage, a position it would maintain and expand in the coming decades.

After the war, President Wilson sought to reshape the global order based on principles of justice, democracy, and collective security. His idealism was enshrined in the Fourteen Points, a sweeping set of proposals aimed at eliminating the causes of future wars. Among these points were calls for open diplomacy, freedom of navigation, arms reduction, and respect for national self-determination. The centerpiece of Wilson’s vision was the creation of a new international organization—the League of Nations—which would provide a forum for resolving disputes peacefully and collectively enforcing international law. Despite his efforts, Wilson faced fierce opposition at home. Many members of the U.S. Senate, particularly isolationist Republicans, viewed the League as a potential infringement on American sovereignty and a dangerous entanglement in foreign affairs. Ultimately, the Senate rejected the Treaty of Versailles, and the U.S. never joined the League, undermining its authority and effectiveness. Nevertheless, Wilson’s vision left a lasting legacy. His commitment to multilateralism and moral diplomacy inspired future frameworks for international cooperation, even as the immediate postwar order faltered. Even though the United States failed to ratify the Treaty of Versailles, its diplomats played a crucial role

in attempting to temper the most punitive elements of the settlement. President Wilson and his allies argued that excessively harsh terms against Germany—particularly the enormous reparations and the infamous “war guilt clause”—would breed resentment and instability. Unfortunately, France and Britain, bearing the brunt of wartime devastation, demanded retribution. Their insistence on crippling Germany economically and politically overrode Wilson’s more conciliatory approach. As a result, the treaty sowed the seeds of discontent that would eventually fuel the rise of Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany. Although the U.S. retreated into a period of relative isolation during the interwar years, its involvement in the negotiations reflected an evolving understanding of international politics. Many American policymakers realized that true peace required more than victory—it required a durable and equitable international order. Despite withdrawing from the League and European affairs, the United States continued to influence global economic policies and humanitarian efforts throughout the 1920s and 1930s, albeit from a distance.

The lessons of World War I profoundly shaped U.S. policy during and after World War II. This time, America did not merely offer support but assumed leadership in building the postwar world. In 1945, the United Nations was established with strong U.S. backing, and unlike the League of Nations, it enjoyed the participation of all major powers, including the United States. Headquartered in New York City, the UN became the centerpiece of international diplomacy, with peacekeeping missions in places like Namibia (1989–1990), Cambodia (1992–1993), Mozambique (1992–1994), and El Salvador (1991–1995), and a long-standing, though complex, presence in Cyprus. Meanwhile, through the Marshall Plan, the U.S. invested billions in the reconstruction of war-torn Europe, fostering stability and economic recovery. It also led the occupation and democratic transformation of Japan and West Germany, embedding liberal institutions and market economies. To safeguard the new international order, the U.S. founded the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a military alliance designed to contain Soviet influence and provide collective defense. Unlike the post-World War I retreat, America now took center stage, maintaining permanent military bases overseas and becoming a fixture in global politics.

Looking back, U.S. involvement in World War I can be understood not simply as a military engagement, but as a profound turning point in the transformation of the United States from a regional power into a global leader. The war forced America to reevaluate its place in the international system and pushed it, for the first time, into the realm of global diplomacy and conflict resolution. Although its initial postwar efforts—such as President Wilson’s Fourteen Points and the League of Nations—were met with domestic resistance and international skepticism, they laid the ideological foundation for a future in which the United States would take a central role in shaping and maintaining world order. These early failures were not without consequence; they provided invaluable lessons about the dangers of disengagement, the volatility of unregulated power vacuums, and the necessity of long-term commitment to international peacebuilding. By the end of World War II, the United States had absorbed these lessons and reemerged with a clearer, more assertive vision for the global order. No longer content with passive neutrality, America took on the responsibility of architect and enforcer of a new international system based on collective security, economic cooperation, liberal democracy, and institutional multilateralism. This trans-

formation was not merely reactive but strategic—driven by the belief that American values and security were intertwined with the stability of the broader world. The establishment of the United Nations, the Bretton Woods economic institutions (including the IMF and World Bank), and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization marked the birth of a U.S.-led liberal international order, designed not only to prevent another world war but also to contain communism, expand capitalism, and promote human rights.

Domestically, this transformation reflected a growing national consensus that America's prosperity and security could no longer be separated from global events. The U.S. economy thrived under this new model, benefiting from international trade networks, open markets, and the strategic placement of military bases across continents. Politically, the United States became a beacon—however imperfect—of democratic ideals and constitutional governance. Culturally and ideologically, American media, values, and technological innovations penetrated nearly every corner of the globe, fueling what many began to call the "American Century." The post-World War II era saw not only a dramatic expansion in the material influence of the United States but also in its moral and symbolic authority. The Cold War further solidified the U.S. role as a global leader, particularly as it positioned itself in direct ideological and geopolitical opposition to the Soviet Union. Through proxy conflicts, foreign aid, diplomatic alliances, and soft power campaigns, the United States sought to prevent the spread of authoritarian regimes and expand its influence across the Global South, Asia, Latin America, and Africa. Although often criticized for hypocrisy and interventionism, this strategic internationalism forged enduring alliances and established long-standing military, economic, and political partnerships that continue into the present. Today, the legacy of this transformation still defines American foreign policy. From leading international sanctions on rogue regimes, to participating in multilateral climate agreements, to maintaining military commitments through NATO and Pacific alliances, the United States remains deeply entrenched in the governance of the global order. American presidents, regardless of political party, continue to wrestle with the tension between intervention and restraint, but the fundamental premise that the United States plays a pivotal role in global affairs is rarely questioned in substance. The journey from George Washington's cautious warning against foreign entanglements to America's post-World War II global leadership illustrates a radical evolution in national identity—from a fledgling republic wary of empire to a global superpower bearing both the burdens and benefits of international stewardship.

Ultimately, this journey reflects not only a shift in policy but a maturation of American purpose. The transformation from isolationism to internationalism redefined the United States' sense of mission in the world—not merely as a protector of its own borders, but as a defender of a world order rooted in stability, cooperation, and shared human values. This legacy, complex and contested though it may be, continues to guide America's engagement with the world in the 21st century, as new challenges—from cybersecurity and pandemics to rising authoritarianism and climate change—demand global solutions and sustained leadership. The creation of a U.S.-led international system, born out of the crises of the 20th century, remains one of the most consequential and enduring developments in modern world history.

Reference and Source:

Chace, J. (2004). *1912: Wilson, Roosevelt, Taft and Debs – The election that changed the country*. Simon & Schuster.

LaFeber, W. (1993). *The American age: United States foreign policy at home and abroad, 1750 to the present* (2nd ed.). W. W. Norton.

United Nations. (n.d.). *The Nobel Peace Prize 1906 – Theodore Roosevelt*. NobelPrize.org. Retrieved from

Tucker, S. C. (Ed.). (2014). *The encyclopedia of the Spanish-American and Philippine-American wars: A political, social, and military history*. ABC-CLIO.

Ricard, S. (2014). *Theodore Roosevelt: Principles and pragmatism in American foreign policy*. *Diplomatic History*, 38(4), 791–826.

The Role of U.S.–Georgia Strategic Partnerships in Strengthening Georgia's Psychological Defense Capabilities

GEORGE ARABULI^{2*}

Abstract

The contemporary global security landscape is undergoing significant changes, giving rise to new security threats. In this rapidly evolving environment, hybrid warfare tools, first introduced by Frank Hoffman in 2007, are being increasingly utilized to achieve strategic objectives through unconventional methods. In this context, states facing aggression mainly aim to develop adaptable defense systems, identify these threats, and safeguard their societies. Smaller states, such as Georgia, often need more time to develop these systems because they have limited resources and less experience in handling such challenges. Therefore, they must strengthen strategic partnerships with more powerful allies to create flexible, adaptable, and responsive defense strategies. The most significant challenges to state defense stem from nontraditional warfare tactics, including those that extend beyond physical combat. These tactics seek to influence the human mind, shaping societal perceptions and attitudes. Their main features are that they are indirect and abstract, making them difficult to detect and counter. The primary method employed in this warfare is manipulation, utilizing tools such as distorted information or, in some cases, disinformation. While information and psychological operations are not new in hybrid warfare, a crucial aspect of today's strategy is that adversaries increasingly rely on these tactics to achieve their strategic objectives. Recently, Western democracies have begun to recognize the importance of these unconventional tactics, resulting in changes to their laws. They have also taken steps to reduce the impact of psychological operations. Georgia, as a small nation, is a target for psychological operations. Its defense system against these threats remains underdeveloped, requiring further legislative progress. A crucial aspect of strengthening psychological defense is forming strategic partnerships with the United States in various areas, particularly in knowledge sharing, media literacy, and legislative support.

Key Words: Psychological Operations, Information Dimension, Manipulation, Hybrid War, Gray Zone Operations, Strategic Partnership.

^{2*} Ph.D. Candidate, American Studies Program, School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, International Black Sea University, Tbilisi, Georgia.

Introduction

Throughout history, the art of warfare has undergone continual evolution. New combat methods frequently emerge, often driven by technological advances. Major technological breakthroughs have historically prompted significant shifts in military strategy, as military theorists quickly seek to adopt these innovations for warfare. In today's era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, technological advancements are occurring at an unprecedented pace. The interconnected Internet, ongoing developments in information technologies, and their integration into daily life are fundamentally transforming the information environment, affecting individuals' cognition, psychology, and perceptions. A key aspect of this ongoing revolution is the gradual convergence of the physical, digital, and human dimensions. As a result, small states like Georgia, which are constantly targeted by Russian hybrid warfare tactics, often possess underdeveloped defense systems in the information domain to safeguard society from psychological manipulation effectively. Therefore, it is crucial to share the United States' experiences and build effective defense capabilities, in collaboration with joint forces within the framework of a strategic partnership.

Literature Review

"Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars" (2007) - Frank G. Hoffman presents Hybrid Warfare as an essential framework in strategic studies, arguing that traditional categories of warfare, such as conventional, irregular, terrorist, and criminal, fail to capture the changing nature of conflict. Future conflicts will involve blended threats, where enemies combine military and non-military tactics, utilizing advanced capabilities alongside irregular methods to exploit the weaknesses of technologically advanced opponents. Hoffman's main contribution is defining Hybrid Warfare and criticizing strict military classifications.

He argues that 21st-century adversaries will coordinate different types of violence to produce combined effects, working on both operational and psychological levels to weaken political resolve and social unity. Hoffman states, "Hybrid Warfare presents a mode of conflict that severely challenges conventional military thinking," urging doctrinal, institutional, and cultural changes. He criticizes the "Fourth Generation Warfare" (4GW) framework for its emphasis on novelty and lack of historical context, highlighting the importance of combining regular and irregular tactics in hybrid conflicts. His analysis anticipates current strategic debates, stressing the need for defense planners to redesign force structures and programs for adaptability, allowing military forces to counter opponents across physical, informational, and psychological domains.

"Allied Joint Doctrine for Psychological Operations" (2014) - NATO's AJP-3.10.1 outlines the structure and implementation of Psychological Operations (PSYOPS) in NATO missions, emphasizing their role in military campaigns and information dominance for strategic goals. It defines PSYOPS as "planned activities using methods of communication to influence perceptions, attitudes, and behavior, impacting political and military objectives," positioning PSYOPS within strategic communication and Information Operations (Info Ops) as a non-lethal warfare tool.

The publication classifies PSYOPS into “white,” “grey,” and “black” based on levels of attribution, emphasizing the ethical use of “white” PSYOPS. It outlines responsibilities from the NATO Military Committee to strategic commanders, highlighting the role of the Combined Joint Psychological Operations Task Force (CJPOTF) and Tactical PSYOPS Teams (TPTs), which integrate influence operations into ground missions. PSYOPS should be integrated early in planning and coordinated through Information Operations (Info Ops) to promote consistency across all information activities.

The document expands PSYOPS applications to peace support, counterinsurgency (COIN), combat operations, and special operations, highlighting the importance of coordination, cultural intelligence, and non-kinetic methods in countering adversaries in the information space. It offers guidelines for counter-propaganda, strategic messaging, and audience segmentation, and presents a scalable model for integrating PSYOPS into national defense strategies.

“Hybrid Warfare in the Black Sea Region: Russian Information-Psychological Operations in Georgia” (2024) - Nika Chitadze’s article examines Russia’s use of information and psychological operations as part of its hybrid warfare in Georgia, analyzing strategic doctrines such as the Gerasimov Doctrine and disinformation tactics within regional geopolitics. He argues Russia aims to destabilize Georgia, weaken its Euro-Atlantic aspirations, and project soft power through culturally and historically targeted IPOs that manipulate vulnerable groups, spread disinformation, and undermine institutions. Using media influence, including traditional and digital outlets, Russia propagates narratives about historical, religious, ethnic, and health issues, especially during COVID-19, reaching Georgian audiences via pro-Kremlin channels and NGOs. Chitadze emphasizes that these IPOs target specific groups, such as minorities, religious conservatives, and impoverished regions, in an effort to weaken national unity, provoke dissent, and seek autonomy, as seen in Samtskhe-Javakheti. Strategic literature links Russia’s tactics to Soviet-era disinformation and modern digital technologies, portraying IPOs as a form of ‘soft occupation’ that replaces conventional military action. He critiques Georgia’s response, noting official efforts are fragmented and reactive, relying heavily on civil society initiatives in media literacy and misinformation detection efforts, which lack government coordination.

The article traces Russia’s evolving tactics from the 2008 war through regional upheavals, highlighting how modern warfare involves political, economic, and informational conflicts. Chitadze warns that Russian influence operations are becoming more mainstream in Georgia, threatening the country’s Western integration, despite strong pro-EU and NATO support. He notes the rise of pro-Russian extremist groups promoting Kremlin narratives, which could jeopardize Georgia’s strategic future. Academically, the article offers a valuable analysis of non-kinetic warfare, addressing a gap in security studies, especially concerning Georgia’s pivotal role. It also provides policymakers with insights on strategic communication and civil resilience.

The Evolving Nature of Warfare and the Essence of Psychological Operations.

As the well-known Prussian military theorist Carl von Clausewitz famously stated: “War is an act of violence aimed at compelling an opponent to act by one’s will” (Howard & Paret, 1984, p. 90). Building

on his idea, it becomes relatively simple to explain the logic behind the actions of predatory states against target countries and to explore new strategies for achieving their strategic goals. However, in this context, our focus shifts to different methods of coercion. Generally, when discussing war and military aggression, the first image that comes to mind is physical intervention, with combined arms, across multiple domains, resulting in mass casualties and damage to military and civilian infrastructure. In today's world, states targeted by hybrid warfare often face extensive information operations aimed at achieving strategic objectives by influencing the human (cognitive) dimension. To better understand what we mean when discussing the impact on the cognitive sphere, we need to examine the nature of psychological operations.

Military doctrines categorize the conflict spectrum across multiple dimensions and spaces (Department of the Army, 2022). Recognizing this is crucial because psychological effects are focused on a specific dimension. The U.S. Army classifies conflicts into five spaces and three dimensions (see Figure 1). According to this framework, all five spaces include physical, informational, and human/cognitive dimensions.

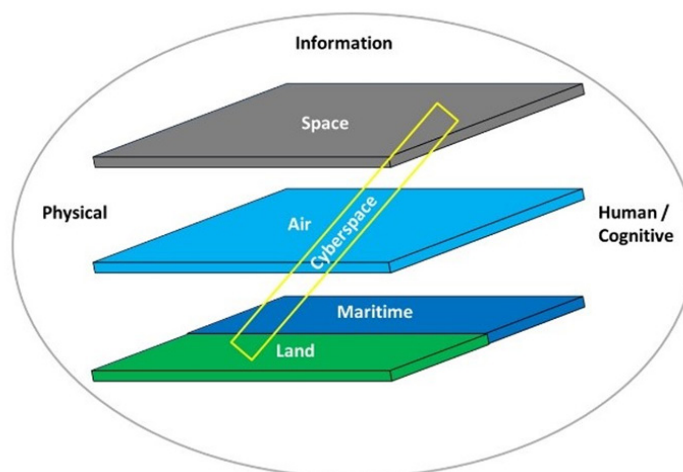


Figure 1: Spaces and dimensions of the conflict (JMark Services, n.d.).

Thus, the doctrine states that war is an act of force (physical dimension) that influences (information dimension) human perceptions, behavior, and decision-making (cognitive dimension). As we can see, the human/cognitive dimension is an essential part of every operational space, meaning that every action in the physical dimension is aimed at creating effects in the information dimension, ultimately leading to its goals in the human dimension (Department of the Army, 2022, p. 11). The concepts primarily focus on human dimensions because the final aim of every action is to influence human behavior and decision-making, as well as shape public opinion in a desired manner. Therefore, any actions taken at any level of war, from strategic to tactical, will have pre-planned impacts on the cognition of target nations. Thus, a state's approach to creating effects on target countries is planned and carried out through all conflict phases, from pre-conflict to post-conflict. For example, during the pre-conflict period, hybrid war elements, such as information operations, are more intense than minor skirmishes. In the case of Georgia, the country faces numerous conditions along the occupation line, which significantly impact

the overall security environment; however, the effects produced by information operations are more harmful, with a greater influence on the cognitive dimension.

As the US Army Doctrine FM 3-13 explains, information operations involve the coordinated use of information-related capabilities during military actions, alongside other lines of operation, to influence, disrupt, corrupt, or usurp the decision-making of enemies and potential enemies while protecting our own. They encompass three dimensions: physical, virtual (cyber), and cognitive, with the primary goal of influencing the physical space through the virtual (cyber) domain to achieve desired effects in the cognitive dimension. We also need to recognize that psychological operations are part of information operations, which generally involve planned activities using methods of communication and other means directed at approved audiences to influence perceptions, attitudes, and behavior, thereby affecting the achievement of political and military objectives (North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 2014, p. 18). Consequently, a structure of psychological operations explains the logic and actions of states conducting hybrid wars against target countries. It is essential to highlight how powerful states, such as Russia, conduct gray zone operations using hybrid war tools to influence human behavior in other countries. Of course, the military element of national power is always an option; however, weak or underdeveloped legislation against the instruments of psychological operations, combined with extremely vulnerable societies, makes it possible to achieve strategic goals with little or no military intervention. This strategy, as planned in Ukraine prior to the 2022 war, aims to achieve military goals with minimal resistance from the country.

One of the key concepts of hybrid war and fourth-generation warfare is that modern conflicts involve simultaneous actions across multiple domains and spaces, often blurring the lines between politics and war, as well as between combatants and non-combatants (Hoffman, 2007). A similar perspective is presented in the work of Valery Gerasimov, the Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces, in his well-known work, known as the "Gerasimov Doctrine," where he describes the role of sabotage and manipulation through psychological operations. Subsequently, the cognitive dimension and its effects in this space are crucial for the success of any military or non-military operation. Thus, in today's doctrines, the North Atlantic Alliance and partner states are considering psychological operations as equal to military aggression. The primary objective of modern conflicts is to integrate the desired effects in the cognitive dimension with physical military force, thereby maximizing damage to society during the pre-conflict period and minimizing the need to employ the military instrument of national power, or creating conditions for rapid success during the conflict period.

The Threat of Psychological Operations in Georgia and the State of Defensive Instruments.

Gray Zone Operations is a modern concept that specifically describes Russian coercive tactics, often seen as an undeclared war against target states, especially neighboring countries where they have specific interests. To better understand the particular tools used in Georgia to achieve strategic goals in the cognitive space, it is helpful to explain what gray zone operations involve. The doctrine includes the tactics, techniques, and procedures employed to reach political and strategic objectives without resorting to

full-scale military aggression (Morris et al., 2019). The actions used to accomplish these goals are divided into several categories and types. These categories might include: 1. Influence on elections, 2. Shaping the political environment in the target state to benefit the Russian Federation, 3. Punishing the ruling political elite in the target state discourage undesired behavior for Russia in the future. The types of gray zone operations are: 1. Military element, which includes empowering a third party against the target state or creating a proxy element to damage security, 2. Information operations, which in general serve to support the political and strategic objectives of the Russian Federation, 3. Cyber operations aimed at damaging critical infrastructure and hindering the work of electronic systems, 4. Using legal instruments as coercion, for instance, passportization in the occupied regions, 5. Economic sanctions, 6. Political influence (Morris et al., 2019).

All the above-discussed types of operations by the Russian Federation are currently ongoing in Georgia during what is known as 'peacetime,' exemplifying gray zone operations. Proxy elements in two occupied regions have been created, supported, and trained to threaten and maintain control over Georgia's security environment, especially along the occupation line. Local media outlets in Georgia, funded by the Gorchakov Foundation, which operates under the Russian government, openly spread pro-Russian narratives and messages. Additionally, the local branch of the Primakov Foundation finances and supports a violent pro-Russian activist who attacks pro-Western supporters and narratives, viewed as tools of Russian information operations. In 2019, Russian cyberattacks targeted Georgian government websites with the aim of psychological influence and election interference (Browne, 2020). Under the guise of legal rights, Russia issued passports to Georgian citizens living in the occupied territories, claiming an obligation to protect them from military aggression by the Georgian government. It then used military force during the 2008 Russo-Georgian War. For political reasons, Russia imposed sanctions on Georgian imports, severely damaging the country's export capacity and creating a government emergency. Lastly, to bolster political support, Russia, through the aforementioned foundations and funding, backs Russian parties and organizations in Georgia.

The discussed Russian gray zone operations aim to influence the cognitive dimensions and shape public opinion in target states, in this case, among the citizens of Georgia. Russia seeks to achieve its strategic objectives with minimal expenditure. The cost and damage of the chosen strategy should be advantageous and carry minimal political repercussions. The most effective tool, offering the most significant psychological impact, is creating a military power imbalance between Georgia and Russia, especially now that the Russia-Ukraine conflict is ongoing. Repeatedly asserting that Georgia could be the next target of Russian military aggression and face the same devastating outcomes as Ukraine significantly impacts Georgian society. This is especially true as the same sources constantly claim that Georgian military forces are unable to resist potential Russian attacks. Additionally, these sources also attempt to tarnish the reputation of Western organizations, portraying them as ineffective tools to counter possible Russian aggression. As a result, these tactics generate psychological effects, which are evident in statistics indicating the decline in numbers of the Georgian population still supports Georgia's integration into Western organizations like the EU and NATO (Fidem, 2024).

The legal basis that guarantees the psychological defense of Georgian citizens is not specified in a single document; however, some regulations that establish more or less effective mechanisms are found in two normative acts: The Law of Georgia on National Security Policy Planning and Coordination (The Legislative Herald of Georgia, 2022), and the Law of Georgia on Information Security (The Legislative Herald of Georgia, 2021). The first law sets out the policies of security sectors, planning procedures, and the distribution of responsibilities among government institutions. Additionally, Article 11 discusses defense in the information domain, specifically in cyberspace. The law also includes two sub-articles that can be considered mechanisms of psychological defense: ensuring the security of Georgia's information space, detecting, identifying, assessing, and predicting threats, risks, and challenges related to it; raising public awareness of cybersecurity issues; and developing an appropriate educational base. The second law, which we mentioned earlier, primarily focuses on the security of the information space, with an emphasis on cybersecurity and privacy policies, protecting personal information, and authentication.

The overall picture suggests that legal mechanisms in Georgia are primarily focused on securing the information space, emphasizing the importance of cyberspace and protecting personal data. However, the government is responsible for protecting its citizens from invisible threats that impact public judgment and ensuring the creation of effective instruments to increase overall resilience against psychological attacks.

The Strategic Importance of U.S.–Georgia Partnerships for Building Psychological Defense Resilience.

Small states like Georgia constantly face threats from an aggressive neighbor; therefore, building strong partnerships and alliances is essential for developing effective defense capabilities. Over the past thirty years, Georgia's most reliable and effective partner has been the United States. Since establishing diplomatic relations in 1992, the United States has played a significant role in supporting Georgia's defense ("U.S. Relations with Georgia," 2021). Supporting and developing defense capabilities involves several areas. The first significant step was the Train-and-Equip Program, after which the Georgian Armed Forces have made significant improvements in their operational capabilities ("Col. Otar Shalikashvili on Details of the Train-and-Equip Program," 2002). The primary focus was on defending the country from conventional military attacks and strengthening defensive capabilities; however, the aspects of aggression, especially during the aforementioned undeclared war, were not given the attention they deserved.

To effectively safeguard its citizens from manipulation, sabotage, and destabilization efforts, Georgia needs to develop a psychological shield to maintain and promote a shared understanding among its people. A key part of this process is sharing the experiences of allies and system-level efforts aimed at protecting the information space. First, Georgia's legal framework must adapt to current threats and establish a foundation for proactive measures. Georgia can look to partner countries or organizations for examples. For instance, in 2016, the United States Congress passed a bill, S.3274, titled "Counter Foreign Disinformation and Propaganda, and for Other Purposes (Sen. Portman, 2016)," which created the Center of Information Analysis and coordinated government agencies to counter foreign information oper-

ations, revealing foreign disinformation and propaganda targeting the United States and its citizens. Additionally, in 2022, the European Union adopted the Digital Services Act (DSA) (The EU's Digital Services Act, 2022). The Digital Services Act is designed as a response mechanism to address crises by analyzing the impact of major online platforms and search services, enabling quick and proportional decisions to protect fundamental rights. It targets large online platforms and search services explicitly. This legislation requires these companies to assess the risks they pose, including the spread of illegal content and potential negative effects on fundamental rights, elections, gender-based violence, and mental health. Companies with 10% or more of the EU population as active users are classified as very large online platforms or search services. Sharing the experiences of partner states and organizations would greatly enhance security in the information space and help develop an effective information defense strategy.

Along with the regulatory legislative framework, Georgia needs to enhance its citizens' skills in psychological defense. One of the main priorities in the United States and EU countries is to inform and train their citizens. They offer specific programs that help increase awareness and educate individuals, enabling them to defend their personal judgment and decision-making against manipulation by adversaries. Additionally, these programs include subjects such as social engineering and cybersecurity.

For Georgia, the United States, under strategic partnership and long-term military cooperation, could establish similar programs in Georgia to boost social resilience. For example, the U.S. military, under the European Command, could develop a specialized program focused on targeting, media literacy, and social engineering, which would significantly help lay the groundwork for future educational centers dedicated to information operations and psychological defense. In Georgia, there are already such examples; when partnering with the U.S. military, the Georgian Defense Forces have established educational schools or centers, which now operate independently under Georgian leadership without direct oversight from the partners. It is worth noting that the results of their work are world-class, as confirmed by several evaluations from foreign experts. Therefore, these programs would help build knowledge within the Georgian army and among civilian groups associated with the Georgian defense forces, ultimately increasing the number of civilians with basic skills in the information space and strengthening psychological defense capabilities.

Conclusions

In the modern security landscape, which includes hybrid warfare tools like information and psychological operations, small states' strategies often focus solely on conventional defense. Countries such as Georgia, facing Russian gray zone operations, need to strengthen their resilience in the cognitive domain. Propaganda, disinformation, sabotage attempts, and manipulation are the main goals of psychological operations aimed at weakening national unity and achieving strategic objectives by influencing mental and emotional factors. Georgia's current legal and institutional systems are ill-equipped to handle these complex threats. Therefore, strategic alliances, especially with partners like the United States, are essential for enhancing Georgia's psychological resilience. Reforms in laws, capacity building, knowledge sharing, and public education facilitated through the U.S.–Georgia partnership can significantly boost

societal resilience. Integrating media literacy, cognitive security, and strategic communication into Georgia's national security plans will empower officials and citizens to recognize, resist, and counter hostile psychological tactics. Ultimately, Georgia's security depends not only on deterring military threats but also on protecting the ability of its people to make informed judgments and resolve issues.

References

- Clausewitz, C. von, Howard, M. E., Paret, P., & Clausewitz, C. von. (1984). *On war*. Princeton University Press.
- Headquarters, Department of the Army. (2022). *FM 3-0 operations*. U.S. Government Publishing Office.
- Global Competition Information Advantage Operations (GCIAO) – JMark Services*. (n.d.). Retrieved July 26, 2025, from <https://www.jmarkservices.com/gcio/>
- Headquarters, Department of the Army. (2013). *FM 3-13 inform and influence activities*. U.S. Government Publishing Office.
- Headquarters, Department of the Army. (2021). *FM 1-02.1 Operational Terms*. U.S. Government Publishing Office.
- Hoffman, F. G. (2007). *Conflict in the 21st Century*: Potomac Institute for Policy Studies.
- Morris, L., Mazarr, M., Hornung, J., Pezard, S., Binnendijk, A., & Kepe, M. (2019). *Gaining Competitive Advantage in the Gray Zone: Response Options for Coercive Aggression Below the Threshold of Major War*. RAND Corporation. <https://doi.org/10.7249/rr2942>
- Browne, R. (2020, February 20). *US and UK Accuse Russia of Major Cyberattack on Georgia* | CNN Politics. CNN. <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/02/20/politics/russia-georgia-hacking>
- Fidem, S. (2024, April 1). *Servabo Fidem—Dissecting the Georgian Population's High Support for the EU*. Geopolitics. <https://www.politicsgeo.com/article/26>
- On Planning and Coordination of the National Security Policy*. (2022). სსიპ "საქართველოს საკანონმდებლო მაცნე". Retrieved July 27, 2025, from <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/2764463>
- Law of Georgia on Information Security*. (2021). სსიპ "საქართველოს საკანონმდებლო მაცნე". Retrieved July 27, 2025, from <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/1679424>
- U.S. Relations with Georgia. (2021). *United States Department of State*. Retrieved July 28, 2025, from <https://2021-2025.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-georgia/>
- Col. Otar Shalikashvili on Details of the Train-and-Equip Program. (n.d.). *Civil Georgia*. Retrieved July 28, 2025, from <https://civil.ge/archives/101690>
- NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION. (2014). AJP 3-10.1: Allied Joint Doctrine for Psychological Operations. NATO Standardization Office.
- Sen. Portman, R. [R-O. (2016, July 14). *S.3274 - 114th Congress (2015-2016): A bill to counter foreign dis-information and propaganda, and for other purposes*. (2016-07-14) [Legislation]. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/3274>
- The EU's Digital Services Act*. (2022, October 27). https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/digital-services-act_en

Examination of Key Events and Turning Points in President Biden's Foreign Affairs to Russia

ANA AROSHIDZE^{3*}

Abstract

The war in Ukraine has become the main reason for a major shift in US foreign affairs to Russia. Since the beginning the diplomatic relations between the two states have become extremely critical. This article analyzes the new policy steps taken by the President Biden's Administration that the United States had not previously taken in order to maintain peace between the countries. This paper examines the turning points, which are the reasons why the political relations between the two countries is so complicated today that it is impossible to predict the future prospects.

Article

46th President of the United States Joe Biden has been elected to the office at one of the most turbulent times in the history of America. From 2021 to 2025, President Joe Biden's foreign policy toward Russia included strong backing for Ukraine, strategic deterrence, and diplomatic engagement.

The political history between the United States and Russia has been full of challenges. Despite Cuban Missile Crisis and the rivalry during the Cold War, the two hegemon states never stopped resetting or reestablishing new rules in order to maintain peace and diplomacy between the two states.

The relations between the United States and Russia turned upside down after Russia launched a full scale invasion of Ukraine in February 24, 2022. Here's an examination of key events and turning points during this period:

On February 24, 2024 the U. S. President Biden addressed the nation about Russia's invasion of Ukraine. He pointed out that the assault was "brutal, without provocation, without justification, without necessity" that had been planned months prior to the attack. Biden stressed that Putin rejected every good intention made by the U.S. and its allies to address the major security concern, avoid the needless conflict through dialogue, and avert human suffering. He stated that Russia's claims about the faults of Ukraine to this war was without evidence and the invasion was the violation of the international law. "Putin is the aggressor, Putin chose this war and now he and his country will bear the consequences" – added the President and authorized long-term impacting sanctions against Russia. He reminded the world that all

^{3*} Ph.D. Candidate, American Studies Program, School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, International Black Sea University, Tbilisi, Georgia.

U.S. allies would join these sanctions as they were not alone. In response, Biden's plan was not to send the U.S. troops to Ukraine to fight against Russia, but urged NATO forces to protect every inch of NATO territories especially in the Eastern Europe. "This aggression cannot go unanswered, if it did, the consequences for America would be much worse. America stands up for bullies. We stand up for freedom. This is who we are" – addressed President Biden. (CBS NEWS, 2022)

The first wave of Sanctions imposed to Russia aimed at limiting Russia's ability to do business in currencies like dollars, euros, pounds and yen. Among the targets were five major Russian banks, including state-backed Sberbank and VTB, as well as members of the Russian elite and their families. Sberbank, Russia's largest lender, would no longer be able to transfer money with the assistance of U.S. banks. As the President Biden stated, Washington was prepared to do more. (Reuters, 2022)

In support of Ukraine, the United States imposed another round of financial sanctions against Russia, which President Joe Biden claimed it would have a long-term impact on the country's economy in April, 2022. The United Kingdom promptly followed the example, and the European Union joined as the allies went ahead with a growing effort to tighten economic sanctions on Russian President Vladimir Putin for "war crimes" in Ukraine. The U.S. sanctions targeted two of Putin's adult daughters. Biden stated that "Russia has already failed in its initial war" after the country's forces were driven back from the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv. He warned, however, that "this fight was far from over." "This war could continue for a long time," but the United States will continue to stand with Ukraine and Ukrainians in the fight for freedom, Biden said. "We're going to stifle Russia's ability to grow for years to come." These sanctions highlight Russia's financial anguish, as evidence that its troops killed Ukrainian civilians has resulted in even more severe penalties imposed by the US and its Western partners, diminishing Putin's ability to fight. While increasing sanctions have not pushed Putin to abandon the war, they have left Russia in increasingly desperate economic problems as Ukrainian soldiers survive his barrages. (The Associated Press, 2022)

In order to create unified system against a common enemy that appeared to have decided to invade the whole country, President Biden had to bolster international institutions, like NATO, European Union and push the new agenda, that would provide Ukraine with essential military and humanitarian aid to combat Russian aggression on their land.

During his meeting with Poland's President Andrej Duda, President Biden emphasized Poland's need for additional US soldiers to support NATO's eastern flank and the proposal for an international peacekeeping force made by Jarosław Kaczyński, the head of Poland's ruling party. This concept has drawn skepticism from US diplomats, and Sergei Lavrov, Russia's foreign minister, has called it "very reckless." Biden spoke to the stakes of the moment, of the urgency of the challenge that lied ahead, the importance of what the conflict in Ukraine meant for the world, and why it was so important that the free world to stay in unity and resolved in the face of Russian aggression. President Biden delivered "remarks on the united efforts of the free world to support the people of Ukraine, hold Russia accountable for its brutal war and defend a future that is rooted in democratic principles". Biden also told reporters in Brussels that his visit

to eastern Europe aimed to reinforce his commitment to have the United States make sure that they are a major piece of dealing with the relocation of all those folks, as well as humanitarian assistance needed both inside Ukraine and outside Ukraine. In a symbolic gesture of support for eastern European nations that were witnessing Russian aggression create havoc in their neighborhood, Biden traveled to the Polish town of Rzeszów, which is around an hour's drive from the Ukrainian border. (The Guardian, 2022)

In October, 2022 CNN journalist Jake Tapper sat down with the President Joe Biden, where they talked about the Russian nuclear threats voiced by the Kremlin to keep the world under fear. President Biden called such threats made by the leader of the strongest nuclear power "irresponsible", since the precedent of using one could cause "Armageddon". The President also pointed out that there are some "red lines" Russia could be able to cross, but to talk about these red lines were thoughtless. He also claimed that Russia's President Putin is a "rational actor who miscalculated significantly". Therefore Putin's objectives were irrational. When asked if he was willing to meet him for talks, Biden stated that he had no intention to do so, as he could not see the rationality of meeting him after Putin committed the war crimes. He also refuses to negotiate the territorial redistribution of Ukraine with Russia, adding "Nothing about Ukraine, without Ukraine" (CNN, 2022)

Joe Biden's remarks on the strong support for Ukraine to join North Atlantic Treaty Organization was again heard at the NATO Summit in Vilnius on 9th of July, 2023. "Our commitment to Ukraine as it defends its freedom and rebuilds its future is unwavering" – posted the President on his social media platform X. The NATO allies decided to establish a route to NATO membership and remove the conditions for Ukraine's Membership Action Plan. The United States and its partners are "doing everything we can" to help Ukraine, said Biden. Additionally, the allies are pledging to work toward Ukraine's long-term security.

The United States and other G7 nations (Japan, Canada, Germany, France, the United Kingdom and Italy) issued a joint declaration of support for Ukraine, "and make it clear that our support will last long into the future," said the President. "It starts a process by which each of our nations and any other nation who wishes to participate will negotiate long-term bilateral security commitments with them to Ukraine. We're going to help Ukraine build a strong capable defense across land, air and sea". With the leadership of U.S. NATO agreed on most detailed and robust defense plans since the Cold War. NATO strengthened its commitment to defense investment. Agreed to bring Ukraine closer to the alliance, and step up support for the long haul. (U.S. Department of Defense , 2023)

A year later, on February 20, 2023, President Biden surprised the world with his visit in Kyiv, Ukraine, that demonstrated the show of solidarity and sent a powerful message to Moscow. Even French President Macron, who is typically a vocal supporter of Europe's "strategic autonomy," has been reminded by the actions of Russia that the region cannot defend itself alone. In contrast to the US, there is a lack of funding, a military and arsenal, and a sense of unity. Deputy Foreign Minister Andriy Melnyk called President Biden's visit "the presence of our important, main partner." (BBC, 2023)

In December, 2023 President Biden complimented Ukraine's defenders who have fought back against Russia's full-fledged onslaught for nearly two years, adding that the "American people can and should be incredibly proud of the part they played in supporting Ukraine's success." He also made a promise that he and American people would not walk away from Ukraine. The two leaders met during Capitol Hill discussions over Biden's additional funding request to provide essential military and humanitarian help to Ukraine. He stated that he would continue to provide US military support as long as congressionally approved funds were available. During his speech, Biden revealed his approval for the newest tranche of military aid, a cost of \$200 million, which includes key air defense interceptors, artillery, and ammunition. "Without supplemental funding, we are rapidly coming to an end of our ability to help Ukraine respond to the urgent operational demands that it has," explained the US President. "Putin is banking on the United States failing to deliver for Ukraine," he added. "We must prove him wrong." (U.S. Department of Defense, 2023)

During his visit in Washington, Zelenskyy spoke with defense officials and senators to express gratefulness for the United States' support and stressed the critical necessity for it to continue. Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III emphasized the United States' "unshakable" determination in supporting Ukraine as it defends itself against Russian aggression in introductory remarks ahead of Zelenskyy's talk at National Defense University in Washington, D.C. "Ukraine matters profoundly to America's security, and to the trajectory of global security in the 21st century," Austin said. "That's why the United States has committed more than \$44 billion in security assistance to Ukraine's brave defenders." He noted that the US-led coalition of partners and allies had provided Ukraine with more than \$37 billion in security assistance. These contributions include capabilities that "are making a crucial difference on the battlefield," according to Austin, and have assisted Ukraine in reclaiming more than half of the land occupied by Russia since February 2022. (U.S. Department of Defense, 2023)

In May, 2024 Biden announced that he would allow Ukraine to strike inside the Russian territories using American ammunition. However, he has limited their usage so that Kyiv may only attack targets over the border near Kharkiv after Russia made substantial progress surrounding the city in the northeastern part of the Ukraine near the Russian border, two US officials told CNN that "The president recently directed his team to ensure that Ukraine is able to use US supplied-weapons for counterfire purposes in Kharkiv, so Ukraine can hit back at Russian forces hitting them or preparing to hit them". They also added that the lifting of the prohibitions is a departure from established policy and comes amid mounting international pressure from close US allies. However, it is confined to the area around Kharkiv, and Ukraine has not requested permission to go beyond that. (CNN, 2024)

"Over the past few weeks, Ukraine came to us and asked for the authorization to use weapons that were provided to defend against this aggression" near Kharkiv, "including against Russian forces that are massing on the Russian side of the border," The Secretary of State Anthony Blinken during a conference in Prague. When asked if the US was ready to enable Ukraine to strike deeper into Russia, Blinken stated that the US will continue to "adapt and adjust" in the future. The administration is also refusing to allow

Ukraine to use the most powerful weapon it has been provided to fire into Russia: long-range missiles known as ATACMS, which can hit targets 200 miles (300 kilometers) distant. Ukraine was permitted to employ US anti-aircraft munitions to eliminate the immediate threat of Russian aircraft operating in both Ukrainian and Russian airspace, and it did very effectively. However, the prohibition has prevented Ukraine from striking Russian aircraft on the ground in Russia. The signature of U.S. support of Ukraine “has been to adapt as the conditions have changed, battlefields change, as what Russia does has changed in terms of how it is pursuing its aggression escalation, we’ve adapted and adjusted too,” said Blinken. (CNN, 2024)

In August, 2024 Russia unleashed waves of missiles and drones at Ukrainian cities and energy facilities. According to Ukrainian officials, this heinous attack killed Ukrainian people and targeted over two dozen important energy systems. President Biden strongly condemned Russia’s ongoing war on Ukraine and efforts to throw the Ukrainian people into darkness. “Let me be clear: Russia will never succeed in Ukraine, and the Ukrainian spirit will never be broken.” - stated the President. (U.S. Embassy in Ukraine, 2024)

The United States continued to lead an alliance of more than 50 nations in support of Ukraine. This coalition has provided Ukraine with important military equipment, including air defense systems and interceptors. The United States and their allies have provided Ukraine with the equipment for five additional strategic air defense systems, and re-prioritized US air defense exports so that they go to Ukraine first. The US has also sent energy equipment to Ukraine to fix its systems and increase the resilience of the country’s electricity grid. “As I told President Zelenskyy on August 23, U.S. support for Ukraine is unshakable. Since February 2022, the people of Ukraine have courageously defended against Russia’s invasion, retaking more than half the territory Russian forces seized in the initial days of the war. Ukraine remains a free, sovereign and independent nation, and Ukrainian forces are fighting every day to defend their homeland and their freedom. The United States will stand with the people of Ukraine until they prevail.” – said the President. (U.S. Embassy in Ukraine, 2024)

In September 2024, the U.S. President Joe Biden and Britain’s Prime Minister Keir Starmer held meeting to discuss the war in Ukraine. The meetings in Washington between US and British leaders came a day after Russian President Vladimir Putin cautioned Western nations not to allow Ukraine to use Western-supplied long-range missiles to hit targets within Russia. Putin stated that such a move would change the character and scope of the fight. When questioned by reporters after his conversation with President Biden if he convinced the US leader to enable Ukraine to launch British missiles into Russia, Starmer claimed they had a “long and productive discussion” on international issues such as Ukraine, the Middle East, and the Indo-Pacific. Since Russia unleashed its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Ukrainian cities and battlegrounds have been bombarded on a regular basis. Kyiv insisted that long-range missile strikes deep within Russia are crucial to its efforts to limit Moscow’s ability to launch such attacks. (The Vatican News, 2024)

The United States provided long-range missiles to Ukraine earlier this year, but they, like Kyiv’s other

Western partners, have not been authorized for deployment against targets within Russia for the risk of escalating the conflict. (The Vatican News, 2024)

In November, 2024 though, the picture changed. Despite the previous claims that America would not allow U.S. weapons used inside the Russian territories, a significant reverse politics came out from Washington, allowing Ukraine to strike deep into the counterpart's country. However, the decision was not out of the blue. It took long debates, risk analysis, months of Ukraine's pleas and Russia's military aggression to let it happen. (Reuters, 2024)

The shift is partly in response to Russia's deployment of North Korean military personnel to supplement its own forces, which has raised concerns in Washington and Kyiv, according to a US official and a source familiar with the decision. (Reuters, 2024)

Vladimir Dzhabarov, first deputy head of the Russian upper house's international affairs committee, warned that Washington's choice to allow Kyiv to strike far into Russia might spark "World War Three". "The West has decided on such a level of escalation that it could end with the Ukrainian statehood in complete ruins by morning," stated Andrei Klishas, a senior member of the Federation Council, Russia's upper chamber of parliament. (Reuters, 2024)

While some US officials are skeptical that permitting long-range strikes will influence the war's overall direction, the move might benefit Ukraine at a time when Russian forces are making gains, perhaps putting Kyiv in a better negotiating position when and if cease-fire talks occur. (Reuters, 2024)

In the first of several farewell speeches, President Joe Biden stated that his government will leave its next president, Donald Trump, "with a very strong hand to play" in foreign policy. Biden said that his administration strengthened broken coalitions that made a difference in international areas of greatest need, such as the Hamas attack on Israel and Russia's invasion of Ukraine. "When Putin invaded Ukraine, he thought he'd conquer Kyiv in a matter of days," Biden said in his speech at the State Department. "But the truth is, since that war began, I'm the only one that stood in the center of Kyiv, not him. Putin never has." - said the President. (Deadline, 2025)

Conclusion

President Biden's foreign policy toward Russia has unfolded in the context of one of Europe's most momentous conflicts since World War II. Faced with an unexpected and barbaric violation of Ukraine's sovereignty, the Biden administration responded with a planned, multilayered policy that embodies both the long-standing logic of great power rivalry and the contemporary necessity of preserving democratic norms.

Militarily, the United States provided unprecedented levels of assistance to Ukraine, establishing itself as the foundation of NATO's collective security. Economic sanctions against Russian elites and institutions

signified a long-term strategy to undermine Russia's ability to sustain aggression. Diplomatically, the administration demonstrated that it could engage in backchannel negotiations, such as prisoner swaps, while maintaining its moral stance and strategic clarity.

This approach has significant repercussions outside Russia. The acts of the Biden administration have maintained the United States' leadership in global security matters, which had previously been called into question. They also sent a strong warning to other authoritarian nations, particularly China, that territorial invasion will be met with unified resistance. However, obstacles remain, including maintaining domestic and international support, managing escalation risks, and planning for Ukraine's long-term reconstruction and defense needs.

In conclusion, Biden's approach to Russia represents a pragmatic yet principled foreign policy—firm when necessary, flexible where possible in a sense that defending democratic sovereignty is not only a moral obligation, but also a strategic need in a more unpredictable globe.

References

BBC. (2023, February 20). Ukraine war: Europe fights to maintain solidarity. Retrieved November 11, 2024, from BBC: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-64637091>

CBS NEWS. (2022, February 24). Biden addresses Russia's invasion of Ukraine | Special Report. Retrieved June 6, 2025, from Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gZ_-VpGrJDs

CNN. (2022, October 11). Biden addresses Putin's nuclear threats in Ukraine | Full CNN exclusive interview. Retrieved June 6, 2025, from Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YpzMfAKN9aQ>

CNN. (2024, May 31). Biden gives Ukraine permission to carry out limited strikes within Russia using US weapons. Retrieved December 15, 2024, from CNN: <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/05/30/politics/biden-ukraine-limited-strikes-russia/index.html>

Deadline. (2025, January 13). Joe Biden Says He Will Leave Trump A "Very Strong Hand To Play" In Foreign Policy, Says Administration "Pressing Hard" To Close Israel-Hamas Deal. Retrieved January 20, 2025, from Deadline: <https://deadline.com/2025/01/biden-foreign-policy-trump-1236255639/>

Reuters. (2022, February 24). Reuters. Retrieved June 6, 2025, from Biden hits Russia with new sanctions for 'premeditated' Ukraine attack: <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/biden-unveil-new-sanctions-russia-after-it-invades-ukraine-2022-02-24/>

Reuters. (2024, November 17). Biden allows Ukraine to use US arms to strike inside Russia. Retrieved December 17, 2024, from The Reuters: <https://www.reuters.com/world/biden-lifts-ban-ukraine-using-us-arms-strike-inside-russia-2024-11-17/>

The Associated Press. (2022, April 6). US hits Russia with 'war crimes' sanctions, Europe following. Retrieved June 6, 2025, from The Associated Press: <https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-kyiv-business-european-commission-united-kingdom-acb86730120a1230b9eb95c3ebdded77>

The Guardian. (2022, March 26). Joe Biden to address 'stakes of this moment' in Ukraine speech from Warsaw. Retrieved June 6, 2025, from The Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/25/joe-biden-visits-poland-in-show-of-support-for-eastern-european-nations>

The Vatican News. (2024, September 14). Starmer and Biden discuss the war in Ukraine at meeting. Retrieved December 15, 2024, from Vatican News: <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/world/news/2024-09/starmer-and-biden-discuss-war-in-ukraine-at-meeting.html>

U.S. Department of Defense . (2023, July 12). Biden Speaks on Ukraine's Future With NATO in Vilnius. Retrieved July 6, 2025, from U.S. Department of Defense : <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/3456385/biden-speaks-on-ukraines-future-with-nato-in-vilnius/>

U.S. Department of Defense. (2023, December 12). Biden Pledges U.S. 'Will Not Walk Away From Ukraine'. Retrieved December 15, 2024, from U.S. Department of Defense: <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/3615637/biden-pledges-us-will-not-walk-away-from-ukraine/>

U.S. Embassy in Ukraine. (2024, August 26). Statement from President Biden on Russia's Aerial Assault on Ukraine's Energy Grid. Retrieved December 15, 2024, from U.S. Embassy in Ukraine: <https://ua.usembassy.gov/statement-from-president-biden-on-russias-aerial-assault-on-ukraines-energy-grid/>

World Order in the Shadow of Russia-Ukraine War: The US-led Negotiations as the Turning Point?

TATO BEZHITASHVILI^{4*}

Abstract

Current world order is grounded on several fundamental principles systematic and harsh violation of which may bring chaos or even a complete dismantling of the system. Dozens of rising challenges have generated micro and macro earthquakes to the solidity of contemporary world order. Yet, none of the critical moments can be compared to the magnitude of the Russia-Ukraine war. With enormous political, military, economic, and social effects, the conflict appears to be the largest and most dangerous post-WWII conflict on the European continent. Accordingly, it has the potential to cause the most extreme adjustments and an ultimate change to the norms and principles of our international system.

This piece examines the cornerstones of the current world order, outlines traditional and non-traditional threats, and exposes several potential opportunities to restore or transform order in a better way. The paper focuses on the Russia-Ukraine war and its multifaceted impact on the current international system. Finally, it pays particular attention to the mediation efforts by the United States.

Keywords: international order, international system, Russia, Ukraine, United States, war, world order.

Introduction

During the last several years, the world order has been experiencing apparent modifications. Due to the chain of emerging global challenges, international security is under serious question. Interstate conflicts, civil wars, climate catastrophes, pandemics, weaponization of information, democratic backsliding, rising extremism, and other crises have long been shaking the stability of the contemporary international system. Alongside those obstacles, this paper puts a primary emphasis on the latest Russia-Ukraine as the most alarming event. It argues that with Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the solidity of the current world order occurred under the highest risk of demolition that was never experienced before. In the three years since the waging of the war, the security architecture and political environment have already experienced profound transformations on both regional and global levels.

^{4*} Ph.D. Candidate, American Studies Program, School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, International Black Sea University, Tbilisi, Georgia.

This article focuses on major principles of the current international system, existing and rising challenges, as well as foreseeable opportunities to regulate or modify existing order. Accordingly, the first chapter overviews the list of key features the current world order stands on. It mentions some of the most quoted definitions of the term, lists the global institutions operating for the last several decades and provides the guiding principles for the world order. Secondly, it discusses the major challenges brought to the existing international system with a specific focus on the Russia-Ukraine War and its second and third-order effects. Finally, the paper highlights potential developments that can normalize or transform the global order. In this case, the piece examines a mediation effort of the United States to end the conflict. Yet, it exposes the potential risks as well as successes of President Trump's Administration in this process that can further influence the prospective trajectory of contemporary order. Shortly, the paper hypothesizes that the eventual ceasefire agreement points mediated by the United States are key to shaping the rules of the Game in decades to come.

Current World Order: Principles

To begin with the conceptualization of the term, scholars widely use Georg Sørensen's definition of world order that is "a governing arrangement among states, meeting the current demand for order in major areas of concern" (Sørensen, 2006, p. 344). Additionally, Richard Haass, the former President of the Council on Foreign Affairs, suggests several tips vital for functioning the international system. First, there should be a consensus over the general principles of the world order. Next, the power should be distributed in a stable and regulated way. Moreover, actors need "creative diplomacy, functioning institutions, and effective action" to prolong the lifecycle of the world order (Haass, 2019).

Interestingly, the international system we are experiencing now rests on the institutions and formats dating back to the post-Second World War and Cold War eras. These include the United Nations replacing the League of Nations and guaranteeing global peace and security since 1945, when "a small group of men and women began a search for hope amid the ruins. And they gathered in San Francisco, stepping back from the haze and horror, to try to shape a new structure that might support an ancient dream. Intensely idealistic and yet tempered by war, they sought to build a new kind of bridge: a bridge between nations, a bridge that might help carry humankind from its darkest hour to its brightest day" (Bush, 1990); financial institutions, such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund promoting economic cooperation among different parts of the world; the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) ensuring security within the Euro-Atlantic space; the European Union (EU) representing the standard of peaceful regional integration and the role model for economic prosperity; the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) regulating security- and democracy-related issues since 1975; the World Trade Organization ensuring and enduring the predictability in the global trade flows, the African Union (AU) replacing the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and unifying the African continent under the principles of solidarity, inclusion, and cooperation since 1963; the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) facilitating multisector cooperation in the region since 1967; the Organization of American States (OAS) serving the role of democracy and security promoter since 1948; and many

other formats of multilateral dialogue. This list ultimately constructs the formation and functioning of the rules-based international order. Rules gradually became guidelines and are “universally accepted as legitimate. In increasing predictability, they reduce risks for all” (Feltman, 2023).

After bringing to light the essential features of world order, it is vital to define a more specific case of the contemporary global order. The current system can be best described with three major governing elements, in particular, National sovereignty, Economic liberalism, and Rule-based inclusive multilateralism (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni & Hofmann, 2020, p. 1078). First of all, the principle of national sovereignty centralizes the role of governments in formulating and implementing foreign policy strategies. Further, economic liberalism facilitates free and open economic ties that enhance trading cooperation among states. Additionally, the principle of rule-based inclusive multilateralism promotes the effectiveness of international norms and offers non-discriminatory opportunities for all actors.

Current World Order: Challenges

As John J. Mearsheimer outlines, orders are vital for at least two major reasons. First of all, “they manage interstate relations in a highly interdependent world.” (Mearsheimer, 2019, p. 10). This tight linkage includes economic, environmental, medical, military, and political relations between states and international organizations. Consequently, there are no restrictive boundaries for global warming, air pollution, diseases, and pandemics as they may easily spread across hundreds of countries. Secondly, it is also argued that orders “help the great powers manage the behaviour of the weaker states in ways that suit the great powers’ interests” (Mearsheimer, 2019, p. 11). This is usually done by setting up regional or international institutions which would oblige the member states to obey its principles. Yet, it is also noteworthy that the rules of the organization frequently serve the interests of not only the great powers but the weaker ones too. The author recalls the signing of the Non-Proliferation Treaty between the two superpowers in 1968 to ensure that no other non-nuclear state would acquire the weapons.

It should also be noted that the core principles of contemporary world order are in crisis, and the newest statistical data on democracy and globalization indices prove this statement too. As stated in the annual report by Carnegie Europe, legislatures worldwide became more repressive in 2024, while far-right movements and parties became increasingly popular among the electorates in Europe (Youngs, et al., 2025). Moreover, as mentioned in the paper, with the so-called foreign agents laws introduced in several countries, the freedoms and privacy of civil society organizations and media outlets were put under serious governmental pressure. Further, in recent years, globalization is day-by-day replaced by protectionism and nationalism, while fewer people live in “free” countries. As the newest data by Freedom House indicates, 40% of the total population lives in “Not Free” countries, while the same share of the world population (40%) lives in “Partly Free” conditions. Consequently, only one-fifth of the global population enjoys living in “Free” countries (Gorokhovskaia & Grothe, 2025, p. 12).

The current world order has many advancements in connectivity, technology, and democratization but

appears unable to deter aggressors from seeking their self-centered objectives. Nowadays, we observe a situation that is analogous to the period of the mid-20th century. For some scholars, the UN can no longer guarantee the fulfillment of its primary commitments and becomes another disappointing version of the League of Nations. The collective security alliance is unable to directly defend Ukraine against Russian aggression, as it may lead to a Third World War. Russia regularly disregards the international norms and principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and human rights, while there are no instant mechanisms for stopping it through legal measures.

At the same time, with increased access to the internet, the chances for information manipulation are amplified. It is already a norm that technological development is systematically used as the means to weaponize information and spread fake news for achieving political ends, enhancing societal cleavages, or disrupting the democratization processes (Lehne, 2023). Notably, the Russian Federation appears as the principal orchestrator of these practices. Its increasingly assertive anti-Western propaganda in and out of Russia's borders, systematic cyber-attacks, and the infamous cases of foreign electoral interference intensify the isolationist movements in Europe and degrade the faith in international organizations, democratic institutions, the rule of law, and human rights protection.

It is also noteworthy that rapid and multi-vector climate change represents a serious challenge threatening the stable development of countries. Furthermore, roughly since the dissolution of the Soviet Union and until 2008, democratic transition, a market economy, and multilateral diplomacy have been the major trends of the international system. In this process, the United States and the European Union have appeared as strategically important players. Nevertheless, their positive impact, and subsequently the stability of the current international system, started to decline around 2008 (Lehne, 2023).

It is also argued that the "rise of the Rest" could proportionately encourage the relative diminishing of the West's global influence (Ringsmose & Rynning, 2011, p. 47). These days, the catchphrase "liberal world order" is out of the common wording, while the term "rules-based order" gradually replaced it (Lehne, 2023). The growing influence of the BRICS intergovernmental organization is also worth mentioning. As a new opportunity for the Rest to counterbalance the Western influence, it already started to extend its membership list by officially adding four countries in 2024 and one – Indonesia – in 2025 (Kenny, 2025).

It is also crucial to briefly compare and contrast the global visions of the last two U.S. Presidential Administrations. The American ex-President Joseph Biden openly portrayed world powers as being part of either democratic or autocratic parts of the world. Though such a vision is more "reminiscent of the East-West divide of the Cold War era," it becomes quite true while looking at the NATO alliance, European Union, AUKUS, and the QUAD as the sole representatives of the democratic part on the one hand, and Russia, China, Iran, North Korea, Syria, and other autocratic regimes on the other (Lo, 2023). While the Biden Administration perceived international institutions as vital for the proper functioning of world order, the Donald Trump Administration appeared rather skeptical towards the role of global and regional organizations, multilateral formats of decision-making, as well as the U.S. financial contribution to its

recipient governments and civil society organizations around the globe. A new administration is more prone to protectionism in an economic sense and isolation from an international political point of view. Nevertheless, it is crucial to underline that Trump's administration dynamically participates in the conflict resolution process between Russia and Ukraine.

Russia-Ukraine War as the Most Critical Point of Current World Order

"Orders tend to expire in a prolonged deterioration rather than a sudden collapse" (Haass, 2019). Thus, there should be a sequence of erosive events, which ultimately lead the world order to demolition. For instance, mismanaged climate change, the uncontrolled and large-scale spread of COVID-19 around the world, and the ineffectiveness of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (Bremmer & Roubini, 2011), are some of the most critical examples here. Most importantly, the Russian invasion of Ukraine appears as the conclusive signal of the crisis of the current international system. It demonstrates that despite numerous achievements, the international system is not completely secure from conflicts, especially with the reactivated Russia as one of the leading revisionist powers.

It is perceived that the orders maintain legitimacy when there is still a "mutual understanding about the rules of engagement and co-existence" in the international society of states (Lo, 2023). Accordingly, the moment these principles face a breakdown, chaos transpires widely. Such an opinion was further proved true by Russia's full-scale war in Ukraine. It is of utmost importance here to underline that with Russia's latest invasion of Ukraine, all three fundamental principles of global order experienced the aggressor's severe influence. In particular, Vladimir Putin's regime harshly violated the sovereignty and territorial integrity of its neighbor, Ukraine, disrupted trade relations and triggered large-scale food and energy crises in the wider European space, as well as threatened the fundamental principles of rule-based inclusive multilateralism. This has ultimately brought disorder and chaos to the international system.

Remarkably, "the future of the UN depends on the global order. The global order, in turn, depends on the readiness of UN member states to defend the principles and values of the UN Charter" (Reire, 2022). It is also true that the current international system fulfils its major objective of circumventing the Third World War from happening. Indeed, that was the foremost goal of the "key architects of the international system" back in 1945 too. Nevertheless, with the Russian Federation threatening the cornerstones of the current global order, the latter's prospects are at serious risk (Feltman, 2023).

As of today, predominantly due to Russia's war in Ukraine, Europe represents the primary zone of the current geopolitical earthquake. The shift from prosperity to insecurity is evident day by day. It becomes even more vivid when comparing the European Union's first (2003) and the latest (2022) security strategy documents with each other. According to the EU's first document, "Europe has never been so prosperous, so secure nor so free. The violence of the first half of the 20th Century has given way to a period of peace and stability unprecedented in European history" (Council of the European Union, 2003, p. 3). The latest Strategic Compass of the European Union, on the contrary, highlights that the system we live

in is “shaped by raw power politics, where everything is weaponised and where we face a fierce battle of narratives”. Interestingly, the document further underlines that the critical events have been evident even before Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in 2022, but “now they are accelerating” (European External Action Service, 2022, p. 4).

With Russia’s aggression against Ukraine, the international system, and especially the European continent, has shifted from a relative Kantian “Peace Island” to a Hobbesian “State of nature.” This conflict represents the most large-scale military dispute on the European continent since the Second World War, and therefore, is the most serious lacmus test for the solidity of the present world order. Hence, provoking the unprovoked and justifying the unjustified war by Russia against Ukraine appears as the conclusive indicator of the global crisis. With its economic, humanitarian, military, and environmental threats, the war in Ukraine is the most dangerous link in the chain.

Concluding Remarks: The U.S. Role and the Future of World Order?

The current international order has experienced a chain of critical events in the last few years, including terrorist attacks, cyber aggressions, information wars, climate catastrophes, the COVID-19 pandemic, shrinking security, democratic backsliding, the rise of the Rest, etc. However, none of them were of such a scale and potential as the Russia-Ukraine war. Hence, this war brought the temperature of the current global order to its highest peak. It is the turning point that may stimulate comprehensive transformations on an international level.

This paper analyzed the core elements of the modern world order, including national sovereignty, economic liberalism, and rule-based inclusive multilateralism. Interestingly, by invading Ukraine, Russia directly violated all these principles and put the validity of the global order under a huge question mark. At the moment, there is a deadlock in the Russia-Ukraine war: if any deal is to be reached, it should serve the interests of both Putin’s regime and Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, which is barely thinkable. This war has very limited room for an exit strategy. However it may end, it is as clear as day that the outcome will be of tremendous importance in stimulating large-scale modifications on regional as well as international levels.

There is no alternative to diplomatic measures in the process of conflict resolution. The active American participation in the negotiation process encourages both sides to assemble around the negotiation table to discuss potential ways out of the deadlock. Yet, the deal that is going to be signed should guarantee that the Russia-Ukraine conflict is no longer a frozen dispute that gives Kremlin time to pause and come back stronger in five or ten years. To assume, officially conceding some of the territories from the Ukrainian side may make precedence for the Kremlin to occupy, annex and ultimately obtain the historical territories of other neighboring states too. This would also give any other revisionist state a considerable justification to invade vulnerable countries of their interest and take any chunk of the latter’s land. For instance, ultimately giving up the Crimean Peninsula to Russia is likely to stimulate the People’s

Republic of China to take Taiwan. In this case, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of any state may face devastating consequences that can promote power politics instead of peaceful cooperation and eventually generate multifaceted chaos to international order. At the same time, the issue of neutrality as a potential solution to conflict may stimulate aggressor states to forcefully convert their sovereign neighbors into neutral states. Consequently, militarily pushing for neutral status may become a norm to create buffer zones in-between aggressors and their geopolitical rivals. That can encourage any great power to invade its weaker neighbors with the logic of ensuring a secure area around its borders. This war is a decisive moment for the current international system. Hence, the negotiation skills of global powers (particularly the United States) and international organizations, as well as the eventual points of the ceasefire agreement will largely shape the trajectory of the international system once and forever.

References

- Bremmer, I., & Roubini, N. (2011). A G-Zero World: The New Economic Club Will Produce Conflict, Not Cooperation. Retrieved April 20, 2025, from <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2011-01-31/g-zero-world>
- Bush, G. (1990). Address Before the 45th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, New York. New York: The American Presidency Project. Retrieved May 20, 2025, from <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-before-the-45th-session-the-united-nations-general-assembly-new-york-new-york>
- Council of the European Union. (2003). European Security Strategy - A Secure Europe in a Better World. Retrieved April 8, 2025, from <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15895-2003-INIT/en/pdf>
- Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, M., & Hofmann, S. C. (2020). Of the contemporary global order, crisis, and change. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 27(7), 1077-1089. Retrieved March 28, 2025, from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13501763.2019.1678665>
- European External Action Service. (2022). A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence. Retrieved March 2, 2025, from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/strategic_compass_en3_web.pdf
- Feltman, J. (2023). War, Peace, and the International System after Ukraine. The Brookings Institution. Retrieved April 17, 2025, from <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/war-peace-and-the-international-system-after-ukraine/>
- Gorokhovskaia, Y., & Grothe, C. (2025). Freedom in the World: The Uphill Battle to Safeguard Rights. Freedom House. Retrieved April 4, 2025, from https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2025-03/FITW_World2025digitalN.pdf
- Haass, R. (2019). How a World Order Ends And What Comes in Its Wake. *Foreign Affairs*. Retrieved March 29, 2025, from <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2018-12-11/how-world-order-ends>
- Kenny, M. (2025). BRICS. *Britannica*. Retrieved April 7, 2025, from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/BRICS>
- Lehne, S. (2023, February 28). After Russia's War Against Ukraine: What Kind of World Order? *Carnegie Europe*. Retrieved March 12, 2025, from <https://carnegieeurope.eu/2023/02/28/after-russia-s-war-against-ukraine-what-kind-of-world-order-pub-89130>
- Lo, B. (2023). The Ukraine Effect: Demise or Rebirth of the Global Order? *LOWY INSTITUTE*. Retrieved March 15, 2025, from <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/ukraine-effect-demise-or-rebirth-global-order>
- Mearsheimer, J. (2019, April 1). Bound to Fail: The Rise and Fall of the Liberal International Order. *International Security*, 43(4), 7-50. Retrieved April 18, 2025, from <https://direct.mit.edu/isec/article/43/4/7/12221/Bound-to-Fail-The-Rise-and-Fall-of-the-Liberal>

Reire, G. (2022). The UN Security Council in Deadlock (Again): The Ability of the UN to Respond to Russia's War in Ukraine. Riga: Latvian Transatlantic Organization. Retrieved April 10, 2025

Ringsmose, J., & Rynning, S. (2011). Introduction. Taking Stock of NATO's New Strategic Concept. In J. Ringsmose, & S. Rynning, NATO's NEW STRATEGIC CONCEPT: A COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT (pp. 7-22). Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies. Retrieved March 15, 2025, from <https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/59845/1/656748095.pdf>

Sørensen, G. (2006, December 1). What Kind of World Order?: The International System in the New Millennium. *Cooperation and Conflict*, 41(4), 343-363. Retrieved April 11, 2025, from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0010836706069601>

Youngs, R., Brudzińska, K., Csaky, Z., Farinha, R., Godfrey, K., Magoga, C., . . . Ventura, E. (2025). European Democracy Support Annual Review 2024. Carnegie Europe. Retrieved April 4, 2025, from <https://carnegie-endowment.org/research/2025/01/european-democracy-support-annual-review-2024?lang=en>

From Sedition to Social Media: The Historical Trajectory of Hate Speech in the United States

LASHA KURDASHVILI^{5*}

Abstract

This article traces the historical development of hate speech in the United States, demonstrating that while the term is modern, its practices, however, are deeply rooted in the nation's political and cultural life. From the Sedition Act of 1798, through nineteenth-century nativism and Reconstruction-era racism, hostile rhetoric shaped civic boundaries and legitimized exclusionary laws. In the twentieth century, pseudoscientific theories and mass media amplified prejudice, while Supreme Court jurisprudence—from *Chaplinsky v. New Hampshire* (1942) to *Brandenburg v. Ohio* (1969)—privileged free expression even when it inflicted symbolic harm. The digital era has intensified these tensions, as algorithms and global platforms magnify hostile discourse while raising new controversies about historical context and regulation. The article concludes that hate speech has consistently emerged from both elites and grass-roots actors and calls for further research into its evolving role in transnational digital environments.

Keywords: hate speech; freedom of speech; United States history; nativism; racial rhetoric; exclusionary law; First Amendment; digital platforms; algorithms; democratic inclusion.

Introduction.

The term "hate speech" is a contemporary term. It originated in 1980s when the U.S. legal scholars were resolving and tried to address the issue of racism and sexual abuse in college campuses. Over time, it has acquired new meanings and evolved in scope. Today, the term has various definitions that are not only limited by the legal circles but rather moved into the border public discourse and social media context. The United Nations defines the "hate speech" as a discourse targeting a group or an individual based on inherent characteristics (such as race, religion or gender) and that may threaten social peace. (United Nations Hate Speech, 2024). While the Encyclopedia of the American Constitution brings a more expanded target group of hate speech defining it as "public speech that expresses hate or encourages violence towards a person or group based on something such as race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation" (Nockleby, 2000). In 1997 Council of Europe – Committee of Ministers included, in addition to the previously mentioned categories, incitement based on social status and political belief. (MINISTERS, 1997)

The United States does not have a legal category called "hate speech" the phrase itself is widely used by

^{5*} Dr. of American Studies, School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, International Black Sea University, Tbilisi, Georgia.

the USA politicians, media and social scholars. Among all variations of the meaning of the term several common characteristics can be highlighted.:

a) Targeted group focus

Hate speech is always aimed toward individuals because of their membership in a group — e.g., race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or other protected categories.

b) Negative context

Its principal is to use derogative and dehumanizing context – insults, slurs, ridicule, stereotypes, exaggerations.

c) Intent to harm

The hate speech is intentional, with the expectation to cause harm, either psychological or social.

d) Publicity

In order to cover a larger group and involve more people the “hate speech” usually occurs in public forums – speeches, conferences, publications, posts on the online platforms.

e) Ascribed identity

The “hate speech” neglects the individuality, focusing on the ascribed identity affiliating a targeted person to a certain group. The offense targets not on “what have they done” as individuals, but “who they are” as a members of a group. (Hietanen & Eddebo, 2023)

Although the phrase itself is modern, the practices it describes and characteristics it implements can be traced back in American history: from “seditious or blasphemous utterance” during the colonial era, nativism in the 19th century, immigration laws rhetoric, segregation, 20th century supremacism. It should be emphasized once again that the purpose of this article is not to directly associate the modern term “hate speech” with the actions and words of individuals who lived in the 19th and 20th centuries. This article examines the common characteristics from a retrospective view, in order to clarify both continuities (racialized and nativist logics) and institutional shifts (legal doctrines, mass media). This article maps the terrain historically and points to how law and technology transformed the reach and harms of hostile group-directed speech.

Colonial and Early-Republic Origins: Sedition, Print, and the Politics of Exclusion

One of the main debates, ever since the revolution, has been between the conflicting concepts of freedom of speech and a speech, which is potentially dangerous for social order and public safety. As one of the first official restrictions to free speech in America, a legal act, can be named the “Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798” which criminalized “any false, scandalous and malicious writing or writings against the government of the United States, or either house of the Congress ... or the President” (Alien and Sedition

Acts, 1789). Even though the act, introduced by the radical Federalists in Congress, officially was justified as necessary in order to protect the fragile republic from foreign influence and internal dissent during a period of quasi-war with France, it had a political intent to target the political opposition of Federalist party while its implementation covered much larger groups of people. (Ellis, 2003, pp. 190-192)

Critics of the act, headed by Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, condemned the Acts as contradicting the First Amendment, which was ratified just seven years earlier, prohibiting Congress from abridging freedom of speech or the press and a direct assault on civil liberties. Moreover, the Sedition Act also set a case for regulating speech not for individual felony but for its potential group effects — destabilizing the polity, inflaming public opinion, or delegitimizing institutions.

The dynamic was reinforced in the print media. The partisan newspapers published various virulent attacks condemning the political opponents, diminishing the immigrants, using stereotypes and exaggerations. As one of the many examples, James Calendar in the pamphlet "The Prospect Before Us" using the rhetoric, draws a line between the two political groups, the one supporting Federalist president John Adams and the one supporting the Anti-federalist Thomas Jefferson: "Take your choice between Adams, war and beggary, and Jefferson, peace, and competency." (Lepore, 2007) On the other spectrum Federalist papers depicted Jeffersonian group as agents of chaos and French radicalism. This verbal and print confrontation led to normalization of **collective-targeting speech**, emphasizing hostility toward group identity rather than individual behavior.

In his book "The Harm in Hate Speech" the political philosopher Jeremy Waldron using the cases of Colonel Matthew Lyon and journalist Anthony Haswell, jailed for their public denunciations of Federalist leaders, argues that these early suppressions reflected a fragile perception of state authority. At the same time such cases revealed the potential for such laws to be abused for partisan gain. The combination of partisan media and state rules created a public space where hostile, group-targeted speech was both politically influential and legally risky (Waldren, 2012, pp. 18-22).

Nativism and Racialized Speech in the Nineteenth Century

With the progression of the 19th century the waves of migration to the United States resulted in the intensified religious and ethnic competition. The immigration in the decade following 1845 reached 3000000 people. (Higham, 1975, p. 15) As a result, "nativism" – a practice of promotion the native born American people interest over the immigrants was established. Deriving from the American Republican Party, the movement known as "Know Nothing" capitalized on Anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant rhetoric mostly the arriving Irish and Germans. (Carlson, 2010)

The antebellum nativist movement, unlike later iteration did not seek to stop the immigration itself. Instead it aimed to reduce the political influence of the non-native born by denying their voting rights, lengthening the residency period required for citizenship, and limiting eligibility for public office. (Howe, 2007, p. 826). The rhetorical arsenal of the "Know Nothing" movement often included stereotyping, ridicule, threats, and harassment. The movement's newspapers and pamphlets made extensive use of

caricatures portraying the Irish and Germans as drunks dressed in wooden barrels or beggars. It should also be noted, that the "Know Nothing" can be described as the second (after the Anti-Masonic party) self-organized mass movement, which formed on the bases of secret fraternal societies, and incorporated a number of populist elements and appeal. Its intent for the use of the stereotypes and harassment was based on the misconception that Catholics cannot be a trusty citizen due to their church affiliation. So the roots of such hostility is based on the religious and ethnical ground.

Parallel to this, explicit racialized hostility toward the migrants in the rhetoric as well as the negative attitude to the migration itself is much clearly traced in post-bellum USA, especially when the migration of the Chinese intensified to the West Coast. Preceded by long-term anti-Chinese sentiment and violence escalating by 1880s the act formalized the anti-Chinese agitation in the Chinese Exclusion Act, which barred the Chinese labor immigration (Chinese Exclusion Act, 1882). At the same time, it signified the translation of hostile group speech into exclusionary law. There are complex reasons for such hostility one of which was of course racism, but also not less important the economic condition of the industrializing state. The rhetoric used by the agitators of this Act implemented references not only to the vivid differences between the Eastern and Western Culture but also to the "threats" that the migrants might implement on the American traditional family values. "They're driving our family men out of the workplace and leaving them in poverty and want. They're turning our boys into hooligans and criminals, and they're driving our girls to death, working for wages that would mean starvation." (White, 2012, pp. 300-301) In his speech in San Francisco, an American political economist, social philosopher and journalist, Henry George stated that Asians are not just tools of corporations and the rich, but also a threat to white masculinity (George, 1876).

Of course the language of the Act did not use the same expressions and was formally justified by the official only by the economic means. Nevertheless, The Act explicitly singles out "Chinese laborers" as undesirable, frames them as a collective danger by mentioning in the preamble that the act is "detrimental to the interests of the United States", and dehumanizes the Chinese as they were barred not only from migration but also from assimilation (Chinese Exclusion Act, 1882). The Act and the political discourse surrounding it demonstrate how demeaning, exclusionary rhetoric about a national group became codified at the highest legal level.

These historical instances underscore the potent influence of public rhetoric: when cultural and political speech amplifies prejudice, it can reshape societal norms, institutional behavior, and legal frameworks, reinforcing hierarchies and institutionalizing discrimination at the national level.

Reconstruction, Jim Crow, and Organized White Supremacist Rhetoric

As the Civil war came to the end the former slaves found in the political speech both a tool to increase their own representation but at the same time the backlash that came from the white supremacists. During the Reconstruction (1865-1877) numerous public speeches were held, pamphlets and petitions were written and conventions gathered by the African American leaders and active members in order

to demand the rights to vote, land distribution and equality in front of laws. (Foner, 1988, pp. 198-205). Despite the fact that those demands were partially met with a certain legislation such as, the Fourteenth and the Fifteenth amendment to the American Constitution, yet this claim-making was almost immediately met with an aggressive racist counter-speech. The discourse that targeted the African Americans was not confined only to words alone-very often it called for the acts of violence and was entwined with threats. White supremacist organizations' rhetoric, such as Ku Klux Klan's founded in 1866, was filled with coded symbols, open aggression towards racial minorities and violence agitation, that also was expressed in ritualized displays, burning crosses and night rides. (Trelease, 1979, pp. 28-34)

Printing press and public orators incorporated this hostility, claiming that the freed men are "unfit" to become the full scale citizens, using the caricatures portraying them as lazy, corrupt and dangerous. If before the Civil War the intent of the dehumanization of African Americans was to justify the slavery, during the reconstruction and till 1890s the intent is to demonize Black People in order to ascribe them as a threat not only to American political system, economy but also family life and traditional values. Such rhetoric also justified the vigilante violence, court case decisions as well as discriminatory legislation that developed into the Jim Crow system by the 1890s. In the post-reconstructed South, Democratic politicians often invoked the racist stereotypes into their campaigns referring to the Black Politicians as corrupt, while the local politicians were involved in normalizing the dehumanizing speech (Brundage, 1993, pp. 54-59). Rebecca Latimer Felton one of the South's leading advocates for women's rights in her speech "A Woman on a Farm" deliberately uses dehumanization and threat fueling the myth of "black rapist" declaring: "...if it needs lynching to protect woman's dearest possession from the ravaging human beast—then I say lynch; a thousand times a week if necessary" (Davidson, 2024). In this way, language did not merely reflect prejudice but actively created the conditions for racial subordination.

Extensive evidence of connected with each other racial rhetoric, acts of violence, intended harm can be found in such sources as: Reconstruction-era congressional debates, Report of the Joint Select Committee to Inquire into the Condition of Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States (1872), and printed in articles of local newspaper like Atlanta Constitution. These materials illustrate how speech functioned not just as expression but as an instrument of social control, reinforcing hierarchies through both symbolic degradation and real coercion. In Jeremy Waldron's terms, such speech undermined the dignity and civic standing of African Americans by broadcasting their exclusion from equal membership in the political community.

Twentieth and Twenty-First Century Transformations: Pseudoscience, Media, and Digital Amplification

Technological progress in the late 19th and early 20th centuries provided people with new channels and platforms for expressing hostility. Admiration for technological progress inspired extreme rationalization and a desire for scientific and pseudo-scientific justification for one's actions. Eugenics and racial science did not limit themselves to public media. They widely circulated through the academic journals, exhibi-

tions and policy proposal in order to spread the prejudicial statements that labeled certain groups of people as biologically inferior and socially unfit (Kevles, 1985, pp. 70-78). Expanding from the academic circles such pseudoscientific rhetoric influenced affiliated politicians in the justification of the such restrictive acts as immigration quotas of 1920s, and forced sterilization upheld by the Supreme Court in the *Buck vs Bell* (1927) decision (*Buck v. Bell*, 1927).

With the development of mass media, introduction of radio, film and later television, grew the scale of hostility and the reach of its rhetoric. Popular entertainment, including minstrel shows, Hollywood films, and newsreels, perpetuated stereotypes that reinforced segregation and normalized exclusionary practices. (Bogle, 2001, pp. 13-17) In 1930s Father Charles Coughlin used the radio broadcast extensively for his sermons, aired on Sundays, reaching 40 000 listeners at one point. Large part of his broadcast sermons was dedicated to the criticism of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's program (Kennedy, 2001, pp. 229-232). In these ceremonies he denounced the "international bankers" and "money changers", the coded dehumanizing term for Jews (Charles Coughlin, 2024). Meanwhile the visual culture of movies and cartoons shaped public perceptions of minority groups through caricature portrayals. These cultural forms ensured that hostile speech was not confined to fringe movements but embedded within mainstream public consciousness.

By the mid-twentieth century appeared the necessity in regulation of offensive and incendiary speech. Supreme court made several decisions in the attempt to balance out the freedom of expression with the need to keep order and protect individuals from harm. Two landmark Supreme Court cases define the U.S. approach to offensive and incendiary speech. In *Chaplinsky v. New Hampshire* (1942), the Court established the "**fighting words**" doctrine, stating that speech which "by its very utterance inflicts injury or tends to incite an immediate breach of the peace" falls outside First Amendment protection (*Chaplinsky v. New Hampshire*, 1942). In contrast, *Brandenburg v. Ohio* (1969) sharply narrowed the state's regulatory power, ruling that advocacy may be restricted only when it is directed to inciting **imminent lawless action** and is likely to produce such action (*Brandenburg v. Ohio*, 1969). Together, these rulings frame the modern boundary between punishable incitement and constitutionally protected advocacy, leaving much extremist or hateful speech safeguarded under the principle that only immediate threats—not broader harms to dignity or inclusion—justify suppression

The advent of the internet further expanded the scale and scope of targeted speech. Forums, blogs, and social platforms such as Facebook, X, and Telegram not only expanded but also consolidated user groups. As a result of such coordination it became extremely difficult to distinguish between the between grassroots expression and orchestrated disinformation (Daniels, 2009, pp. 62-64). Online media and online platforms basing their algorithmic system on sensational and inflammatory content intensified the process. Such content has big engagement value and as a result receives more views, or clicks. At the same time there is a much larger hostile backfire of the consolidated group of internet users. These developments raised complex legal and ethical questions concerning free expression, moderation, and transnational governance of digital spaces. Some platforms try to regulate the content, by

banning the dangerous speech, and again fall into controversial discussion of what and who defines the speech as dangerous.

The case of Liberty County Vindicator post demonstrates such a controversy and provides an opportunity to look at the problematic nature of a retrospective view of the past. The small Texan Newspaper, in July 2017 attempted to post the segments out of Declaration of Independence on Facebook. Facebook's algorithm temporally removed on the segments which contained Jefferson's reference towards the Native Americans as "merciless Indian savages", as demeaning language targeting a group (Facebook finds Independence document 'racist', 2018). This removal resulted in a debate over the "hate rhetoric" in the American foundational texts. While the Declaration served as a charter of liberty, it also contained exclusionary and derogatory language aimed at Indigenous peoples. At the same time Facebook's intervention and removal of the segment echoed the suppressive practices of the Alien and Sedition Act since the algorithm viewed such speech as potentially dangerous, destabilizing the collective order. The algorithm did not take into the account the historical and educational context of the Declaration, cultural background of the period, the lack of intent to cause harm of those who made the post.

Conclusion

The historical trajectory of hate speech in America demonstrates that, although the term itself is contemporary, its practices are deeply based on the American political and cultural development following the dynamic of the historical process (Nockleby, 2000). From the Sedition Act of 1789 to the racialized rhetoric of the nativism and Jim Crow Laws of 19th century, to the 20 century eugenics and scientific racism and finally to the rise of the era of internet, the diminishing, dehumanizing speech functioned as a tool to build up boundaries separating the society into certain conflicting groups, and legitimizing hierarchies of inclusion (Foner, 1988) (Trelease, 1979). This proves that such group targeted hostile rhetoric has never been the peripheral to U.S. democratic process, rather held one of the central position in historical discuss over liberty, belonging and public order.

In the practices of 19th and 20th century reciprocal relationships between the hostile language and the institutional decisions can be highlighted. Anti-immigrant and postbellum white supremacists not only used the hostile rhetoric and violent acts in their campaigns but also transmitted and translated it into official language of the durable structure of law, ranging from Jim Crow to immigrant exclusory status in the United States and immigration ban (Bogle, 2001). The proliferation of such speech further reflecting the technological development culminated in the form of pseudo-scientific discourse, that with the use of the new media technologies reached the new scales of reach, with the legislative outcomes. Nevertheless, the Supreme Court sought to draw constitutional boundaries around expression in both the Chaplinsky v. New Hampshire (1942) to Brandenburg v. Ohio (1969) decisions, leaning to the protection of free speech even if it inflicted symbolic harm. This tension between the ideal of unrestricted discourse and the reality of collective harm continues to define the American regulatory approach.

During the digital era these contradictions have intensified. The reach, that the online platforms provided to the hostile speech became unprecedented. At the same time the moderation policies of the platforms have provoked further controversies over the topic of distinction between harmful incitement, public expression and even historically situated expression. The 2017 removal of the Liberty County Vindicator's segment from the Declaration of Independence manifests this paradox: language once foundational to national identity is simultaneously recognized as derogatory within contemporary standards (Hietanen & Eddebo, 2023). Such cases point to the issue that the American experience with the hate speech cannot be limited only to episodic cases of such rhetoric, but should be view and understood as a part of a longer continuum in which speech power and exclusion are linked. Importantly this language can emerge from both the organized ruling elite and so from the grassroots mobilization which points to the prevalent role it played amongst different levels of society. Finally, the continuity of such phenomenon illustrates the complexity of reconciling a constitutional commitment to free speech with the equal demands of dignity, safety and public order. Future research would benefit from examining how these historical continuities interact with transnational digital environments, where the boundaries between state authority, corporate regulation, and grassroots expression are increasingly blurred.

References

- Alien and Sedition Acts. (1789, June-July). Retrieved from National Archives: <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/alien-and-sedition-acts>
- Bogle, D. (2001). *Toms, coons, mulattoes, mammies, and bucks: An interpretive history of Blacks in American films* (. New York: Continuum.
- Brandenburg v. Ohio. (1969, June 9). Retrieved from Justia U.S. Supreme Court: <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/395/444/>
- Brundage, F. (1993). *Lynching in the New South: Georgia and Virginia, 1880-1930*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Buck v. Bell. (1927, April 22). Retrieved from Justia U.S. Supreme Court : <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/274/200/>
- Carlson, C. (2010). The rhetoric of the Know-Nothing Party: Nativism as a response to the rhetorical situation. *Southern Communication Journal*, 364-383.
- Chaplinsky v. New Hampshire. (1942, February 5). Retrieved from Justia U.S. Supreme Court: <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/315/568/>
- Charles Coughlin. (2024, October 25). Retrieved from American Holocaust Memorial Museum: <https://exhibitions.ushmm.org/americans-and-the-holocaust/personal-story/charles-coughlin>
- Chinese Exclusion Act. (1882, May 6). Retrieved from National Archives: <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/chinese-exclusion-act>
- Daniels, J. (2009). *Cyber Racism: White Supremacy Online and the New Attack on Civil Rights*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Davidson, D. J. (2024, October 23). *When White Supremacists Overthrew a Government*. Retrieved from PBS: <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/when-white-supremacists-overthrew-government/>
- Ellis, J. P. (2003). *Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Facebook finds Independence document 'racist'. (2018, July 5). Retrieved from [bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-44722728): <https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-44722728>
- Foner, E. (1988). *Reconstruction: America's unfinished revolution, 1863–1877*. New York: Harper & Row.
- George, H. (1876). Speech delivered in San Francisco during the presidential election of 1876. In H. George, *Henry George Papers* (pp. 66-67). New York: New York Public Library.
- Hietanen, M., & Eddebo, J. (2023, October). Towards a Definition of Hate Speech—With a Focus on Online Contexts. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, <https://journals.sagepub.com/>

doi/10.1177/01968599221124309. Retrieved from Sage Journals Home.

Higham, J. (1975). *Send These to me*. New York : New York : Atheneum.

Howe, D. W. (2007). *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kennedy, D. M. (2001). *Freedom from Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929-1945*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kevles, D. J. (1985). *In the Name of Eugenics Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity*. Oakland: University of California Press.

Lepore, J. (2007, September 17). Party Time. Retrieved from New Yorker: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2007/09/17/party-time>

MINISTERS, C. O. (1997, October 30). RECOMMENDATION No. R (97) 20 . Retrieved from COUNCIL OF EUROPE : <https://rm.coe.int/1680505d5b>

Nockleby, J. T. (2000). Hate Speech. In L. W. Karst, *Encyclopedia of the American Constitution* (pp. 1277–1279). Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA.

Report of the Joint Select Committee to Inquire into the Condition of Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States. (1872, February 19). Retrieved from The Online Books Page: <https://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/metabook?id=insurrection1872>

Trelease, A. W. (1979). *White Terror: The Ku Klux Klan Conspiracy and Southern Reconstruction*. New Orleans: Louisiana State University Press.

United Nations Hate Speech. (2024, October 21). Retrieved from United Nations Official Website: <https://www.un.org/en/hate-speech/understanding-hate-speech/what-is-hate-speech#:~:text=In%20common%20language%2C%20%E2%80%9Chate%20speech,that%20may%20threaten%20social%20peace.>

Waldren, J. (2012). *The Harm in the Hate Speech*. Harvard: Harvard University Press.

White, R. (2012). *Railroaded: The Transcontinentals and the Making of Modern America*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Dynamics of the search for the reasonable ethics to protect public confidence in the US government

TAMAR SHIOSHVILI^{6*}

Introduction

During the time when a number of Americans consider government as largely distant and impacted by coordinated activities, it is not unusual that “progressives” are looking for new alternatives to reunite the American people to their government. Some progressives have applied new technology to realize that linking. Computer supporters predicted the use of the Internet as the way to stimulate citizens, to make them vote, and enable them to convey their thoughts on a number of topics.

In 2000, Democratic primary elections in Arizona were conducted online, and in 2004 Michigan permitted its voters to vote online to select delegates to the Democratic national gathering. Furthermore, in both 2000 and 2004, candidates for president made contact with voters via Internet, and one Democratic candidate, Howard Dean, in the 2004 primary competition, assembled thousands of supporters via the Internet.

If this trend continued, predicted by Dick Morris, voting on policy issues would be online for sure, and the internet would supply citizens with information on a number of issues. Dick Morris sees the Internet as transforming politics. Morris considers the technology of cyberspace as the source of linking citizens to their government in the degree unachievable with any other means of communication (Morris, 2007).

Closeness and trust of the American public towards the government was challenge from the beginning. The leaders of the American Revolution for sure did not think of the formation of a single, integrated nation, nor a type of government where common people ruled. Majority of American leaders in the late-eighteenth century argued that a government founded on popular consent, protecting individual rights – reflected in the Declaration of Independence – was conceivable only in limited homogeneous societies, where government was not far from local dignities, and where basic misunderstanding, squabbles among the people did not exist.

The articles of confederation formed in law what had been in proactive – an unsteady confederation of states, a form of government, in which the states are practically independent and possess majority of governmental powers, whereas the central government has nearly none. According the Articles significant decisions were made by state lawmakers. The Central government had just some important obligations but actually no power.

^{6*} Affiliated Prof. Dr., School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, International Black Sea University, Tbilisi, Georgia.

It could make war or peace, but had no power to levy taxes, regulate commerce among the states, had no independent chief executive to follow the laws to be passed by Congress, nor did it have a national court system. Moreover, the requirement that all national laws be confirmed by 9 of the 13 states made enacting laws unaccomplishable, and the new central government could not finance its performance (Greenberg, p. 24).

What was the government like the framers created? Republican government is founded on the idea of representation meaning that public strategies are made not right by the people but by the people's elected representatives instead of them.

The constitution devised a federal system, in which some powers are left to the states and some powers are granted to the central government. The powers in the Constitution lean a bit towards the center, although (William H. Riker).

The basic purpose of the U.S. Constitution is to define the objections and powers of the government, such interpretation differentiates what is permissible and what is impermissible and the Constitution restricts what government may legitimately do, even if a majority wanted to do more. As political philosopher Robert Dahl puts it, "To achieve their goal of preserving a set of inalienable rights superior to the majority principle", the framers deliberately created a framework of government that was carefully designed to impede and even prevent the operation of majority rule (Dahl, p.5).

To cope with this challenge, the framers looked to the ancient concept of balanced government, promoted by the French philosopher Montesquieu. The main idea of balanced government is that condensed power of any kind is dangerous and that the way to avoid absolutism is first to fragment governmental power into its composing parts - executive, legislative, and judicial- then put each into a separate branch. The US Constitution assigns separate spheres of liabilities and particularizes specific powers of each branch: legislative power (Article I), executive power (Article II), and judicial power (Article III, p.76).

Does Compulsory Voting Keep Democracy Strong?

Voting is the most essential way of participating in a democracy, however too many citizens do not use their right to vote, particularly in the United States. In the 1988 and 1992 Presidential elections, the participation in elections was only 50 and 55 percent, and in the midterm Congressional elections in 1990 and 1994, it was just 33 and 36 percent. After four years, the participation in the Presidential election was 49 percent, and for the 1998 for the Congressional election it was 36 percent (Lijphart, 2007).

This is a substantial challenge for two causes. One is democratic lawfulness: Can a government that has obtained competency in a low-turnout election potentially declare to be a representative government? For example, a certain number of Americans interrogated President Clinton's mandate as he got only 43 percent of the votes (voted) and because just 55 percent of those registered to vote in the long run did so-which meant that he received the backing of fewer than 25 percent of all entitled voters in 1992.

Another problem is that, low number of participated people for sure means – that some groups vote in

bigger numbers than other groups and thus gain an incommensurate impact on the government and its policies (ibid, 2007).

The only way out was to deal with these challenges is to increase the turnout at maximum. It may not be down-to-earth to anticipate that everyone will vote, but participation of 90 percent is a reliable ambition, as some democracies reveal. But how can it be reached? There are some institutional ways to promote turnout. They involve voter-friendly registration methods: voting on the weekend instead of during the week; proportional representation; scheduling as many elections as possible – national, state, and local – on the same day, etc.

It's noteworthy, that one other method can intensify turnout as all others combined: compulsory voting. In Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Greece, Italy, Venezuela, and several other Latin American democracies, obligatory voting has generated almost universal voter turnout. It is somehow astounding that turning voting mandatory is so productive, as the charges for skipping voting are normally so small equaling to the parking breaching, besides, implementation seems to be very neglectful, because of the big numbers of people participating in mandatory voting is impossible to severely impose (Parking rules are administered far more harshly).

For example, with 10 million entitled voters in Australia, even a turnout of 95 percent means that half a million people did not vote, and it presumably is not reasonable to charge such a large amount with fines. Australia is actually among the most illiberal disciplinarian of obligatory voting, but even there, only about 4 percent of nonvoters end up having to pay the small fines. In Belgium, fewer than one-fourth of 1 percent of nonvoters are charged (Diclerico, 2007).

It's worth accentuating why low voter turnout is such a serious problem for democracies – low turnout usually means that privileged citizens (those with better education and more wealth) vote in notably larger numbers than less advantaged citizens. This introduces a systematic prejudice in favor of wealthy citizens, as, "If you don't vote, you don't count". The already prosperous citizens who vote are later recompensated with government policies.

In the United States, only Presidential elections generate turnouts of more than 50 percent of the voting – age population; turnout in midterm Congressional elections has only about 35 percent in recent years and in local elections is closer to 25 percent (ibid, 2007).

- According to the American Presidency Project (APP), the lowest voter turnout occurred in 1924 – 49%.
- Among post-World War II elections in 1948 – saw the lowest turnout 51%. Harry S. Truman won the presidency in that election.
- During the 1950s and 1960s, US presidential elections when Dwight D. Eisenhower was elected turnout was 61%.
- In the 1968 election – 61%
- However, in 1972 – turnout dropped to 55 %.

- 1980-1900 trends
- Ronald Reagan's elections – 55%
- 2000-2010 trends George W. Bush's election – 54%
- In 2012 – Obama's Presidential election – 58%
- In 2016 Donald Trump's election – 59%

Highest turnout in 2020

- The 2020 presidential elections recorded the highest voter turnout during the pandemic, many states expanded options for voting by mail or drop-off.
- In 2020 US presidential elections had a historic 67%.
- 2024 US voter turnout on Nov. 5 was around 65%, 158 million ballots.
- What was the very thing that helped Trump win?
- Voters, fed up with high prices on everything from groceries to car insurance, have removed Democrats from power in Washington. Trump has promised to strike high prices by whisking things up.
- Some of the same campaign promises that attracted voters – mass deportation and sky-high tariffs would be inflationary, according some experts.

Bond market is getting tense about Trump's intention to add trillions to the national debt, and make it more expensive to get a mortgage, or home loan and finance the purchase of a car. Trump has introduced tariffs as a remarkable fix to almost any problem, describing these taxes in imports as "the greatest thing ever invented". He's threatened to impose high tariffs on friend and contender.

Trump's promises to impose enormous tariffs, deport millions of undocumented workers and influence the Federal Reserve, would weaken growth, boost inflation and lower employment, according to a recent working paper released by the Peterson Institute for Economics. Of course, it's too early to predict which of Trump's campaign promises will be realized.

Conclusion

In spite of the fact that the American population is better educated and faces fewer procedural obstacles to voting than previously, a considerable segment of the American electorate does not participate in elections. As it happened, from 1960 through 1996 voting turnout in presidential elections decreased about fourteen percentage points, and the turnout figure – forty-nine percent in 1996 was the minimal in seventy-two years. In 2000 the turnout approached 51.27 percent, and took a significant jump in 2004 between five and ten percent, although many observers consider, that turnout is still very low.

Low voter turnout, as it is maintained, is one more indication of a general decline in the quality of political life in the United States, as residents continuously withdraw from the political system. But the case is,

that the American community is constructed by character or by its constitution so that it can hold up the transitory action of bad laws, and can await without ruining the general legislation. The great advantage of the Americans is their being able to commit faults which they may afterwards fix.

The governed in America are knowledgeable and attentive to their interests. As the people in democracies are more vigilant in their affairs and jealous of their rights, they impede their representatives from discarding the general line of behavior.

References

Morris, D. (2007). Points of View, Readings in American Government and Politics. Public Opinion.

Greenberg, E. S., Benjamin, I. (2007). America's Democratic Republic. Pearson Education, USA.

Ricker, W. H, ed. (1987). The Invention of Centralized Federalism, The Development of Centralized Federalism. Boston: Kluwer Academic.

Dahl, R. A. (1977). On removing the Impediments to Democracy in the United States. Political Science Quarterly.

Lijphart, A. (2007). Compulsory Voting Is the Best Way to Keep Democracy Strong. US.

Redefining Alliances: The Transformation of U.S.–Arab Relations Amid Geopolitical Shifts and Economic Diversification

SAMIN USTIASHVILI^{7*}

Abstract

U.S.–Arab relations, which have primarily been energy-based and involved military collaboration and counterterrorism activities, are now at a stage of considerable change. The decline in the U.S. dependence on oil from the Gulf, the diversification programs of the Arab states, and the shifting regional landscape are reconfiguring these alliances, most notably the one between the United States and Saudi Arabia.

Geopolitical shifts—such as China’s growing power in the world, the aftermath of the Arab Spring, and changes in U.S. foreign policy priorities—have altered Washington’s strategic approach. At the same time, the expanding influence of regional players such as Iran and Turkey, in addition to the normalisation of relations with Israel and certain Arab countries through the Abraham Accords, makes the situation even more complicated (Katz, 2024). This article examines these changes, with a particular emphasis on U.S.–Saudi relations, offering a reevaluation of traditional alignments in an increasingly multipolar world.

Keywords: U.S.–Arab relations, Middle East, economic diversification, foreign policy, Abraham Accords, regional powers, China, energy security, geopolitical shifts

Introduction

Economic diversification efforts, led by a number of Arab states—most notably Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030 and the United Arab Emirates’ economic policies—are now the main focus of the strategic decision to move away from excessive reliance on oil revenues and toward more diversified, innovation-driven economies. As these countries attempt to attract foreign investment in sectors such as technology, renewable energy, tourism, and entertainment, their ties with the United States become more complex and layered (Roberts, 2025). In this changing economic environment, the U.S.–Arab partnerships are undergoing a transformation from a primarily transactional relationship—based on the trade of oil for security—to a more diverse and deeper cooperative involvement with technology transfer, sustainable development, and innovation at its core. These changes are gradually redefining the contours of the U.S.–Arab relations.

The Middle East’s social change is definitely a game-changer in the redefinition of relations as well. A large group of young people is actively involved in the making of social reforms and they are very much

^{7*} Doctor of American Studies Program, School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, International Black Sea University, Tbilisi, Georgia.

into gender equality, seeking to have their voices heard politically. This generational change is certainly complicating U.S. foreign policy as it is trying to establish relationships with the regimes which probably will not be happy about the changes while at the same time, it needs to continue following democracy and human rights principles. In Washington, the main challenge is how to manage strategic interests while engaging with Arab societies — thus not only establishing partnerships based on respect but also those that are in line with common goals.

Together, economic diversification, social transformation, and shifting geopolitical dynamics are reshaping U.S.–Arab relations. These evolving factors not only redefine the traditional foundations of the alliance but also open up new pathways for cooperation, calling for a critical reassessment that goes beyond conventional narratives of oil dependence and military alignment. The trajectory of U.S.–Arab relations serve as a lens through which broader regional transformations can be understood, reflecting the complex interplay of global power shifts in the 21st century.

The creation of the “Golden Share” agreement in 1945

The foundations of this relationship were laid in the mid-20th century, during the height of Cold War geopolitics. Following World War II, the United States emerged as a dominant global power and sought strategic alliances in the Middle East—primarily driven by the region’s vast oil reserves. The discovery of significant oil fields in Saudi Arabia in the late 1930s heightened American interest in the region. The pivotal 1945 meeting between President Franklin D. Roosevelt and King Abdulaziz ibn Saud aboard the USS *Quincy* resulted in a landmark understanding: the U.S. would provide military protection to the kingdom in exchange for secure access to oil. As oil became essential to Western economic recovery and growth during the 1950s and 1960s, this U.S.–Saudi alliance became a cornerstone of America’s strategic presence in the region (Ullah & Xinlei, 2025).

During the Cold War, the geopolitical landscape continued to complicate American-Arab relations. The expansionist policies of the Soviet Union posed a significant threat to American interests in the region, prompting Washington to strengthen its alliances with the Arab nations to counter communist influence. Various nations, including Egypt, Jordan and Iraq, were involved in this ideological battle. The United States has adopted a policy of supporting authoritarian regimes that align themselves with its interests, often neglecting democratic aspirations or human rights concerns. Pivotal moments, such as the Suez crisis in 1956 and the six -day war in 1967, anchored more the dynamics of cooperation in terms of security and military aid as tools for American influence in the region.

In addition, American relations with the Arab states occurred within the context of the strategic policies established under the Eisenhower Doctrine, which explicitly aimed to counter Soviet penetration in the Middle East. This doctrine underlined America’s commitment to intervene in the region to suppress perceived threats, thus perpetuating a cycle of dependence in which regional governments relied on American military and economic support for their survival. Consequently, the security agreements, characterized by arms sales and military bases, have been an integral part of the American-Arab

partnerships, often prioritized to the detriment of economic diversification or social reform within these nations (Ullah and Xinlei, 2025).

In the post-Cold War era, while oil continued to play a vital role in American-Arab relations, the evolving geopolitical landscape introduced new dynamics. The 1990-1991 Gulf War marked a significant turning point because the United States positioned itself as a key defender of regional stability against the aggression of Iraq. The ramifications of such military interventions temporally reinforced America's strategic alliances with Gulf states, especially within the context of the broader War on Terror following the events of September 11, 2001. Thus, the history of US-Arab relations is deeply linked to the dependency and security arrangements that prevailed during the Cold War, influencing current interactions as nations across the Middle East navigate a complex landscape characterized by fluctuating loyalties and emerging priorities. The geopolitical landscape of the Middle East has undergone a significant transformation over the last two decades, characterized by the emergence of multipolarity that has gradually changed the balance of power within the traditional US sphere of influence. The rise of nations such as China has become increasingly influential in shaping diplomatic and economic relations within the region, causing a reevaluation of US-Arab relations. This evolutionary dynamic is underlined by several interrelated factors, including the strategic interests of various global powers, the persistent rivalry between regional actors such as Saudi Arabia and Iran, and the formation of new alliances that prioritize economic diversification and social change over the traditional premises of oil revenues.

Historically, the United States has maintained a hegemonic presence in the Middle East, driven mainly by its interests in securing access to oil resources and maintaining stability in a region marked by conflict and political instability. However, in the last decade, it has seen China's rise as a formidable competitor, both economically and politically. As the Belt and Road Initiative of China (BRI) extends its reach throughout the region, investments in infrastructure, trade, and energy partnerships have allowed Beijing to cultivate deeper ties with Arab states. This economic engagement not only diversifies the region's economic partnerships but also challenges the binary narrative of US influence, prompting Arab nations to recalibrate their diplomatic strategies in the face of emerging multipolarity (Zorri, 2023).

At the same time, the continuous rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran exemplifies the complexities of intra-regional dynamics that further redefined USA-Arab relations. The sectarian landscape, marked by Sunni-Shia divisions, exacerbated tensions not only between these two nations but also affected broader relationships with the US, as Iran sought to expand its influence through the power of attorney and military interventions, particularly in Syria and Iraq, the US found more and more incredible in regional conflicts. This has led to a reevaluation of alliances, as Arab states consider their national interests in conjunction with their historical ties to the US (Areej, Ikram, and Jhandad, 2024). The changes and strategies adopted by these nations indicate a shift to prioritize localized security outcomes, sometimes at odds with traditional US policy goals.

New Friends, New Rules: How China and Russia Are Redrawing Middle Eastern Alliances

As Gulf states increasingly engage with rising powers such as China and Russia—nations that offer complementary capabilities and alternative security partnerships—the United States is compelled to recalibrate not only its economic strategies but also its diplomatic posture in the region. Future U.S. cooperation in military and technological fields will likely require a more integrated approach—one that spans defense, investment, and innovation (Hanish, 2023). These evolving dynamics in U.S.–Arab relations, in light of economic diversification, signal a broader realignment of interests, marked by intensified competition and cooperation in a rapidly shifting geopolitical environment.

The involvement of external powers, particularly China and Russia, has significantly reshaped the Middle East's strategic landscape, with direct implications for U.S.–Arab relations. Historically, U.S. hegemony in the region rested on strategic alliances rooted in oil dependency and security guarantees. However, the rise of China and the reassertion of Russia as influential actors have complicated these dynamics, prompting Arab states to diversify their foreign policy options within an increasingly multipolar world order.

China's expanding presence in the Middle East aligns with its broader Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), through which it promotes economic integration via trade and infrastructure investment. Arab states seeking to diversify away from oil have found a strategic partner in China for technology, development, and capital. For instance, the United Arab Emirates has entered into numerous innovation-focused partnerships with Beijing, particularly in the areas of sustainability and digital infrastructure. These deepening economic ties not only advance diversification goals but also reduce reliance on U.S. economic and strategic support. As China becomes a vital trade partner for many Arab countries, the shifting alignment of interests threatens to complicate the United States' traditional dominance in the region.

Conversely, Russia's revitalization of its role in the Middle East has been marked by assertive military interventions and calculated diplomatic manoeuvres—most notably its involvement in the Syrian civil war and its alignment with non-state actors such as Hezbollah. These actions have enabled Moscow to re-establish itself as a key player and a strategic partner to several Arab states, particularly those facing Western isolation or seeking alternative channels of international support. Countries like Egypt and Syria have deepened their ties with Russia, in part due to shifts in U.S. foreign policy and a perceived retreat from the region under successive American administrations.

Russia's engagement in the region strategically capitalizes on Cold War-era relationships while offering Arab states an alternative power center to balance against Western influence. This multipolar alignment, driven by pragmatic foreign policy recalibrations, further complicates the United States' longstanding role as the region's principal security guarantor.

The implications for American-arab relations are multifaceted. The introduction of the alternative dynamics of power in the region requires a reassessment of American strategies. Traditional American allies are becoming more and more cautious, assessing their options in the midst of changing perceptions

concerning American reliability and commitment to the region. While the Arab nations explore relations that prioritize economic diversification and security, they may find themselves more to engage more with the Russian and Chinese interests which are sometimes in conflict with American policies.

Beyond Palestine: Pragmatism, Security, and the Future of Arab-Israeli Ties

This scalable landscape creates a precarious situation for American-Arab relations. The growing competition for influence questions not only historical geopolitical frameworks, but also aggravates the existing tensions between the United States and this external powers. An example can be seen in the contrasting American and Russian approaches to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict; Russia supporting Palestinian interests, while the United States is firmly allied with Israel. Such differences offer Arab states the possibility of maneuvering between powers, ensuring that their positions are strategically advantageous.

In the end, the rooting of China and Russia in the Middle East announces a paradigm shift in the American-Arab dynamics. While these external actors continue to gain ground, expectations for the United States as an unwavering partner in economic security and stability can be tested, forcing a reinvention of alliances that go beyond traditional oil dependence. The increasingly complex interaction of economic interests, diplomatic commitments and military alliances requires a critical reassessment of the way in which Arab nations sail in their foreign relations at a time defined by competing global powers., Social transformations in the Arab nations are intrinsically linked to the evolution of US -ARAB relations, mainly because the region experiences significant changes in the demography of young people, civil society movements and attitudes towards governance. The demographic profile of the Middle East is marked by a young and more urban population, which has deep implications for internal social structures and external diplomatic commitments. This youth demography, defined by the aspirations of greater political participation and socioeconomic opportunities, actively influences the political scenario, challenging long -time governance structures that are often characterized by authoritarianism and rigidity (Bakare, Bandesha and Ali, 2024).

The 2011 Arab Spring was a crucial moment, signaling a collective demand for reform, justice and responsibility among young people. Subsequent protests and civil society movements have promoted a climate of activism that is increasingly vocal on governance issues. For example, movements arose that defend women's rights, anti -corruption measures and transparent governance, demonstrating a change to more participative governance models. These base movements not only reflect internal social aspirations, but also resonate with US foreign policy goals, which traditionally emphasize democracy and human rights as angular stones of diplomatic relations (Bakare, Bandesha and Ali, 2024). However, the US often struggling to align their foreign policy with the realities of various governance aspirations throughout the region, as support for democratic movements can conflict with established alliances with authoritarian regimes.

In addition to political aspirations, social media and digital platforms have acted as social change

catalysts, allowing the rapid dissemination of ideas and movement organization. This connection has enabled marginalized voices and facilitated the transonic collaboration between youth movements, which, in turn, brings new forms of social engagement in the public sphere. The ability to mobilize quickly and effectively on social media has changed the scenario of civil society in the Arab nations, presenting opportunities and challenges for traditional governance modes. As these digital movements gain strength, they influence public opinion and press governments to respond to a more informed and active citizen (Bakare, Bandesha and Ali, 2024).

The implications of these social changes extend to international relations, especially with the United States. As the Arab nations strive to redefine their identities and governances, US policy formulators are required to reevaluate their diplomatic strategies. The challenge is to balance the geopolitical interests established for a long time with the growing demands of reform and democratization. US historical alliances with monarchies and regimes characterized by repression can conflict with the emerging dynamics of civil society, causing the need for recalibrated engagement strategies that respond to the evolutionary aspirations of the population.

Furthermore, the change of attitudes towards governance is also reflected in increasing demand for economic opportunities other than the dependence on oil. Many Arab states are seeking efforts to economic diversification as part of their Vision 2030 plans, which aim to promote innovation, promote entrepreneurship and create job opportunities for young people. This economic transformation intersects with social change, as job creation and economic empowerment are directly linked to greater political stability and civic responsibility (Bakare, Bandesha and Ali, 2024).

In short, the socio-political landscape in the Arab nations is changing significantly, influenced by demographic changes, civil activism and evolving aspirations of governance. These dynamics are reformulating the US -ARAB course, requiring an adaptive and differentiated approach to diplomacy that recognizes the transformation potential between these nations. The interaction of these social changes with geopolitical interests and efforts on economic diversification demonstrates the complexities of navigating a region in flow, as US engagement strategies should evolve to reflect the realities of a generation prepared to redefine the region's future. The safety dynamics in the Middle East are characterized by a complex interaction of factors that significantly influence the relationships between the United States and the Arab. At the center of these factors are terrorism and regional instability, which remain fundamental in modeling the military presence of the United States and the trade of weapons within the Arab States. While geopolitical changes continue to modify the panorama of international relations, nature evolving security concerns emerges both as a challenge and as a catalyst for US Arab alliances.

Terrorism has long been a concern for primary safety in the Middle East, in particular following the attacks of 11 September, which fell an American military commitment concerted in Afghanistan and subsequently in Iraq. These interventions, although aimed at fighting terrorism, gave rise to the proliferation of extremist groups throughout the region, complicating the panorama of security (Tabet,

2024). The threat of terrorism is not simply an external question, but also a significant internal challenge for Arab States that face radicalization between their populations and associated social consequences, which often include political instability and insecurity. This violence and disorders have underlined the need for solid military partnerships between the United States and Arab governments, since these regimes are increasingly based on American military support for anti-terrorism operations and internal security.

The United States have established a significant military presence in the Middle East in the last two decades, manifesting both in permanent bases and the deployment of troops, military training and sharing initiatives of intelligence. Through these military partnerships, the Arab states have gained access to technology and advanced military equipment, contributing to the substantial growth of weapons trade in the United States in the region. The quantitative increases of weapons sales underline the intake of shared strategic interests, focused mainly on regional safety and anti-terrorism efforts (Alnassar, 2024). However, these alliances are not immune to criticism; There is an ongoing debate that surrounds the long-term effectiveness of the US military interventions and the proliferation of weapons. Critics claim that a lasting military presence could inadvertently perpetuate cycles of violence instead of promoting stability (Tabet, 2024).

Conclusion

The trajectory of U.S.–Arab relations has entered a pivotal phase marked by profound economic, geopolitical, and social transformations. Historically built on a foundation of energy dependency and strategic security arrangements, these alliances are now being redefined by internal and external forces that demand a more nuanced and adaptive approach. The economic diversification strategies led by Gulf states—such as Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030 and the UAE’s Vision 2071—demonstrate a decisive move away from oil-based models toward high-tech, knowledge-driven economies. These transitions are not merely economic; they carry substantial geopolitical weight, positioning Arab states as more assertive actors capable of negotiating a broader range of global partnerships.

Concurrently, the rise of China and Russia as influential powers in the Middle East introduces new dimensions to an already intricate geopolitical landscape. China’s infrastructure investments and strategic use of soft power through the Belt and Road Initiative, alongside Russia’s military and diplomatic interventions, offer alternative alliances to Arab states seeking greater autonomy from U.S. influence. This multipolar reality challenges traditional paradigms of U.S. dominance and necessitates a recalibrated diplomatic approach—one that recognizes Arab states as strategic partners with agency and evolving national interests.

Social transformation within the Arab world further adds complexity to U.S. policy considerations. Youth-driven movements, increased calls for gender equality, and the influence of digital platforms have given rise to more vocal and organized civil societies. These actors are reshaping the domestic political

discourse in ways that occasionally clash with the governance models of long-standing U.S. allies. American policymakers thus face a critical dilemma: how to maintain strategic ties with authoritarian regimes while upholding the democratic values and human rights principles that underpin much of its global rhetoric. Failing to strike this balance risks eroding U.S. credibility and influence in the long term.

The normalization of relations between certain Arab states and Israel—most notably through the Abraham Accords—further illustrates the fluidity of regional priorities. These agreements, motivated by shared concerns over Iran, access to technology, and economic collaboration, represent a pragmatic shift away from historical ideological commitments. While the United States has welcomed these developments as a pathway to regional stability, they also reveal growing divergences among Arab states and highlight the need for a more flexible and differentiated diplomatic posture.

Ultimately, the evolving U.S.–Arab relationship cannot be understood through the lens of Cold War-era alliances or simplistic transactional frameworks. It requires a deeper engagement with the internal dynamics of Arab societies, the strategic ambitions of emerging regional powers, and the shifting contours of global influence. For the United States to remain a relevant and constructive actor in the Middle East, it must embrace a multidimensional strategy—one that blends security cooperation with economic innovation, diplomatic agility, and support for inclusive governance.

In sum, this period of realignment presents not only challenges but also significant opportunities. By reimagining its role from a dominant power to a collaborative partner, the United States can help shape a more stable, prosperous, and autonomous Middle East—an outcome that ultimately serves both regional and global interests.

References

- Ullah, A., & Xinlei, L. (2025). Navigating complex interdependence: An in-depth analysis of Iran and Saudi Arabia's strategic engagement with the BRI in the Middle East. *Chinese Political Science Review*, 10(1), 72-100. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s41111-024-00250-6>
- Katz, Y. A Decade of Change in Middle Eastern Geopolitics. <https://www.athensjournals.gr/politics/2025-1-2-4-Katz.pdf>
- Del Sarto, R. A., & Soler i Lecha, E. (2024). Regionalism and alliances in the Middle East, 2011-2021: from a "flash in the Pan" of regional cooperation to liquid alliances. *Geopolitics*, 29(4), 1447-1473. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14650045.2023.2268542>
- Schiff, A., & Kertcher, C. (2024). Silent alliances and shifting tides: unveiling the hidden pathways to resolving interstate rivalries—the UAE-Israel case. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 35(1), 174-191. <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/ijcma-01-2023-0006/full/html>
- Nicolas, L. (2024). Global and Regional Strategies in the Middle East: In Pursuit of Hegemony. Taylor & Francis. <https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=dAcQEQAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA1975&dq=Beyond+Oil+and+Alliances+U.S.+Arab+Relations+Middle+East+2023+insights+analysis&ots=N-VCM3PQ3FM&sig=bW82h95dnX-V96uzStJphwXWrrE>
- Tabet, M. M. (2024). US Arms Trade in the Middle East: A Complex and Dynamic Relationship. <https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/major-papers/295/>
- Roberts, D. B. (2025). Re-examining the Foundations of US–Gulf relations. *Middle Eastern Studies*, 1-12. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00263206.2025.2453428>
- Katz, Y. Analyzing Middle Eastern Geopolitics from the Arab Spring to the Israel-Hamas War. <https://www.athensjournals.gr/mediterranean/2025-11-1-1-Katz.pdf>
- Ciuriak, D. (2023). US-China Economic Rivalry and Prospects for Peace in the Middle East. *The Journal of Peace and War Studies* (forthcoming). https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4397443
- Tidjani, H., & Khaoula, B. (2024). Evaluation of the Role of the Arab Gulf Lobby in the Middle East Conflicts (Doctoral dissertation, Kasdi Merbah Ouargla University). <https://dspace.univ-ouargla.dz/jspui/handle/123456789/36044>
- Zorri, D. M. (2023). Saudi Arabia and Iran in a Multipolar Global World Order: Scenarios for the Future of the Middle East. *JOURNAL OF PEACE AND WAR STUDIES*, 60. <https://www.norwich.edu/documents/journal-peace-war-studies-5th-edition-0#page=65>
- Hanish, S. B. BEYOND BORDERS: A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF THE ARAB CHINESE RELATIONS. https://ijessr.com/uploads2024/ijessr_07_963.pdf
- Burton, G. (2023). External powers in the Middle East: views from within the region. In *Handbook of Middle East Politics* (pp. 174-189). Edward Elgar Publishing. <https://www.elgaronline.com/edcollchap/book/9781802205633/book-part-9781802205633-16.xml>

- Baomar, A. A. H. A. (2024). The GCC'S Complex Interdependence with China and its Implications on Western Alliances (Master's thesis, Sultan Qaboos University (Oman)). <https://search.proquest.com/openview/a04d632744a0ebac6b29324c4b653f73/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=2026366&diss=y>
- Blarel, N. (2024). Navigating US–China Rivalry in a Multi-aligned Middle East: Understanding India's Shifting Strategy Towards the Region. *Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs*, 11(4), 536-556. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/23477970241285200>
- Bakare, N., Bandesha, M. S., & Ali, R. (2024). Ten Years After the Arab Spring. Engagement vs. Disengagement in US Policy to the Middle East. In *Arab-Israel Normalisation of Ties: Global Perspectives* (pp. 261-283). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore. https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-981-99-7765-9_14
- Halabi, Y. (2023). Saudi Arabia: A Crossroad Between Alliances. <https://laur.lau.edu.lb:8443/xmlui/handle/10725/15334>
- Alnassar, A. (2024). Security Factors behind the Decline in the US-Gulf States Relations. *Open Journal of Political Science*, 14(1), 14-27. <https://www.scirp.org/journal/paperinformation?paperid=130572>
- Areej, A., Ikram, B., & Jhandad, J. (2024). Saudi-Iran Rapprochement and China's Growing Presence in the Middle East. *CISS Insight Journal*, 12(1), P115-138. <http://www.journal.ciss.org.pk/index.php/ciss-insight/article/view/365>
- Chaziza, M. (2024). The US-China rivalry in the Middle East: Confrontation or competitive coexistence. *Contemporary Review of the Middle East*, 11(2), 231-252. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/23477989241240899>

SECTION II: CULTURE, SOCIAL ISSUES

The US Socio- political and cultural values highlighted through Modern Art in Arab Countries

IRINA BAKHTADZE^{8*}

FERYAL ABDULLAH MOHAMED ALHAZANI^{9*}

Abstract

The article underlines the significance of teaching the subject of Modern American Art of the 1920s to students in higher educational institutions in Arab Countries. It emphasizes the significance of raising awareness of the country's young generation about the US social, political, and cultural life. Most recently, the political and cultural relations between the two countries have been developing fast, and Saudi Arabia is one of the most reliable strategic partners of the United States in the region. The role of teaching American Modern Art to the students will provide an opportunity to find common characteristics in modern approaches to art, aesthetics, and youth problems in the two countries. The qualitative study is based on the analysis of the 1920s modern artists' creative works, important images, the history and theoretical evaluation of the artistic movement.

Key words: teaching Modern Art, US culture in the 1920s, Saudi Arabia, US-KSA political and socio-cultural relations, Pop culture.

Introduction

The political, economic, and diplomatic relations between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United States have been developing successfully in recent decades based on the common strategic interests; considering this reality, raising awareness of the country's young generation about the US social and cultural life is becoming important. One of the effective ways to achieve this goal is to provide a wide opportunity for the young generation to get introduced to modern American art to gain knowledge, assess, and perceive the present, as well as further development trends of art in both countries.

Saudi Arabia is one of the most reliable strategic partners of the United States in the region, sharing a common concern for regional security, Middle East peace, oil exports - imports, and sustainable

^{8*} Affiliated Prof. Dr. in American Studies, School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, International Black Sea University, Tbilisi, Georgia.

^{9*} Ph.D. Candidate, American Studies Program, School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, International Black Sea University, Tbilisi, Georgia.

economic and trade development. Since petroleum was discovered in 1938, its economy has been developing very fast. (Caryl, S, 2014). Saudi Arabia is described as leading the “Pro-Western Camp” of Arab countries (composed of Egypt, Jordan, and Arab states of the Persian Gulf) aligned with the U.S. Currently, the US administration maintains a stable partnership with KSA. Recently, President Donald J. Trump, after his visit to the Kingdom, announced Saudi Arabia’s \$600-billion commitment to invest in the United States, building economic ties that will endure for generations to come. The investment will strengthen energy security, defense, industry, and technology which will promote access to global infrastructure and critical minerals. Investment partnerships include several sector-specific funds with a strong emphasis on U.S. deployment (2025 visit of Donald Trump to the Middle East. <https://www.google.com>). The agreements reached during the period are historic and transformative for both countries and represent a new golden era of partnership between the United States and Saudi Arabia. The deepening United States-Saudi Arabia partnership reflects a joint vision for long-term prosperity and employment opportunities in both nations. The largest defense sales agreement - \$142 billion was signed which will provide Saudi Arabia with state-of-the-art warfighting equipment and services from over a dozen U.S. defense firms. (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/fact-sheets/2025/05>)

At present, 80,000 Americans living in Saudi Arabia include those working there. A significant portion of these Americans are employed in the oil industry, construction, and finance sectors. Additionally, Saudi Arabia hosts approximately 5,000 U.S. military personnel. In 2022, there were more than six thousand private sector workers in Saudi Arabia who were citizens of the United States (gulfmigration.grc.net/saudi-arabia).

In 2024, two-way trade between the USA and Saudi Arabia (SAU) totaled \$25.9 billion, with a U.S. goods trade surplus of \$443 million. U.S. exports to Saudi Arabia were \$13.2 billion, while imports from Saudi Arabia were \$12.7 billion. Both countries are committed to deeper economic integration, with a focus on areas like health, energy, science, and education.

(<https://oec.world/en/profile/bilateral-country>).

Intercultural relations are also developing rapidly, and English language is becoming more popular among the young generation firming the ties between the two nations.

Higher Education in Saudi Arabia, and Arab students in the US universities:

In the twenty-first century, the vibrancy of the U.S.-Saudi relationship, based on multifaceted interests in the political, economic, business, and humanitarian fields, remains secure. The two countries have a history of technical and educational exchange which has benefited both nations.

Higher education in Saudi Arabia has expanded rapidly, with large numbers of universities and colleges being founded particularly since 2000. Institutions of higher education include *King Saud University* at Riyadh, the *Islamic University* at Medina, and the *King Abdulaziz University* in Jeddah. *Princess Norah University* is the largest women’s university in the world. *King Abdullah University of Science*

and Technology, known as KAUST, is the first mixed-gender university campus in Saudi Arabia and was founded in 2009. Other colleges and universities emphasize curricula in sciences and technology, military studies, religion, and medicine. *"Encyclopædia Britannica Online Saudi Arabia". 2023*). In the 2023-2024 academic year, there were 14,828 Saudi Arabian students studying in the United States. This makes Saudi Arabia the 3rd largest source of international students in the US, after India and China. In the 2022-2023 academic year, the number was 15,989. In the past, the number of Saudi students in US universities has been significantly higher, with some sources citing over 100,000 students in the early 2010s. This was due to a scholarship program initiated by KSA in 2005 that sent Saudi students to US universities. While the number has decreased since then, Saudi Arabia remains a significant source of international students for US universities (Statista, ResearchGate).

Cultural relations between the US and Saudi Arabia (KSA). Today, cultural relations are much stronger and multifaceted than it was two decades ago. It is driven by significant educational and cultural exchange programs, a growing number of students and tourists. These exchanges promote mutual understanding and strengthen ties between the two countries. The US also supports KSA's cultural initiatives and fosters closer bonds through various forms of cooperation. The Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission (**SACM**) to the United States is an agency, created by the Saudi government early in the 20th century, which supports Saudi students studying in the US universities. <https://www.google.com/search?q=cultural+relations+between+US+and+KSA>).

The US socio-cultural values highlighted through American Art in Arab Countries are becoming important. Cultural relations between the two countries are growing; some facts provided below demonstrate the progress in this direction.

American fine arts are making a presence in Saudi Arabia through various initiatives and collaborations. These include exchange programs like *Global Media Makers*, which connects international filmmakers with U.S. professionals. Cultural institutions like the *King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture (Ithra)*, also host exhibitions and events featuring American artists. Additionally, the Saudi Music Commission and the U.S. Embassy are working together to strengthen musical ties, with visits from American musicians like Herbie Hancock (Ithra | Accelerating potential, inspiring minds. <https://www.google.com>).

The United States and Saudi Arabia further underscored their commitment to deeper cultural, educational, and scientific partnerships through the signing of agreements between the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Asian Art and the Royal Commission for a historical site – AlUla (located in northwest Saudi Arabia, AlUla, is a wonderful blend of natural wonders and ancient heritage) on collaborative research, and an exhibition focused on artifacts from ancient Dadan in AlUla (Ancient oasis city in KSA. <https://www.google.com>).

The Arts, Culture, & Entertainment (ACE) Committee operates under the American Chamber of Commerce of Saudi Arabia, to provide American and Saudi companies with expertise, community, and access to support the development of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's emerging creative

industries. Included industries are: domestic arts, culture, design, fashion, entertainment, cinema, music, theater, culinary arts, tourism, and film. The Committee recognizes major portion of these creative emerging markets which comprises SMEs (small & medium enterprises), and thus provides an array of impactful professional advancement programs, workshops, and community building activities to support its entrepreneurs. (<https://www.amchamksa.com/ace>).

One of the priorities of ACE Committee is to strengthen Cross-Cultural Integration: Developing cross-marketing opportunities between the members to increase market demand and commercial activity work with Saudi Arabia aims to promote culture as a way of life, and create opportunities for US and Saudi cultural exchange taking into consideration the range of traditional views.

Saudi and US cultural programs provide opportunity to bridge cultural differences between the nations. The first *Islamic Art Biennale* opened in late January in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia to visitors from around the world. With the title "*First House*," the biennale celebrates centuries-old artifacts and art practices as well as traditions inspired by the Kaaba in Mecca, Islam's first holy site. It also features contemporary artwork exploring themes of home and migration, unity and diversity, also openness and equality. Together, these works, produced by Saudis and non-Saudis, highlight the kingdom's growing cultural ties to the outside world as well as how art provides innovative pathways to connect different people and communities – including Saudis and Americans. (<https://www.amchamksa.com/ace>).

The biennales highlight the kingdom's cultural renaissance and close artistic ties with the United States. By better understanding those ties, Americans and Saudis can more clearly see the common, as well as unique, artistic influences in their two societies. Those forces reflect the work of innovative American and Saudi "networkers" – the artists who can link people and find commonalities as well as distinctive sources. The contemporary Saudi artist Abdunasser Gharem once advised, "*People need to listen to the artist.*" ("Listen to the artists: US and Saudi artists develop cultural ties." Saudi Arabia, 2023. <https://agsi.org/analysis/>).

One of the Saudis whose work *Tinari* showcased in Diriyah was *Ahmed Mater*, an artist who incorporates American and Saudi images and themes into his work and who has had solo shows at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art and the Brooklyn Museum of Art. (<https://agsi.org/analysis/>).

How to involve Arab students in the process of sharing Western aesthetics through Modern Art:

As the first steps have already been made by both countries, willing to continue their dialogue through the prism of culture, the youth development policy in Saudi should also incorporate art education, with the aim to teach them Western aesthetics through American Modern Art. The problem lies in adapting American art in a way that it respects local values while fostering global art appreciation.

Introducing a subject of Modern American Art 1920s will raise awareness among Saudi students about cultural and intellectual revival in the 1920s to 1930s. Modern art in the US during this period was diverse, encompassing abstract, expressionist, and experimental styles, often influenced by European

movements but with a distinct American focus. It aimed exploring new forms of artistic expression, at moving away from traditional, realistic styles to embrace abstract and emotional content. The roaring 20s were a time of change in America. Personal expression and the rebellious thought of the influential avant-garde movements dominated the 1920s art. The innovations occurring at this time in painting, design, architecture, fashion, crafts, and music are still recognizable and influential. The most influential styles included Art Novo, Art Deco, Surrealism, and others. (The History of Modern & Contemporary Art Movements From 1863 to Today, 2024).

The goal of teaching modern American Art focusing on the new tendencies and styles is to introduce the values, history, social relations, and people of the US to the students through diverse trends in Modern Art, leading to a better understanding of the country and people with whom the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has had political and diplomatic relations. Moreover, it will help them to identify the existing differences as well as similarities between Eastern and Western cultures and art, and ultimately support development of more robust and close relationships between two nations.

Conclusions

Saudi and U.S. mutual cultural and educational programs provide an opportunity to bridge cultural differences and show through their art how people of different cultures address common challenges. Through art, the students gain a deeper understanding of Western history and contemporary society. Integrating American Modern Art in educational institutions presents a challenge due to cultural, historical, and ideological differences between the two countries. Modern art reflects modern sensibilities; some of the most important modern artwork covers subjects and themes which assists the students better perceive the contemporary world. Moreover, it helps to overcome different cultural and religious barriers, accept the commonalities among the young generation of different nations, and encourage them to see the ways how to live in a more harmonious world.

References

Caryl, S, 2014, 1938: Oil discovery in Saudi Arabia. National Geographic Society, retrieved April 2025

<http://gulfmigration.grc.net/saudi-arabia-workers-employed-in-the-private-sector-by-country-of-citizenship-2022/>).

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/fact-sheets/2025/05/fact-sheet-president-donald-j-trump-secures-historic-600-billion-investment-commitment-in-saudi-arabia/>.

Possible U.S.-Saudi Agreements and Normalization with Israel: Considerations for Congress 2024. Congressional Research Service.

<https://oec.world/en/profile/bilateral-country/sau/partner/usa>

"Encyclopædia Britannica Online Saudi Arabia". Encyclopædia Britannica. 28 May 2023. . Retrieved April 2025

Statista, ResearchGate, *Retrieved April 2025*

<https://www.google.com/search?q=cultural+relations+between+US+and+KSA>. *Retrieved April 2025*

2025 visit of Donald Trump to the Middle East. <https://www.google.com>

Art, Culture and Entertainment in Saudi Arabia. <https://www.amchamksa.com/ace>.

Ithra | Accelerating potential, inspiring minds.

<https://www.google.com/search?q=King+Abdulaziz+Center+for+World+Culture>

Ancient oasis city in KSA. <https://www.google.com/search?q=alula+saudi+arabia&oq>

("Listen to the artists: US and Saudi artists develop cultural ties." Saudi Arabia, 2023. <https://agsi.org/analysis/>).

The History of Modern & Contemporary Art Movements From 1863 to Today, 2024 (<https://www.contemporaryartissue.com/the-history-of-modern-contemporary-art-movement>)

Beyond Reforms: Assessing the Efficacy of Post-Katrina Disaster Relief Policies in Enhancing U.S. National Security Resilience (2005–2025)

FOSTER NYASHA^{10*}

IRINA BAKHTADZE^{11*}

Abstract

This article provides a comprehensive evaluation of the long-term efficacy of U.S. disaster relief policies implemented in the wake of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, with a particular emphasis on their contributions to national security resilience over the two decades from 2005 to 2025. Drawing on key reforms such as the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (PKEMRA) of 2006, which restructured the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and integrated disaster management more deeply into the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) frameworks, the study examines improvements in interagency coordination, response capabilities, and proactive mitigation strategies. Through a mixed-methods approach, including thematic analysis of policy documents, quantitative assessments of response metrics (e.g., fatality rates, economic losses, and aid disbursement times), and comparative case studies of subsequent major disasters such as Hurricanes Sandy (2012), Harvey (2017), and Ida (2021), the research highlights both successes and persistent shortcomings. Reforms have led to faster federal responses, enhanced pre-disaster funding, and better incorporation of climate threats into national security strategies, reducing vulnerabilities to hybrid risks like terrorism amplified by natural disasters. However, challenges such as funding instability, bureaucratic silos, and inequities in aid distribution continue to undermine overall efficacy, particularly in the face of escalating climate-driven events. The article proposes a multi-dimensional resilience scorecard model to inform future policy refinements, emphasizing the need for sustained investment in equity-focused and climate-adaptive measures to bolster national security.

Keywords: Hurricane Katrina, Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (PKEMRA), FEMA reforms, disaster relief policies, national security resilience, climate threats, interagency coordination, comparative disaster analysis, equity in recovery, mitigation strategies

1. Introduction

Hurricane Katrina, which struck the Gulf Coast on August 29, 2005, remains one of the most catastrophic natural disasters in U.S. history, causing over 1,800 deaths, displacing more than a million people, and

^{10*} Ph.D. Candidate, American Studies Program, School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, International Black Sea University, Tbilisi, Georgia.

^{11*} Affiliated Prof. Dr. in American Studies, School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, International Black Sea University, Tbilisi, Georgia.

inflicting economic damages estimated at \$125 billion to \$200 billion, depending on adjusted metrics. The storm exposed profound systemic failures in U.S. disaster management, including delayed federal responses, inadequate coordination between federal, state, and local agencies, and breakdowns in critical infrastructure such as New Orleans' levee system, which led to widespread flooding and humanitarian crises. These failures not only amplified human suffering but also raised alarms about national security vulnerabilities, as disorganized responses could potentially create opportunities for exploitation by adversarial actors, including terrorism or foreign interference during chaos.

In response, Congress passed the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (PKEMRA) in 2006, which marked a pivotal shift by elevating FEMA's status within DHS, restoring its independence in key operations, and mandating a more comprehensive approach to emergency management encompassing preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation. PKEMRA also introduced provisions for pre-positioning federal assets, continuous training for surge capacity forces, and prohibitions against discrimination in aid distribution, aiming to address inequities exposed by Katrina, where low-income and minority communities suffered disproportionately. Over the ensuing two decades, additional legislation such as the Sandy Recovery Improvement Act (2013) and the Disaster Recovery Reform Act (2018) built on PKEMRA by enhancing flexibility in public assistance funding, empowering tribal nations to request declarations independently, and establishing dedicated pre-disaster mitigation funds like the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program, which allocates over \$1 billion annually for climate-resilient projects. This study assesses the efficacy of these reforms in enhancing national security resilience defined as the nation's capacity to anticipate, absorb, adapt to, and recover from disruptions while safeguarding critical assets and populations from compounded threats like climate-amplified disasters and hybrid security risks. By comparing Katrina's baseline failures with responses to Hurricanes Sandy (2012, 159 deaths, \$65 billion in damages), Harvey (2017, \$125 billion in damages), and Ida (2021, significant Northeast flooding and power outages), the analysis reveals mixed outcomes: improved federal mobilization and mitigation investments have reduced some vulnerabilities, but persistent issues like funding cuts, administrative silos, and equity gaps continue to hinder comprehensive resilience. The hypothesis posits that while post-Katrina policies have catalyzed structural improvements, their efficacy in national security contexts remains limited by inconsistent implementation and evolving climate threats.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Post-Katrina Policy Evolution and Security Integration

Existing scholarship underscores Katrina's role as a catalyst for redefining disaster relief as integral to national security, shifting from a post-9/11 terrorism focus back toward natural hazards within DHS. PKEMRA's reforms, as analyzed in Government Accountability Office (GAO) reports, addressed immediate shortcomings by centralizing FEMA's authority, mandating national preparedness plans, and in-

tegrating military roles in domestic relief, such as expanded National Guard deployments. Subsequent policies, like the 2018 Disaster Recovery Reform Act, introduced the BRIC program to fund proactive measures, such as floodplain restoration and infrastructure upgrades, reflecting a pivot to risk reduction amid climate change. However, critiques highlight rollbacks, such as those under the Trump administration, which reduced FEMA staffing and revoked flood risk standards, potentially reversing gains in preparedness.

2.2 Resilience as a National Security Imperative

Theoretical frameworks draw on resilience theory, which emphasizes adaptive capacity to shocks, and climate security paradigms that view disasters as “threat multipliers” exacerbating geopolitical instabilities. Post-Katrina, U.S. strategies, including the 2015 and 2022 National Security Strategies, explicitly linked climate-driven events to security risks, advocating for integrated approaches to mitigate hybrid threats like cyberattacks during recoveries. Literature from the National Academies stresses the need for proactive, forward-looking policies over reactive ones, noting Katrina’s influence on equity-focused reforms to build societal resilience.

2.3 Comparative Disaster Contexts

Comparative analyses reveal progress: Sandy’s response benefited from PKEMRA’s pre-positioning, with faster aid and reduced fatalities (159 vs. Katrina’s 1,833), but exposed ongoing infrastructure gaps. 35 38 39 44 Harvey demonstrated improved flood mapping but highlighted equity issues in recovery, with \$125 billion in damages echoing Katrina’s scale. Ida tested upgraded levees in New Orleans but revealed power grid vulnerabilities in the Northeast, underscoring uneven national application of reforms. NOAA’s data indicates rising disaster costs from 2005–2025, with over 300 billion-dollar events, signaling the need for adaptive policies. (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. It is a U.S. federal agency within the Department of Commerce, established in 1970, responsible for monitoring and predicting changes in the Earth’s oceans, atmosphere, and climate. NOAA provides critical data, forecasts, and warnings related to weather, including hurricanes, tornadoes, and other natural disasters, as well as managing marine resources and conducting environmental research. Its work supports disaster preparedness, climate resilience, and economic activities like fishing and shipping)

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a convergent mixed-methods design, integrating qualitative thematic analysis of policy documents and reports with quantitative evaluations of disaster metrics, such as response times, fatality rates, economic losses, and aid efficiency, drawn from databases like NOAA’s Billion-Dollar Weather Disasters and EM-DAT. Historical comparisons trace policy impacts across the 2005–2025 timeline.

3.2 Epistemological Foundations

Grounded in critical realism, the approach acknowledges the objective realities of disaster impacts while examining socially constructed policy responses and security narratives.

3.3 Case Selection Rationale

Cases were selected for their scale and temporal relevance: Katrina as the baseline, Sandy for early reform testing, Harvey for mid-term assessments, and Ida for recent evaluations, covering geographic diversity (Gulf Coast, Northeast, Texas).

3.4 Data Sources

Primary sources include FEMA reports, DHS strategies (2005–2025), GAO audits, and congressional records. Secondary sources encompass peer-reviewed studies and NGO analyses. Quantitative data covers metrics from NOAA and FEMA, including \$6.6 billion in Individual Assistance and \$17.1 billion in Public Assistance for Katrina-affected areas.

3.5 Data Analysis

Thematic coding was conducted using NVivo on over 150 documents, with statistical comparisons (e.g., 40% reduction in response times post-PKEMRA) and chronological mapping of reforms and disasters.

3.6 Validity and Reliability

Triangulation across sources ensured construct validity, with reliability bolstered by replicable metrics and transparent coding schemes.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Post-Katrina Reforms as Global Blueprint

PKEMRA centralized FEMA’s coordination, leading to a 40% drop in average response times for major disasters by enabling pre-disaster asset positioning and surge training. The 2015 National Security Strategy incorporated climate as a security threat, a direct Katrina legacy, enhancing interagency roles in hybrid scenarios.

4.2 U.S. Disaster Cooperation and Reforms Efficacy

Reforms doubled FEMA’s capacity in hurricane-prone areas and introduced equity provisions, but roll-backs (e.g., staff cuts) have led to delays, as seen in 2025 Texas floods. BRIC has funded over \$1 billion in resilient projects, improving infrastructure but not fully addressing silos.

4.3 Disaster Policy Outcomes

Outcomes include enhanced institutional capacity (e.g., regional FEMA offices) and better bilateral trust in security frameworks, but equity gaps persist, with Black homeowners three times more likely to face flooding post-reforms.

5. Challenges and Limitations

- a. Geopolitical and Climate Constraints: Escalating storms due to climate change outpace reforms, with hybrid threats limiting implementation.
- b. Dependency and Funding Risks: Reliance on federal aid and cuts (e.g., BRIC funding battles) impede long-term resilience.
- c. Data and Equity Access: Restricted classified data and biases in aid hinder transparency and equitable outcomes.

6. Recommendations

To address gaps, we propose a three-pillar resilience scorecard model:

- 1 Metrics and Auditing: Implement annual FEMA dashboards tracking response efficacy, equity metrics, and climate integration, with mandatory socioeconomic assessments.
- 2 Equity and Coordination: Consolidate programs under FEMA, elevating it to cabinet status and mandating joint DHS-DoD exercises for hybrid threats.
- 3 Investment and Adaptation: Increase BRIC funding and local incentives to avoid dependency, focusing on climate-security fusion.

Conclusion

Post-Katrina reforms, led by PKEMRA, have significantly improved U.S. disaster relief through enhanced coordination, mitigation funding, and security integration, as evidenced by reduced response times and better outcomes in Sandy, Harvey, and Ida compared to Katrina. Yet, with over 300 billion-dollar disasters since 2005 and ongoing climate threats, unlearned lessons—such as funding instability and equity failures, threaten national security resilience. A balanced, locally empowered approach, as recommended, is essential for sustaining gains and adapting to future risks.

References

- Brown, A. (2019). Post-Katrina reforms and U.S. disaster policy. *Homeland Security Journal*, 3(3), 45–62.
- Busby, J. W. (2007). *Climate change and national security: An agenda for action*. Council on Foreign Relations Press.
- Cutter, S. L., Burton, C. G., & Emrich, C. T. (2008). Disaster resilience indicators for benchmarking baseline conditions. *Journal of Homeland Security and Emergency Management*, 5(1), Article 1.
- Dalby, S. (2013). Climate change and the insecurity frame. *Geopolitics*, 18(3), 635–658.
- Department of Homeland Security. (2023). *National security strategy*. <https://www.dhs.gov/national-security>
- FEMA. (2010). *Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act implementation report*. <https://www.fema.gov>
- Garcia, M. (2018). The PKEMRA legacy: Centralizing disaster response. *Public Policy Review*, 2(2), 89–104.
- Kapucu, N., & Liou, K. T. (2014). *Disaster and development: Examining global issues and cases*. Springer.
- Smith, J. (2017). Hurricane Katrina and the redefinition of U.S. security. *Security Studies*, 3(3), 77–94.
- Taylor, K. (2021). Military roles in disaster relief: Post-Katrina insights. *Security and Civil Affairs*, 2(2), 65–82.
- Tierney, K. (2014). *The social roots of risk: Producing disasters, promoting resilience*. Stanford University Press.
- U.S. Government Accountability Office. (2008). *Actions Taken to Implement the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act*. <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-09-59r>
- Waugh, W. L., Jr. (2006). The political costs of failure in the Katrina and Rita disasters. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 604(1), 10–25. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716205284912>

A Comparative Analysis of Mainstream Media Influence in Georgia and the United States

BARBARE BAKRADZE^{12*}

In today's world, it is hard to trust a specific media outlet and not check the source of the information through other networks. We gather all significant data through various media platforms. Although free media is a characteristic of freedom and democracy, why do news outlets betray the public's trust and subjectively promote the ideologies they profit from? The press has become an entertainment, a commercialised business selling not very important content (Taibbi, 2021). Mainstream media influences elections in various complex ways. However, how media outlets operate in a country with their methods of news coverage differs greatly.

This article investigates and compares the U.S. and Georgia in political and democratic contexts, and the convergences and divergences in media landscapes operating in the indicated environment. Democracies create a healthy and competitive setting for media outlets to operate without government intervention. Georgia, a post-Soviet country, gained freedom and independence not too long ago. Although democratic values and western aspirations are firm, its private and public institutions still face challenges from the neighbouring hostile nation. In contrast, the United States represents the contemporary model of democracy where freedom of speech and individual rights are respected on the highest level. Understanding these matters assists us in evaluating the given country's political climate and press freedom index.

1.1. Political Bias and Editorial Policies

1.1.1. Georgia

During the 2024 parliamentary elections, the Georgian political and media environment became extremely polarised. Media outlets emerged as direct platforms of certain political parties they were affiliated with. Mainstream media outlets: online media, press, television, and radio played a crucial role in portraying certain political parties' ideologies and connecting them to their electoral. Pro-government and critical media transformed Georgian social and political norms through the shift in their news coverage, the spread of misinformation and propaganda, and the asking of critical questions. During the pre-election period and beyond, critical media presented the only way to let the general public's voice be heard. It became a vital tool for Georgia's international partners to evaluate objectively the critical situation in the country and listen to people's aspirations of Western integration, which contrasted with the ruling party's messages. The critical media, such as Mtavari TV, TV Pirveli, and Formula TV, actively dis-

^{12*} Senior Student of American Studies Program, School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, International Black Sea University, Tbilisi, Georgia.

cussed the growing authoritarian tendencies in the country, corruption, and cases of voter suppression, resulting in an unfair pre-election environment. Electoral did not have access to this kind of information through government-aligned media platforms. Imedi TV, Public Broadcaster, and Rustavi 2 tended to portray negatively the opposition parties and their supporters, accusing them of betraying Georgian values and ideologies. They provided minimal investigative reporting on faults of government officials and lawmakers, and used all resources, whether it was the spread of propaganda and disinformation, to present the ruling party in a positive light. The dual media ecosystem further polarised Georgian society and contributed to the public distrust towards the media.

To understand the politics behind the editorial policy of the media outlet, we need to scrutinise its ownership and political ties. The Public Broadcaster is funded by the government, thus by the people. Hence, they are obligated to provide objective information to the public without aligning themselves or showing public support for any political parties. However, state-owned media are directly under the government's control and endorse the ruling party through their ways of reporting (n.d., 2012). Before 2019, under the proprietorship of Davit Dvali and Director General Nika Gvaramia, the outlet embodied a critical news channel opposing the ruling party. However, after the years of legal dispute, Kibar Khalvashi became the new owner of the company, appointing his lawyer, Paata Selia, as the new Director General (n.d., 2019). These changes in the news channel's ownership drastically changed the editorial policies and ways of coverage of the entity. Today, Rustavi 2 is considered a pro-government media outlet, which has become a vital tool for the ruling party's election campaign. This example precisely defines how much the ownership can alter the core values of the media outlet.

These divides in the mainstream media's news coverage, validating and covering news with opposite perspectives, prevented a consensus narrative formation in public. Government-aligned media: Imedi TV, Pirveli TV, and Rustavi 2 emphasised national stability and security through scrutinising the West and promoting Russian propaganda regarding the war in Ukraine and portraying Western states as enemies. They actively invited Georgian Dream officials for interviews and excluded opposition party leaders from discussions, leaving the public in the absence of conflicting evidence. In contrast, opposition-aligned and critical media engaged in debates with opposition party leaders and civil society, excluding ruling party officials, while promoting the general public's concerns and ideas. These channels emphasised the importance of the upcoming elections in terms of civic suppression, democratic crisis, and fostered public discourse, which increased voter turnout and civic engagement in political discourse.

1.1.2. United States

In the United States, there is a more mature democracy and established institutions than in Georgia. However, during the 2024 presidential elections, the ideological divide between mainstream media platforms was evident. Political and media polarisation in American society was extremely high, especially as the far-right movement's popularity increased drastically. Right-wing media outlets such as Fox News concentrated on immigration and economic recession with anti-establishment rhetoric. Reporters most-

ly covered increased numbers of illegal immigrants, their crimes, and emphasised the threat they posed to American society. Additionally, they would stress the prices of goods and inflation, and dissatisfied the middle class. Through these selective and biased reporting, conservative media platforms opposed Biden's administration and increased discontent among the conservative electorate. The political bias of the entity had a direct impact on its editorial policies and news coverage.

On the other hand, CNN, MSNBC, and The New York Times displayed liberal media outlets promoting democracy preservation, minority rights, and environmental policy. During the 2024 election coverage, they often criticised Trump's first term in office regarding negative effects on the environment, human rights, and healthcare. Their editorial bias was linked to target demographics and advertising appeal. The ongoing legal disputes against Donald Trump granted a wider scope to those platforms to combat Trump's campaign and discredit the former President with an emotional aspect in conservatives' eyes. Contrary to Fox News, liberal media outlets were more likely to objectively criticise democrats and faults of the Biden administration, though they principally aimed to discredit conservatives. Through these selective framing and emotionally driven headlines, mainstream media contributed to the increase of political polarisation in the U.S. In both countries, Georgia and the U.S., mass media abused their power and influenced electoral choice and perception in the 2024 elections.

1.2. Ownership and Government Influence

1.2.1. Georgia

The Georgian business environment is not fair or accessible for the majority of the population. Large corporations, especially media outlets, are controlled by business elites with political motives and strong connections with political leaders. The owners of the mainstream media have a clear agenda for the outlet's editorial policies and their target audience. Shareholders, connected to the ruling party, Georgian Dream, give direct orders to their subordinates regarding what stories they should cover and in which context they should frame it. The editorial policy of pro-government media outlets is aimed at total support of the government, dissemination of propaganda and disinformation, and discrediting opposing authorities. In Georgia, Imedi Holding, which encompasses Imedi TV, Maestro, and GDS, is one of the biggest media corporations with significant financial resources and leading television ratings. According to Irakli Rukhadze, one of the Imedi TV owners, during the pre-election period, his mission, and therefore that of his broadcast station, was to ensure that the GD would secure the upcoming election (n.d., 2024). Furthermore, the owners of POSTV, Rustavi 2, and Public Broadcaster have very close ties with Bidzina Ivanishvili and other high officials of the ruling party. These TV stations actively engaged in the propaganda and disinformation spread by the GD, elucidating that they were under the direct government influence.

Over the past few years, Georgia's media environment has been deteriorating, especially for the critical and independent outlets that are not affiliated with the ruling party. Since the government adopted the Russian Law and other anti-democratic legislations, the working process of journalists of critical media became dangerous. Since 2021, journalists have experienced harsh treatment, slander, and harassment

from public sector officers. In 2021, during a rally encouraged by the authorities, more than 50 media professionals were injured, resulting in one operator's death. In 2023, Transparency International Georgia documented 45 cases of harassment and violence against journalists and interference in their work, often resulting in their arrests. There have been cases when Georgian officials did not let foreign journalists with a critical attitude towards the ruling government to enter the country. As of last year, an Azerbaijani investigative journalist, Afgan Sadigov, was arrested in Georgia on political motives, remaining in extradition detention to date. These and even more data on repressions against the media and free speech in Georgia illuminate the increase of government control on private and public institutions, and dangers posed to critical media.

1.2.2. United States

In the United States, the mainstream media platforms are owned by the major conglomerates such as Comcast (NBC), Disney (ABC), and News Corp (Fox). The private entities combine various major and local news channels to reach the masses. These large corporations have close ties with certain political parties and officials, which is evident in their editorial policies and biased reporting. Furthermore, they often opt for prioritising the company's interests and revenue growth by exerting influence over news reporters and producers through direct control and commercial oversight (Lloyd, 2023). The effects of the targeted and selective reporting might be severely damaging to one's reputation. Although in countries like Georgia, independent and critical media can be controlled and harassed due to absence of laws and checks and balances system for the government, in the United States, the First Amendment to the Constitution protects the freedom of speech, work of critical media, and television programming, and prevents censorship and government restrictions on speech (n.d., 2021). However, news agencies become under the indirect influence of lobbying and access journalism, leading to biased reporting. This does not apply to private companies and social media platforms that can manage and set their own policies on speech. Private companies hold the power to create cultural and organisational standards that embody the values of the owners. Gradually, these cultural dynamics adjust into the work culture of the company, making the news professionals within the organisation follow the directives of the shareholders.

In the modern world, people get news through their phone screens. They follow mainstream media accounts on social media and learn about new developments in the world. Companies such as Meta and Google have significant power in content visibility, increasing media influence. According to the Media Research Center, the Google search favoured Kamala Harris during the 2024 presidential election, placing her campaign website in more prominent locations than the official site of her Republican rival, Donald Trump (Zilber, 2024). These types of actions of large media outlets, focusing on profits, using technical advancements, and showing public endorsements to certain candidates in the elections, induce discussions about whether the media serve democratic functions or corporate interests. Consequently, electoral trust in media and private enterprises diminishes, contributing to the political polarisation, low public trust and electoral dissatisfaction.

1.3. The Contribution of Mainstream Media to the Increasing Political Polarization and the Trust Levels Among the Voters

1.3.1. Political Polarisation

Political polarisation emerges through divergence of political attitudes into extreme ideological and philosophical differences. The concept is often discussed in democratic systems, where the presence of multiple political parties fuels tension among the electorate regarding various political issues, policies, and propositions. As citizens become more mature and inherent in their political beliefs, they often tend to reflect the party ideologies they identify with while making important decisions, such as voting, rather than prioritising their personal interests. Hence, their voting patterns are more beneficial to the political party's success rather than their own interests (n.d., 2025). The same patterns were visible during the election period in Georgia and the United States, where the political environment was extremely polarised, followed by the voters, whose main interest was to support the political party they were affiliated with rather than focusing on their well-being. The environment became more polarised by the contribution of the mass media.

In Georgia, political polarisation presents Georgian Dream's vital tool to cause divisions in the public and weaken its power. This strategy has been implemented for a decade. Even in 2021, GD officials have mentioned UNM or their actions in 80% of their press briefings. Furthermore, 92% of them can be evaluated as a deliberate move to diminish opposition parties, especially UNM, in the electorate's eyes (Samkharadze, 2022). Since 2022, levels of polarisation have significantly increased because of the government's shift toward harsh anti-Western rhetoric and a more appeasing stance on Russia. Government-affiliated media outlets acted as direct proponents of these narratives. In response, anti-government media criticised and fact-checked these channels and GD officials for spreading propaganda and jeopardising our national sovereignty. As a result, political polarisation grew further, and so did divisions among the electorate and opposing media outlets.

In the United States, the same developments were visible concerning the increase of polarisation and divisions between Democrats and Republicans. During last years, conservatism became more radicalised, deepening divisions among the people with different beliefs. Social and health issues such as LGBTQ rights, abortion, access to reproductive health care, and immigration, even deepened divisions in society. It is necessary to point out that these concerns were raised by Trump and his fellow Republicans. As far-right movements expand in the United States, the more polarised the society becomes. Similarly, as Georgian Dream, Trump has mentioned and blamed the Biden administration for various things. During his re-election campaign, he declared that he would launch an investigation into President Biden and his family once he returned to office (Pengelly, 2024). The public hatred and resentment against the political opponents significantly impacted the electorate and reciprocated feelings. Therefore, the way political leaders present themselves and the way the media covers them have the power to unite the public or divide and polarise them.

1.3.2. Trust in Media

Extreme polarisation in the political and media environment decreases citizens' trust in media and government institutions. As people became aware of the media's biased and selective news coverage techniques, their reliance on media platforms decreased. According to the Caucasus Barometer data, only one-fourth of the public claims have trust in media. If in 2013, 12% of respondents expressed distrust towards media, by 2024, it had tripled to 36%. As the survey suggests, in 2024, Imedi TV led with 22% of trust, while 2% trusted the Public Broadcaster, and 8% - Rustavi 2. As indicated, the ones who trusted the above-mentioned channels were Georgian Dream Supporters. On the other hand, TV Pirveli garnered 6%, Mtavari Arkhi 8%, and TV Pirveli only 2%. Respondents who do not trust pro-government media outlets say they do not support the ruling party (Atchaidze, 2024). The data shows Georgians' low trust rates in the media system. The government's and various other powers' intervention in media organisations' domestic affairs to influence them to breach the ethical code and subjectively publish stories aggravates media and political polarisation and decreases the public's trust in these institutions.

In the United States, the media environment was also highly polarised. Democrats and Republicans expose themselves to selective and biased news coverage, leaving few options to independents or those who seek objective and fair information. According to the Gallup Poll, Americans show record-low trust in the mass media, with 31% having great confidence in the media to cover the news accurately, 33% of Americans having not very much confidence, and 36% having no trust in the media. Furthermore, 54% of Democrats, 27% of Independents, and 12% of Republicans show a great trust in the media. The difference emerges among Democrats by age groups, as young Democrats trust the media less than older Democrats do (Brenan, 2024).

1.4. Legitimacy of Elections and Media Narratives

Georgian parliamentary elections took place on October 26, 2024. The extremely polarised and tense pre-election environment provoked uncertainties about how fairly the election would be conducted and whether votes would be accurately counted. The opposition parties, with President Salome Zourabichvili's leadership, launched an active campaign to work with civil society and international organisations to gain supporters, raise awareness about how fair elections are held, and prepare for the upcoming challenges. However, on the election day, critical media and election observers reported numerous violations of conduct. Reporters were not allowed inside the voting rooms to document the cases of misconduct. Although the voting system was digital and there was a minimal chance of fraudulent imitation, the ruling party formulated mechanisms to manipulate people and affect their choices before they voted.

Plenty of international and observational organisations reported cases of fabrications and called on the government to plan new elections. For Georgians, this election was symbolic of peacefully choosing the country's Euro-Atlantic integration and changing the government. However, after complex schemes, Georgian Dream managed to rig the elections. After people got the final results of the election and officially heard the majority was won the ruling party, opposition parties immediately called the election

rigged and refused to recognise the new government. Massive protests in the streets continued to show Georgian Dream people's disobedience and lack of fear against their communist style repressions.

According to the OSCE/ODIHR report, assessing the Georgian 2024 election, although the electorate had a wide range of choices and the process was technically well-administered, it took place in a highly polarised and unbalanced media environment. The ruling party gained from extensive coverage of pro-government media outlets, while opposition-affiliated and critical media faced intimidation and limited access, with restrictions to operate freely and professionally report the true stories (n.d., 2024). Although this report criticised Georgian Dream and questioned whether voters were intimidated or under pressure while casting their ballots, Georgian Dream's PM Irakli Kobakhidze thanked OSCE/ODIHR for objectively assessing the elections in Georgia despite the provocations from the opposition, and claimed that the report positively evaluated the elections as free and competitive. MP Shalva Papuashvili also devoted a briefing to the report and repeated the same evaluations as Kobakhidze did. In addition, he compared the severity of Georgia's assessment criteria towards the U.S. and criticised the organisation to align the assessment to Georgia's context (n.d., 2024).

Pro-government media outlets instantly recognised and congratulated Georgian Dream officials for their victory. Critical and independent media outlets called the elections rigged, the government illegitimate, and have not recognised them as Georgia's officially elected authority. This decision, not to recognise the illegitimate government, has been one of the main motivators of the civil society protesting every day since the elections to demand new fair elections. Journalists were the ones who personally witnessed and documented all the illegal activities on election day and beyond. According to the new research, "Media Environment 2024: The Fight for Trust and Freedom in Georgia," because of the Foreign Agents Law, there is increased aggression against journalists by the ruling party, particularly in the regions. The study notes that the withdrawal of media donors from Georgia, because of the newly adopted legislation and regulations, has forced local media to prioritise survival over development. The research states that because of the new legislations and dysfunctional environment in the country, journalists' and their family members' safety are at risk (n.d., 2025).

In the United States, the 2024 presidential election was conducted in a quiet democratic environment without major incidents. Although during previous presidential elections, Trump lost the Oval Office, he did not accept the defeat and encouraged his supporters to protest. However, because he did not have the external support, strong legal groundwork to pursue the accusations, and lost his momentum, the Supreme Court denied his last lawsuit in 2021 (Durkee, 2021). During the 2024 presidential elections, Trump secured his victory and returned to the White House. Defeated former Vice President Kamala Harris admitted her defeat and recognised Trump's presidency by congratulating him. Because Harris conceded the election, and mainstream media named Trump as a winner, he got legitimacy. American mainstream media has the power to count the votes and privately call the results. They gather all the official reports by individual states, use live official results along with exit polls, voter surveys and deep knowledge of election rules and trends to quickly let Americans know about the results of the election

(Agius, 2024). In this sense, American media holds huge power over legitimising the election process and its results.

As the media and general public expected a very close race for the Oval Office, Trump's victory still came as a surprise for many, including the media. The following examples of how various media outlets reacted to his re-election signify public attitudes and polarisation. "His Win Opens an Era of Uncertainty for the Nation," "Donald Trump, the twice impeached, criminally convicted former president who survived two assassination attempts during the 2024 campaign, has been voted back into the White House," "Trump vows to usher in 'golden age of America' after projected presidential triumph." Elections followed by the Trump's victory and these not very heart-warming reactions revealed substantial divisions among the American society (Desk, 2024).

Trump's new term has brought liberal media outlets fear for their future and resources. MSNBC and CNN, two very vocal liberal outlets that critically covered Trump's first term and the pre-election campaign, are now implementing some boundaries, stopping to show any extreme disapproval of the President (Helmore, 2024). These media organisations create public and political discourse throughout the whole country. When these large corporations, along with others, fear Trump's next moves in terms of business decisions or their corporate owners' interests, then there should be bigger conversations around freedom of speech and business. During these important times, mainstream media outlets should be extremely aware of what they ideas they develop and the way they present it. Continuous unethical, biased and selective reporting will further polarise American and Georgian societies, which will bring more challenges in the future.

References

- Agius, M. W. (2024). *Why media outlets declare US election results*. DW.
- Atchaidze, M. (2024). Tracking Georgia's Media, Internet Usage and Perceptions Over a Decade. *Caucasus Analytical Digest*, 3-10.
- Brenan, M. (2024). *Americans' Trust in Media Remains at Trend Low*. Gallup.
- Desk, T. W. (2024). *2024 Presidential Elections: How Top U.S. Media Outlets Covered Donald Trump's Victory*. Times of India.
- Durkee, A. (2021). *Supreme Court Kills Last Trump Election Lawsuit*. Forbes.
- Helmore, E. (2024). *'An existential battle': how Trump's win is shifting the US media landscape*. New York: The Guardian.
- Lloyd, T. (2023, December 20). *From Pluralism to Consolidation: Analyzing the Impact of Media Ownership Consolidation on the Diversity of Opinions and Journalistic Integrity*. Retrieved from The Media Guide.
- n.d. (2012). *Media and Elections*. Retrieved from The Electoral Knowledge Network: <https://aceproject.org/main/english/me/index.htm>
- n.d. (2019). *Kibar Khalvashi Registered as Rustavi 2 TV Owner*. Retrieved from Civil Georgia.
- n.d. (2021). *First Amendment and Censorship*. Retrieved from American Library Association .
- n.d. (2024). *Domestic and International Reactions to OSCE/ODIHR Final Report on Georgia*. Civil Georgia.
- n.d. (2024). *Georgia's elections marred by an uneven playing field, pressure and tension, but voters were offered a wide choice: international observers*. OSCE.
- n.d. (2024). *The State of Democracy in 2020-2024: Corruption, Judiciary, Parliament, and Media*. Tbilisi: Transparency International Georgia.
- n.d. (2025). *Political Polarization*. Retrieved from EBSCO: <https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/political-science/political-polarization>
- n.d. (2025). *Study Speaks of Unprecedented Media Repression in 2024 Amid Foreign Agents Law*. Civil Georgia.
- Pengelly, M. (2024). *Trump to seek federal investigations of Biden if re-elected, report says*. The Guardian.
- Samkharadze, N. (2022). *What Does the Polarization in Georgia Look Like and*. Tbilisi: Georgian Institute of Politics.
- Zilber, A. (2024, September 26). *Google search favors Kamala Harris over Trump, puts articles with 'leftist bias' atop GOP nominee's site: study*. Retrieved from New York Post: <https://nypost.com/2024/09/26/business/google-search-favors-kamala-harris-over-donald-trump-study>

The influence of American culture on the Georgian media space

TSITSINO BUKIA^{13*}

abstract

American culture was made accessible to Georgian audiences through the media. The first translations of American literature appeared in the Georgian magazines "Mnatobi" and "Tsiskari" at the beginning of the 20th century. Soviet censorship, through selective filtering, popularized texts that coincided with socialist ideas. In the post-Soviet period, American literature entered Georgia without restrictions and introduced global literary themes.

The appearance of American media formats and films on Georgian television screens contributed to the structural and content transformation of the Georgian television industry.

The adaptation of American television formats on Georgian television became particularly relevant in the 2000s. Music and reality shows, such as "Got Talent" and "Dancing with the Stars," sitcom "Friends", were broadcast for Georgian audiences in a form adapted to local realities. These projects influenced the standards and quality of television production and established modern production and visual techniques.

The modernization of the cinema network and the synchronization of their work with international premieres of American films contribute to the establishment of a global film culture in Georgia.

The influence of American media formats and films is noticeable both in the aesthetic preferences of the audience and in local production, which often incorporates elements of Western narratives and standards.

Keywords: American culture, influence, American media format, Georgian media space

Introduction

The media in Georgia has always played the role of disseminating culture. Writing about political issues was first restricted due to the interests of the Russian royal court, then due to Soviet censorship. Therefore, Georgian publicists understood that their function should be to spread education and culture to the broad masses, to provide a kind of enlightenment. Ilia Chavchavadze set this goal for journalism as early as the 19th century - "The primary duty of a magazine and newspaper should be to spread learning and knowledge." (Chavchavadze, 1953)

^{13*} Assoc. Prof. Dr., Caucasus International University, Tbilisi, Georgia.

The ongoing processes in the world, the globalization characteristic of the modern world, and technical progress have made genres, forms, and means of self-expression similar. This trend is also known as Americanization, which indicates the expansion and influence of American culture.

American culture has invaded Georgian reality through mass communication. This is the diversity of works, genres, and formats that have influenced modern Georgian culture through media intervention and have had an impact on the tastes of readers and viewers - the mass audience.

Literature Review

American culture entered the Soviet space in a dosed and selective manner. (Manana Shamilishvili, 2020)

Censorship allowed the translation of works only by writers who wrote on topics acceptable to the Soviet regime. (Kopaliani)

In the 1920s and 1930s, the first attempts to translate English-language authors appeared in the Soviet Union. Mark Twain was translated, and later: Dreiser, Jack London, John Reed, Harriet Beecher Stowe. They especially liked those writers who were critical of the capitalist system. In the 1970s and 1980s, the works of Ernest Hemingway, Ray Bradbury, Theodore Dreiser, Faulkner, and others were translated. The period before the collapse of the Soviet Union was distinguished by special loyalty, at which time censorship was lifted and gave way not only to texts approved by ideology, but also to all valuable works. (Churadze, 2020)

The Georgian public became acquainted with American literature through print media. The literary magazine "Tsiskari" published Mark Twain's works in the 1920s. In the 1950s and 1960s, the magazine "Mnatobi" offered its readers the works of Jack London, Theodore Dreiser, and Ernest Hemingway. Later, they, along with other authors, also reached the readers in the form of separate publications.

Following the development of the television industry, American media production began to enter the post-Soviet space en masse.

Nana Iobashvili, in her dissertation "Structural-Semantic and Linguistic-Pragmatic Peculiarities of American and Georgian Entertainment Talk Shows", draws attention to the fact that America first introduced the talk show genre in the 1930s. The majority of Georgian talk shows are analogues of the American one. (Iobashvili, 2023)

The talk show consists of three parts: introduction, interview and conclusion. The main part is built on the principle of question and answer. It is the most popular and, in fact, unrivaled.

The end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the 21st century were distinguished by the expansion of television and cinema. The abundance of American formats in the Georgian media space is especially striking. The work "American Talk Show and Georgian Analogues" emphasizes the

democratic nature of the genre. "After the collapse of the Soviet Union, substantive reforms demanded a transformation of the television form," this format showed the advantages of a pluralistic approach, therefore it turned out to be a new fruit for Georgian society and this led to the emergence of analogues of American talk shows in the Georgian media space. (Marine Lomidze, 2016)

Another American television genre that has become a part of the Georgian television industry, is the reality show. The first reality show was "An American Family," which aired on PBS in 1973. Jeffrey Ruoff's research "An American Family: A Televised Life" examines in detail its cultural, social impact, and significance in the development of modern reality television. Ruoff notes that this show was one of the first to show real people in real situations. (Ruoff, 2001)

Claire Palay's work discusses the first reality show, in which she shows the public's reactions to the program. She writes that the show reflected not only family life, but also the processes of feminist and social change taking place in America in the 1970s. American culture was able to effectively export these ideas to the rest of the world. (Palay, 2012)

The history of reality shows in Georgia began with "Jeobar". The projects were implemented here: "The X Factor Georgia", "Georgia's Got Talent", "Dancing with the Stars Georgia"; etc., which indicates the popularity of this American format in the Georgian media scene.

James Carey put forward an alternative to the prevailing theory of communication - "transmission in the form of a ritual model". He interpreted culture as a process, although it can also refer to an attribute - their physical environment, instruments, religion, customs, etc. are evident. According to James Carey, it became apparent that a process was underway that could be called the globalization of culture - "internationalization" (it is referred to as "Americanization"); in terms of identity, media texts are often globalized, even if they are created at the local or national level and in languages. (McQuail, 2010)

Research Methods

The research used content analysis and comparative analysis methods, which were found to be the most appropriate for this context and made it possible to obtain relevant results.

Discussion

Elite culture is a collective name for the original treasure created by a nation. It is rarely influenced, and the older it is, the more resistant it is to external factors.

Mass culture - this term refers to superficial, popular, best-selling, marketable products and mainly refers to content distributed through mass media. External influences have a strong impact on mass culture and can cause fundamental changes.

Due to historical circumstances, American culture entered Georgia thanks to mass communication means. First American elite culture and then American mass culture. However, the media were the conduit and importer of both types of content.

Despite Soviet censorship, in the twentieth century it became possible to translate works that were socially close to the messages of the Communist Party into Georgian. In the post-Soviet period, the area in this regard expanded. Technical progress and Internet technology have opened the door wide to American (and not only) culture.

At first there was print media: books, newspapers and magazines, and later radio and television. It should also be said that cinema, as one of the means of mass communication, became an active importer of American culture. World premieres of Hollywood productions became available to the Georgian audience in parallel with the film event (not through Russia).

Television formats created by American media appeared in Georgian reality mainly after the establishment of commercial channels. "Rustavi 2" and "Imedi" offered the public various shows, such as "Got Talent" and "Dancing with the Stars," "The Voice", etc.

Cultural expansion had its positive and negative sides. On the one hand, it is important for our country to keep up with world news and become an adequate receiver of 21st century content, but it is also worth noting that simple and direct delivery of formats can be incomprehensible to the audience. Adaptation and adjustment to specific realities are a necessary element. However, it is also worth considering that the creators of the format require compliance with its rules. Not to mention the fact that simply copying formats produced by others will not develop Georgian television, learning from the experience of others, refining taste and creating one's own projects is the main challenge, and this is a rather difficult task for the Georgian television industry. However, there are several projects in this direction that are worth noting. For example, the program "Book Shelf".

Cultural expansion is a well-known phenomenon in history and is characterized by certain peculiarities. Hollywood productions, American TV formats and other components of culture are so large-scale and well-thought-out that competing with them is a difficult task for any financially and intellectually strong country.

Georgian culture is unique, so literature, painting, architecture, folklore, music, dance, cinematography can exist freely from any influence and use all types of cultural expansion only for development and intellectual growth, in order to independently continue the process of creating something new in its own way. But, unfortunately, we cannot say the same about mass media. It directly transfers foreign formats and creates Georgian analogues, which further distances it from producing its own exclusive content.

As a positive example, we can cite one rare exception. The Georgian analogue of the sitcom "Friends" "In The Middle Of The City" deserves special mention. It was produced by the studio "Night Show". And it aired on "Imedi" for 6 years. From September 23, 2007 to July 9, 2013, a total of 16 seasons were

released. The project was renewed on October 13, 2014, under the name "10 Years Later" and ended in March 2017. The film crew underwent training at "Warner Brothers Studios" and obtained the right to create a format. The project manager was Davit Gogichaishvili, and the executive producer was Irakli Kakabadze. In 2019, "Imedi" again aired the series and again received high ratings. Which means that "In The Middle Of The City" is an equally beloved, understandable, and acceptable sitcom for viewers of all generations.

For two decades, its re-watching by audiences of any age, on the air or on the Internet, the repetition of phrases and jokes from this film, the unconditional and unwavering rating, the positive attitude expressed by the audience are an indication that in this case we are not dealing with a simple copying of the format. The creators of "In The Middle Of The City" were able to combine the rules proposed by the creators of a specific sitcom with the Georgian character. They had been taken the American format and make absolutely Georgian content from it. The characters in it, messages, character, humor - all the details are so understandable and embedded in the context that they are perceived naturally and ideally.

In fact, only the means of depiction are the same _The built-in audience, which enters with applause and feedback, the narrative of the relationship between friends and the bar scenes are offered in the style of the American "Friends", but everything else: humor, phrases, situation, characters - is very close and understandable to the Georgian audience. This is precisely what determines the immense popularity of the series.

Other sitcom-type projects were also broadcast on Georgian channels, but they did not enjoy such popularity. Based on this example, it is clear that it is always better to take into account the specific context and environment than to blindly transfer a foreign format. All this must be adapted to the needs and demands of a specific audience, and only then does it achieve an incredible result - the unconditional love of the audience.

Conclusion

Thus, the research showed us that American culture entered Georgia through the efforts of mass media. It did not have a worldview-causing, fundamental, fundamental change in elite culture, but rather shared its charm and aesthetics and helped to refine the ability to express and perceive (as in general, the culture of all countries enriches the common human treasure, and those who become acquainted with it develop more). But it had a strong and fundamental impact on mass culture - on the content distributed through mass communication media, which was expressed in copying American formats (talk shows, reality shows, TV series). In this regard (with the exception of rare exceptions (we can name "My wife's friends"), all formats offered by Georgian televisions are either American, or their Georgian analogue, or are greatly influenced by it. As a positive example of analogy, we can name "In The Middle Of The City", in which the creators breathed Georgian spirit into the American format.

As a recommendation, it can be noted that copying and importing American formats, if not accompanied

by locally produced content, will significantly hinder the development of Georgian television. It is necessary not to imitate, but to learn from the experience of others and develop our own creative approaches.

References

Chavchavadze, I. (1953). Preface to Iveria.

Churadze, E. (2020). Translation Policy of the 1950-60s in Georgia and its Influence on Translation of Ernest Hemingway's Fiction. Leeds Working Papers. Retrieved from https://www.latl.leeds.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/49/2020/12/Churadze_2020.pdf

Iobashvili, N. (2023). Structural-semantic and linguistic-pragmatic features of American and Georgian entertainment talk shows.

Kopaliani, A. (n.d.). Censorship allowed the translation of works only by writers who wrote on topics acceptable to the Soviet regime. Retrieved from <https://www.spekali.tsu.ge/index.php/en/article/viewArticle/10/97>

Manana Shamilishvili, M. T. (2020). Introduction to Journalism and Mass Communication. Tbilisi: Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University Publishing House.

Marine Lomidze, K. K. (2016). American Talk Show and Georgian Analogues. Issues in American Studies.

McQuail, D. (2010). Mass Communication Theory". Sage.

Palay, C. (2012). „The Loud Liberation: Family, Feminism, and the First Reality Television Show“. Retrieved from <https://digital.lib.washington.edu/researchworks/items/32006ce5-5545-410e-8af6-f60e9e6c319b>

Ruoff, J. (2001). „An American Family: A Televised Life“.

Nobel Peace Prize – Legacy of the US Presidents

MAIA KUTATELADZE^{14*}

Abstract

The Nobel Peace Prize, as intended by its creator Alfred Nobel, aims to celebrate those who strive to benefit humanity, moving beyond the destructive legacy often associated with his inventions. Our exploration of this prestigious award, particularly through the lens of U.S. Presidents who have received it, reveals a nuanced understanding of “peace” which is not just the absence of war, but a complex interplay of justice, freedom, and development, constantly challenged by ongoing global conflicts and hidden forms of violence like economic sanctions or climate injustice. Looking at U.S. presidential laureates – Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Jimmy Carter, and Barack Obama – we see a recurring commitment to global diplomacy and a vision extending beyond American borders. Each president, despite their unique circumstances and the controversies surrounding their awards, aimed to foster international cooperation, build institutions for lasting peace, and advocate for diplomatic solutions. Their Nobel recognition underlines US leaders pursue to global peace, reshapes meaning of peace and reminds us that working for peace is a long and often tough journey.

Key words: Peace, Nobel peace prize, US president, controversy.

Introduction:

The Nobel Peace Prize, established through the will of Alfred Nobel, stands as a global recognition for those who dedicate their lives to the betterment of humanity. Awarded annually in various fields, it particularly highlights individuals and organizations striving for peace. The concept of peace itself is deeply complex, encompassing far more than just the absence of war; it involves justice, freedom, and the ability for people to thrive.

While humanity continuously strives for a more peaceful world, numerous challenges persist, making the achievement of true global peace an ongoing endeavor (Zapatero, 2025). Exploring the essence of the Nobel Peace Prize and the multifaceted pursuit of peace reveals how certain U.S. Presidents have contributed to this grand objective and left their unique mark on its legacy.

The act of granting Nobel Prize shows how much U.S. presidents can shape the world. They act as key peacemakers and inspiring leaders. Looking at their work reminds us that reaching peace is a long and

^{14*} Invited Lecturer, International Black Sea University, Tbilisi, Georgia.

often hard journey. Understanding the core meaning of the Nobel Peace Prize and the difficult journey toward world peace reveals how some U.S. Presidents have helped achieve this big goal, leaving their own distinct, and sometimes debated, impact.

What is peace?

What is peace – this is the questions which people find very hard to answer.

Generally, peace can be understood as: *“the elimination of war is peace and the social contract between two different groups is also peace. Peace is easy to understand but difficult to define.”* (Mustafa, Jamshed, Nawaz, Arslan, & Ahmad, 2023, p. 853). However, the answer depends on many things, on many angles, on the views how we view peace. Peace can be defined as something that brings calmness in life. It can be peaceful state of mind or peaceful surrounding that makes people feel relaxed and harmonious. Throughout the history a lot of leaders tried to define the meaning of peace mainly by their actions and ideas. Some of them even provided the definition of peace and those quotes describes the aspiration of those people and focus on their actions and commitment. There are some of them below.

- *“Peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal.” – Martin Luther King Jr. (Religious leader, activist, 1929 – 1968, USA) (O’Connor, 2024)*
- *“Peace is an environment where conflicts are resolved without violence, where people are free, not exploited, living so they can grow to their full potential.” – Gerard A. Vanderhaar (Writer, educator, 1931-2005, USA) (O’Connor, 2024)*
- *“If you want peace, work for justice.” – Pope Paul VI (Religious leader, 1897 – 1978, Italy) (O’Connor, 2024)*
- *“You can’t separate peace from freedom because no one can be at peace unless he has his freedom.” – Malcolm X (Activist, religious leader, 1925 – 1965, USA) (O’Connor, 2024)*
- *“Peace cannot exist without justice, justice cannot exist without fairness, fairness cannot exist without development, development cannot exist without democracy, democracy cannot exist without respect for the identity of worth of cultures and peoples.” – Rigoberta Menchu (Activist, 1953 – present, Guatemala) (O’Connor, 2024)*

As we can see peace is frequently identified with justice, fairness and with development, peace is not the only thing that implies nonviolence, but it is also something that gives people opportunity to have the decent quality of life that means that they must have the equal opportunities and access to education, healthcare, employment, and participation in society. True peace goes beyond the absence of war; it requires the presence of social justice, human rights, and dignity for all. Only when these conditions are met can communities thrive and individuals live without fear or discrimination and pursue for development and personal fulfillment. Peace creates the foundation upon which individuals and societies can grow, innovate, and contribute to a better future. Without peace, development is unsustainable, and without justice and equality, peace is incomplete. Therefore, building lasting peace means investing in

people, empowering communities, and ensuring that no one is left behind. Bayerlein, Kamin, & Krahmann argue that there are several factors that facilitate peace. They are: democracy, rejection to violence, rule of law, tolerance, equality (Bayerlein, Kamin, & Krahmann, 2024). These factors are crucial for establishing peace in a nation and sustaining it over time. Democracy encourages participation and accountability, allowing citizens to voice their concerns through peaceful means. The rejection of violence promotes dialogue and cooperation, while the rule of law ensures justice and fairness for all. Tolerance and equality foster social cohesion by respecting diversity and protecting the rights of every individual. When these principles are followed, societies become more resilient, inclusive, and capable of resolving conflicts without force - laying the foundation for long-term peace and development.

Positive side of peace

Peace is undoubtedly a good thing, as it creates a safe and stable environment for every generation to live and develop. People can set goals and thrive to fulfill their goals, while peaceful environment enables them to take reasonable risks and accomplish their dreams without fear of violence or disruption. In such conditions, individuals are more likely to innovate, collaborate, and contribute positively to society.

A peaceful society fosters safety and security, where people can go about their lives without fear of violence or conflict, where people feel protected and develop a sense of trust in their institutions and authorities. Peaceful environment supports economic growth, as businesses are more inclined to invest and produce, create more jobs. As a result, individuals can experience financial stability and even accumulate wealth that in return strengthens countries' economy and makes them more attractive for both local and international investors and business institutions.

Moreover, health and wellbeing improve when resources are not drained by war or unrest. People have access to sufficient medical care, healthy living conditions and opportunities to have education and develop their full potential. *"Lack of education can bring lawlessness and lawlessness initiate the traumas and grievances towards society and state. So by giving good peaceful education we can solve the issues of violence and lawlessness and it can heal the traumas and grievances of the society."* (Mustafa, Jamshed, Nawaz, Arslan, & Ahmad, 2023)

Healthy and educated people mean creates nation that can have more influence on global policy and market. Furthermore, peace encourages global cooperation, as nations are more willing to work together to solve common problems. It also upholds human rights and justice, creating fairer societies where everyone has a voice. Peace builds stronger communities through mutual respect and support, and it allows individuals to pursue personal fulfillment, dreams, and ambitions. Moreover, in peaceful societies, innovation and creativity tend to thrive. When people are not preoccupied with basic survival or insecurity, they can focus their energy on research, art, science, and technological advancement. Educational institutions can operate freely, nurturing critical thinking and future leadership.

Peace provides a strong foundation for sustainable development. Environmental protection efforts are

more successful in peaceful regions, where long-term planning and cooperation are possible. Peaceful nations are better positioned to address climate change problems, preserve natural resources, and invest in renewable energy. In essence, peace touches every aspect of human life - economy, health, education, justice, and sustainability, making meaningful progress and lasting prosperity possible for future generations. *"Indicators for positive peace at the national level variously include cooperation, conflict transformation, alleviation of poverty and misery, liberation from oppression, good governance, self-determination, human rights, overcoming prejudice, mutual learning, communication, and dialogue, as well as infrastructure, economic development, education, human rights, cohesion, interdependence, and food"* (Bayerlein, Kamin, & Krahmann, 2024, p. 10).

Negative side of peace

Like many other concepts, peace also has its negative side. While it is widely seen as a positive state, peace can often be fragile and temporary. In a globalized world where competition for resources is increasing, the unequal distribution of those resources causes tensions often remained just beneath the surface, especially in regions where people feel deprived or excluded from economic or political benefits. In such cases, peace may simply reflect the absence of visible conflict, while deeper issues such as inequality, marginalization, and systemic injustice persist. This form of negative peace offers stability on the surface but fails to address the root causes of dissatisfaction and unrest, making it an incomplete and potentially short-lived solution. *"Negative peace is easy to achieve by the states and people because negative peace is the absence of violence, extremism, and war. In negative peace, the borders of the state are secure and no one touching the sovereignty of the state while government and population are suffering. because of injustice and poor government and system."* (Mustafa, Jamshed, Nawaz, Arslan, & Ahmad, 2023, p. 854)

Bayerlein, Kamin, & Krahmann argue that each components that facilitate peace: democracy, rejection to violence, rule of law, tolerance, equality (Bayerlein, Kamin, & Krahmann, 2024) can have negative effect and may provide negative peace.

While democracy is often seen to bring peace, it can also highlight divisions and inequalities within society. Sometimes, having too much democracy, such as constant pressure to participate into election, can lead to problems instead of solutions. Schansberg (Schansberg, 2021) points out that encouraging everyone to vote might not always make sense, especially when many people do not fully understand the policies or policy-making process. Since a single vote rarely changes the outcome, but the combined results can have serious consequences, it is worth thinking carefully about whether universal voting and majority rule are always the best approach. This can create distrust and frustration and illusion of peace – a form of negative peace – calm on the surface, but tension beneath.

Rejecting violence is essential to peace, but it can also be used to suppress legitimate dissent. Authorities may label protests or resistance movements as "violent" in order to justify crackdowns or silence

opposition. This can lead to forced calm, where fear replaces open dialogue. People may stop expressing their needs, not because they are satisfied, but because they fear consequences. Such conditions reflect negative peace, where the absence of violence comes at the cost of freedom. (Galtung, 1969)

The rule of law is meant to ensure fairness, but when laws are unjust or applied unequally, they can become tools of oppression. In some societies, legal systems uphold the status quo and protect those in power while punishing the vulnerable. This attitude reinforces power imbalances and protects privileged individuals, while justice is delayed for the marginalized and the defense of human rights remains weak. In such cases, legalistic peace may exist, but without true justice or meaningful reform. People may follow the law not out of trust, but out of fear or lack of choice. This sustains negative peace, where stability exists without genuine equity or transformation.

Tolerance is often promoted as a peaceful value, but it can sometimes lead to passive acceptance of inequality or injustice. If tolerance means simply putting up with others rather than understanding or engaging with them, it can reinforce social divisions. In some cases, tolerance is used to avoid addressing uncomfortable truths and creates superficial harmony that problems, contributes to a fragile negative peace. True tolerance needs cooperation, communication, understanding differences, and coexistence. It must not require forceful effort or the suppression of one's own identity or beliefs.

Pursuing equality can sometimes lead to unintended consequences if it is approached in a narrow or superficial way. Policies that aim to treat everyone the same may overlook the needs of vulnerable groups. For example, women are often not treated equally to men, and some individuals have specific inclusive needs that require attention. When equality is claimed without equity, without addressing real imbalances, it can create resentment or a false sense of justice. People may be told they are equal in theory, even though they remain disadvantaged in practice. This results in negative peace, where feelings of unfairness remain beneath a calm surface.

Alfred Nobel and Nobel Peace Prize

Alfred Nobel was born in 1833 in Stockholm, Sweden, and died in 1896 in Sanremo, Italy. He was a distinguished Swedish chemist, engineer, and inventor, best known for the invention of dynamite. Over the course of his lifetime, he was awarded 355 patents, reflecting his significant contributions to science and engineering (Alfred Nobel, n.d.).

Despite the widespread industrial use of his inventions, Nobel grew increasingly concerned about the destructive potential of his work, particularly in warfare. Motivated by a desire to leave a more positive legacy, he dedicated most of his fortune to establish the Nobel Prizes.

Established through his will, the Nobel Prizes are awarded annually in the fields of Physics, Chemistry, Physiology or Medicine, Literature, and Peace. Nobel's intention was to recognize individuals and organizations that contribute to the advancement of knowledge, the betterment of society, and the

promotion of peace – *“those who, during the preceding year, shall have conferred the greatest benefit to humankind”* (Alfred Nobel, n.d.).

Through these prestigious awards, Alfred Nobel ensured that his name would be associated not with weapons, but with progress, humanitarianism, and the celebration of excellence in service to humanity.

The Nobel Prizes are among the most prestigious international distinctions, awarded annually to individuals and organizations whose work has made a significant impact in their respective fields. The prizes are presented in six categories: Physics, Chemistry, Physiology or Medicine, Literature, Peace, and Economic Sciences – the latter added in 1968 by the Central Bank of Sweden in memory of Alfred Nobel (About the prize, n.d.).

These awards were established in accordance with the 1895 will of Alfred Nobel, a Swedish inventor, scientist, and philanthropist, who expressed a desire to use his wealth to support those whose efforts “have conferred the greatest benefit to mankind.” His intention was to celebrate not only scientific achievement but also humanitarian efforts and intellectual contributions that advance global well-being.

Each Nobel Prize is awarded by a separate committee based in Sweden or Norway, depending on the category, and recipients – referred to as Nobel Laureates – are selected through a rigorous nomination and review process. The prizes not only include a medal and diploma but also a substantial monetary award intended to support the continued work of the laureates.

More than a century after their inception, the Nobel Prizes continue to symbolize the highest standards of excellence and remain a powerful incentive for scientific progress, cultural advancement, and peace-building around the world. They serve as a testament to Alfred Nobel’s enduring legacy, a vision of progress guided by knowledge, compassion, and global responsibility.

Global Peace: Reality or Myth?

Since the end of the Second World War in 1945, the world has witnessed a significant decline in large-scale global wars. Institutions such as the United Nations (UN) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) have played a crucial role in conflict prevention, mediation, and peacekeeping. Through diplomatic engagement and international cooperation, many countries now resolve disputes through negotiation rather than armed confrontation. Mechanisms such as trade agreements, treaties, international law, and multilateral peacekeeping missions have contributed to greater global stability.

Additionally, there has been a growing global awareness of human rights. Declaration of human rights and foundation of local legislation on it created countries where people firstly feel personal freedom and peace and urge for the development of surrounding and betterment of the country. That tendency created education systems, the media, and civil society activism which foster a culture that increasingly values peace, justice, and respect for human dignity. This shift has contributed to a normative framework in which peaceful conflict resolution and the protection of rights are recognized as fundamental principles of international relations and peaceful cooperation, coexistence and mutual respect among countries.

Despite these advancements, the notion of global peace remains, to a large extent, an ideal rather than a fully realized condition. Armed conflicts continue in numerous regions, indicating that violence and war remain persistent realities. Dozens of localized and regional conflicts claim lives, displace populations, and destabilize societies. Moreover, peace is not equally experienced across the globe. While some nations enjoy relative stability, others are plagued by poverty, authoritarian regimes, foreign occupation, and systemic violence. This disparity reflects what scholars often refer to as “unequal peace” (Kamranzadeh & Zheng, 2024)

Contemporary forms of conflict also challenge traditional definitions of peace. Cyber warfare, economic sanctions, political oppression, and environmental injustices represent indirect or structural forms of violence that cause significant harm without involving open combat. These issues complicate the picture of what constitutes peace in the modern era.

Furthermore, the continued existence of nuclear arsenals and the escalating global expenditure on military forces underscore a world still shaped by fear and deterrence. In many countries, military budgets exceed spending on essential sectors such as education and healthcare, reflecting priorities that undermine long-term human security and development.

While considerable progress has been made in promoting peace and reducing large-scale warfare, global peace remains an incomplete and uneven achievement. The coexistence of diplomatic advancement with persistent conflict, inequality, and indirect violence suggests that peace is both a reality in some contexts and a myth in others. Addressing these contradictions requires sustained international commitment to justice, disarmament, and inclusive development.

Nobel Peace Prize US Presidents laureates

While countries strive to achieve global peace and coexistence in a relatively harmonious way, such a goal cannot be achieved without outstanding political leaders who possess a peaceful global vision and the determination to put that vision into practice through concrete action and sustained commitment. Some of them are acknowledged because of their deeds and are rewarded with international recognition, such as the Nobel Peace Prize. This prestigious award honors those who have made significant efforts toward the promotion of peace, diplomacy, and humanitarian values.

Several U.S. Presidents have been recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize, each recognized for their distinct contributions and facing varying degrees of controversy:

Theodore Roosevelt (1906): Awarded for his role in mediating the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), which led to the Treaty of Portsmouth. Prize motivation: *“for his role in bringing to an end the bloody war recently waged between two of the world’s great powers, Japan and Russia”* (Theodore Roosevelt - Facts, n.d.)

Roosevelt actively coordinated negotiations, preventing both sides from withdrawing. He also support-

ed the Hague Peace Conferences, advocating for international arbitration courts and peaceful conflict resolution. His diplomacy in acquiring the Panama Canal Zone, though controversial, was framed by some as a move to foster global trade and cooperation. Roosevelt was the first statesman to receive the Peace Prize. However, critics noted the irony of the award, given his reputation for aggressive military policies and his "Speak softly and carry a big stick" approach. Some argued he used peace diplomacy to expand U.S. influence, pursuing an imperialist strategy. Additionally, the war's end was partly attributed to economic exhaustion rather than solely Roosevelt's mediation, and he orchestrated U.S. intervention in Panama, backing a coup against Colombian rule to facilitate the canal's construction (Nolan, n.d.).

The second president who got Nobel Peace Prize among the US president was **Woodrow Wilson (1919)**: Prize motivation: *"for his role as founder of the League of Nations"* (Woodrow Wilson - Speed read, n.d.) Recognized as the founder of the League of Nations, an organization envisioned to prevent future wars through collective security, open diplomacy, and peaceful conflict resolution. His "Fourteen Points Speech" outlined a vision for world peace after World War I, advocating for self-determination, free trade, and disarmament. Wilson played a central role in the Paris Peace Conference and the creation of the post-WWI order. Despite international praise for promoting moral diplomacy and a new global order based on principles rather than empires, the League of Nations ultimately failed due to key weaknesses: lack of U.S. membership, absence of real military power to enforce decisions, slow decision-making requiring unanimous votes, and being ignored by major powers like Italy, Japan, and Germany.

Another laureate of the Nobel Peace Prize is **Jimmy Carter (2002)**: Awarded decades after his presidency for his *"decades of untiring effort to find peaceful solutions to international conflicts, to advance democracy and human rights, and to promote economic and social development"* (Jimmy Carter - Speed read, n.d.). The Carter Center, founded in 1982, has been instrumental in mediating conflicts in various regions, monitoring elections in over 100 countries, and leading public health efforts. Carter's post-presidency diplomacy often operated independently of the U.S. government, focusing on resolving disputes and promoting peace and human dignity. His recognition was unique for being honored so long after his time in office, signifying a lifetime of peacebuilding. However, critics questioned the timing of the award, suggesting it was partly a rebuke of U.S. policies under George W. Bush. Some also viewed Carter's Middle East efforts, like the Camp David Accords, as impressive but with limited lasting impact, and he faced criticism during his presidency for perceived weakness in foreign policy.

Probably the most surprising and controversial Nobel Peace Prize was the one granted to **Barack Obama (2009)**: Received the prize less than nine months into his first term for his *"extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples"* (Barack H. Obama - Facts, n.d.). The Nobel Committee recognized him for creating a *"new climate"* in international relations and fostering dialogue. Obama himself expressed surprise and humility, stating he did not feel he deserved to be in the company of previous transformative figures. The award was largely based on his vision for nuclear disarmament, his re-engagement of the U.S. with the United Nations, and his efforts to restore respect for international institutions, particularly on climate change and arms control. He also promoted

a new tone in foreign policy, emphasizing dialogue over confrontation, especially with the Muslim world, Russia, and Iran. The committee acknowledged that much of the award was based on Obama's intentions, tone, and potential to transform diplomacy. However, critics argued the award was premature and not based on accomplishments, noting the expansion of drone strikes and U.S. involvement in military actions in Libya, Syria, Afghanistan, and Yemen under his administration.

Commonalities among these presidential laureates include a strong emphasis on peace and diplomacy, a global vision that extends beyond U.S. borders, and the pursuit of moral or idealistic objectives in foreign policy. Their work consistently involved a commitment to international cooperation, efforts towards institution-building for lasting peace, initiatives in nuclear arms reduction and nonproliferation, and a preference for diplomatic conflict resolution over military action. Despite each award drawing some questions or criticism, the recognition of U.S. presidents with the Nobel Peace Prize highlights their significant global impact and influence as diplomatic force multipliers, underscoring the importance of presidential moral leadership and inspiring future generations of peace advocates.

Conclusion

Peace remains one of humanity's most essential and enduring goals. True peace goes beyond the mere absence of war - known as *negative peace* - and aspires to *positive peace*, which includes justice, equality, security, and opportunity for all. Achieving such peace requires sustained international cooperation, the establishment of strong institutions, respect for human rights, and the prioritization of diplomacy over force. As the world continues to face global crises, the pursuit of peace calls for visionary leadership, long-term commitment, and a shared global responsibility.

U.S. presidents who have received the Nobel Peace Prize have played significant roles in shaping this vision of peace. Through efforts in nuclear arms reduction, institution building, and diplomatic negotiations, they have used their office as a powerful platform for global change. Their actions often reflect a moral or idealistic desire to integrate humanitarian values into foreign policy. However, the presidency is an immensely complex role, and these leaders have also faced criticism for peace efforts and broader military or political decisions. Nonetheless, their global vision and commitment to diplomacy have left lasting impacts on international relations.

The Nobel Peace Prize serves as both recognition and motivation. When awarded to U.S. presidents, it acknowledges their efforts to advance peace, foster international dialogue, and act as diplomatic force multipliers. At the same time, it invites scrutiny and reflection, prompting deeper questions about the nature of peace, leadership, and the expectations placed on global powers.

Ultimately, the Nobel Peace Prize is a symbol of hope and responsibility. It honors those who have tried to shift the world toward cooperation and justice, even in the face of immense pressure and complexity. For U.S. presidents, this recognition amplifies their global influence and reminds future leaders that true

leadership is not only about power, but about the courage to promote peace, even when it is difficult. Their legacy encourages future generations to believe in the possibility of peace and to continue striving for a more just and peaceful world.

References

- About the prize. (n.d.). Retrieved July 29, 2025, from The Nobel Prize: <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/economic-sciences/>
- Alfred Nobel. (n.d.). Retrieved July 29, 2025, from nobelprize: <https://www.nobelprize.org/alfred-nobel>
- Barack H. Obama - Facts. (n.d.). Retrieved July 30, 2025, from The Nobel prize: <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2009/obama/facts/>
- Bayerlein, M., Kamin, K., & Krahmann, E. (2024, December 5). From Negative to Positive Peace: How Norms Relate to Different Peace Dimensions. *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 1-21. doi:10.1080/17502977.2024.2335609
- Galtung, J. (1969). Violence, Peace, and Peace Research. *Journal of Peace Research*, 6(3), 167-191.
- Jimmy Carter - Speed read. (n.d.). Retrieved July 30, 2025, from Th Nobel Prize: <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2002/carter/speedread/>
- Kamranzadeh, A., & Zheng, C. Z. (2024). Unequal Peace. *International Economic Review*, 1-36. doi:10.1111/iere.12725
- Mustafa, G., Jamshed, U., Nawaz, S., Arslan, M., & Ahmad, T. (2023, April). Peace: A Conceptual Understanding. *Journal of Positive School Psychology*, 7(4), 853-863. Retrieved July 29, 2025, from <http://journalppw.com>
- Nolan, C. J. (n.d.). The Panama Canal. (B. University, Producer) Retrieved July 30, 2025, from Bill of rights institute: <https://billofrightsinstitute.org/essays/the-panama-canal>
- O'Connor, T. (2024, May 29). 23 Quotes to Help You Define Peace. Retrieved from everydaypeacebuilding.com: <https://everydaypeacebuilding.com/quotes-define-peace/>
- Schansberg, E. (2021). The Limits of Democracy. Retrieved June 29, 2025, from Cato Journal: <https://www.cato.org/cato-journal/fall-2021/limits-democracy>
- Theodore Roosevelt - Facts. (n.d.). Retrieved July 29, 2025, from The Nobel Prize: <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1906/roosevelt/facts/>
- Woodrow Wilson - Speed read. (n.d.). Retrieved July 30, 2025, from The Nobel Peace: <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1919/wilson/speedread/>
- Zapatero, J. L. (2025, 06 29). Peace, an Ongoing Endeavour. Retrieved from <https://metapolis.net/>: <https://metapolis.net/project/peace-an-ongoing-endeavour/>

Changes in the Family Structure of Whites in the U.S.

MEDEA KUZANASHVILI^{15*}

Abstract

Over the past several decades, the family structure of Whites in the United States has undergone significant transformation, reflecting broader social, economic, and cultural shifts. From the dominance of the nuclear family model in the mid-20th century to the rise of more diverse and fluid family forms today, these changes are marked by increasing divorce rates, delayed marriages, smaller family sizes, and growing acceptance of cohabitation and child-free living (Anthony, 2024). These developments coincide with rising individualism, heightened educational and career aspirations, and greater autonomy in lifestyle choices.

This article explores these trends by analyzing the influence of long-term economic pressures—such as wage stagnation, housing insecurity, and the high cost of childcare—as well as the shifting roles and expectations of men and women within the family unit. It also highlights how evolving cultural attitudes toward marriage, sexuality, and reproduction have led to greater social legitimacy for non-traditional family arrangements. The legalization of same-sex marriage, the growth of interracial and multigenerational households, and the increasing prevalence of single-parent and single-person households further underscore the redefinition of family among White Americans.

In addition, the article examines how demographic trends, including declining birth rates and population aging, are reshaping the fabric of American society and influencing future family trajectories. Drawing upon historical records, sociological theory, and recent demographic data, this study provides a comprehensive overview of how White American families have adapted to and been shaped by changing social norms, state policies, and cultural ideologies (Behav, 2012). The findings contribute to a broader understanding of the intersection between race, identity, and family life in contemporary America.

Introduction

Over the past several decades, the American family has experienced profound transformations, challenging long-held ideals about what constitutes a “traditional” family. Nowhere is this more evident than in the changing family structures among Whites in the United States. The once-dominant model of the nuclear family—composed of a married heterosexual couple and their children—has increasingly given

^{15*} Ph.D. Candidate, American Studies Program, School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, International Black Sea University, Tbilisi, Georgia.

way to more diverse family forms. Rising divorce rates, delayed marriages, cohabitation, smaller family sizes, and the growing acceptance of same-sex and interracial marriages all reflect a society in flux. These shifts are shaped by a complex interplay of factors, including economic pressures, evolving gender roles, and changing cultural attitudes toward marriage, parenthood, and family life.

This article will examine the evolution of family structures among White Americans, tracing key trends from the post-World War II era to the present day. By analyzing historical patterns, sociological studies, and demographic data, this exploration seeks to understand not only how White families have changed but also the social forces driving these shifts. From the rise of blended and multigenerational households to the growing number of child-free and single-person homes, the modern family looks vastly different from its mid-20th-century counterpart. Understanding these changes provides crucial insights into the broader social transformations affecting American society today.

1. Traditional Family Structure: Post–World War II Era (1940s–1960s)

In the aftermath of World War II, the “traditional” family structure—characterized by a male breadwinner, female homemaker, and biological children—became the dominant ideal, particularly among White Americans. This nuclear family model was heavily reinforced through cultural media, public policy (such as the GI Bill), and the booming suburban housing market. Marriage rates were high, and couples tended to marry young and have multiple children, giving rise to what became known as the “baby boom.” During this time, approximately 70% of American households were headed by married couples, and among Whites, the proportion was even higher.

Social norms strongly emphasized conformity to heterosexual marriage, rigid gender roles, and moral conservatism. Divorce was rare and stigmatized. Women, especially White women, were encouraged to embrace domesticity, while men were expected to fulfill the economic provider role. This family model was portrayed as the cultural ideal in postwar media, including television shows such as *Leave It to Beaver* and *Father Knows Best*, which depicted the nuclear family as the foundation of American success and morality.

However, it is important to recognize that this model, while widely celebrated, was not universal. It often excluded non-White families, single individuals, and those who deviated from traditional gender norms. Nevertheless, for a significant portion of the White American population, the nuclear family became both a social expectation and a symbol of national stability during a period of Cold War conservatism and economic growth.

2. Social Upheaval and the Rise of Diverse Family Forms (1970s–1980s)

Beginning in the late 1960s and intensifying through the 1970s and 1980s, a series of social changes began to disrupt the traditional family structure. One of the most significant developments was the rise in divorce rates, facilitated by the introduction of no-fault divorce laws—first adopted in California in

1969 and later across the U.S. These legal reforms allowed couples to dissolve marriages without proving wrongdoing, drastically altering the permanence of marital unions.

This period also witnessed dramatic changes in gender roles. The feminist movement gained strength, advocating for women's rights in education, employment, and reproductive autonomy. White women entered the workforce in increasing numbers, delaying marriage and childbirth as they pursued higher education and financial independence. The dual-earner family began to replace the single-breadwinner model, particularly in urban and suburban middle-class households.

Birth rates among White Americans began to decline, in part due to increased access to contraception, shifts in attitudes about family size, and economic pressures related to inflation and wage stagnation. As a result, smaller family units became more common. The prevalence of single-parent households, particularly among divorced women, increased sharply. The family no longer fit into a one-size-fits-all mold; instead, new forms of kinship and caregiving emerged in response to social and economic realities.

3. The Normalization of Alternative Family Structures (1990s–2000s)

By the 1990s, non-traditional family forms had gained widespread social legitimacy. Cohabitation before or instead of marriage became normalized among White couples, with many choosing to live together without legal commitment. This shift reflected broader cultural changes, including a growing emphasis on individual autonomy and skepticism toward lifelong monogamy.

At the same time, public awareness of LGBTQ+ relationships grew, despite ongoing legal and social challenges. Same-sex households, though not legally recognized in most states, began to be visible in census data and public discourse. White same-sex couples, particularly in urban and progressive regions, formed families through adoption, surrogacy, and co-parenting arrangements, further diversifying the landscape of American kinship.

Blended families also became more common as divorce and remarriage increased. Stepfamilies—where one or both partners bring children from previous relationships—created new dynamics in parenting and household organization. The notion of family expanded to include more fluid and varied structures, challenging the postwar ideal.

4. Contemporary Trends in White Family Life (2010s–2020s)

In the 21st century, family life among White Americans has continued to evolve in response to new economic realities, social norms, and policy changes. The average age at first marriage has steadily increased, with many delaying union formation to prioritize education, career development, or personal growth. For the first time in modern history, the majority of adults in their 20s and early 30s are unmarried.

The legalization of same-sex marriage in 2015 marked a turning point in family law, granting full legal recognition to diverse family types. This milestone contributed to the visibility and acceptance of LGBTQ+ families, particularly among White Americans in liberal regions. Meanwhile, interracial marriage—once outlawed and stigmatized—has become increasingly common, reflecting broader racial and ethnic integration.

There has also been a rise in child-free living. Many White individuals and couples now choose not to have children, often citing environmental concerns, economic burdens, or lifestyle preferences. The growth of single-person households is another defining trend of this era, especially in urban centers where autonomy, mobility, and digital connectivity shape modern lifestyles.

Multigenerational households have also resurged, driven by rising housing costs, caregiving needs, and economic interdependence between generations. Grandparents, adult children, and grandchildren increasingly share living spaces, reviving older forms of familial interdependence in a contemporary context.

5. Key Drivers Behind the Transformation

Several structural factors have driven these long-term changes:

Economic Pressures: The rising cost of living—especially housing, healthcare, and education—has made traditional family formation more difficult. Dual-income households are now a necessity rather than a choice for many White families.

Shifting Gender Norms: As traditional gender roles erode, family roles have become more flexible. Fathers are more involved in child-rearing, and mothers are increasingly present in the labor force. These shifts have challenged the patriarchal foundations of mid-century family life.

Cultural Liberalization: The stigma around divorce, cohabitation, childlessness, and non-marital births has declined dramatically. Americans now place greater emphasis on personal choice, emotional fulfillment, and authenticity in relationships.

Technological and Media Influence: Dating apps, social media, and digital communication have altered how individuals form relationships, maintain connections, and co-parent. Online platforms also offer support networks for non-traditional families.

Would you like me to continue with a summary section or add APA-style citations for each historical or sociological point made?

Let me know how you want to proceed, and I'll finalize it into one polished, academic article or dissertation chapter!

Conclusion

The family structure among Whites in the United States has undergone profound transformation over the past several decades, mirroring broader social, economic, and cultural changes that have reshaped American society. What was once the dominant nuclear family model of the mid-20th century has given way to a diversity of family forms that better align with the realities and values of contemporary life. Rising economic pressures, changing gender roles, and evolving cultural attitudes toward marriage, parenthood, and personal fulfillment have contributed to a notable decline in traditional family structures. In their place, alternative arrangements—such as cohabitation, single-parent households, blended families, and same-sex marriages—have become more common and increasingly accepted.

These shifts extend beyond demographic trends; they signify a larger cultural reorientation. Families are no longer solely defined by legal bonds or biological ties, but by emotional support, shared responsibilities, and chosen commitments. This shift toward personalized definitions of family life is indicative of a society that increasingly values autonomy, individual choice, and flexibility. Technology has also played a role in transforming family dynamics—facilitating long-distance parenting, digital co-parenting arrangements, and online support networks, all of which redefine what family connection looks like in the modern world.

At the same time, these changes present new challenges. The decline of traditional structures has created gaps in social support, particularly for single parents and non-traditional families who may not receive the same institutional recognition or benefits. Social policies, healthcare systems, tax codes, and educational frameworks often lag behind these demographic realities, leaving many families without adequate support. The burden of caregiving, economic vulnerability, and housing insecurity disproportionately affects less privileged family forms, exacerbating existing inequalities.

Understanding the shifting structure of White families in America offers more than academic insight—it has practical implications for policymakers, educators, and social service providers. Recognizing and supporting diverse family arrangements is not only a matter of social justice but a necessity for fostering social cohesion in a pluralistic society. Institutions must adapt to reflect the evolving realities of family life, ensuring that all types of families can thrive.

As White family structures continue to evolve, they reflect the dynamic nature of American society itself—marked by resilience, reinvention, and an expanding definition of what it means to be a family. Rather than signaling decline, these transformations highlight the capacity of families to adapt, redefine themselves, and persist in the face of change. Embracing this diversity is key to building a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable social fabric for future generations (Behav, 2012).

References

- Anthony GG, j. j. (2024). Family Structure and Poverty Changes Among U.S. White Alone (non-Hispanic) Families in the United States: A State of Families Project Report (1967–2022). Taylor & Francis Online, 236-241.
- Behav, J. H. (2012, October 10). National Library of Medicine. Retrieved from PubMed Central: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC3468327/>
- Berger, J. (2014). Prenatal Environment Affecting Fetus's Future Development. Bartledy.com, 70.
- Berman K, S. P. (2007). Maternal stress during pregnancy predicts cognitive ability and fearfulness in infancy. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.* , 1454-1463.
- DiPietro JA, N. M. (2006). Maternal psychological distress during pregnancy in relation to child development at age two. *Pubmed*, 573-587.
- Ditzen, A.-L. Z. (2019, September 25). *www.frontiersin.org*. Retrieved from <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02179/full#B53>.
- Jerod M Rasmussen 1, A. M. (2019). Maternal Interleukin-6 concentration during pregnancy is associated with variation in frontolimbic white matter and cognitive development in early life. *Pubmed*, 825-835.
- Kieran J O'Donnell 1, V. G. (2014). The persisting effect of maternal mood in pregnancy on childhood psychopathology. *Pubmed*, 393-403.
- Vivette Glover 1, K. J. (2018). Prenatal maternal stress, fetal programming, and mechanisms underlying later psychopathology-A global perspective. *Pubmed*, 843-854.
- Williams, L. (2021, May 6). <https://professional.heart.org/es/news/2021/05/06/prenatal-stress-can-program-a-childs-brain-for-later-health-issues>. Retrieved from <https://professional.heart.org/>: <https://professional.heart.org/es/news/2021/05/06/prenatal-stress-can-program-a-childs-brain-for-later-health-issues>
- Winerman, L. (2023, November 16). <https://neurosciencenews.com>. Retrieved from <https://neurosciencenews.com/maternal-stress-child-mental-health-25225/>: <https://neurosciencenews.com/maternal-stress-child-mental-health-25225/>
- Xiaoxiao Fan a, N. W. (2024, February 10). <https://www.sciencedirect.com>. Retrieved from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0149763424000484>: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0149763424000484>

The role of industrialization and migration in shaping American corporate structures and labor markets

EKA MELADZE^{16*}

Abstract

This paper examines the intertwined roles of industrialization and migration in shaping the corporate structures and labor markets of the United States during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Industrialization fueled unprecedented economic growth, leading to the rise of large corporations that adopted hierarchical and bureaucratic models to manage complex operations. Simultaneously, waves of migration provided a vital labor force to sustain industrial expansion, introducing diverse skill sets and cultural perspectives to the American workforce.

The analysis explores how migrant labor became integral to industries such as manufacturing and railroads, while also addressing the socio-economic challenges faced by immigrant communities, including exploitation and discrimination. It further investigates the influence of industrialization and migration on labor market evolution, highlighting the emergence of unions, labor movements, and policy shifts aimed at improving working conditions.

Through historical case studies, the paper reveals the enduring impacts of these phenomena on modern corporate practices and labor policies, offering insights into the foundations of today's economic systems. By understanding this critical period in U.S. history, the paper underscores the lessons it holds for addressing contemporary issues in workforce diversity, immigration policy, and corporate governance.

Keywords: Industrialization, Migration, American corporate structures, Labor markets,

Introduction

The rapid industrialization of the United States during the late 19th and early 20th centuries marked a transformative period in the nation's economic and social development. As the U.S. transitioned from an agrarian to an industrial economy, the rise of large-scale manufacturing and technological innovation created the need for new forms of corporate organization and economic governance. Key milestones—such as the expansion of the railroad network, the growth of steel and oil industries, and the adoption of assembly-line production—signaled the emergence of powerful corporate structures designed to manage mass production and distribution efficiently.

^{16*} Ph.D., American Studies Program, School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, International Black Sea University, Tbilisi, Georgia.

Simultaneously, the U.S. experienced one of the most significant waves of migration in its history, with millions of immigrants arriving to meet the growing labor demands of a booming industrial economy. This influx of labor not only filled the ranks of the expanding workforce but also contributed to profound shifts in the American labor market. The convergence of industrialization and migration redefined labor dynamics, giving rise to new patterns of employment, worker mobilization, and the growth of labor unions. These movements played a critical role in advocating for improved working conditions, fair wages, and labor rights, influencing the socioeconomic landscape for generations to come.

This article explores three interrelated themes: the rise of American corporations in response to industrial growth; the shaping of labor markets through both industrial and migratory pressures; and the enduring legacy of these historical processes on contemporary corporate practices and labor policies. By analyzing this intersection, we aim to uncover lessons relevant to current debates on economic development, workforce transformation, and immigration reform in the United States.

Research Methods

This article adopts a **historical-qualitative research approach** to examine the transformative effects of industrialization and migration on the evolution of corporate structures and labor markets in the United States. The study draws upon a combination of historical analysis, qualitative content analysis, case studies, and secondary data interpretation to develop a comprehensive understanding of long-term economic and institutional shifts.

A central component of the methodology involves the historical examination of industrial milestones between the mid-19th and early 20th centuries. Key events—such as the expansion of the railroad system, the implementation of the assembly line, and legal rulings on corporate personhood—are analyzed through scholarly literature, historical records, and government archives. This method provides the contextual foundation for understanding institutional changes in American corporate development.

This research incorporates qualitative content analysis to explore themes related to labor dynamics, corporate management, and migration patterns. Relevant academic publications, historical texts, policy documents, and archival speeches are analyzed to uncover the ideological, economic, and social narratives shaping these transformations.

The study includes case analyses of historically significant corporations—such as Standard Oil, U.S. Steel, and the Ford Motor Company—to illustrate how industrial expansion and immigrant labor influenced business organization and strategy. These cases were selected based on their national influence and their well-documented historical development, offering insights into the broader structural patterns of corporate growth.

Where applicable, the article draws on secondary data from historical economic reports, the U.S. Census, the Department of Labor, and peer-reviewed studies. This data supports the interpretation of trends in

industrial output, employment, wage dynamics, and immigration, and serves to triangulate qualitative findings.

Industrialization and the Rise of American Corporations

The industrialization of the United States in the 19th and early 20th centuries marked a defining era of economic transformation. It introduced large-scale production systems, restructured economic relationships, and laid the foundation for the modern American corporate economy. Several key milestones in U.S. industrial development contributed to this sweeping change (Chandler, 1977; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1975).

Among the most significant milestones was the expansion of the railroad network after the Civil War. The completion of the Transcontinental Railroad in 1869 connected markets across the country, facilitated the movement of goods and labor, and enabled the national integration of commerce (Interstate Commerce Commission, 1916; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1975). This infrastructure was vital for industries such as steel, coal, and oil, which relied heavily on logistical efficiency. The rise of these industries, particularly under figures like Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller, symbolized the transition from small-scale production to vertically integrated, national corporations (Livesay, 2007; Nevins, 1953).

The emergence of corporate structures was a direct response to the demands of industrial growth. Traditional family-owned businesses could no longer sustain the scale and complexity of operations required by mass production. As a result, new forms of organization—such as joint-stock companies, trusts, and holding companies—were developed to manage capital investment, operational expansion, and workforce coordination (Zunz, 1990; Chandler, 1977). The rise of limited liability and corporate personhood (cemented by legal decisions like *Santa Clara County v. Southern Pacific Railroad Co.* in 1886) further strengthened corporations as powerful entities within the American legal and economic system (Chandler, 1977).

Technological advancements played a critical role in shaping business practices and accelerating industrial development. The invention of the telegraph and later the telephone revolutionized communication across distances, allowing for more efficient management of multi-site operations (Hughes, 1989). Mechanization, such as the Bessemer process in steel production and the introduction of electricity in manufacturing plants, increased productivity and reduced costs (Temin, 1964; Hughes, 1989). Perhaps most influential was the adoption of the assembly line by Henry Ford in 1913, which not only transformed the automobile industry but also became a model for manufacturing efficiency across sectors (Brinkley, 2003).

Together, these developments redefined the American economy. Industrialization created the conditions for the rise of large, powerful corporations capable of operating on a national and eventually global scale. This transformation laid the groundwork for modern capitalism and continues to shape the dynamics of corporate organization and economic power today (Chandler, 1977; Zunz, 1990).

Key Industrial and Economic Statistics (1865–1920)

Table : Key Industrial Growth Indicators in the U.S. (1860–1913)

Indicator	Year(s)	Data	Significance
Manufacturing Output	1860–1910	Increased nearly 12-fold	U.S. became the world's leading industrial power by 1900
Gross National Product	1869 → 1913	Grew from \$7 billion to \$39 billion	Reflects a dramatic expansion of U.S. economic activity
Steel Production	1875 → 1910	Increased from 380,000 tons to 26.5 million tons	U.S. surpassed Britain and Germany; became top global steel producer

Table: Key Industrial Growth Indicators in the U.S. (1860–1916)

Indicator	Year(s)	Data	Significance
Manufacturing Output	1860–1910	Increased nearly 12-fold	U.S. became the world's leading industrial power by 1900
Gross National Product	1869 → 1913	Grew from \$7 billion to \$39 billion	Reflects dramatic expansion of economic activity
Steel Production	1875 → 1910	From 380,000 tons to 26.5 million tons	U.S. surpassed Britain and Germany; became top global steel producer
Railroad Mileage	1865 → 1916	Expanded from 35,000 miles to over 254,000 miles	U.S. had more rail miles than rest of the world combined by 1916
Investment in Railroads	19th Century	Over 20% of capital investment; major employer	Demonstrates centrality of railroads to economic development and job creation

Table: Major Indicators of Corporate Growth in the U.S. (Late 19th–Early 20th Century)

Indicator	Time Period	Data	Significance
Corporate Growth	By 1904	Top 1% of U.S. corporations controlled over 44% of industrial assets	Indicates rapid concentration of economic power among a few large corporation
Standard Oil Company	Late 19th century	Controlled ~90% of U.S. oil refining capacity	Became a symbol of monopoly capitalism and led to antitrust reform

Ford Motor Company	1903 (founded) → 1914	Produced nearly 50% of all U.S. automobiles by 1914	Revolutionized industrial production through assembly-line efficiency
--------------------	-----------------------	---	---

Table: Innovation and Technological Advancement in U.S. Industry (1870–1920)

Indicator	Time Period	Data	Significance
Patents Filed	1870–1910	Over 500,000 patents granted	Reflects rapid growth in American innovation and industrial technology
Electrification of Industry	By 1920	Nearly 70% of U.S. factories powered by electricity	Marked shift to modern industrial production; increased efficiency and output

Impact on Corporate Structures

The rapid industrialization of the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries necessitated the evolution of new corporate structures capable of managing large-scale operations. As industries expanded, corporations developed **hierarchical and bureaucratic models** to ensure efficient decision-making, coordination, and control. This transformation marked a departure from small, owner-managed enterprises to professionally managed corporations where authority was delegated across multiple levels of management (Chandler, 1977). These bureaucratic systems enabled companies to operate across state and national borders, manage diversified production lines, and monitor workforce performance systematically.

The rise of **large industrial firms such as U.S. Steel, Standard Oil, and General Electric** exemplified this shift. These corporations adopted administrative hierarchies, central offices, and specialized departments—finance, production, human resources—which laid the groundwork for the modern corporation (Zunz, 1990; Livesay, 2007). For example, U.S. Steel employed over 160,000 people by 1901, necessitating a complex internal structure to manage operations, logistics, and labor (Nevins, 1953).

Migration played a crucial role in shaping corporate structures and labor policies. The influx of immigrants from Europe between 1880 and 1920 provided a steady supply of labor but also introduced challenges related to communication, cultural integration, and labor relations (Higham, 1998). Corporations responded by institutionalizing labor practices such as division of labor by skill and ethnicity, using foremen from similar ethnic groups to oversee immigrant workers, and implementing policies aimed at socializing new laborers into industrial discipline (Gutman, 1977).

Labor segmentation became a feature of many corporate workplaces, with skilled positions often reserved for native-born or Western European workers, while newer immigrants from Southern and East-

ern Europe were assigned more dangerous or low-paying jobs. This structure mirrored both economic efficiency and social hierarchy, reinforcing divisions within the workforce (Zolberg, 2006).

Case studies illustrate how industrialization and migration collectively influenced corporate evolution. **Ford Motor Company**, for instance, adopted the assembly line and hired a highly diverse immigrant labor force. In response to high turnover and cultural fragmentation, Ford introduced the **Sociological Department** in 1914, which monitored workers' home lives and promoted "Americanization" to enhance productivity and corporate loyalty (Brinkley, 2003). Similarly, **Standard Oil**, under Rockefeller's control, used centralized management and cost-accounting systems to maintain efficiency across its many subsidiaries, relying heavily on a stable and disciplined workforce drawn from recent migrants (Chandler, 1977).

Ultimately, the interaction between industrial growth and migration reshaped American corporate structures into **large-scale, vertically integrated, bureaucratically managed systems** capable of absorbing, organizing, and regulating a diverse labor pool. These changes had long-term implications for labor policy, management theory, and the development of corporate capitalism in the United States.

Shaping the Labor Markets

The labor markets in the United States underwent profound transformation during the period of rapid industrialization and mass migration from the mid-19th to early 20th centuries. As factories, railroads, and mining operations expanded, demand surged for both skilled and unskilled labor. **Industrialization restructured the labor economy**, shifting work from agrarian, craft-based employment to factory-based wage labor (Montgomery, 1987). This transition created new employment opportunities but also introduced instability, wage suppression, and exploitative conditions, particularly for immigrant workers.

The **mass migration wave**—over 20 million immigrants entered the U.S. between 1880 and 1920—reshaped the workforce demographically and economically (Daniels, 2002). Migrants from Southern and Eastern Europe, including Italians, Poles, and Jews, along with earlier waves of Irish and German immigrants, filled the ranks of industrial labor. Often lacking English proficiency and bargaining power, these workers were frequently assigned the most hazardous and lowest-paid jobs, a situation that employers exploited to suppress wages and resist unionization (Zolberg, 2006).

In response to deteriorating labor conditions, the **labor movement gained momentum**. The rise of industrial capitalism gave birth to organizations such as the **Knights of Labor (founded 1869)** and the **American Federation of Labor (AFL, founded 1886)**. These groups sought to combat long hours, low wages, and unsafe working conditions through collective bargaining, strikes, and political advocacy (Foner, 1976). While early efforts were often fragmented—divided along ethnic, racial, and skill lines—there were significant victories. The 1894 **Pullman Strike** and the **1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire**, though tragic, heightened public awareness and led to reforms in workplace safety and labor rights (Greenwald, 2005).

Over time, **labor unions played a crucial role in raising wages, limiting work hours, and promoting legislation that improved working conditions**, such as child labor laws, workers' compensation, and the eight-hour workday (Dubofsky & Dulles, 2010). These gains, however, were uneven across industries and regions, and many immigrant workers—particularly recent arrivals—remained marginalized.

The **long-term impacts of industrialization and migration on social mobility** were both positive and uneven. While many immigrant families endured initial poverty and hardship, their children often ascended the socioeconomic ladder through education and unionized employment. Industrial jobs—especially those with union protection—offered a path to middle-class stability, homeownership, and community development for millions (Alba & Nee, 2003). Yet, structural inequalities persisted, particularly for racial minorities and the most recent immigrants, who continued to face exclusion from many of the labor movement's gains.

By the early 20th century, the interplay between industrial capitalism, organized labor, and immigration had reshaped the American labor market into a dynamic and contested space. It laid the groundwork for future debates over workers' rights, corporate power, and immigration policy that remain relevant in today's economic landscape.

Legacy and Modern Implications

The legacies of industrialization and migration continue to shape the contours of corporate organization and labor systems in the United States. The economic and demographic transformations that began in the 19th century laid the groundwork for many of today's institutional structures, business models, and workforce dynamics.

One of the **most enduring impacts** of this period is the **hierarchical corporate model**, which emerged in response to the management challenges of large-scale production and continues to influence how contemporary firms are structured. Many of today's multinational corporations evolved from the industrial giants of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, such as U.S. Steel, Standard Oil, and General Electric (Chandler, 1977). These early corporations pioneered managerial hierarchies, departmental specialization, and formalized corporate governance—principles still foundational in today's business world (Zunz, 1990).

In terms of labor, the **historical relationship between industrialization and migration** remains relevant. The reliance on immigrant labor to sustain economic growth in the industrial age set a precedent that is echoed in today's globalized labor markets. From construction to agriculture to technology, immigrant workers continue to play a pivotal role in the U.S. economy (Portes & Rumbaut, 2014). Moreover, the segmentation of the labor market—where migrants often occupy low-wage, precarious jobs—is a continuation of patterns established during the first major industrial boom (Waldinger & Lichter, 2003).

Labor unions, although diminished in strength compared to their peak in the mid-20th century, **still reflect the legacy of early labor movements**. The legal protections and institutional frameworks that

originated from past struggles—such as minimum wage laws, workplace safety regulations, and collective bargaining rights—are direct outcomes of the labor activism during industrialization (Dubofsky & Dulles, 2010). Recent movements, such as efforts to unionize tech workers and Amazon warehouse employees, demonstrate that many of the core issues—job security, fair wages, and working conditions—remain unresolved.

From a policy perspective, the **lessons of the industrial era are vital for understanding contemporary debates** on immigration and economic regulation. Historically, periods of mass migration were often followed by xenophobic backlashes and restrictive legislation, such as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the Immigration Act of 1924 (Higham, 1998). These historical episodes offer cautionary insights into the cyclical nature of nativist sentiment and the consequences of exclusionary policies.

Furthermore, the economic dislocation and labor upheaval of the industrial age mirror current concerns surrounding **automation, globalization, and the gig economy**. As artificial intelligence and remote work technologies reshape employment, questions about job displacement, social mobility, and equitable access to opportunity echo the dilemmas faced by workers during the industrial transformation (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014).

In sum, the legacies of industrialization and migration are not confined to the past—they are embedded in the **structure of modern capitalism, the character of the workforce, and the policy decisions that shape labor and immigration systems** today. Understanding this historical foundation is essential for crafting more inclusive and sustainable economic strategies in the present.

Conclusion

The industrialization of the United States, coupled with waves of migration in the 19th and early 20th centuries, fundamentally transformed the nation's economic and social landscape. This period saw the rise of powerful corporate structures, driven by technological innovation, infrastructure development, and the need for efficient management of large-scale production. Simultaneously, the labor market evolved through the incorporation of immigrant labor, the growth of unions, and new labor policies aimed at addressing the challenges of an expanding workforce. These historical dynamics not only shaped modern corporate practices and labor relations but also continue to influence contemporary debates on economic policy, immigration, and the organization of work. Understanding these foundational shifts offers critical insights into the enduring legacy of industrial-era transformations in today's globalized economy.

References

- Alba, R., & Nee, V. (2003). *Remaking the American mainstream: Assimilation and contemporary immigration*. Harvard University Press.
- Brinkley, D. (2003). *Wheels for the world: Henry Ford, his company, and a century of progress*. Viking.
- Brynjolfsson, E., & McAfee, A. (2014). *The second machine age: Work, progress, and prosperity in a time of brilliant technologies*. W. W. Norton & Company.
- Chandler, A. D. (1977). *The visible hand: The managerial revolution in American business*. Harvard University Press.
- Daniels, R. (2002). *Coming to America: A history of immigration and ethnicity in American life* (2nd ed.). Harper Perennial.
- Dubofsky, M., & Dulles, F. R. (2010). *Labor in America: A history* (8th ed.). Wiley-Blackwell.
- Foner, P. S. (1976). *History of the labor movement in the United States: Volume 1 – From colonial times to the founding of the American Federation of Labor*. International Publishers.
- Greenwald, R. A. (2005). *The triangle fire, protocols of peace, and industrial democracy in progressive era New York*. Temple University Press.
- Gutman, H. G. (1977). *Work, culture, and society in industrializing America: Essays in American working class and social history*. Alfred A. Knopf.
- Higham, J. (1998). *Strangers in the land: Patterns of American nativism, 1860–1925* (2nd ed.). Rutgers University Press.
- Hughes, T. P. (1989). *American genesis: A century of invention and technological enthusiasm, 1870–1970*. Viking Penguin.
- Interstate Commerce Commission. (1916). *Annual report of the Interstate Commerce Commission*. U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Livesay, H. C. (2007). *Andrew Carnegie and the rise of big business* (3rd ed.). Pearson Longman.
- Montgomery, D. (1987). *The fall of the house of labor: The workplace, the state, and American labor activism, 1865–1925*. Cambridge University Press.
- Nevins, A. (1953). *Study in power: John D. Rockefeller, industrialist and philanthropist* (Vol. 2). Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Portes, A., & Rumbaut, R. G. (2014). *Immigrant America: A portrait* (4th ed.). University of California Press.
- Temin, P. (1964). *Iron and steel in nineteenth-century America: An economic inquiry*. MIT Press.
- U.S. Bureau of the Census. (1975). *Historical statistics of the United States: Colonial times to 1970* (Bicentennial ed.). U.S. Government Printing Office. <https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/title/41>

U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. (n.d.). *Patent statistics*. United States Department of Commerce. <https://www.uspto.gov>

Waldinger, R., & Lichter, M. I. (2003). *How the other half works: Immigration and the social organization of labor*. University of California Press.

Zolberg, A. R. (2006). *A nation by design: Immigration policy in the fashioning of America*. Harvard University Press.

Zunz, O. (1990). *Making America corporate, 1870–1920*. University of Chicago Press.

A key role of Vocational Training in preparing a skilled and job-ready workforce in the US

SOPO REVAZISHVILI^{17*}

IRINA BAKHTADZE^{18*}

Abstract

The article highlights various aspects of vocational education in the United States, including the types of institutions, programs designed in close collaboration with industry stakeholders, and the curriculum. Vocational colleges, often referred to as career and technical education (CTE) institutions

play a vital role in the American education system, providing students with hands-on, skills-based training for a wide variety of occupations. Funding and policy for vocational education are often driven by federal initiatives, such as the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, which aims to enhance Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs nationwide. The article describes the existing differences between vocational education provided at the secondary and postsecondary levels. Each occupation has a special curriculum. Nevertheless, some secondary vocational courses provide general labour market preparation, teaching general employment skills, offering career education, and applying academic skills rather than preparing students solely for paid employment in a specific occupation. The article employs both quantitative and qualitative methods of investigation, utilizing secondary sources, statistical data, and other primary sources.

Keywords: vocational education, US technical education (CTE) institutions, vocational training and curriculum, Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act.

Introduction

Vocational colleges- are referred to as career and technical education (CTE) institutions that play a vital role in the American education system. These institutions offer students hands-on, skills-based teaching for a broad spectrum of occupations, which include healthcare, technologies, trades, manufacturing, hospitality, and many others. Unlike traditional four-year universities, vocational training colleges mainly offer certificates, diplomas, and associate degrees that are directly tailored for specific career paths. In the United States, vocational education is available at diverse educational institutions, such as com-

^{17*} Ph.D. Candidate, American Studies Program, School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, International Black Sea University, Tbilisi, Georgia.

^{18*} Affiliated Prof. Dr. in American Studies, School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, International Black Sea University, Tbilisi, Georgia.

munity colleges, technical colleges, and standalone trade schools. These programs are often designed in close collaboration with industry stakeholders to ensure that curricula remain relevant to current labour market demands. Funding and policy of the vocational training college are often driven by federal initiatives, such as the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, which aims to enhance Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs nationwide (US Department of Education, 2020).

The 1990 Perkins Act defines vocational education as “organized educational programs that offer a sequence of courses which are directly related to the preparation of individuals in paid or unpaid employment in current or emerging occupations requiring other than a baccalaureate or advanced degree” (Perkins Act, 1990). Federal recognition of this teaching method was first started with the and later reaffirmed in the 1998 update. States were required to develop performance measures and standards for assessing local vocational programs. The 1998 Perkins Act emphasized integration, secondary-post-secondary articulation, and all aspects of the industry and required a measure of academic performance. While vocational education is provided at both the secondary and postsecondary levels, its focus differs somewhat at each level (Perkins Act, 1998).

Methodology

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative data to examine the structure, implementation, and impact of vocational education in the United States. The research is grounded in a review of secondary sources, including official reports, statistical databases, and scholarly literature on Career and Technical Education (CTE).

Quantitative data were primarily sourced from the US Bureau of Labour Statistics, the National Centre for Education Statistics (NCES), and government reports related to the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act. These data sources provided insights into labour market trends, employment projections by skill level, and income comparisons between various educational attainments.

The qualitative aspect of the research involved a thematic analysis of federal and state policy documents, institutional reports, and vocational curriculum models. Special attention was paid to the historical development of CTE legislation, the classification of vocational programs at secondary and postsecondary levels, and the role of public-private partnerships in curriculum design.

By combining statistical analysis with policy review, this methodology enables a comprehensive understanding of how vocational training aligns with labour market demands, supports underserved populations, and contributes to economic development. The use of diverse data sources enhances the validity and relevance of the findings presented in this paper.

Vocational education is classified as secondary and postsecondary vocational education:

Secondary Vocational Education

Secondary vocational education can itself be sorted into three types:

- consumer and homemaking education;
- general labour market preparation;
- specific labour market preparation;

Specific labour market preparation courses teach students skills those are needed to enter a particular occupational field. Such courses can be grouped into the following occupational program areas:

- Agriculture;
- Business and office;
- Marketing and distribution;
- Health;
- Occupational home economics;
- Trade and industry (including construction, mechanics and repairs, and precision production);
- Technical and communications.

Despite each occupation requiring a unique curriculum, some secondary vocational programs concentrate on overall career preparation rather than specialized job training. In recent years, the goals of vocational education have expanded to include preparing students not only for entry into the workforce but also for career advancement and progression into further education and training. For instance, educators must integrate academic and vocational education simultaneously. Secondary vocational education is provided primarily through three types of public high schools:

- comprehensive high schools (the typical US high school);
- Area vocational schools (regional facilities that students attend part of a day to receive their occupational training);
- Full-time vocational high schools (schools that offer academic studies but focus on preparing students for work in a particular occupation or industry).

The latter two types are referred to collectively as vocational schools.

Postsecondary Vocational Education

Vocational education at the non-baccalaureate postsecondary level primarily focuses on career specific training. Postsecondary-level occupational programs commonly parallel the program areas identified at the secondary level:

- Agriculture;

- Business and office;
- Marketing and distribution;
- Health;
- Home economics;
- Technical education (including protective services, computers and data processing, engineering and science technologies, and communication technologies); and trade and industry;

Postsecondary vocational education is offered at several types of institutions, including public, private, and postsecondary institutions such as private, nonprofit four-year institutions; public two- to three-year institutions (generally colleges); public vocational-technical institutes; private, nonprofit institutions with less than four years of operation; and private proprietary (for-profit) institutions.

Jobs in this middle-skill segment of the American labor market are growing more rapidly than lower-skill jobs over the next decade. About 38 per cent of the labor market, or forty-five million adults, held middle-skill jobs in 2010. The Bureau of Labor Statistics forecasts that occupations requiring a postsecondary credential will grow about five percentage points faster than those that do not. Middle-skill postsecondary employment is expected to rise by 17.5 percent from 2010 to 2020—about the same rate as high-skill employment (see Table 1). Meanwhile, middle-skill employment requiring apprenticeships and job training is expected to grow by about 13.4 per cent, which is faster than low-skilled job growth.

Table 1. Employment and Total Job Openings (in thousands), by Education Category (2010-2020)

Education Level	2010	2020	# Change	% Change
High Skill (BA & above)	28567	33531	4964	17.4
Middle Skill (Postsecondary)	15330	18013	2683	17.5
Middle Skill (Non-Postsecondary)	30007	34025	4018	13.4
Low Skill (HS diploma, less than HS)	69164	77968	8804	12.7
Total	143068	163537	20469	14.3

Vocational training plays a great role in preparing a skilled and job-ready workforce. By focusing on industry-specific skills, it helps bridge the gap between education and employment, ensuring that businesses have access to well-trained professionals. It also allows workers to upskill or reskill, making them more adaptable to change job markets. This means more people can secure stable jobs, and industries can fill critical labour shortages with qualified employees. Professional schools, such as law schools, medical schools, and business schools, offer advanced education in specific fields of study. Gaining entry into these institutions is highly selective, and applicants are generally required to have a bachelor's degree. Professional programs are designed to equip students with the credentials and practical skills needed for careers that demand specialized knowledge, such as in law, medicine, business, and similar disciplines. These schools often demand admissions standards and extended course durations, but they

prepare graduates with the qualifications necessary to pursue well-compensated and influential careers. This is particularly important for underserved communities, where access to higher education may be limited. When more and more people have skills to earn a living wage, societies become more equitable, and consequently economic mobility improves.

Challenges and Recommendations

What Are the Economic Benefits of Vocational Training?

Investing in technical education programs strengthens entire economies and is not just suitable for only individuals. When workers are equipped with special skills, businesses thrive, unemployment rates drop and consequently industries remain competitive. However, how exactly does this impact the economy?

- Skilled workers find jobs faster, helping lower joblessness rates.
- Proper training leads to more efficient workers and higher-quality output.
- Skilled professionals drive industrial and technological advancements.
- More skilled workers mean higher wages and increased consumer spending.

How Does Vocational Training Support Industry Growth?

Industries thrive when they have access to a skilled and competent workforce, and vocational training plays a crucial role in achieving this. By equipping workers with specialized skills to tailor industry demands, vocational programs enable businesses to scale, innovate, and remain competitive.

How Can Governments and Businesses Support Vocational Training Programs?

Governments and businesses must invest to thrive vocational trainings in its development. Governments can create policies that make these programs more accessible.

Collaboration between governments and businesses makes sure that training adjusts with real industry needs, creating a more prepared and adaptable workforce.

Funding and incentives: Governments can offer financial support through grants, scholarships, and tax incentives to encourage vocational education. This makes training more and more affordable and of course accessible to a broader segment of the population.

Partnerships with industries: Businesses can collaborate with educational institutions to develop training programs tailored to specific industry needs. This allows graduates to have the exact skills required in the job market.

Apprenticeships and on-the-job training: Companies can offer apprenticeship programs that allow trainees to gain hands-on experience while earning a wage. This helps bridge the gap between education and real-world employment.

What Are the Most Effective Models of Vocational Training?

Not all workforce skill development services are the same. Some models are more effective in preparing students for real-world careers. The best programs combine hands-on experience with industry collaboration to provide trainees with job-ready skills completion.

Here are some of the most effective vocational training models such as:

Apprenticeship programs -Apprentices earn while they learn, gaining practical skills that directly apply to their chosen field of work.

Work-based learning: This model integrates training with actual working experience, allowing students to develop skills in a real industry setting. It is particularly beneficial in fields such as healthcare, construction, and advanced manufacturing.

Online and blended learning: With digital advancements, vocational training now often includes online courses combined with hands-on practical experience. This flexible approach gives students to balance education with work or other commitments.

How Does Vocational Training Adapt to Changing Market Needs?

The job market is constantly evolving, and vocational training must keep pace with the emergence of new industries and technologies. Many programs now integrate digital tools, automation, and green technologies to guarantee that workers stay relevant in modern workplaces.

Schools and training institutions collaborate with industry leaders to update curriculums and introduce new certifications that match workforce demands. This adaptability not only provides job security for workers but also helps businesses remain competitive in an ever-changing economy.

What Are the Challenges Facing Vocational Training Programs

Although vocational Training Programs have several benefits, they face a number of challenges that can limit their accessibility and effectiveness..Challenges Facing Vocational Training Programs may be:

Limited funding and resources: Many career-oriented training programs have problems with inadequate funding, providing modern equipment, skilled instructors, and up-to-date curricula. Increased investment from governments and private sectors can help bridge this gap.

Perception and stigma: Vocational training is often perceived as less alternative to traditional college education that sometimes discourage students from enrolling. It is very crucial to raise awareness about its benefits and that can help change public perception about this issue.

Adapting to technological advancements: Rapid changes in industries necessitate that vocational programs frequently update their training materials. Institutions must collaborate closely with industry leaders to ensure that students are learning the latest skills required in the workforce.

Conclusion

Through investing in skills training, workforce development programs, and technical education, businesses and governments can create a more sustainable and competitive economy.

As governments and businesses recognize the importance of workforce development, vocational training is expected to continue expanding, providing more individuals with job market readiness and access to high-paying employment opportunities. This shift will not only strengthen industries but also drive innovation, reduce unemployment, and promote inclusive economic growth worldwide.

Ensuring continued prosperity into the next generation requires placing a high priority on strengthening human capital. That means creatively restructuring the funding and governance of workforce delivery systems. But workforce training can no longer exist as a domain apart from primary and secondary education, postsecondary education, social services, and economic development. The most effective strategies will be collaborative, with the federal government playing a powerful coordinating role.

References

- U.S. Department of Education. (2020). Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act Overview. <https://cte.ed.gov>
- Perkins Act of 1990, Pub. L. No. 101-392, 104 Stat. 753 (1990). <https://www.congress.gov/bill/101st-congress/house-bill/7>
- Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act Amendments of 1998, Pub. L. No. 105-332, 112 Stat. 3076. <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PLAW-105publ332/pdf/PLAW-105publ332.pdf>
- Soliz,A.(2023). Career and Technical Education at Community Colleges: A Review of the Literature. AERA Open. Vol. 9, No. 1. Vanderbilt University. P. 1 –17
- Hilard,T.(2013). Building the American Workforce. Center for an Urban Future.P.1-17.https://nycfuture.org/pdf/Building_the_American_Workforce.pdf
- Gunderson, M. M. (2004). A study of the influence vocational education has on students' ultimate academic success . [Doctoral dissertation, University of Central Florida]. STARS Electronic Theses and Dissertations. <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/etd/9/>
- <https://www.collegevine.com/faq/156915/what-percentage-of-vocational-school-graduates-secure-jobs>
- Shorelight. (n.d.). Vocational study in the USA. <https://shorelight.com/student-stories/vocational-study-in-the-usa/>
- U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (1995). Vocational education in the United States: The early 1990s (NCES 95-024). <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs/web/95024-2.asp>

Methodism: From the State to the Free Church

GEORGE SHADURI^{19*}

Abstract

The Methodist denomination underwent a classical transformation from the state to the free church. We can observe this pattern, the evolution from *ecclesiola* to *ecclesia*, in the 17th century: Puritans, the spiritual predecessors of Methodists, started as a body within the Church of England, separating eventually from it. Methodists continued the pattern, having formed as an integral movement within the Church. As a movement within the state church, Methodists possessed features not present in the main body of the Anglican church: connexionalism, evangelism, and enthusiasm. It acquired these features because of its pietistic and revivalistic nature. These features distinguished it from the orthodoxy, which eventually pre-conditioned its separation from the state church.

The key point determining separation of Methodists from the state church was the necessity of ordination of ministers by non-bishops, as, following the American Revolution, Anglican bishops were reluctant to ordain the Methodists overseas because of their politically separatist views. This caused breaking the traditional line of ordination which resulted in the eventual secession of the Methodist church, turning it from *ecclesiola* into *ecclesia*.

Key words: Methodism, sect, Church of England, state church, free church

1. Introduction: Puritanism as a Sect within the State Church

On the one hand, the Puritan movement can be seen as a sect, but, on the other one, it also represents a sect within the state church. Puritanism emerged as early as in the 16th century to defend the Calvinist platform within the Anglican church when it became evident that Anglicanism inherited too much from Catholicism. It formed into a powerful movement in the 17th century setting its purpose the purifying the Anglican church from its Arminian (Catholic) residues. However, willing to play the role of a purifying catalysts, Puritans never intended to break away from the Church of England. The power of their action expressed itself in the turbulent 1640s when, owing to the efforts of the Presbyterians and Independents, the monarchy was abolished and the Republic established. The process of ceasing to be part of the state church system started in the years of the Reformation when, in 1662 the non-conforming Puritans (Presbyterians) withdrew from the Anglican church (the event known as 'the Ejection') (Gordon, 1917). By the 1680s all the Presbyterians ejected from the state church, thus assuming the status of the

^{19*} Assoc. Prof. Dr. in American Studies, School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, International Black Sea University, Tbilisi, Georgia.

Dissenters, although their theology, polity and ethics remained and continued to be Puritan. In essence, their conversion from the state-type *ecclesiola* into the classical sect occurred. Although formally they became independent, in reality their role and power in ecclesiastical and political processes diminished because the ejected Presbyterians soon assumed the Arminian teaching and thus ceased to be carriers of revivalist doctrine in contrast to the earlier decades when their position was purely revivalist: Calvinist doctrine versus Catholic/Arminian doctrine.

New processes start developing right after the Glorious Revolution. The year 1689 was marked by the adoption of the Act of Toleration which granted freedom of religion to all Protestants (although not Catholics). This act paradoxically impacted the overall religiousness of the nation: it was dramatically reduced by the end of the 17th – beginning of the 18th century as less and less people went to attend the Anglican services, while the services of the Dissenters proliferated (Gordon, 1917). The general spirit in the Church of England went 'dormant': conventional modes of preaching in the church did not attract believers anymore. That meant the necessity of reforming the Anglican church 'from inside' once again.

Calvinism could not play the reforming force, as the age of reason and rationalism was on the threshold. The help came from the emerging Pietism – a continental movement called to raise devotion in believers. There is certain similarity between Pietism and Puritanism: by analogy with English Puritanism, in Germany, Pietistic groups were formed *within* the Lutheran church, staying in alliance with local aristocracy, not aiming at breaking from the official Lutheran church (Troeltsch, 1931).

Pietism came on the English soil through Methodism. John Wesley came into contact with Moravian Brethren whose devotion helped him develop a peculiarly pietistic mindset. It became cornerstone of his teaching after the illumination he experienced in 1738 (Harwood, 1854). This doctrine was the foundation of the movement which he originated within the Church of England with the purpose of reforming it in the pietistic manner. Wesley never intended to break with the Anglican Church whatsoever. Even more, being Pietist and Enthusiast, he combined these low-church principles with high churchmanship, remaining a zealous Anglican. Thus, by analogy with the 17th century, in the 18th century Methodism represented *ecclesiola in ecclesia* (Lloyd-Jones, 1965), bearing features of sect, but ceasing to become one, staying within and being part of the state church. Our task is to see how Methodism eventually developed from a state into a free church.

2. Methodism as a Sect within the State Church

2.1. Connexionalism

In the period of the Restoration of Monarchy, the clergy and laymen of the Church of England set up a new type of parochial and charitable activity to survive successfully up to the eighteenth century. These included the 'religious societies' – small communities called to strengthen and complement parochial communities. These societies were seen as effective tools for bringing the Christianity in crisis back to its initial greatness and drive, serving as a support for the perishing Church of England (Armstrong, 1973).

Wesley's idea was to bring his converts together in such societies. He liked to underline that he was no innovator in this direction but he was just applying the already existing practice in the Church. Members of these societies had to attend the church and partake regularly even if they disagreed with the minister's teaching. They were to gather once a week on their own for prayers and hymns and for mutual assistance in their religious life (Balleine, 1911).

Methodism itself began as a religious society, as a 'Holy Club' at Oxford in 1729 established by John Wesley and his brother Charles. From the very days of the Holy Club, Wesley was sure that believers needed to gather together, first, for public worship, and, second, for closer spiritual communication. He drew his primary principle from a text-book published in 1680, in which an anonymous country parson speaks that if believers from different parts of the kingdom unite in societies for spiritual engagement and mutual support, that will be most effective in "restoring... [the] decaying Christianity to its primitive life and vigour" and support and save the dying Church (Davies, 1966, p. 215).

The first Methodist societies were organized in Kingswood and Bristol. At first, the Bristol societies met in private houses but soon it was felt that separate buildings were needed specially for these gatherings. Thus, it was decided to raise money to build a "Society Room". The first such society room was built in 1741 and is known as 'The New Room'. This practice was liked and approved, as the need for raising money continued, so it was decided that a society should meet once a week to allow a leader of the society to collect a penny from society members weekly. It was called 'class money' and it gave start to weekly Methodist 'classes'. This is how the Methodist Society Class originated, having become the cell of Society membership, ground for training of lay preachers, and an effective tool of evangelism. The individual proceedings of Class Meetings must have been different in various places, but the main thing was that its leader was a layman, i.e. he was neither an ordained clergyman, nor itinerant preacher, often being from a lower class or having no or almost no education. The same was true for the members of the Class where he was a leader (Davies, 1976, pp. 62-63).

For those members of the Church who experienced rebirth and were on the way of sanctification and perfection, classes of more intimate nature were created, where their members could confide with each other about the experience they had. These classes were called 'bands' (Ibid., p. 64).

In terms of the organization of its polity, the Methodist Church was Presbyterian. By introducing 'superintendents' (elder-ministers) for each 'circuit' (in analogy with 'parish'), through the system of 'stewards', 'leaders', through 'quarterly meetings' of professional and lay clergymen in each circuit, Wesley created very Presbyterian system, whose later developments did not shatter but rather strengthened the Presbyterian system which he established (Workman, 1912, pp. 119-120).

Leaders and stewards (who were considered of a higher status) simply executed administrative responsibilities under 'assistants'. Whether members or leaders or stewards were admitted or dismissed by Wesley and his immediate assistants. In 1771 Wesley declared that the hierarchy of the power transmission in the Methodist polity was the following: 1. The assistant; 2. The preachers; 3. The stewards; 4. The leaders; 5. The people (Davies, R. E., 1966).

From 1739, the tradition of weekly conferences was given: after the class and band system was inaugurated, a meeting between the minister, the leaders and the stewards of the larger societies was established (Ibid.), which later evolved into the tradition of yearly Conferences.

The establishment and development of societies led to the notion of 'United Societies' (in Bristol, one of the primary strongholds of Methodism). Although the notion fell out of use later, the principle of connexionalism endured and still is considered as one of Wesley's greatest contribution to ecclesiastical polity (Ibid.).

By the coming of the Victorian times, Methodism represented into the system which was different from Congregationalism insofar as it never allowed its societies to join together in a separate church. The societies present in a given area were connected to each other forming a so-called 'circuit' with two or more ministers in it. Thus, a circuit was a group of societies, organized around a stronger society which should provide support for other societies in the group (Workman, 1912). Various societies further constituted a number of 'districts' with a chairman at the head of each, whose ministers and stewards met twice a year. Finally, there was the annual Conference at the top of the system representing the supreme body of Methodist connexionalism (Ibid.).

2.2. Evangelism

We have already discussed the structure of the Methodist polity. As we have seen, at the top were so-called 'assistants' or 'helpers'. These originally were the itinerant preachers who then were delegated the responsibility of overseeing the members and leaders of the Methodist 'classes' discussed above. The assistants superintended both leaders and stewards, who, not having any executive authority, merely exercised administrative responsibilities under their superintendents (Davies, 1966).

Participation of lay preachers, including the itinerant preaching, became one of the expressions of voluntarism in Methodism.

Troeltsch (1931) defines voluntarism in a following way. Tracing back the origins of Baptism, he says that, stimulated by the Reformation, everywhere there rose great number of small groups of devoted believers detached from "the world", pursuing religious freedom, who were striving to form communities of believers who experienced true conversion and joined a community of voluntary members. Their adult baptism, being an outward expression, was a symbol of voluntarism. They were distinguished by accentuating the desire of being a "holy community", their "holiness" defined as that of the Sermon of the Mount, which meant mature Christians composing a voluntary community (Troeltsch, 1931, pp. 695-696).

A famous evangelist of the 19th century, Charles Spurgeon (1877), traces the origins of the open-air preaching professed by the Protestants to Jesus Christ's Sermon on the Mount, saying that the Lord pronounced most of his speeches either on the mountain, or at the sea, or in the streets ("Our Lord was to all intents and purposes an open-air preacher" – Spurgeon, 1877, p. 55). He reviews the history of

open-field preaching and juxtaposes the opposition of the Catholics clergy to open-field preaching to eagerness of the first Protestants to preach in the open air, marking it as one of the distinguished signs of the Reformation:

The Reformation when yet a babe was like the new-born Christ, and had not where to lay its head, but a company of men comparable to the heavenly host proclaimed it under the open heavens, where shepherds and common people heard them gladly.

(Spurgeon, 1877, p. 56)

Outdoor preaching came to Methodism from Wales. Since 1688, Non-conformism in Wales was developing very rapidly, while in England it was on decline. Non-conformists preached in the native tongue and the Welsh Anglican priest, Griffith Jones, took after them. At the same, being aware that the churches other than his own were closed to him, he started preaching at home and in the fields. It came to pass that he arrived in Bristol and met George Whitefield there. Whitefield was fascinated by his method and also started preaching outdoors in Bristol as the Welsh preachers did. He invited Wesley in Bristol. Being a high churchman, Wesley was at first appalled by the idea of the outdoor preaching. Still, he held talks with a Religious Society, and, having recalled and discussed with them the Sermon on the Mount, came to the conclusion that such type of sermons was quite common in those times, while there were churches existing at the same time. So, he decided to preach outdoors for three thousand listeners, and continued this practice which had distinctive and, often, unexpected effects (Halevy, 1971).

The discipline in Methodism has always been very evangelical, as, although on the one hand, its structure was presbyteral and episcopal, on the other hand it was based on voluntary participation of so-called 'helpers' who were given special status in its organization. By the end of Wesley's career, the governance of the Methodist Society which became the Church was exercised by the Conference of Travelling Preachers. Almost all of these preachers, being laymen, carried out preaching and ministerial work, while being supported by donations of the people. These itinerant preachers were Wesley's personal representatives connecting the Societies, superintending stewards, leaders and people. They were those who actually governed Methodism. Wesley's *Large Minutes* of 1789, the guidelines for all Methodists, defines the 'helpers' as 'extraordinary messengers', i.e. they are not seen as regular ministers, but called by an outstanding work of the Spirit to a more non-planned, but still very important, spiritual work. Its purpose was to urge the dormant clergy to take after them and also to care for the souls neglected by the clergy. This was a cornerstone of the rise of Methodism, which defined the ministry within its realm in its pursuit of Holiness (Davies, 1966, pp. 198-199).

2.3. Enthusiasm

According to Troeltsch (1931), the feature of Methodism was to appeal to believers through direct personal experience. This was achieved through 'Enthusiasm' and emotional revivalism. 'Enthusiasm' played very important part in the beginnings of the Anabaptist movement, Quakerism and Methodism.

By definition of Ronald Knox (1961), the nature of enthusiasm lies in the preaching of new birth which cannot be confined to a simple change of manners, rather it represents a totally new approach which is distinguished by the appeal to the heart in contrast with earlier dealing with management of outward practices. The expression of enthusiasm is the belief of close Second Coming; this is linked to ecstasy – an aggregate of abnormal symptoms, resulting from belief in the prophecy. Knox refers to Gibson, Bishop of London, who defined enthusiasm as ‘a strong persuasion on the mind of persons that they are guided in an extraordinary manner by immediate impressions and impulses of the Spirit of God’ (Knox, 1961, p. 450). It is true that Wesley started as a high-churchman. However, “without ever being aware of it, he has changed camps” (Ibid, p. 451).

Indeed, it is a non-debated fact about early Methodism that Wesley was sympathetic towards enthusiasm in its most outspoken forms: he eagerly describes the spiritual torments and consolations of believers he preached for after 1739 (Ibid., p. 452).

The spirit of enthusiasm in Methodism can arguably be traced to the practice coming from Wales from times when Wesley met Welsh preachers. The Welsh, who were hardly coming out of savagery, loved exultation: they had fondness for tumultuous passions and rebuked the Anglican preachers for coldness and formality, for employing reason and not emotion in their services (Halevy, 1971).

The one who started the Methodist Revival was Calvinist Methodist George Whitefield. He was the first to take over the practice of field-preaching from Welsh preachers in Bristol and he summoned Wesley to join him in doing this. Whitefield was asking him to preach to barbarians and Wesley knew that the format of either University sermon or that preached in a London parish would not be appropriate. By his own admittance, Wesley could hardly get accustomed to preaching in the open-air, as Whitefield asked him, taking into account his usual adherence to decency and order (Rupert, 1976).

The reason for Enthusiasm in Methodism lies in deep desire for a direct personal experience. This desire was satisfied by resorting to Enthusiasm and emotional revivalism. The striking impact of the Methodist revivalism on believers, an impact which was always invigorated being evangelical in its strength and zeal, was specifically based upon the revivalism of feeling, it was owing to this that it became possible for Methodism to get to people and social groups whom it would have been unable to reach otherwise. Such an Enthusiasm certainly involved the risk of an anarchical individualism. However, Methodism eliminated this risk by a very careful and rigid organizational system which envisaged linking of the individual to the whole. Methodism excelled in both of the arts: organization and revivalism (Troeltsch, 1931).

3. Methodism: Foundation of the Free Church

The turbulent events of the American Revolution put discord in the control system ruled by Wesley and the English Conference. Fledgling American Methodism had very little time for ordination from overseas, or obtaining expatriate leadership, or of being considered as a mission in the colonies. To cut the long story short, Methodism underwent a speedy Americanization. The sec-

and yearly conference accepted four colonist preachers, plus seven colonist preachers on trial.

In the second half of the 1770s, with Anglicanism rapidly collapsing, Methodism faced changes. Wesley's coordination seemed problematic under new circumstances. How should Methodism solve its new organizational problems?

In 1779, two conferences took place: one at Kent County (Delaware) and another at Fluvanna (Virginia). The first one aligned firmly with Wesley and his appointee Asbury. The second one abolished the Episcopal polity. Assuming the status of 'dissenters', it elaborated procedures which would stipulate the formation of the new church. This church would combine Anglicanism, Wesleyanism and Presbyterianism. The four appointed presbyters were authorized for the right of administering sacraments, ordaining, and duty of determining who would be eligible for sacraments. This eclectic (partly Anglican, partly Presbyterian, and certainly more democratic) Fluvanna Conference paved the path for American Methodism to follow in the near future (Richey, 2012).

The turning point for Methodism to move from the state to the free church came after the American revolution when the necessity of ordination of American Methodist priests from England arose.

In 1746, John Wesley read a work written by Peter King, the Puritan, dated by the end of the 17th century, in which it was argued that presbyters, and not only bishops, had the same right to ordain priest, as it was stated in the New Testament. For years, Wesley cherished this idea, but he never ventured to act upon this principle for his dedication and respect towards the Church of England. Although he was a 'Superintendent', which represented a latinized form of 'bishop', he was not actually a bishop, being of a lower rank in clerical hierarchy.

The turning point came in 1784. Knowing that his mission needs to be continued, he first appointed the yearly Conference consisting of one hundred persons, the so-called Legal Hundred, which was supposed to become his successor. In this way, the Methodist Societies were formed into a formal *ecclesiola in ecclesia*, with its own being and constitution.

By 1784, the American Revolution was over, and the Americans won their liberty. It's natural that the clergymen of the Church of England working in America were loyalists and supported Britain. They ceased to be favoured by Americans and therefore had to come back home. Wesley's American ministers had maintained either a neutral position, or openly supported the American cause. Therefore, they were welcome in the free America. However, not a single of them was ordained, being unfortunate to get ordained from any of the authorized person on the territory of the United States. Wesley knew that and he tried hard to improve the situation, asking the Bishop of London (whose diocese encompassed America) and Archbishop of York to ordain some of them. Both refused for some ostensible grounds. Thus, in the beginning of September, 1784, Wesley himself consecrated three men as elders, and one of them – as Superintendent (Whatcoat and Vasey – as deacons and Coke as a Superintendent). These three soon afterwards traveled to America and played vital role in promotion of Methodism there (Rupert, 1976).

Charles Wesley, John's brother, clearly saw that ordination meant separation. John Wesley did not ac-

cept that and stubbornly continued defending his position, arguing separation. Soon after his death, the Methodist community in England became split on the issue of ordination by episcopally non-ordained ministers, which led to the eventual break with the Church of England (Ibid.).

Considering the new ecclesiastical and political reality established after the Revolution, Wesley declared drawing up a Sketch for a new church for "our brethren in North America" (Richey, 2012, p. 24), drafting a liturgy for it. He let American Methodists be "at full liberty, simply to follow the Scriptures and the Primitive Church" (Ibid., p. 24). Still, Wesley did not intend to block his authority in how Americans would follow the Scriptures and the Primitive Church. With that purpose, he also sent provisions, revisions or other similar documents in line with the Anglican Church.

A Wesley-ordained Superintendent Coke met the leader of American Methodists Asbury on December 14 in Maryland, from where they traveled to Perry Hall, a landmark site for the Methodists. There the new reformers finally transformed Wesley's tenets into proposals. Thus, at the end of 1784, the American Methodists, blessed and guided by John Wesley, established the Methodist Episcopal Church, which was followed by other communions breaking or revisioning their connections with European authorities (Richey, 2012).

4. Conclusions

The passage of transformation of Methodism from the state to the free church reflects classical metamorphosis from *ecclessiola* into *ecclesia*.

The origin of Methodism is the same as that of Puritanism – it is Pietism, the school calling for better godliness and for returning to the original primitive church. In the 17th century, in its most active period, Puritanism was a sect within the Church of England – an *ecclessiola* within *ecclesia*, aiming at reforming the church from within. The aim was fulfilled partly – the kingdom remained Protestant and in the 1689 the freedom for religion was granted to the Dissenting Puritans. However, there was another process as well: the Puritans ejected from the official Church, and, having likewise embraced Arminianism, lost the mission of the reformers aiming at bringing the church to its evangelical roots.

The situation was such that in the beginning of the 18th century, it was evident that there was a deep crisis in the Church of England, and it needed a fresh force capable of bringing the church out of this crisis. The newly emerging Methodism strove to assume this role. Just like the Puritans, the Methodists started as an *ecclessiola* in *ecclesia* – for most contemporaries they were seen as a sect within the church. Methodism carried a number of features which were Pietistic in their nature, making it an effective tool for evangelizing both the formal church and society, which were:

(1) Connexionalism. Methodism started as a society called for strengthening the ties between believers, bringing them together, which evolved into creating different 'cells' composing the connected units of the Methodist community. In 1739, the first Methodist conference was held. In the course of the time, specifically Methodist polity developed, as by 1771 Wesley approved the following hierarchy which was

essentially presbyterian, which involved laymen: 1. The assistant; 2. The preachers; 3. The stewards; 4. The leaders; 5. The people. Thus, Methodist ecclesia – a church within the church – formed. However, it differed from the Congregationalists, as different Methodist societies were forbidden to create churches independent from each other;

(2) Evangelism. Involvement of lay preaching at the top of the Methodist polity was one of the evangelical elements. This element is connected with another one – voluntaryism, assuming involvement of independent, unordained, preachers in their work. This principle is connected with the Jesus Christ's Sermon on the Mount, which, on the one hand, sanctified the outdoor preaching, and, on the other hand, made it possible for independent, lay preachers to get involved in the practice of preaching outdoors. This practice was started first in Wales, taken over by George Whitefield (who later applied it successfully in North America), and, finally, embraced by Wesley, who employed it on the English soil;

(3) Enthusiasm, or emotional revivalism. Enthusiasm came out of the open-air preaching. This element became possible because of the desire of believers for direct personal experience. Open-air preaching and Welsh factor contributed to this practice. Skeptical and reluctant at first, Wesley had to accept this reality because it was owing to revivalism of feeling that it became possible for Methodism to get to people and social groups whom it would have been unable to reach otherwise.

In the second half of the 1770s, Anglicanism was rapidly collapsing in North America. In 1779, two different Methodist conferences were held: the first, adhered to Wesleyan principles, while the second approved an eclectic church polity. The schism was eventually overcome but the second conference created precedent for creation of a typically American Methodist church.

Wesley faced the dilemma: he needed to ordain preachers in America. However, he could not because Anglican bishops were reluctant to ordain the clergymen who were opposing the policy of metropolis. Having read that it is fully evangelical to give a presbyter the right to ordain preachers, Wesley personally ordained three men as elders who then went to America to carry out the Methodist mission there. At the end of 1784, the American Methodists, blessed and guided by John Wesley, established the Methodist Episcopal Church, which was followed by other communions breaking or revisioning their connections with European authorities.

SECTION III: LITERATURE, WOMEN'S ISSUES

Teaching American Values through Literature at IBSU

SOPHIO CHAREKISHVILI^{20*}

GEORGE SHADURI^{21*}

Abstract

This article analyzes classroom observations conducted in two university courses at International Black Sea University - *American Novel* and *Introduction to American Literature*. The study explores how students respond to and interpret American values while engaging with American authors' biographies, the literary movements and selected works discussed throughout the courses. The observations reveal that American values are constantly addressed, and students' analyses reflect a range of theoretical approaches. The findings demonstrate the value of using literature to foster critical thinking about cultural, social and moral issues in higher education.

Literature Review

Scholarly interest surrounding the connections between literature and value transmission is longstanding and many prominent scholars delineated this theme in their works.

Neumann (1918) is a staunch advocate for using American literature to teach students American values. Therefore, he aptly names American literature as a 'serviceable vehicle' and introduces two statements to justify this: first and foremost, idealistic values are deeply inherent in American literary works, and as a consequence, literature is able to connect with emotions better than historical or civil information; secondly, it is highly unlikely to force idealistic values as information hence, literature is proposed as a perfect vehicle for acquiring values. Moreover, Neumann (1918) suggests that the language should be well-appreciated by Americans as the fundamental values of the country are subtly inherent in the language. Overall, Neumann's (1918) claims imply that literature can have an important part to play in students' moral and cultural formation.

Kaplan(2018), in his book *Democratic Humanism and American Literature*, argues that it is politics more

^{20*} Ph.D. Candidate, American Studies Program, School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, International Black Sea University, Tbilisi, Georgia.

^{21*} Affiliated Associate Professor, Doctor

often than literature that reveals the true nature of American democratic values. He, however, believes that to understand these values, one should refer to literature especially, the 19th-century classic writers. He believes it is complex and controversial to define values as they require 'ethical sophistication'. For illustration, he examines 'freedom' which often contradicts the social system, justice and equality. On the other hand, Kaplan(2018) regards writers as the 'freest critics of their civilization'. Consequently, Georgian students are likely to better comprehend the moral and cultural frameworks of American society by reading and analysing the works of 19th-century classic writers.

The core of the American values is the American Dream which has always been the national spirit for Americans. Izaguirre (2014), in his thesis, explores the ideals of the American Dream in American literary works and connects them to values such as individualism and self-reliance. While Izaguirre (2014) argues that the American Dream contributed to the unification of the social and racial classes, Hedhili, S. N. (2016) concludes that the American Dream is unrealistic to achieve for everyone by virtue of social, economic and racial factors; only rich white men have the potential to pursue this dream.

Ramgotra (2021) challenges the classical liberal notion of individualism which is often depicted in American literature. She emphasizes the significance of community in shaping personal values; this critique is invaluable for Georgian students in terms of interpreting of the tension between individualism and community. Ramgotra's (2021) analysis might contribute to a deep understanding of the balance between individual freedom and social cohesion.

Carroll, N. (2002) claims that a person is capable of forming, enhancing or interpreting a true belief with the help of narrative artwork. Furthermore, he argues that simply gaining facts from the television, newspaper or other media differs from acquiring knowledge from a work of art; Information gained through artwork contributes to its vivid comprehension, the deepening of existing knowledge, or, more importantly, it might assist in forming a unique perspective on an issue.

Observation

The objective of the observation is to determine the extent to which American values are incorporated into the study process and whether studying American literature helps students understand traditional American values. The observation was conducted in two courses, "American Novel" and "Introduction to American Literature", during one semester.

American Novel, an elective course in American Studies for Bachelor's students at IBSU, is a 42-hour class work (3-hour lectures over 14 weeks) that comprises the reading and analysis of three major American novels associated with three main stages of American literary development: Romanticism – Realism – Modernism (including the Jazz Age). These are: "The Scarlet Letter" by Nathaniel Hawthorne (Romanticism), "The Adventure of Huckleberry Finn" by Mark Twain (Realism) and "The Great Gatsby" by F. S. Fitzgerald (Modernism/Jazz Age).

The observation was assessed based on how students incorporated American values and literary theories into their discussions and analyses.

First and foremost, students learn about the author of the novel, the movement the book belongs to, and the social and political context of the era. Students' homework is to read the retold version of the novel, while the original version is studied in class.

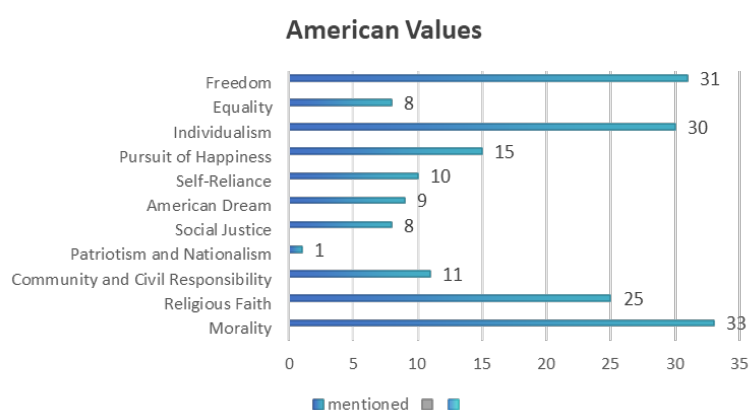
Three aspects are emphasized while working on these novels: vocabulary, the plot of the novel, and linguistic/stylistic analysis. Therefore, class tasks are threefold. Vocabulary-related tasks include guessing the meanings of the words and idioms from the context, as well as interpreting dialectal variations and nonstandard spellings used by the author. Another type of task is discussions centered on the plot, character motivations and narrative development in the novels, and last but not least, students engage in various activities that involve linguistic/stylistic analysis by reading selected extracts from the original text.

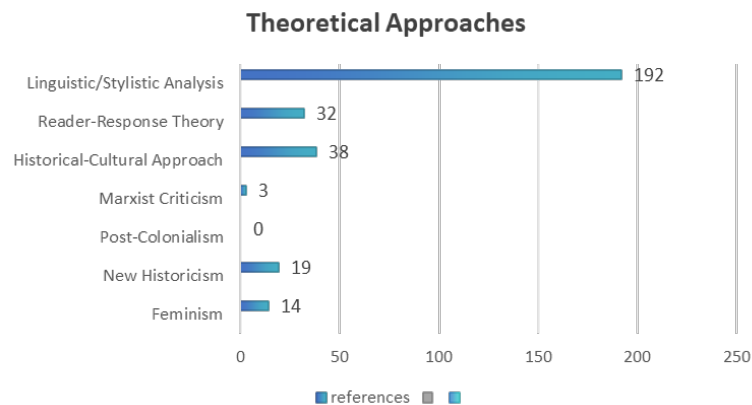
Results of the Observation of AN

The novels were discussed in a way to depict the positive and negative side of values of the American society of the era they were written. Discussions in class included American values such as freedom, equality, individualism, the pursuit of happiness, self-reliance, the American dream, social justice, patriotism and nationalism, community and civil responsibility, religious faith, and morality. Each lesson included discussions and debates on American values, references to culture, social or political contexts of the novels, encouragements of critical thinking and personal interpretations. Most of the students actively participated in discussions and were critically engaged with theoretical approaches.

The qualitative analysis of a 42-hour class observation demonstrated high student engagement, frequent use of values in discussions, instances when students connected themes of the novels to contemporary or their personal experiences, active listening and responding to opposing interpretations, and expressing critical explanations. This shows that students acquired and comprehended traditional American values with the help of American novels.

The quantitative analysis reveals how many times values were mentioned and theoretical approaches were referred to during the entire course. The most discussed values are Morality, Freedom, Individualism, and Religious Faith and the most frequently referred-to theoretical approach is Linguistic/Stylistic Analysis, with 192 references, followed by the Historical-Cultural approach with 38 references and Reader-Response Theory with 32 references.





Introduction to American Literature, an obligatory course in the American Studies program for Bachelor's students at IBSU, is a 28-hour class work (2-hour lectures over 14 weeks). Students become familiar with American literature from the colonial period (16th - 18th centuries.) through to the 20th century.

Classwork proceeds as follows: students are introduced to the author's biography, the literary movement, and the author's major works. Students also have the opportunity to watch short film adaptations of novels and listen to poetry in class.

Classwork is based on lectures explaining American literature, while students analyze a short story and write an essay each lesson as a homework assignment. During the semester, students select and read one novel for a presentation. Presentations cover character analysis, internal and external conflicts, plot analysis, the literary movement the novel belongs to, and, most importantly, students express their personal attitudes towards the novel and discuss the influence it had on them.

Results of the Observation of IAL

The material discussed in class covers a wide variety of American values namely, freedom, equality, individualism, the pursuit of happiness, self-reliance, the American dream, social justice, patriotism and nationalism, community and civil responsibility, religious faith, morality, courage, tolerance, survival and disillusionment with the American dream. Additionally, the course introduces theoretical approaches such as Feminism, New Historicism, Post-Colonialism, Marxist Criticism, Historical-Cultural approach, Reader-Response theory, Linguistic/Stylistic analysis, Moral and Ethical Criticism and Psychoanalytic Criticism.

Debates and discussions are limited since the course primarily employs a lecture-based format. However, brief discussions address the core American cultural and traditional values. Students are encouraged to analyze concepts such as life, self-reliance, intuition and individualism and to reflect on how, for instance, Transcendentalist ideas apply to their own experiences.

Students exhibit greater interest when visual and auditory materials are used to explore deeper meanings and implications. For example, students found the statue of 'Evangeline' visually impressive, enjoyed listening to Edgar Allan Poe's poetry with its distinctive rhythm and sound, and were struck by

Upton Sinclair's quote 'I aimed at the public's heart and by accident I hit it in the stomach.' (Sinclair, 1906, as cited in Encyclopedia Britannica, n.d.)

Individual student presentations allowed students to express their personal attitudes, sympathies and antipathies, as well as, the influence the novel, protagonist or historical era had on them. For instance, while discussing Theodore Dreiser's "An American Tragedy", one student mentioned sympathizing with the protagonist, finding it difficult to balance ambition and integrity.

The results indicate that, despite the lecture based-structure, students engaged meaningfully with American values, enhanced their perception and understanding of these values and made personal connections with the values discussed.

Conclusion

Overall, based on the literature review and conducted observations, we can conclude that American literature plays a significant role in transmitting American values through foreign domestic educational systems, including Georgian higher education institutions, namely IBSU. American values are deeply embedded in U.S. literature, and by studying and analyzing American literary works, students become familiar with these values. Literature shapes students' perceptions and understanding of different cultural perspectives and encourages critical thinking about values and social norms.

References

- Carroll, N. (2002). The wheel of virtue: Art, literature, and moral knowledge. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 60(1), 3-26.
- Hedhili, S. N. (2016). *From pure values to corruptions: The death of the American dream - A study of the process in American literature* (Master's thesis).
- Izaguirre, J. (2014). *The American dream and literature: How the themes of self-reliance and individualism in American literature are relevant in preserving both the aesthetics and the ideal of the American dream* (Doctoral dissertation, DePaul University).
- Kaplan, H. (2018). *Democratic humanism and American literature*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Neumann, H (1918). *Teaching American ideas through literature*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.
- Sinclair, U. (1906). *What life means to me*. As cited in *The Jungle* (n.d.). In Encyclopedia Britannica. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/The-Jungle-novel-by-Sinclair>
- Ramgotra, M. (2021). Beyond individualism: Freedom, sociability and justice. *ISRF Bulletin*.

Ralph Waldo Emerson's Idea of Self-Reliance and 19th century American Individualism

BARBARE IOSEBASHVILI^{22*}

Abstract

The research focuses on the impact of Emerson's philosophy on 19th-century America and the obstacles it encountered in terms of traditional religion and social norms. His essay "Self-Reliance", Emerson's one of the most influential works, is a set of ideas that urges the individual to be himself and to rely solely on his own intuition and wisdom. Therefore, the research includes historical and philosophical context as well. The main goal is to present Ralph Waldo Emerson's view on self-reliance and individualism. Accordingly, one of the main sources of the thesis is Emerson's essay "Self-Reliance". At the same time, it explores why Emerson's philosophy was given such importance and how relevant it is in contemporary America. This research presents a new perspective that explores what American individualism of the 19th century is and how it was formed based on Emerson's philosophy. The thesis argues that American society continues to be individualistic and still values what Emerson promoted- self-sufficiency, and non-conformity.

Keywords: non-conformity Self-Reliance: Emerson, 19th-century America individualism, , transcendentalism, American philosophy, self-sufficiency

"Self-Reliance" and the Concept of Individualism According to Ralph Waldo Emerson

The nineteenth century is a turning point in American history, when the country faced a difficult mission to establish its own identity. From industrialization to the process of changing religious norms, when it was increasingly difficult to break away from European influence, the founder of American individualism and the author of the famous essay "Self-Reliance", Ralph Waldo Emerson, appeared. This chapter will discuss the path Emerson himself took before he reached self-realization and how "Self-Reliance" became one of the important pillars of the definition of American identity. What ideology did the philosopher hold and why were his views revolutionary.

^{22*} Senior Student of American Studies Program, School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, International Black Sea University, Tbilisi, Georgia.

1.1. "Trust Thyself" – Philosophy of "Self-Reliance" in 19th Century America-How Emerson Found His Inner Voice

Ralph Waldo Emerson is one of the most prominent figures in American history and is known as one of the founding fathers of the philosophical movement of transcendentalism. It was during this period when America was undergoing various reforms in political, industrial, and religious matters that the nineteenth century saw the rise of philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson with his belief that man should be nonconformist and rely entirely on his own thinking and intuition, seeking God in all things spiritual. He himself was born in 1803 and raised as a Unitarian, but Emerson did not see the truth in established religion and separated himself from it, and it was from there that he began his career as a public lecturer, spreading transcendental doctrine.

From Emerson's difficult biography, we learn that during the years when he was counting his last days as a Unitarian minister, he often visited the grave of his deceased wife, who had not lived even till the age of twenty. Emerson was going through such a turning point in his life that he even had his wife's grave opened. According to Robert D. Richardson Jr. he writes in his book "Emerson the Mind of Fire", the philosopher needed to adjust his eyes to death, and this act served precisely this purpose (JR, 1995). Adding to that Emerson referred to his deceased wife as alive in his journals. This difficult period was accompanied by chaos in Emerson's mind, he could not find spiritual peace and truth in his own religion, he could not find answers to his questions, he doubted the historical accuracy of the Bible, and all this led to the turning point when he left society and found answers within himself. It is deeply likely that such personal experiences allowed Emerson to write "Self-Reliance", an essay that calls us to seek truth within ourselves.

Emerson later, in one of his most famous works, "Self-Reliance", analyzes the human condition in society and calls for non-conformism and to remain ourselves all the time. He emphasizes how the individual loses himself by following social standards and conformism, just for the sake of not excluding this or that person from society. In this case, he cites the nature of a child as an example, and explains that a child does not think about his behavior, he always expresses himself naturally. However, when a child grows up, it is we, the adult members of society, who force them to behave within the framework of society. Emerson writes in his essay "Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string" which subsequently leads to different attitudes in nineteenth-century America (Emerson R. W., Self-Reliance, 1841, p. 2). Because of the historical context, Emerson opposes traditional regulations, traditional religion, conformism (the responsibility that a person has to society), accordingly he slowly forms what we call individualism. . A human who lives with his/her opinion and considers that an individual must avoid conformity and false consistency and follow their instincts and ideas. Emerson emphasizes that people who live with society's view are killing creators in themselves. Therefore, a true man "must be a nonconformist" (Emerson R. W., Self-Reliance, 1841, p. 3). It means that we must not follow any standards or point of view which are revealed in society. Therefore, an opinion can not be true just because the people accept it. A man must explore the truth independently and see if there is any goodness in the opinion which has flourished in

the society. And if you find something wrong you must say it and not be scared to be misunderstood because "nothing is last sacred but the integrity of your own mind" (Emerson R. W., Slef-Reliance, 1841, p. 4). After that, when a humankind starts claiming something completely different from others, they must not be afraid or take a step back just because he/she will be misunderstood. Why? The only thing that matters in a person's life is themselves. And in addition a person is not obliged to spend all the time explaining their way of thinking. After that we will be able to not rely on the society that gave up their identity and became a "joint stock company" that is more like a spectacle than the reality (Emerson R. W., Slef-Reliance, 1841, p. 3). But we, people who see all these must be standing in the crowd "with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude" (Emerson R. W., Slef-Reliance, 1841, p. 5). The Wisdom is a key that will help a person clearly see the game of conformity. The human has one important obligation from Emerson's point of view that he or she must do only what concerns them but not what people think. Nothing matters but ourselves and if we respect our individuality we will have a chance to gain the freedom from the outside world. Believe in your mind, yourself, your point of view, and be free from the society that kills uniqueness. Otherwise, if someone choose to follow such "rules" will not have an easy journey, moreover, it is easy to rely on peoples' actions and their opinions but it is hard to protect your own. As it was mentioned, if we maintain our strength we will be able to escape from conformity. Of course it needs the strength to deal with people because once you start to live nonconformity they will show their displeasure. Instead of such doctrines which are created by society and have no value in humankind, we must appreciate the nature because this is the only sacred law around us. (Such thesis is logical because as it is well known Emerson was a transcendentalist and was claiming that nature is the power and God) (Emerson R. W., Slef-Reliance, 1841).

Danger of self-trust is consistency. A foolish consistency which makes people afraid of what they say. Because the opinion that you used to think was right must not influence you to change your mind. People who are afraid to defend their ideas are little minds therefore they are afraid of changes. But a wise man will not be so. Therefore, speaking directly about anything is the straight which is for the brave people but it is also fine to change your ideas day by day- "Speak what you think now in hard words, and to-morrow speak what to-morrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict every thing you said to-day" (Emerson R. W., Slef-Reliance, 1841, p. 7) and if you will be misunderstood, even better, because it is great to be misunderstood (Emerson R. W., Slef-Reliance, 1841).

1.2. Revolutionary Ideas of Emerson Against Social Conformity

Emerson's philosophy was strange for that period American society for different reasons. First of all, he challenged traditional authority, which he was also originally part of (meaning Unitarianism), and claimed that only truth a mankind could find lied in our selves. Therefore, his messages were revolutionary and powerful especially for a growing nation as it was America in the 19th century.

One of the milestones of Emerson's ideology were criticizing social norms and social conformity. Therefore, one part of it was religion as well. He believed that a person did not need churches to have connection with God. Adding to that Emerson realized that religious doctrines were far from heaven and

spirituality and were becoming more and more materialistic. In his essay "The Over-Soul" he mentions, that faith that is based on authority is not true faith (Emerson R. W., *The Over-Soul*, 1841). It emphasizes that, according to Emerson, true belief and spirituality comes only from a person's heart and mind and not from something that is in religious doctrines. Adding to that point, in his essay "Divinity School Address" Emerson criticized established religious preaches and dogmas and stated, finding the soul does not require doctrine, it must be felt, and this will then become the soul of the church itself (Emerson R. W., *The Divinity School Address*, 1838). Such words required a high level of non-conformity from a person because at a time when religious institutions and churches had a huge power in society, Emerson stated the ideas that the church was not a place where a person could find connection with God, dogmas were not the preaches by what a person could find God, and only a person could find the God if he would start searching him in his own mind and soul. (Emerson R. W., *The Divinity School Address*, 1838). We can say that Emerson lived according to his own words and preaches. He was not only saying or writing for other people but himself- he was non-conformist too. Therefore suggesting the idea that a person could find God independently was a dangerous doctrine of him which was new and strange for American society in the 19th century.

Such statements were certainly considered radical in America at the time. According to Lawrence Buell, Emerson not only rejected all religiously established norms but also managed to replace them. This is precisely the fact that Emerson not only taught to go against conformity but also acted like it himself (Buell, Emerson, 2003). After this, Emerson found truth in spirituality and in himself. According to his essay "Nature", it is clear that for him it was in nature that the true God could be found. "In the woods, we return to reason and faith. There I feel that nothing can befall me in life,—no disgrace, no calamity... which nature cannot repair" (Emerson R. W., *Nature*, 1836, p. 2). It was precisely this unruly nature of his that later became the individualism that became the foundation of American history and was written in golden letters. Emerson's model of self-reliance became the seed of American ideal of democratic individualism (Buell, Emerson, 2003).

1.3. How Emerson Shaped American Individualism in the 19th Century.

The mid-nineteenth century was an important period for America, as it was the time when the new nation was beginning to form and define its identity. At the same time, European influence was quite widespread, and Emerson encouraged the American people to be more independent and individualistic. Accordingly, a cultural, identical independence was necessary (Emerson R. W., 1837). "Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string" (Emerson R. W., *Self-Reliance*, 1841, p. 2). This quote perfectly shows that according to Emerson, self-reliance was not only the idea of being independent but he also he also promoted intellectual and spiritual isolation from this world. This ideology made Emerson different from other Enlightenment thinkers. He underlines the idea of the inner voice and inner intuition. Emerson suggests that in order to find the truth a person should be a non-conformist and should reject all the external things. He even promoted the idea that the external authority like the church is not needed for a person to find the God (Emerson R. W., *Self-Reliance*, 1841).

Emerson embodied what he was preaching. He himself was a non-conformist who rejected all the norms that were established in America. Emerson was always emphasizing that in the society around him materialism was growing and people were more concentrated on material things over spirituality. He presented a philosophy that has become an American niche from the soul to the flesh. It is necessary to take into account the fact that Emerson appears when America is going through a period of great changes. These are industrialization and various religious reforms. It was during this period that Emerson wrote that we should abandon all religious dogmas and teachings, that we should not trust the truths heard from outside, but should seek the truth only within ourselves. With all this, Emerson slowly, step by step, created what we call American individualism today, a concept that has become one of the most characteristic concepts when talking about the American people. We should not forget the fact that for Americans the concept of freedom is and was of paramount importance even then, and Emerson did not escape this concept either. On the contrary, he was a lover of freedom and democracy. This man was able to present his ideas to the American people in various forms, be it religion, education, literature or philosophy. In building American individualism, Emerson paved the way for everyone who would set foot on the path of seeking truth (Buell, Emerson, 2003).

1.3. Establishing Emerson's Legacy of The Self Made Soul

Emerson's great personality has left a lasting mark on America and still holds a prominent place in the formation of the U.S. society. He is not only a philosopher or essayist, but also a landmark and cultural monument of America. He was able to show Americans at the turning point of the nineteenth century what true freedom, faith and identity were.

We can also call his perception of personality – “self-reliant” (Emerson R. W., Self-Reliance, 1841) - this is not a political or religious concept, but a philosophical one, which denotes the process of forming a true personality. Of course, America was and still is a capitalist country, which seems to leave no room for spirituality or listening to the inner voice, instead of the “self-made soul”, we see the “self-made” man in capitalism, although these two concepts have no connection with each other. The first of them denotes the process of searching for the inner voice that a person goes through in search of truth, and the second concept is a capitalist ideal. According to Buell, Emerson's understanding of self-reliance is not entirely selfish, but rather a way to find one's inner moral voice (Buell, Emerson, 2003). This underlines once again that Emerson's “Self-Reliance” is not focused on the pursuit of material success, on the contrary, it rejects everything material or what society considers right and tries to impose on you, instead Emerson advises us to seek the morality that our intuition dictates to us. Accordingly, it is very likely that it was this moral law that Emerson himself discovered that dictated him to leave his ministry, renounce his own religious doctrine despite public criticism, and become one of the most radical philosophers of his time. He did not hide his thoughts, no matter how radical they appeared to people, but wrote, published, spoke, etc. (Emerson R. W., Self-Reliance, 1841).

According to historian Robert D. Richardson, *Emerson gave Americans a path and showed them how to think independently, how to perceive everything from their own perspective, and most importantly, to trust*

their intuition and their own truth, even if it deviates from generally accepted norms (Richardson R. D., 1995). And these words make it clear that Emerson made a huge contribution to making America what it is today. With his help, the concepts of individualism, self-reliance, and non-conformism were introduced. It was as if he showed Americans what true Americans should be like.

References

- Buell, L. (2003). *Emerson*. Harvard University Press.
- Emerson, R. W. (1836). *Nature*.
- Emerson, R. W. (1837). *The American Scholar*. Pter Pauper Press.
- Emerson, R. W. (1838). *The Divinity School Address*.
- Emerson, R. W. (1841). *Slef-Reliance*.
- Emerson, R. W. (1841). *The Over-Soul*.
- JR, R. D. (1995). *Emerson The Mind of Fire*. University of California Press.
- Richardson, R. D. (1995). *Emerson: The Mind on Fire*.

The Search for Meaning: Walker Percy and Christian Existential Thought

NATIA BUTKHUZI^{23*}

Abstract

This article explores the archetype of Christian existentialism in Walker Percy's *The Moviegoer* (1961), examining how the novel engages with existential themes through the lens of Christian theology. The protagonist, Binx Bolling, embodies the search for meaning in a postmodern, secular world, as he grapples with feelings of existential despair and disconnection.

Drawing upon the works of existential philosophers and writers such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, Fyodor Dostoevsky, and Søren Kierkegaard, the article investigates how Percy synthesizes these philosophical traditions to craft a uniquely Christian existentialist response to the absurdity of life. It argues that *The Moviegoer* presents a compelling narrative of redemption, offering faith and Christian grace as pathways to meaning in a fragmented, spiritually disoriented world.

The article highlights how Percy's novel contributes to both existentialist and Christian literary traditions, providing deep insight into the spiritual and transcendent concerns of mid-20th-century America. Through a qualitative analysis of the novel and a critical study of 20th-century absurdist literature, the article contrasts secular existential despair with the redemptive potential of Christian belief. Ultimately, it positions *The Moviegoer* as a significant work that illuminates the human longing for meaning and transcendence in an age of doubt.

Keywords: Walker Percy, *The Moviegoer*, existential philosophy, Christian existentialism, Christian faith.

Article includes:

Introduction

Chapter 1: The Role of Faith in Existentialist Philosophy

1.1 Existentialism and Religion

1.2 The Search for Meaning: Walker Percy and Christian Existential Thought

1.3 Christian Existentialists and Their Impact on Percy's Work

Chapter 2: Binx Bolling and the Crisis of Modern Existence in *The Moviegoer*

2.1 Binx Bolling's Journey Through Existential Despair in *The Moviegoer*

^{23*} Ph.D. Candidate, American Studies Program, School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, International Black Sea University, Tbilisi, Georgia.

2.2 The goal of The Moviegoer

Chapter 3: Faith's Transformative Power: Redemption in a Meaningless World

3.1 Faith as a Response to the Absurd

3.2 Redemption and Grace

Conclusion

Bibliography

Introduction

Walker Percy was born in Alabama, his uncle was a former United States senator, and his grandfather was a prominent Civil War hero. He had a difficult childhood, and a series of misfortunes began when his grandfather suicide himself, and when Percy turned 13, his father did the same. Two years later, Percy's mother died suddenly in a car accident. After that, his uncle William Alexander Percy took custody of Walker and his two younger brothers. He was a prominent and influential lawyer and also a famous poet who was close to such prominent writers as William Faulkner, Langston Hughes and Robert Penn Warren and historian Shelby Foote.

Having spent his youth in Mississippi, most of his life in Louisiana, and his artistic creations were originally spread in the South, Percy naturally assumed the name of a regional writer. He was one of the outstanding writer-philosophers among his contemporary American writers. It is noteworthy not only that his work was saturated with deep Christian existentialism, but also because of his many philosophical essays, which, upon publication in influential academic journals, gained great recognition in advanced philosophical circles and not only. Moreover, Walker Percy insisted that his essays, in which one found a close connection between language and existence, were of far less importance than his novels.

Philosophizing and short story-writing career did not start directly from either philosophy or even writing, and no matter how surprising it may seem, everything started from science. He studied chemistry in North Carolina, where he received a degree and enrolled in the Faculty of Physics and Science of Columbia University in New York, where he was awarded the degree of **Doctor of Medicine in 1941**. Percy studied a number of pathologies and was fascinated by the processes taking place in the clinic. In 1942, he fell seriously ill, which caused a radical reassessment of his life. After that, Percy changed his knowledge of the science of life, exploring intellectual and moral principles, which further fueled his interest in philosophy and writing.

The mid-20th century was a period marked by both intellectual and cultural cataclysm, with existentialist philosophy resonating deeply within the literature of the era. Famous writers like Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Franz Kafka explored the absurdity and alienation inherent in the human condition, questioning the possibility of meaning in a seemingly indifferent universe. Among these secular existentialist voices, Walker Percy emerges as a significant American writer who, while engaging with similar themes of alienation and the search for meaning in life, offered a distinctly Christian response. Percy's

literary works, particularly *The Moviegoer* (1961), reflect his interest in existentialism, while also exploring Christian themes of faith, redemption, and grace.

Christian existentialism, as a philosophical approach, addresses existential themes—such as human freedom, suffering, and the search for authenticity—while providing a resolution grounded in faith. Great thinkers like Søren Kierkegaard and Fyodor Dostoevsky combined existential inquiries with Christian beliefs, portraying faith not as a rejection of existential struggles but as a higher solution to human despair. Walker Percy, influenced by both existential philosophy and his Catholic faith, incorporates these ideas throughout his novels. In *The Moviegoer*, Percy explores modern existential crises through the character of Binx Bolling, whose quest for meaning in a secular world reflects the larger existential pursuit of authenticity, ultimately offering a Christian vision of hope and redemption.

This article aims to examine Christian existentialism in the works of Walker Percy, with particular focus on *The Moviegoer*. By analyzing the themes of alienation, the search for meaning, and the potential for redemption, this study argues that Percy's novel offers a unique Christian existentialist framework for understanding the human condition. In doing so, it positions Percy's work as an important contribution to both existentialist and Christian literary traditions.

Chapter 1: The Role of Faith in Existentialist Philosophy

1.1 Existentialism and Religion

Existentialism, as a philosophical movement, focuses on how individuals confront a universe that is indifferent and often absurd. Prominent existentialist thinkers such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, and Martin Heidegger examined themes like human freedom, alienation, and the anxiety that arises from seeking meaning in a chaotic world. Sartre's belief that existence precedes essence suggests that humans are born without any inherent purpose and must create their own meaning. His version of existentialism is atheistic, rejecting the idea of a higher being or moral order.

In contrast, Christian existentialism, as developed by Søren Kierkegaard and later thinkers like Gabriel Marcel and Paul Tillich, combines existential concerns with Christian beliefs. Kierkegaard, often seen as the father of Christian existentialism, proposed that true existence requires making a "leap of faith." For him, faith involves accepting paradoxes and the absurdity of believing in a transcendent God despite the lack of rational proof. This personal, subjective commitment to faith is the core of the existential experience with God, distinct from logical or rational arguments.

Christian existentialists such as Dostoevsky and Tillich emphasized the human struggle with suffering, freedom, and moral choice, while offering hope in the form of divine grace and redemption. Dostoevsky's characters, for instance, often face profound existential crises, yet through suffering and spiritual awakening, they encounter the possibility of salvation. Christian existentialism, therefore, asserts that while life may seem absurd and meaningless, the answer to human suffering lies in the divine grace offered through faith.

1.2 The Search for Meaning: Walker Percy and Christian Existential Thought

Walker Percy's literary works are deeply influenced by both existentialist philosophy and his Catholic faith. Percy's early life, marked by personal tragedy—including the deaths of his parents and his struggles with depression—shaped his exploration of existential themes. Percy was initially drawn to the works of existential philosophers such as Sartre and Heidegger, yet his conversion to Catholicism in the 1940s became a crucial moment in his intellectual and literary work. As a Catholic, Percy found a way to reconcile his existential questions with the possibility of spiritual transcendence.

In *The Moviegoer*, Walker Percy's protagonist, Binx Bolling, symbolizes the quest for meaning in a secular and materialistic world. Like many characters in existentialist literature, Binx experiences profound alienation and despair. However, in contrast to Sartre's characters, who often find themselves without hope or direction, Binx's journey ultimately leads him toward a tentative embrace of faith. This difference is central to Percy's contribution to Christian existentialism—while his characters grapple with existential crises, the novel offers the possibility of redemption through Christian belief.

Percy's works critique the emptiness of postwar American society, where consumerism and the pursuit of pleasure often replace deeper reflections on meaning. In *The Moviegoer*, Percy explores how characters like Binx attempt to escape their inner emptiness through distractions, such as movies, only to discover that such pursuits do not bring true fulfillment. Through the existential struggles of his characters, Percy suggests that real meaning can only be found through faith, which transcends the superficial concerns of modern life.

1.3 Christian Existentialists and Their Impact on Percy's Work

Walker Percy's connection to Christian existentialism is deeply influenced by the writings of Kierkegaard and Dostoevsky. Both authors examine the individual's struggle with existential anxiety and the conflict between personal freedom and divine will. For Kierkegaard, the "leap of faith" is crucial to achieving authentic existence, and Percy mirrors this idea in Binx's journey, which gradually leads him to acknowledge the potential for transcendence. Binx's sense of alienation stems not only from a lack of purpose but also from his inability to embrace faith, which holds the key to his redemption.

Dostoevsky's exploration of spiritual awakening through suffering resonates in Percy's work as well. While Percy's characters do not undergo the extreme suffering seen in Dostoevsky's novels, they still face deep existential crises. Binx, for example, must confront his own sense of nihilism before he can even begin to experience the possibility of faith. Percy, like Dostoevsky, portrays the human condition as one of suffering, but he also introduces the possibility of redemption through the grace of God.

Chapter 2: Binx Bolling and the Crisis of Modern Existence in *The Moviegoer*

2.1 Binx Bolling's Journey Through Existential Despair in *The Moviegoer*

*Binx Bolling, the protagonist of *The Moviegoer*, is a disillusioned and aimless young man living in New*

Orleans. As an affluent postwar individual with no clear sense of purpose, Binx's existential crisis arises from a deep sense of disconnection both from society and himself. Like Sartre's characters, Binx feels alienated from his environment, finding little fulfillment in the material pleasures that others seem to value. However, unlike Sartre's figures, who often succumb to nihilism, Binx's quest for meaning opens up the possibility of something greater, particularly through faith.

At the core of Binx's crisis is his profound alienation, which is not just social or political, but deeply personal. He feels detached from his family, friends, and the world around him. Life seems like something he observes rather than participates in, a feeling symbolized by his obsessive habit of going to the movies. This act of watching films becomes a metaphor for his inability to engage authentically with life. Filled with superficial distractions, Binx is constantly searching for meaning but struggles to find anything that can address his deep existential yearnings.

This search for meaning is a key theme in existentialist philosophy, where the pursuit of authenticity is often viewed as a response to the absurdity of existence. Binx's journey mirrors the existentialist quest for authenticity but is also deeply connected to Christian concepts of grace and redemption. As the novel progresses, Binx begins to question whether faith could offer a solution to his feelings of alienation.

2.2 The goal of *The Moviegoer*

The act of going to the movies becomes a central motif in Binx's life. It represents both his escape from reality and his desire to find meaning in life in an otherwise meaningless world. However, the movies also symbolize the emptiness of modern life, where people are increasingly disengaged from reality and instead lose themselves in distractions. The films Binx watches mirror his own inability to confront life head-on. In this sense, movies serve as both a symptom and a metaphor for his existential crisis. Yet, the very act of watching films also represents a yearning for something beyond the mundane—a search for transcendence that will eventually lead Binx toward faith.

Chapter 3: Faith's Transformative Power: Redemption in a Meaningless World

3.1 Faith as a Response to the Absurd

Although *The Moviegoer* is a deeply existential novel, it also presents a potential escape from despair: faith. Binx's growing awareness of the emptiness of his life leads him to question whether there is a way out of his existential anguish. In this way, Percy reflects the Christian existentialist idea that faith can provide the answers that existential philosophy alone cannot. While Sartre and Camus see human beings as condemned to create meaning in an absurd world, Percy suggests that meaning is found not through human effort alone but through divine intervention.

3.2 Redemption and Grace

In the end, Binx's journey is one of seeking redemption. Through moments of introspection and his

interactions with others, he starts to recognize the potential for grace. Percy's Christian existentialism emphasizes that, while individuals are free to make choices and face suffering, redemption is attainable through divine grace. Binx's gradual shift toward faith symbolizes the possibility of transcendence in a world plagued by existential hopelessness. Though the novel doesn't provide a clear resolution, it implies that the quest for meaning is not futile and that divine intervention is possible, even in a seemingly indifferent universe.

Conclusion

Walker Percy's *The Moviegoer* serves as a deep exploration of the existential challenges of modern life, viewed through the lens of Christian existentialism. Binx Bolling's quest for meaning, sense of alienation, and eventual turn toward faith reflect a Christian response to the absurdity of existence. By blending Christian concepts of grace and redemption with existential concerns of alienation and the search for authenticity, Percy creates a distinct literary space where faith and existentialism coexist. In doing so, Percy broadens our understanding of both modern existential thought and Christian theology, offering readers a path from despair to hope through the potential for faith.

Walker Percy's work shows us that the search for meaning is not just a philosophical puzzle, but a deeply personal and spiritual journey. Through his characters and stories, he explores the confusion and emptiness many people feel in the modern world—and points to faith as a possible way through it. By blending existential questions with Christian ideas, Percy offers a hopeful message: even in times of doubt and disconnection, there is a path toward truth, purpose, and healing. His writing encourages us to look beyond the surface of life and ask the deeper questions that can lead us to something greater.

References

Camus, Albert. *The Myth of Sisyphus*. Translated by Justin O'Brien, Vintage Books, 1991.

A foundational text in existential philosophy, *The Myth of Sisyphus* explores the concept of the absurd and the struggle for meaning in a meaningless world, offering insight into the themes of existential despair and the search for authenticity that permeate *The Moviegoer*.

Dostoevsky, Fyodor. *The Brothers Karamazov*. Translated by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002.

Dostoevsky's exploration of suffering, redemption, and the tension between faith and doubt deeply influenced Percy's Christian existentialism, particularly in the portrayal of Binx Bolling's spiritual journey.

Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time*. Translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, Blackwell, 1962.

Heidegger's existential exploration of being and authenticity helped shape the intellectual climate in which Percy was writing, informing his understanding of human alienation and the search for meaning.

Kierkegaard, Søren. *Fear and Trembling*. Translated by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, Princeton University Press, 1983.

As a key figure in Christian existentialism, Kierkegaard's notion of the "leap of faith" directly influences Percy's depiction of faith as the solution to existential crises, particularly in *The Moviegoer*.

Percy, Walker. *The Moviegoer*. Vintage International, 1990 (1961).

The primary text for this analysis, *The Moviegoer* explores the existential crises of Binx Bolling and his search for meaning in a secular, postwar world, while subtly integrating Christian existential themes of redemption and grace.

Percy, Walker. *Signposts in a Strange Land*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1991.

A collection of essays that offer a deeper understanding of Percy's intellectual and philosophical framework, reflecting his engagement with existential thought and his Catholic faith.

Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Being and Nothingness*. Translated by Hazel E. Barnes, Washington Square Press, 1992.

Sartre's seminal work on existentialism, which discusses the absurdity of existence and the individual's freedom to create meaning, provides a contrast to Percy's Christian existentialism.

Tillich, Paul. *The Courage to Be*. Yale University Press, 1952.

Tillich's exploration of existential anxiety and the possibility of transcendence through faith contributes to the Christian existentialist ideas in Percy's work.

Warren, Robert Penn. *Night Rider*. Macmillan, 1939.

Although not directly related to Percy's own work, this novel from a fellow Southern writer of Percy's

circle provides insight into Southern existentialism and themes of alienation that influenced Percy's narrative style.

Wirth-Nesher, Hana. Walker Percy's Philosophy of Redemption. University of Georgia Press, 1993.

Psychological Characteristics of Women during Pre and Post-Divorce; Relationships with Environment

TAMAR MGELADZE^{24*}

Abstract

Divorce is an important psychological and social turning point in women's lives, frequently accompanied by emotional suffering, identity problems, and changes in environmental support systems. This study examines women's psychological traits before and after divorce, focusing on emotional responses, social integration, and environmental interactions. The study uses a qualitative literature review to compare experiences in Georgia and the United States from 2010 to 2024. According to the findings, anxiety, low self-esteem, and social pressure dominate the pre-divorce periods, particularly in societies with strong traditional family standards. Women who have divorced may experience a delicate mix of emotional emancipation and psychological fragility. While American women have more access to support services and societal acceptability, Georgian women endure long-term psychological issues due to cultural stigma and poor mental health infrastructure. The study emphasises the importance of culturally specific psychological interventions, mental health services, and social policy reforms. Strengthening social networks and lowering societal stigma can considerably improve post-divorce rehabilitation and women's general well-being.

Keywords: Divorce, Women's Mental Health, Cultural Comparison, Post-Divorce Adaptation

Introduction

Divorce is a complex life event with far-reaching consequences for women's psychological health. Women going through divorce confront unique cultural and emotional problems in the United States and Georgia, which are shaped by traditional norms, socioeconomic realities, and access to support services. This study seeks to investigate how women mentally experience the pre- and post-divorce stages, as well as how their environment affects their adaptation and well-being.

Literature Review

Over the last couple of decades, research has repeatedly shown that divorce causes more psychological injury to women than men. Divorce is associated with higher rates of sadness, anxiety, and lower life satisfaction in both the United States and Georgia (Amato and Hohmann-Marriott, 2007; Leopold, 2018).

^{24*} Ph.D. Candidate, American Studies Program, School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, International Black Sea University, Tbilisi, Georgia.

The social construct of marriage in Georgian society, which emphasises female obedience and motherhood, exacerbates the psychological toll on women considering or experiencing divorce (Kiknadze & Gigauri, 2022).

While American women experience psychological discomfort, they benefit from more progressive societal norms, increased institutional assistance, and a broader acceptance of different family patterns. Access to mental health treatments and women's rights movements in the United States have been linked to better post-divorce outcomes (Garcia et al., 2021).

Notably, divorced women are more likely to endure identity issues, financial challenges, and social isolation. Georgian women, in particular, frequently report feeling rejected by their communities and extended families, whereas their American counterparts rely more heavily on social support structures beyond their immediate family (Ninua, 2021; Smith et al., 2022).

Methodology

This study is based on a qualitative comparative examination of secondary materials, including academic journal articles, empirical studies, and systematic reviews published between 2000 and 2024. A thematic approach was utilised to uncover trends in the psychological experiences of divorced women in the United States and Georgia. Emotional responses, identity development, financial hardship, and support systems were among the main topics discussed. The comparative component allowed for the investigation of how cultural and environmental influences influence psychological results.

Results

The psychological responses of women were classified into two primary categories: pre-divorce and post-divorce traits.

Figure 1: Pre-Divorce Psychological Traits

This chart illustrates the main emotional and psychological difficulties experienced by women before initiating divorce:

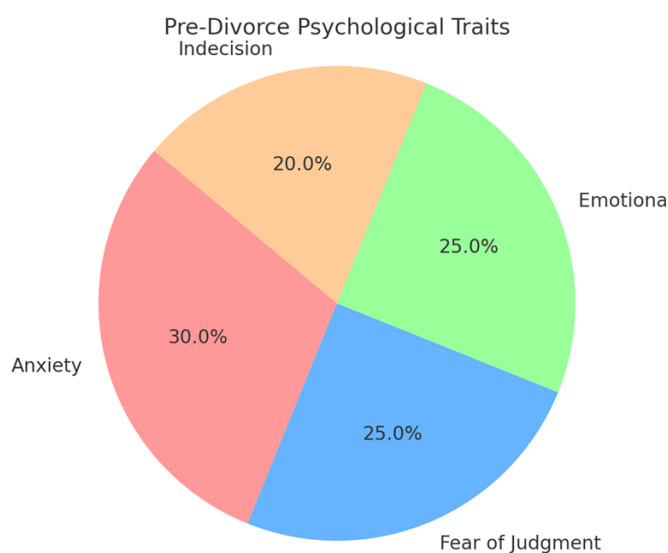
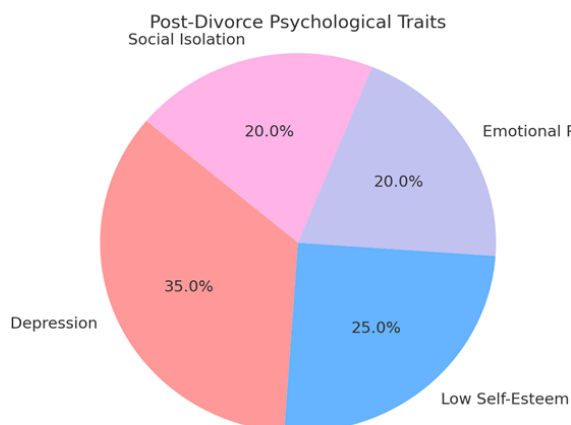


Figure 2: Post-Divorce Psychological Traits

This pie chart summarizes common psychological states reported by women following divorce:



The pre-divorce period is dominated by emotional exhaustion, fear of judgment, and indecision, suggesting internalized conflict and social pressure. Post-divorce, while some women experience relief and personal growth, the majority report anxiety, depression, and social isolation, especially in cultures with strong traditional family structures.

Divorce remains a critical juncture in a woman's life, often intersecting with socioeconomic status, cultural tradition, and personal psychological resilience. In Western societies such as the United States, divorce has become more normalized, with increasing social support mechanisms in place. These include access to therapy, peer support groups, and legal advocacy services. Despite this, many American women still report high levels of stress, particularly related to child custody disputes and the sudden shift in lifestyle and financial responsibilities.

By contrast, Georgian women face more entrenched cultural resistance to divorce. In traditional Georgian households, women are often expected to maintain family harmony and bear emotional labor, which contributes to the stigmatization of divorced women. This results in feelings of guilt and failure that are reinforced by societal expectations. Studies by Tsiklauri and Beridze (2022) highlight that many Georgian women remain in unhealthy relationships due to fear of social rejection or economic insecurity.

Psychologically, the pre-divorce period is characterized by anticipatory grief—a mourning of the relationship even before it formally ends. Symptoms include prolonged sadness, irritability, and indecisiveness, which are often unaddressed due to denial or the hope of reconciliation. Therapeutic intervention at this stage is crucial. According to Amato (2000), timely psychological counseling can significantly reduce long-term trauma.

During the post-divorce phase, many women experience a dual emotional trajectory: relief and trauma. Relief comes from the cessation of conflict, especially in cases involving abuse or chronic dissatisfaction. Yet trauma persists in the form of identity loss, fear of being alone, and restructuring daily routines. This is particularly intense for women with children, as they often assume primary caregiving responsibilities alongside economic strain.

Environmental and community support play a pivotal role in psychological adjustment. In the United States, churches, non-profits, and online communities offer a variety of platforms where women can connect and heal. Conversely, Georgian women report lower engagement in these systems due to limited access and stigma associated with psychological help.

The contrast in national divorce rates is also telling. According to national statistics, the divorce rate in the U.S. hovers around 2.7 per 1,000 population, while Georgia has seen rising numbers in the last decade, influenced by economic instability and social change. This demographic trend necessitates policy-level attention, including reforms in family law, child custody protocols, and psychological services.

In sum, the cross-cultural differences reveal a complex interplay between personal resilience and systemic support. Psychological outcomes are not solely determined by individual strength but also by the frameworks society offers. By focusing on emotional well-being and creating inclusive support networks, both countries can enhance the quality of life for divorced women and reduce the stigma surrounding this life transition.

Divorce remains a critical juncture in a woman's life, often intersecting with socioeconomic status, cultural tradition, and personal psychological resilience. In Western societies such as the United States, divorce has become more normalized, with increasing social support mechanisms in place. These include access to therapy, peer support groups, and legal advocacy services. Despite this, many American women still report high levels of stress, particularly related to child custody disputes and the sudden shift in lifestyle and financial responsibilities.

By contrast, Georgian women face more entrenched cultural resistance to divorce. In traditional Georgian households, women are often expected to maintain family harmony and bear emotional labor, which contributes to the stigmatization of divorced women. This results in feelings of guilt and failure that are reinforced by societal expectations. Studies by Tsiklauri and Beridze (2022) highlight that many Georgian women remain in unhealthy relationships due to fear of social rejection or economic insecurity.

Psychologically, the pre-divorce period is characterized by anticipatory grief—a mourning of the relationship even before it formally ends. Symptoms include prolonged sadness, irritability, and indecisiveness, which are often unaddressed due to denial or the hope of reconciliation. Therapeutic intervention at this stage is crucial. According to Amato (2000), timely psychological counseling can significantly reduce long-term trauma.

During the post-divorce phase, many women experience a dual emotional trajectory: relief and trauma. Relief comes from the cessation of conflict, especially in cases involving abuse or chronic dissatisfaction. Yet trauma persists in the form of identity loss, fear of being alone, and restructuring daily routines. This is particularly intense for women with children, as they often assume primary caregiving responsibilities alongside economic strain.

Environmental and community support play a pivotal role in psychological adjustment. In the United States, churches, non-profits, and online communities offer a variety of platforms where women can connect and heal. Conversely, Georgian women report lower engagement in these systems due to limited access and stigma associated with psychological help.

The contrast in national divorce rates is also telling. According to national statistics, the divorce rate in the U.S. hovers around 2.7 per 1,000 population, while Georgia has seen rising numbers in the last decade, influenced by economic instability and social change. This demographic trend necessitates policy-level attention, including reforms in family law, child custody protocols, and psychological services.

In sum, the cross-cultural differences reveal a complex interplay between personal resilience and systemic support. Psychological outcomes are not solely determined by individual strength but also by the frameworks society offers. By focusing on emotional well-being and creating inclusive support networks, both countries can enhance the quality of life for divorced women and reduce the stigma surrounding this life transition.

Furthermore, the psychological toll of divorce is not isolated to the emotional sphere alone. The disruption in daily routines, changes in social status, and the loss of shared financial resources can significantly affect a woman's self-perception and future planning capacity. In both the United States and Georgia, although legal systems differ, divorced women face the challenge of rebuilding a sense of identity and autonomy that was often entwined with marital roles. This redefinition requires emotional labor, support from peers, and sometimes professional intervention. How communities either support or hinder this transformation plays a critical role in long-term psychological outcomes.

In the Georgian context, extended family expectations and patriarchal structures often mean that women are judged harshly for seeking divorce, even in instances of abuse. These societal norms lead to self-censorship, delayed legal actions, and suppression of emotional needs. Conversely, the American cultural environment, while more liberal, presents its challenges, such as legal complexity, high cost of divorce, and inconsistent access to psychological services across different states. Each context requires a culturally sensitive approach to post-divorce mental health services that considers local norms and available infrastructure.

The methodology used in this study allows for an in-depth cultural and psychological comparison, providing a nuanced understanding of how divorce is lived and processed by women in different societies. A key strength of the comparative approach lies in its ability to reveal systemic influences that may not be visible through case-specific analysis. For instance, Georgian women's reluctance to access therapy is not solely a personal choice but reflects a lack of institutional normalization of mental health care. Meanwhile, American women may have access to support systems, but the commodification of therapy often places it out of financial reach for lower-income groups. This comparative lens enriches the interpretation of psychological reactions observed in both contexts.

Quantitatively, the pie charts used in this study illustrate that while anxiety and depression remain the most common outcomes in both contexts, the experience of emotional relief and empowerment post-divorce is more frequently reported in liberal societies. This suggests a correlation between social freedom and psychological resilience. The ability to reconstruct life after divorce appears to be linked not just to internal factors like emotional strength, but also to external validation and access to community resources. These findings support the need for systemic change in policy and community-based care.

In conclusion, addressing the psychological needs of divorced women is a multidimensional task that requires collaboration between policymakers, mental health professionals, and community leaders. The stigma around divorce must be actively challenged through public discourse and education. Governments can play a vital role by subsidizing counseling services, ensuring fair legal treatment, and promoting gender equality in familial roles. The findings from this cross-cultural analysis not only highlight the specific challenges women face in the United States and Georgia but also call for universal efforts to humanize and normalize divorce as a personal life choice rather than a social failure.

To further explore the impact of environmental influences on post-divorce mental health, it is essential to consider the structural and policy-related support systems available in each country. In Georgia, for example, the limited availability of government-subsidized mental health services means that many women must rely on informal networks or private providers, which can be financially and socially inaccessible. This creates a mental health care gap where women most in need of services are least likely to obtain them. Cultural reluctance to acknowledge psychological distress further compounds this issue.

In contrast, the United States offers a wider spectrum of support services, from court-mandated counseling in child custody cases to free support groups facilitated by non-profit and religious organizations. However, disparities still exist between urban and rural populations, and access to high-quality care remains dependent on insurance coverage and income levels. Thus, while the infrastructure is better developed, barriers persist for marginalized communities.

The role of children in shaping women's psychological response to divorce cannot be understated. Research indicates that mothers who are granted sole or primary custody often experience an initial period of empowerment but may later struggle with the dual responsibilities of breadwinning and caregiving. In the Georgian context, extended families may offer support, but such arrangements can sometimes perpetuate controlling dynamics and limit a woman's post-divorce autonomy. American women, on the other hand, may experience more independence but at the cost of reduced family involvement and increased financial pressure.

Educational background and employment opportunities also play a major role in post-divorce resilience. Women with higher levels of education and career experience tend to report a faster emotional recovery and greater self-efficacy. Those with fewer qualifications or long periods out of the workforce, particularly homemakers, often face a steeper climb toward stability. Georgia's labor market is less flexible for mid-life reentry, and social stigma may further hinder women's career resurgence. In contrast, the U.S. offers more re-training programs and adult education pathways, albeit often at significant personal cost.

From a theoretical standpoint, the psychological model of 'learned helplessness' is often relevant in understanding the behavior of women in prolonged dysfunctional marriages. Over time, repeated emotional invalidation or abuse can condition individuals to believe they have no control over their circumstances. Divorce, then, becomes not just a legal break but a psychological unlearning of passivity. This transition requires both internal restructuring and external reinforcement through supportive policies and networks.

Furthermore, post-divorce identity reconstruction is a common theme in psychological recovery literature. Women often report rediscovering hobbies, returning to education, or starting entrepreneurial ventures. These developments are significant not only for individual recovery but for broader societal transformation. Empowered women are more likely to advocate for policy change, support others in similar situations, and contribute positively to the social fabric.

The long-term impact of divorce on women's health extends beyond mental well-being. Studies have shown links between chronic emotional stress and increased risk of cardiovascular disease, sleep disturbances, and weakened immune function. Therefore, divorce should be treated not just as a social issue but as a public health concern. Government interventions must include awareness campaigns, preventive care, and long-term counseling services.

Ultimately, while this study highlights distinct cultural and policy-related differences between Georgia and the United States, it also reveals commonalities in women's experiences. Emotional turmoil, societal judgment, and economic uncertainty are universal themes. By amplifying women's voices and using research to shape humane and inclusive policy, society can shift from stigmatization to empowerment, offering divorced women a genuine chance at renewal and psychological wellness.

Moreover, societal perception of women's roles plays a pivotal role in shaping their divorce experiences. In Georgia, deep-rooted gender norms often depict women as primary caregivers and moral guardians of the family. When divorce occurs, these same expectations become a source of psychological burden. Women who deviate from the traditional role of the obedient wife and nurturing mother may face harsh criticism, ostracization, or subtle exclusion from community life. These consequences create an internalized stigma, complicating recovery and contributing to long-term mental health issues such as depression and social withdrawal.

Contrastingly, American society, despite being more individualistic, still imposes challenges. The glorification of self-sufficiency often places undue pressure on women to demonstrate resilience immediately after divorce. The narrative of 'bouncing back' can obscure the need for prolonged support and care. Many women, particularly those who were financially dependent during marriage, report feeling isolated and overwhelmed by the demands of post-divorce life. The dissonance between social expectations and personal limitations often results in increased stress and lowered self-esteem.

Religion also plays a key role in both countries. In Georgia, the Orthodox Church holds considerable influence over public opinion and family norms. Divorced women may be seen as violating religious expectations, further marginalizing them in faith-based communities. Meanwhile, in the U.S., while religious views on divorce vary across denominations, many churches have evolved to offer support programs specifically for divorced members. This dual role of religion—as both an agent of moral pressure and a source of support—adds complexity to the psychological adjustment process.

Media representation of divorced women also differs significantly. In Georgian media, di-

orce is often portrayed as a crisis or moral failure, reinforcing gendered stereotypes and limiting public empathy. In contrast, U.S. media tends to romanticize post-divorce independence, often featuring successful, liberated women reclaiming their lives. While empowering, these portrayals can also create unrealistic expectations, ignoring the financial and emotional hardships many women endure. Thus, media both reflect and influence societal attitudes toward divorced women and must be critically examined as part of the broader environmental context.

The emotional development of children in divorced families is another factor intricately tied to women's psychological well-being. Women often prioritize their children's stability over their own, delaying personal recovery in favor of ensuring consistency in parenting. This self-sacrificing behavior, while commendable, can result in neglect of self-care. Georgian women may rely on extended family to support their children, but this can blur parenting boundaries and undermine maternal authority. In the U.S., single mothers may face legal and logistical barriers to shared custody, intensifying their emotional and economic burden.

Another key concept in divorce research is post-traumatic growth—the idea that individuals can achieve significant personal development following adversity. Many women, after navigating the emotional turmoil of divorce, report discovering inner strengths, setting new life goals, and developing a renewed sense of autonomy. Support systems that foster this growth include education programs, mentorship networks, therapy, and community engagement. Governments and non-profits should invest in such resources to shift the narrative from victimhood to empowerment.

Finally, interdisciplinary research is necessary to understand the full scope of divorce's psychological effects. Psychology, sociology, law, and public health must converge to address the multifactorial challenges women face. For example, family courts could benefit from psychological expertise when making custody decisions, ensuring that mental health implications are considered. Similarly, educational institutions can play a proactive role in supporting children of divorced families, thereby indirectly reducing maternal stress.

By expanding public discourse, enhancing institutional responsiveness, and promoting community-based healing, societies can radically improve outcomes for divorced women. The goal is not merely to treat divorce as a legal endpoint but to acknowledge it as a transformative process that requires compassion, structure, and sustained investment in mental health and social equity.

Conclusions

This study highlights that divorce impacts women differently across cultural contexts. American women benefit from institutional and social support, which mitigates emotional damage and enhances resilience. In contrast, Georgian women face extended psychological distress due to societal expectations, limited access to mental health care, and economic dependency. Effective interventions must be culturally adapted, and societal attitudes must shift to support rather than stigmatize divorced women.

References

- Amato, P. R. (2000). The consequences of divorce for adults and children. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 62(4), 1269–1287.
- Davis, K., & Lee, A. (2023). Women and Divorce in Contemporary America. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 47(1), 11–28.
- Gogoladze, I. (2023). Gender roles and stigma in post-Soviet Georgian society. *Georgian Social Studies Review*, 5(2), 90–108.
- Jones, T., & Miller, B. (2021). Pre-divorce stress and psychological health. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 38(3), 215–229.
- Tsiklauri, N., & Beridze, M. (2022). Post-divorce social outcomes for women in Georgia. *Caucasus Sociology Quarterly*, 7(1), 45–62.
- Zarnadze, L. (2024). Cultural transformation and divorce trends in Georgia. *Social and Cultural Inquiry*, 12(1), 101–115.

Ten Days in a Mad-House: An Analysis

LIKA MIRUASHVILI^{25*}

Abstract

Elizabeth Cochrane Seaman took on the name of Nellie Bly and an assignment that led to the creation of her novel *Ten Days in a Mad-House*. Her mission was to infiltrate an insane asylum on Blackwell's island for ten days and describe its conditions. At a time when women were so disadvantaged, it was especially courageous of her to attempt such an important ordeal. Thus, began the story of her adventure. This article will analyze the literary work *Ten Days in a Mad-House* and how it deals with the issues of women's mental health.

Keywords: Mental health, asylum, treatment, patient, Nellie Bly, Ten Days in a Mad-House

Research Questions:

1. How does Bly portray the physical and emotional distress put on the patients?
2. How were women treated in the asylum?
3. How does the treatment of women in the asylum showcase the society's views of women?

Significance: Understanding what certain individuals had to face in the mental health system, will aid current researchers and scientists into making more informed and empathetic decisions.

Goal: The Research aims to showcase several ways in which the mental health system failed women around 1887, when this novel was published.

Introduction

Nellie Bly's incredible accomplishment paved the way for improvements in the mental health facility systems, women's rights and journalism. Through analyzing the circumstances from the novel, one can understand why that is. Grasping the horrors that certain individuals faced in the mental health system, will aid current researchers and scientists into making more informed and empathetic decisions. The paper aims to showcase several ways in which the mental health system failed women around 1887, when this novel was published.

^{25*} Senior Student of American Studies Program, School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, International Black Sea University, Tbilisi, Georgia.

Considering Nellie Bly's profession, it is to be expected that she would mention journalism in this novel. "If there is anyone who can ferret out a mystery it is a reporter. I felt that I would rather face a mass of expert doctors, policemen, and detectives than two bright specimens of my craft, ..." (Bly, 1887, p. 36). With this sentiment the author indicates her understanding of her own profession and willingness to do all that she can in order to accomplish her mission. On the other hand, it is disheartening to realize how little faith she already has in medical professionals and the fact that her lack of faith will be proven correct.

Historical Overview

On the one hand, Nellie Bly mainly discusses the plights of the women with and women accused of having mental illnesses. Nevertheless, we see how this is not a simple psychological phenomenon but really a sociological issue involving women. Women of that time were encouraged to become homemakers. They had no other intellectual or recreational pursuits. If a woman showed interest in anything other than homemaking, she would be deemed insane. Preferred diagnosis for rebellious women of that time was hysteria. Additionally, some women were put in mental health hospitals simply due to the fact that they did not fit contemporary social and cultural norms (Showalter, 1985). The fact that this supposed mental health hospital only took women as their patients is one sign of how society saw women. Patients had no guarantees for wellbeing, no due process during trial and no treatment plan. The only thing Bly needed to do in order to be deemed insane was to act in an unconventional way. The other women in the story were the ones to bring her closer to being imprisoned in the asylum. This fact shows how deeply the roots of misunderstanding women's mental health went in the minds of every individual.

Additionally, it is important to note that husbands or families who were ashamed of a woman in their lives or simply did not like them, had the power to put them in mental health asylums by labelling them as insane individuals who had "hysteria". A historical diagnosis that has largely been discredited by professionals (Showalter, 1985).

In order to focus the readers on the hardships that real people in a real environment faced, Bly decided to deliberately avoid the use of literary devices. A choice that underlines the gravity of the themes she is writing about. One of the very few literary devices she uses is in this personification: "...the light... helped envelop us in a dusky hue and dye our spirits navy blue" (Bly, 1887, p.20). The metaphorical navy blue, of course, represents the absolute despair of the women, most of whom were actually not even mentally ill, who had to endure harsh conditions with no hope of freedom or justice.

Conditions of the Asylum

One may claim that the theme of this novel heavily revolves around mental health. This is partially correct. Furthermore, this paper would like to argue that *Ten Days in a Mad-House* also explores the treatment of "the other" in society. "The other" in this case includes anyone daring to disregard established

social norms (a list that, in this case, mainly consists of women). In the end, the way aforementioned people are treated may predictably lead to them acquiring mental health problems.

The fact that, throughout the novel, Bly refers to the mentally ill women with a variety of heartwrenching names is a preliminary indication of the feeling the audience will be left with by the end of the book. These names include: "The poor unfortunates", "my suffering sisters", "poor crazy captives", "the unfortunates brought here", "the poor things", "the poor patients".

Firstly, one has to mention the physical conditions of the insane asylum. Most people would agree that a place housing troubled individuals should be as comfortable, safe and secure as possible. Blackwell's Island does not exhibit any of those qualities. In actuality such conditions can even be considered as human rights violations. "The small windows were closed, and, with the smell of the filthy room, the air was stifling. At one end of the cabin was a small bunk in such a condition that I had to hold my nose when I went near it" (Bly, 1887, p. 64). One may expect that at least a shared space, such as a kitchen, could be appropriate or sanitary. If they do, they would be disappointed: "We passed one low building, and the stench was so horrible that I was compelled to hold my breath, and I mentally decided that it was the kitchen. I afterward found I was correct in my surmise, ..." (Bly, 1887, p. 66). Unfortunately, the food is not any better, as Bly evocatively describes a dish of meat and potatoes: "It could not have been colder had it been cooked the week before, and it had no chance to make acquaintance with salt or pepper" (Bly, 1887, p. 50). This fact becomes even more disturbing when later on, we find out that the doctors and nurses have a different - a much better - menu; additionally, this is happening when "the sick patients grow sicker over the table" (Bly, 1887, p. 98). Other than generally unfavorable conditions, the asylum poses a significant fire risk. Every room is locked separately by the nurses. Bly notes that even kind nurses, which the ones in the asylum are obviously not, would not risk their lives to save the hundreds of patients in the event of a fire (Bly, 1887, p. 86). A proof of the blatant disregard for the patient's safety.

Finally, to encapsulate the general state that befalls the women that end up at Blackwell's Island, there is a quote from the novel - a sentence that Bly believes would fit the place better as the motto on the wall than the one that is already there - "He who enters here leaveth hope behind" (Bly, 1887, p. 95).

The second issue in this regard is the staff's treatment of their patients. Even before being brought to the asylum, Bly is treated more as a criminal than as a patient: "The rough looking attendant twisted his arms around mine, and half-led, half-dragged me to an ambulance" (Bly, 1887, p. 63). This standpoint is proven again when Bly states, "It seemed to require a man and a woman to lead me up the plank to reach the shore" (Bly, 1887, p. 65). A sentiment that creates the feeling in the audience that the staff already expect the patients to want to escape. Thus, proving that they are well aware of the asylum's atrocious conditions. The staff's awareness of their own cruelty is seen in a scene, in which Bly (as the "character" in the story) confronts a nurse, stating that the city is financially responsible to maintain the asylum and compensates the personnel to be kind. The nurse responds coldly: "Well, you don't need to expect any kindness here, for you won't get it," (Bly, 1887, p. 84); one fundamental part of being a human

is our connection to nature. It can be as simple as looking out at the scenery or breathing fresh air - a right that is given to prisoners. However, when a patient asked to look out a window, they would receive lowered brows and terrifying glares (Bly, 1887).

The most pressing issue that seems to arise in this novel is the fact that medical personnel blatantly disregard the patients words in the case that they listen to them at all. Bly, when witnessing one woman's situation, remarks that "She begged that they try all their tests for insanity, if they had any, and give her justice" (Bly, 1887, p.69). Such treatment could be due to a variety of reasons: the doctors may refuse to listen to the patients due to discrimination (perhaps because they do not take women and women's opinions and pain seriously). Another reason can be that they do not think mentally ill people can have rational, reasonable and fair points to make. Finally, they may not be qualified/educated enough to know what to do. If this is true, then one cannot help but compare them to reporters, as seen by Bly: "How untiring they [the reporters] are in their efforts to get something new" (Bly, 1887, p.62). To exacerbate the situation, the so-called doctors ignore the patients even when they feel physically ill or determine that "In cases such as mine [Bly's] such tests failed"(Bly, 1887, p.100).

A grave instance in which we see both ill treatment and refusal to listen to patients is with a woman named Mrs. Louise Schanz, who does not even speak English. The doctors do not get an interpreter or a translator for her and she has to plead her case in German, in a "voice broken by sobs" (Bly, 1887, p.70). "A woman taken without her own consent from the free world to an asylum and there given no chance to prove her sanity. Confined most probably for life behind asylum bars, without even being told in her language the why and wherefore" (Bly, 1887, p.70). Bly compares this to criminals who have the chance to prove their innocence and comes to a chilling conclusion: "Who would not rather be a murderer and take the chance for life than be declared insane, without hope of escape?" (Bly, 1887, p.70).

Conclusion

To sum up, the novel examines the harsh realities of women living in the mental asylum at Blackwell's island. The conditions were unbearably inhumane and purposefully cruel. Nellie Bly managed to escape and recorded her experiences in order to help future patients. Bly chose to depict the physical and emotional distress of women directly and in vivid detail. The lack of literary devices was a direction she took in order to highlight the reality of these women. At the expense of her artistry, she gave these women, and those that may have one day shared the fates of the patients, some justice.

References

- The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. (2025, April 18). Nellie Bly | Biography & around the world in Seventy-two Days. Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Nellie-Bly>
- Bly, N. (1887). Ten days in a mad-house. Norman L. Munro. <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/21162>
- Showalter, E. (1985). *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture 1830-1980*. United States of America: Random House.
- Rivkin, J., & Ryan, M. (2017). *Literary Theory: An Anthology*. Chichester, United Kingdom : Wiley-Blackwell.
- Clark, H. (2020, October 21). Heather Clark on Sylvia Plath, with Ruth Franklin, October 21, 2020. (R. Franklin, Interviewer) Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=teQIf_wZckE&t=940s

In Search of American Identity: A Comparative Reflection from Steinbeck's 1960 America to 2025

NATIA MSHVIDOBADZE^{26*}

Abstract

This article offers a comparative reflection on American identity and ethnicity, drawing on John Steinbeck's *Travels with Charley in Search of America* (1962) and the sociopolitical realities of the United States in 2025. Through a state-by-state analysis of Steinbeck's journey, the article explores themes of regional identity, conformity, migration, and the immigrant experience. It highlights Steinbeck's early observations of American homogenization and cultural fragmentation, while juxtaposing them with present-day demographic shifts, environmental challenges, and rising political polarization. The continuity and transformation of American identity across these two periods form the core of this comparative study.

Keywords: American identity, ethnicity, Steinbeck, *Travels with Charley*, migration, regional diversity, political polarization, 2025 America, cultural homogenization, immigrant experience.

Introduction

"Radio and television speech becomes standardized, perhaps better English than we have ever used. Just as our bread, mixed and baked, packaged and sold without benefit of accident or human frailty, is uniformly good and uniformly tasteless, so will our speech become one speech." (Steinbeck J., 1962, p.158).

Consider that this lament on American monoculture was written before the advent of color television-let alone satellite networks, internet and AI. We will see some more of Steinbeck's eerily predictive words that still echo today. I hope this article isn't "uniformly good and uniformly tasteless," but just tasty enough to give you some food for thought.

In September 1960, Steinbeck set off across the United States with his poodle, Charley, aiming to rediscover the country he had long written about. The result is a book that not only captures the American landscape, but also opens a window into the national psyche—with all its contradictions, hopes, and tensions. John Steinbeck's characteristic deadpan humor and quiet insight make the book an irresistible read (Benson, 1990; Parini, 1995).

The 1960s marked a pivotal era in American history, defined by civil rights movements, growing racial tensions, the Cold War, and the early stages of the Vietnam War. It was a time of profound social and

^{26*} Ph.D. Candidate, American Studies Program, School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, International Black Sea University, Tbilisi, Georgia.

cultural upheaval, with widespread challenges to traditional values, rising political activism, and rapid technological advancement. When *Travels with Charley in Search of America* was published in 1962, the nation stood at a crossroads—grappling with its identity, ideals, and the contradictions between progress and discontent. In contrast, 2025 presents a different yet equally complex landscape: while the nation enjoys unprecedented digital connectivity and scientific progress, it also faces deep political polarization, renewed struggles for racial and social justice, environmental crises, and questions about truth in a post-digital age. Both eras, though separated by decades, reflect a nation in search of itself—torn between its aspirations and its realities.

Steinbeck's journey begins in Maine, where he reconnects with the stoic, old-world character of New England, sensing a spiritual tie to his ancestral roots. "I felt the pull of the country of my ancestors... a sense of belonging" (p. 18), he writes, highlighting his reverence for tradition and simplicity.

In Vermont and New Hampshire, John Steinbeck admires the quiet dignity and resilience of the people, yet he also observes an increasing sense of isolation—both geographic and emotional—as rural communities confront the pressures of modernization, the erosion of traditional ways of life (Postman, 1985).

The Midwest—particularly Wisconsin, Illinois, and Michigan—presents a landscape of industriousness, where Steinbeck is impressed by hard work of farmers facing economic pressures and environmental challenges which are no stranger in 2025 either, yet he again laments the encroachment of modern conformity that threatens their independence and destroys nature. As he observed the leveling of old trees and towns in the name of progress he asks: "Why progress so much looks like destruction?" p. 57 A question that rings louder than ever in an age of climate crisis.

In the vast openness of North and South Dakota, Steinbeck is struck by both the grandeur and desolation of the plains, describing them as "empty, beautiful, and terribly lonely." While he marvels at the natural landscape, he also notes the quiet strength and hospitality of the people who endure the region's harshness, living lives shaped by isolation, endurance, and a deep connection to the land. (p. 91).

Montana, however, casts a spell on Steinbeck—he is unabashedly smitten with the state, confessing, "Love is inarticulate. Montana has a spell on me" (p. 149). His admiration extends beyond the dramatic beauty of its mountains and open skies to the rugged independence and authenticity of its people, whose deep ties to the land and unpretentious character resonate with his ideal of the American spirit, revealing an emotional bond that transcends logic.

Idaho and Washington offer a study in contrasts—Idaho's serene, mountainous beauty and sparse population evoke a sense of peaceful isolation, while in Washington, Steinbeck is struck by the tension between stunning natural landscapes and the growing presence of industrial sprawl. He observes a shift in the character of the people as well, noting a move from rural independence to a more fast-paced, urbanized lifestyle, signaling broader cultural and economic changes in the American Northwest.

As for Oregon, Steinbeck describes its landscapes as lush, clean, and almost dreamlike. He notes the

state's balance between wildness and order. He praises the people as friendly, practical, and deeply connected to the land, noting their self-reliance and quiet pride. For Steinbeck, Oregon represents a rare harmony between nature and human life.

In California, Steinbeck's nostalgia gives way to disappointment as he witnesses his once-idyllic Monterey transformed by commercialization, lamenting, "The Monterey I knew is not the Monterey of today" (p. 164). His disillusionment deepens as he observes the complex social tensions in the state, particularly around issues of immigration and ethnicity—he notes the struggles of Mexican and other immigrant laborers, whose presence underscores both the economic dependency on migrant work and the growing cultural divides shaping California's evolving identity. The fields worked by the Dust Bowl migrants during the depression Steinbeck immortalized in *Grapes of Wrath* and *Of Mice and Men* are now predominantly tended by Mexican migrant workers affected by the Bracero Program (1942–1964)—a bilateral labor agreement between the U.S. and Mexico (Calavita, 1992).

Long before today's deportation disputes and overcrowding crises, Steinbeck raised a weary eyebrow at California's swelling numbers: "I remember Salinas, the town of my birth, when it proudly announced 4,000 citizens. Now it is 80,000 and leaping pell mell on in a mathematical progression—a hundred thousand in three years and perhaps 200,000 in ten, with no end in sight" (Steinbeck, 1962, p.174).

Texas offers Steinbeck a strange and compelling enchantment; he is drawn to its boldness, grandiosity, and immense scale, even indulging in what he calls an "orgie of luxury" during a brief respite from his travels in an affluent friend's house (p. 186). Yet beneath the surface charm, he notes a distinctive Texan mentality marked by fierce pride, self-reliance, and a deep-rooted belief in exceptionalism. He is intrigued by Texans' loud talk of secession, but when he jokingly organizes a "Friends of Texas Secession" group, locals bristle at the idea—revealing a paradoxical pride: they boast of wanting to secede, but don't tolerate outsiders endorsing it.

Yet in the South, particularly Louisiana, the mood turns somber. Witnessing hatred during school integration protests organized by the white protesters, Steinbeck is shaken: "I was astonished and horrified by the venom" (p. 203).

To sum up, his deeply personal reflections reveal not only a writer trying to rediscover his country but also a traveler profoundly moved—and often disturbed—by the shifting cultural landscape of America.

If John Steinbeck traveled in search of America in 2025, he would be struck by a nation transformed—its landscapes more digitally connected, yet socially fragmented, and its identity shaped increasingly by immigration, ethnicity, and mobility.

In Maine and wider New England, he might note the aging population—nearly 22% over age 65 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023)—and the quiet persistence of tradition (U.S. Census Bureau, 2024). now contrasted by a post-pandemic 30% rise in rural housing demand (Zillow, 2022) fueled by remote workers and second-home buyers.

Across the Midwest, cities like Detroit are undergoing \$9 billion in redevelopment (Detroit Economic Growth Corporation, 2024), while rural counties continue to empty—35% lost population between 2010 and 2023 (Pew Research Center) (Pew Research Center, 2024). The region's demographic shifts also include a rising Latino presence and a slow erosion of white working-class dominance.

In the Dakotas and Montana, digital life has brought connectivity but deepened social isolation. A 2023 Gallup poll revealed that 46% of Americans feel less connected, despite more digital communication (Gallup, 2023). Yet Montana still enchants—especially Bozeman, where tech migration from places like Silicon Valley has spurred a 21% population surge over the past decade (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023), altering the cultural fabric of the Mountain West.

California, once the embodiment of the American dream, would disappoint Steinbeck even more now. The state faces a median home price above \$830,000 (California Association of Realtors, 2024), 600,000 acres burned in 2023 wildfires (Cal Fire), and staggering inequality: the top 10% now hold 75% of the state's wealth (UC Berkeley, 2024) (UC Berkeley, 2024).

Steinbeck likely wouldn't be surprised by today's heated protests and clashes with law enforcement—he saw the storm gathering long ago. Reflecting on California's rapid population growth, Steinbeck foresaw the growing unease:

"Even those people who joy in numbers and are impressed with bigness are beginning to worry, gradually becoming aware that there must be a situation point and the progress may be a progression toward strangulation." p.174

Yet, unlike the Trump administration's hardline stance on immigration, Steinbeck didn't propose extreme solutions: "...and no solution has been found. You can't forbid people to be born, at least not yet." p.174

Texas, once his "orgie of luxury," has become a destination for those fleeing high-cost states. Over 500,000 new residents moved in during 2023–2024, largely from California and New York (IRS data, 2024), reversing traditional migration flows. Texas reflects a unique ethnic convergence: it is now a majority-minority state, with Latinos recently surpassing whites as the largest group, reshaping its culture, politics, and identity.

Even though Steinbeck didn't actually visit Florida, there's a lot of talk of Florida as America's most favorite destination in the book. Florida might still charm Steinbeck with its sun, real estate boom (60% home price rise since 2020, Redfin), and retiree appeal, yet he would not miss its contradictions. Over 2.5 million residents live in flood zones (NOAA, 2023), and political polarization—centered on education, immigration, and climate policy—fractures its sunny image.

In the South, including Louisiana, he would find the legacy of racial struggle alive and evolving. While the Black population declines slightly due to reverse migration, the Latino population has grown 27% since 2010 (Brookings, 2023), contributing to a complex demographic mosaic. Immigration—legal and otherwise—reshapes small towns and big cities alike, sometimes welcomed, often contested.

Immigration, once marginal in public discourse, now dominates it. The Pew Research Center (2024) ranks it among the top three national concerns, with over 45 million foreign-born residents helping define 21st-century America. Steinbeck would likely reflect not only on who Americans are, but on how they move—across borders, screens, and identities. America in 2025, he might say, is still in search of itself, but now its journey winds through contested spaces shaped by ethnicity, migration, and digital transformation

“For all of our enormous geographic range, for all of our sectionalism, for all of our interwoven breeds drawn from every part of the ethnic world, we are a nation, a new breed. Americans are much more American than they are Northerners, Southerners, Westerners or Easterners. And descendants of English, Irish, Italian, Jewish, German, Polish are essentially American. This is not patriotic whoop-de-do. This is a carefully observed fact.” p.186

Steinbeck moves from observing regional and personal diversity to recognizing a shared national character—a restlessness, practicality, and deep belief in personal freedom. He insists that “American identity is an exact and provable thing,” shaped not by uniformity but by common values and emotional undercurrents. This realization comes with awe as it happened in less than 200 years and most of it last 50 years. Aware of his own biases, he adds, “If I find matters to criticize and to deplore they were tendencies equally present in myself,” emphasizing that national flaws are not external to the individual but part of the collective identity he seeks to understand.

Despite his admiration for America’s capacity for integration, Steinbeck does not ignore the undercurrents of xenophobia and ethnic hierarchy that run through American history. Reflecting on his childhood, he recalls:

“I remember how when I was a child we responded to the natural dislike of the stranger. We who were born here and our parents also felt a strange superiority over newcomers, barbarians, forestieri, and they, the foreigners, resented us.”p.174

The use of the term *forestieri*, meaning foreigners in Italian, evokes the linguistic and cultural barriers that shaped perceptions of otherness. Steinbeck’s account highlights how American identity, while inclusive in theory, was frequently guarded by social mechanisms of exclusion.

Reimagining Ethnicity and Identity in 2025

In contrast to Steinbeck’s era, the United States in 2025 is marked by both unprecedented diversity and intensified polarization. The demographic landscape has shifted considerably: Latino, Asian, Middle Eastern, and multiracial populations constitute a significant and growing proportion of the American populace. Contemporary discourse favors a model of cultural pluralism or “mosaic” over the older ideal of the melting pot. In this model, ethnic and cultural differences are not expected to dissolve into a singular national identity, but rather to coexist within a shared civic framework.

However, this pluralism has provoked tension, especially in political rhetoric that seeks to return to an

imagined past of ethnic and cultural homogeneity. The presidency of Donald Trump—particularly in its second iteration—has been associated with a resurgence of nationalist and exclusionary discourses. Policies and public statements have emphasized border security, immigration restrictions (Hochschild, 2016; Jones, 2023), and a reassertion of traditional American values, often framed in opposition to multiculturalism. In this context, the “foreigner” reemerges not only as an outsider, but as a perceived threat to national cohesion.

This shift stands in contrast to Steinbeck’s cautious optimism about America’s integrative potential. While Steinbeck acknowledged prejudice, he ultimately believed in the nation’s ability to reconcile difference into unity. The Trump-era narrative, by contrast, constructs American identity through boundaries—both literal and symbolic—and often positions ethnic diversity as incompatible with national strength (Glazer, 1997).

The comparison between Steinbeck’s observations and contemporary America reveals both continuity and rupture. The table below outlines some of the key contrasts:

Conclusion: In Search of Which America?

In conclusion, John Steinbeck’s *Travels with Charley* captures a nation in flux—searching for unity amid its diversity. His hopeful yet honest reflections reveal both the promise and the pitfalls of American identity. In contrast, the fractured politics of 2025, marked by exclusion and protectionism under Trump’s second term, suggest a retreat from that inclusive vision. Steinbeck’s road trip remains strikingly relevant—not as mere nostalgia, but as a challenge to rediscover who Americans are, and who they still have the power to become.

References

- Benson, J. (1990). *The True Adventures of John Steinbeck, Writer: A Biography*. Viking Penguin.
- Calavita, K. (1992). *Inside the State: The Bracero Program, Immigration, and the I.N.S.* Routledge.
- Gallup. (2023). Americans feel less connected despite more digital communication. Gallup, Inc.
- Glazer, N. (1997). *We Are All Multiculturalists Now*. Harvard University Press.
- Hochschild, A. (2016). *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right*. The New Press.
- Jones, R. P. (2023). *The Hidden Roots of White Supremacy and the Path to a Shared American Future*. Simon & Schuster.
- Lowe, L. (1996). *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics*. Duke University Press.
- Owens, L. (2001). *John Steinbeck's Re-Vision of America*. University of Georgia Press.
- Parini, J. (1995). *John Steinbeck: A Biography*. Henry Holt and Company.
- Pew Research Center. (2024). Public priorities for 2024: Immigration, economy, and inflation dominate concerns. Pew Research Center.
- Postman, N. (1985). *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*. Viking Penguin.
- Steinbeck, J. (1962). *Travels with Charley in Search of America*. Viking Press.
- UC Berkeley. (2024). Wealth inequality in California: A rising divide. University of California, Berkeley.
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2024). Population estimates and demographic shifts by state, 2023–2024. U.S. Department of Commerce.

Theoretical Framework of the Work-Family Conflict (WFC) for Understanding 21st Century American and Georgian Women's Lives

SALOME TCHARBADZE^{27*}

DR. TAMAR SHIOSHVILI

Abstract

Work-family conflict (WFC) is still a significant challenge to gender equality in the 21st century, especially for women who are still balancing paid work and unpaid domestic care work. The research employs role theory, work-family border theory, and conservation of resources (COR) theory to contrast work-family conflict (WFC) in the United States and Georgia. The paper explores how deeply entrenched gender norms and structural problems affect women's emotional, social, and economic lives. The research achieves these goals by analysing current empirical studies (2022–2024) and reports from institutions such as UN Women, the World Bank, and the Associated Press. The paper investigates how structural flaws and enduring gender stereotypes interact to define women's social, psychological, and financial experiences.

In Georgia, poor state-subsidised day care and gendered traditional roles establish settings within which women workers tend to bear full-time care responsibilities. Burnout is therefore partly a norm; weak labour market attachment follows, and mobility is impaired. In the US, lack of government-mandated paid leave and costly child-care centres also lead women into incompatible trade-offs of job promotion and family obligations, even with economic achievement.

The study shows that women in both nations suffer from role strain due to conflicting expectations across their work and family life, poor boundary control, and a constant depletion of necessary personal resources. Low-income and minority women specifically bear these responsibilities. The article finds that actual change must combine public mobilisation challenging the cultural scripts that place caregiving labour largely in women's hands with institutional reform like paid family leave and easily accessible child care.

The study adds to international debates of gender, work, and social welfare by bringing together theory, comparative policy analysis, and the latest statistical data from countries. The book advocates for intersectional and culturally responsive approaches with women's lived experiences at the forefront of policy development and implementation.

Keywords: Work-family conflict, gender norms, unpaid care, burnout, Georgia, United States, Role Theory, Border Theory, COR Theory, childcare policy.

^{27*} Ph.D. Candidate, American Studies Program, School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, International Black Sea University, Tbilisi, Georgia.

Introduction

Today's woman's life all over the globe defines itself in terms of the intersection of work and family obligations. Though women make up a growing proportion of today's workforce, societal expectations of home work and care have not changed much. The majority of women thus experience what is described as work-family conflict (WFC), which is a psychological and sociological strain resulting from the conflict between paid work demands and unpaid family responsibilities. UN Women (2022) asserts that WFC is among the most fundamental impediments to attaining gender parity in both developing and developed countries. Women in the United States and Georgia, particularly, have structurally different but functionally similar constraints; the success of women in the workplace is heavily dependent on the amount of institutional and cultural support that they get at home.

Deeply rooted patriarchal customs in Georgia, a post-Soviet country, mean that gender roles remain quite traditional. Even with full-time work, women are still expected to put family duties first—e.g., childcare and care of the elderly. Georgian women spend more than twice as much time on unpaid domestic work as men, reports the World Bank (2023). Georgia provides state-supported maternity leave, but paternal leave is socially discouraged or short, thereby reinforcing the mother's responsibility. And even more scarce is affordable public daycare, with private institutions being unaffordable to many. Thus, instead of a lack of qualification or intent, infrastructure and cultural barriers hinder women's labour force participation.

In the United States, a nation at times puffed up due to economic opportunity, WFC goes on a quite different terrain. The United States is one of the very few high-income countries without a government-mandated paid parental leave policy. Although some companies and states offer some benefits, an estimated forty per cent of private-sector workers lack paid leave (Associated Press, 2024). Besides, American mothers also have what sociologists call the "motherhood penalty," where their motherhood makes women less qualified or committed to work. UNDP (2022) notes that American moms are significantly more prone than fathers to curtail work hours or quit the profession entirely, therefore aggravating conventional income disparities and hindering career advancement.

Both the United States and Georgia have a weakness in that their economic models fail to prioritise the inclusion of care within mainstream social and economic policy, viewing childcare as a personal issue instead of a public one, thereby disproportionately affecting women. By emphasising a substantial portion of the workforce, such an imbalance not only perpetuates gendered roles but also undercuts national economic capacity.

Three theoretical frameworks—Role Theory, Work-Family Border Theory, and the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory—allow one to deconstruct these issues. Role Theory states that individuals occupy various social roles—employee, parent, and spouse, for instance—each of which has its own expectations and stresses (Kahn et al., 1964; Hobfoll, 1989.). Where these stresses converge, individuals—women in particular—suffer role strain. Citing the permeability of borders between work and home, Work-Family

Border Theory contends that conflict is a result of inefficient transition between the two domains (Clark, 2000). Finally, COR Theory contends that WFC is caused by individuals having inadequate resources—time, money, and emotional support—to carry out their responsibilities, thereby resulting in stress and burnout (Hobfoll, 1989; Westman, 2022).

Materials and Methods

This study employs a mixed-methods approach of secondary data analysis and theoretical literature review. Three theoretical models—Role Theory (Kahn et al., 1964; Hobfoll, 1989), Work-Family Border Theory (Clark, 2000), and Conservation of Resources Theory (Hobfoll, 1989)—were selected as the conceptual foundation. Work-family conflict experiences of women in the United States and Georgia were compared using a comparative nation case study design to determine differences and similarities.

Data Sources:

- Work-family conflict, burnout, gender roles, and caring academic journals from 2022 to 2024
- Reports of UN Women (2022), World Bank (2023), UNDP (2022), Associated Press (2024), and other international agencies.
- Peer-reviewed sources: Westman (2022), Li et al. (2022), Medina-Garrido et al. (2023).

Data Collection and Analysis

1. Search databases including JSTOR, Scopus, and Google Scholar with keywords such as “work-family conflict,” “role strain,” “gender norms,” “childcare policy,” and “burnout.” Studies published from 2022 to 2024 were selected only
2. A comparison of Georgia and United States national-level data assisted in describing trends across unpaid work, child care availability, parental leave policy, and burnout events.
3. Descriptive statistics were utilised to analyse quantitative data to provide insight into patterns and variation. Visualisations include bar graphs and contrast tables indicating the existence of policies and caregiving burdens.

Results

1. Disparities in Unpaid Labour

- o Georgia: Men’s 1.8 (World Bank, 2023) compared to women’s average of 4.5 hours/day on unpaid household tasks.
- o USA: Compared to men’s 2.1, women average 3.8 hours (UN Women, 2022).

2. Parental Leave Policy Gaps

- o Georgia grants 183 days of maternity leave but lacks subsidised childcare or paternity leave (UN Women, 2022).
- o The U.S. does not have national paid leave; about forty per cent of private workers get none at all (Associated Press, 2024).

3. Burnout and Mental Health Outcomes

- o Georgia: According to Westman (2022) 62% of working women say they are emotionally tired.
- o U.S.: Particularly Black and Latina women, half of women say they are highly stressed (Associated Press, 2024).

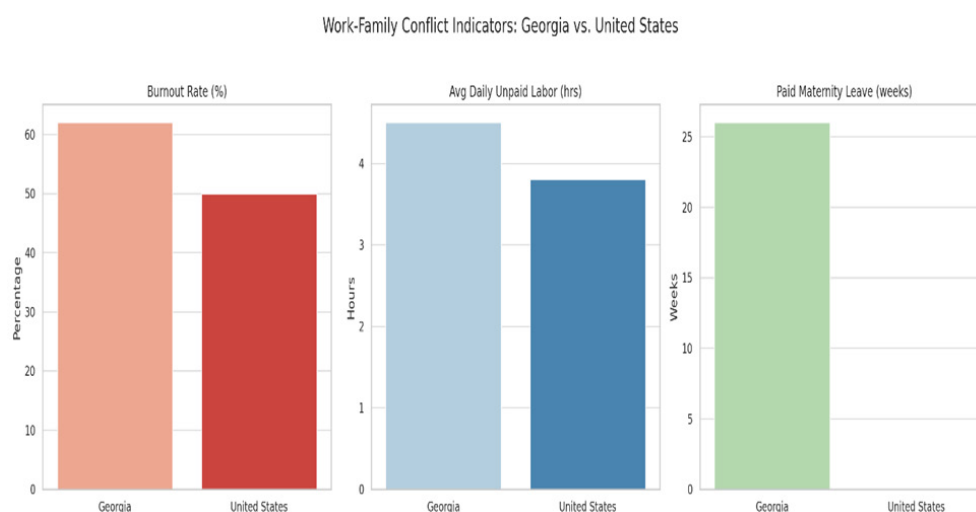
4. Employment Trends and Income Inequality

- o Georgia: Lack of childcare forces 44% of women to work part-time or informally (World Bank, 2023).
- o US: Women cut family work hours 1.5x more than males (UNDP, 2022).

5. Cultural Norms and Gender Role Expectations

- o Georgia: High cultural expectations to give family top priority (Li et al., 2022).
- o U.S.: Less evident in progressive states; similar in conservative ones (Li et al., 2022).

“Visual Summary of Work-Family Conflict Measures (Georgia vs. U.S.)”



Work – Family Conflict Indicators: Georgia vs. United States

The composite chart presents three major indicators of work-family conflict experienced by women in Georgia and the United States:

1. Percentage Burnout Rate:

- Georgia: 62% of working women experience emotional exhaustion.
- United States: Half of the invited participants report feeling extreme stress. Illustrates the emotional toll of blending paid work and unpaid care (Westman, 2022; Associated Press, 2024).

2. **Daily Unpaid Labour Average: Hours**

Georgia: 4.5 hours every day.

United States: 3.8 hours daily.

† Shows time lost that lowers energy and advances careers (UN Women, 2022; World Bank, 2023).

3. **. Paid mother's leave (weeks):**

Georgia: 26 partial pay weeks.

United States: 0 federal mandatory weeks.

† Highlights the institutional policy gap, specifically in the United States, impacting employment security and maternal health.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this comparative study affirm the multivariate complexity of work-family conflict (WFC) for both American and Georgian women. Despite their divergent political systems, economic systems, and cultural heritage, both countries illustrate how a lack of structural support and persisting gender stereotypes contribute to the working woman's load. With the empirical results presented, this conversation extends the application of the three principal theoretical frameworks—Role Theory, Work-Family Border Theory, and Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory—and positions their relevance.

Role Theory Revisited

Role Theory contends that individuals perform several social roles—work role, caregiving role, and domestic role, say—concurrently with varying set of responsibilities and expectations. Role strain is caused by incompatibility of demands across various roles, argue Kahn et al. (1964). In the case of Georgian and American women, incompatibility occurs as follows: working mothers are supposed to perform high domestic duties and excel professionally as well. Especially in the absence or presence of poorly developed support mechanisms—like flexible working hours and parental leave—Medina-Garrido et al. (2023) depict that role conflict exerts a detrimental effect on mental well-being and job performance. The common family environment found in Georgia supports the notion that women must make a sacrifice for family at the cost of work. In the US, the maternity penalty—where mothers are viewed by employers as being less dedicated—is also leading women to reduce working hours or abandon their careers entirely (UNDP, 2022).

Work-Family Border Theory and Environmental Rigidity

Clark's (2000) Employment-Family Balance Border Theory explains the psychological consequences of individuals not keeping a boundary between work and their personal life. Border theory presumes "work" and "family" to be divided but interpenetrating domains; tension occurs when individuals have minimal

control over movement between them. Limited flexibility at work and the absence of officially organised childcare facilities in Georgia force women to perform emotional and physical labour simultaneously. In the situation of women employed in informal or part-time sectors, especially, this interconnectedness occasionally dissolves the divide between workplace and home. In the United States, it is inequitably distributed and at other times inaccessible to lower-income populations, even as greater telecommuting is made possible through technology. Furthermore, cultural stigma of home-based parenting, as less “professional”,—devalues such an arrangement even for women who have flexible work (Li et al., 2022).

For female employees who work in gendered professions such as health and teaching, where work extends beyond office hours and emotional labor is inherent in the job, the boundary porosity is particularly so (Westman, 2022). Inadequate transition of the role from worker to caregiver and from caregiver to worker leads to long-term withdrawal from the labor force and chronic stress. They are bound by workplace culture, as Clark’s thesis indicates, and thus both Georgian and American institutions exhibit the same adamant refusal to redefine job expectations in terms that enable caring.

Resource Depletion and Psychological Cost: COR Theory

The Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory, formulated by Hobfoll (1989), suggests that people seek to acquire, maintain, and safeguard valued resources—e.g., time, emotional energy, and income. Threat or loss of these resources provokes stress. In the case of WFC, both American and Georgian women experience systemic depletion of these resources. Westman (2022) blames the lack of employer-provided childcare and rigid work demands for a precipitous decline in women’s well-being and productivity. In Georgia, mothers often resort to job abandonment following multitasking burnout, while in the U.S., women commonly cite burnout as an important reason for exiting the workforce (Associated Press, 2024).

The psychological cost is immense. Women are less likely to invest in long-term career development or professional growth when they are constantly alternating jobs without institutional support. This is a self-reinforcing cycle wherein underemployment engenders economic necessity and economic dependency suppresses independence and complicates mental well-being in turn. COR Theory explains this downward spiral by assisting in the conceptualisation of WFC as both a cumulative psychological problem of a structural nature and a scheduling problem.

Cultural and Institutional Intersections

As institutional deficiencies characterised WFC for much of the period, cultural values also matter. Career-driven mothers or fathers on parental leave at home in Georgia are socially unacceptable because the majority perceive care as the natural role of women. Stigma breeds rigid gender norms and delegitimises policy experimentation (World Bank, 2023). Even in the United States, neoliberalism celebrates autonomy and individual success. Care work is left out of public policy discussions since the latter views it as a private issue. The result is a fragmented system in which women, particularly those belonging to marginalised communities, bear the disproportionate burden of care (UNDP, 2022).

This institutional cultural overlap is among the reasons why good-intentioned policy has at times failed to realise change. For example, offering paid parental leave without altering corporate culture leads to underuse by men and cements women's caregiver status. As Li et al. (2022) describe, cultures in which caregiving is not gendered and where institutionally there are active reinforcements of this egalitarian norm are achieving gender-equal results with increasing frequency.

Intersectionality and Inclusive Policy Design

To examine WFC, an intersectional framework is ultimately necessary. Poor women, racial and ethnic minorities, single mothers, and others have fundamentally different experiences from middle-class or affluent women. Black and Latina women are more likely in the U.S. to be working frontline positions, less likely to receive benefits from their employers, and more likely to face discrimination at work (Associated Press, 2024). Women in rural Georgia face geographical and economic limitations that compound their care responsibilities.

Successful reform hinges on intersectional policy design—design that is attuned to and addresses the compounded vulnerabilities experienced by women. Initiatives must be crafted to address socioeconomic status, ethnicity, family structure, and gender in addition to gender. Policies threaten to entrench the very inequalities they aim to eliminate without such nuance.

In sum, the argument illustrates how a combination of contradictory roles, stringent legislation, limited resources, and dominant gender stereotypes determines WFC among females in Georgia as well as the US. These are complexity and system-related challenges. Tackling WFC theoretically requires an integrated approach incorporating structural change, workplace restructuring, and cultural transformation, as the theoretical models propose. Institutions must transform to view caring as a shared, social responsibility, rather than an individual choice available to women. Gender equality can then move from policy rhetoric to the arena of lived experience.

Conclusion

The objective of this research was to explore the phenomenon of work-family conflict (WFC) among women in two socio-culturally distinct but structurally similar countries: Georgia and the United States. Through a comparative Role Theory, Work-Family Border Theory, and Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory analysis, the study reveals the systematic nature of the difficulties professional women encounter in managing professional and domestic lives with inadequate institutional or societal support. This study's conclusion identifies several key new directions for theory, policy, and practice.

Primarily, the Role Theory application demonstrated that women continue to endure role strain due to incompatible demands placed upon them by their caring and professional roles. Women in both countries are structured and socialised to fulfil responsibilities within both spheres without effective redistribution or assistance. Women in the US and in Georgia undergo the identical pressures under different

political systems and economic progress: ongoing negotiation between work performance and family care.

Second, Work-Family Border Theory showed that the problem is environmental inflexibility, devaluing proper border management instead of simply a lack of energy or time. Work settings in both countries are still too insensitive to the dual-role reality of their women workers. Too often relying on class, occupation, or firm size, practices like flexible work hours, telecommuting possibilities, or childcare at the workplace are still rare and inconsistently utilized

Third, COR Theory told us that prolonged exposure to WFC drains resources. Women forever stressed to overextend themselves—emotionally, economically, and physically—suffer burnout, diminished productivity, and withdrawal from the labour force. It is not merely an individual but a social and economic matter concerning the country's welfare and development.

Also highlighted by the findings were the limitations of institutional change in the absence of cultural change. An example is the fact that Georgia's maternity leave does not appreciably reduce WFC since women's sole bailiwick continues to be caregiving. The same may also be stated for the United States, where men are culturally discouraged from availing themselves of paid parental leave, thus entrenching traditional gender roles even in situations where some companies provide it. This suggests that legislative intervention is not going to be in a position to effect real change unless it can be supported by societal change within attitudes.

A final key finding is the need for intersectional analysis in combating WFC. Not all women are experiencing the same condition of conflict. Poor women, single mothers, racial and ethnic minorities, and women in rural areas bear the burdens more heavily. Solutions that are effective will need to be attuned to this diversity. Policymakers will need to create programs that do more than advance gender equality in the abstract but also confront the particular disadvantages of the most vulnerable women.

Lastly, the comparative strategy in this paper also highlights the worldwide nature of WFC and the universal call for action. The experiences of women in Georgia and America are not isolated incidents but part of a general trend at the global level. To manage these experiences, structural change in the form of enhancing work and family policy infrastructure and society-level initiatives to challenge and modify outdated gender norms is necessary.

Finally, solving the work-family conflict is just as much an economic, social, and public health imperative as a gender equality one. Countries that fail to provide for working women will persist in denying themselves equality, talent, and productivity. Georgia and the United States of America can move closer to true gender equality and improved society well-being through initiating coordinated, intersectional, and culturally aware reforms. The time has come to stand up—not just for women, but for all who value a just, equitable, and thriving society.

Key Recommendations:

1. Establish policies that include thorough paid paternity and parental leaves.
2. Encourage and increase access to daycare centres.
3. Encourage flexible work arrangements such as flextime and hybrid models.
4. Encourage the participants to challenge gender roles by educating and involving them.

Guarantee policy interventions are inclusive of disadvantaged groups and intersectional in nature. Both countries can reduce WFC and achieve gender equality significantly and durably by integrating legal, economic, and cultural changes.

References

- Associated Press. (2024). Half of U.S. Women Report Daily Stress from Work-Family Imbalance. <https://apnews.com>
- Clark, S. C. (2000). Work/family border theory: A new theory of work/family balance. *Human Relations*, 53(6), 747–770.
- Garrido-Medina, M., Biedma-Ferrer, J. M., & Ramos-Rodriguez, A. R. (2023). Work-family policies and women's job performance: A role theory perspective. *Journal of Management Studies*, 60(1), 1–20.
- Hobfoll, S. E. (1989). Conservation of resources: A new attempt at conceptualizing stress. *American Psychologist*, 44(3), 513–524.
- Kahn, R. L., Wolfe, D. M., Quinn, R. P., Snoek, J. D., & Rosenthal, R. A. (1964). *Organizational stress: Studies in role conflict and ambiguity*. Wiley.
- Li, X., Chen, Y., & Zhang, L. (2022). Gender roles and work-family conflict in global societies. *International Journal of Social Research*, 45(2), 101–119.
- UN Women. (2022). Strategic Plan 2022–2025. <https://www.unwomen.org>
- UNDP. (2022). Gender Equality and Development Report. <https://www.undp.org>
- Westman, M. (2022). Women's exhaustion in the workplace: Causes and consequences. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 27(1), 12–25.
- World Bank. (2023). Women and Unpaid Work in Georgia. <https://www.worldbank.org>