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ABSTRACT

of the dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

**THE IMPACT OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION
TECHNOLOGIES ON MODERN INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS**

Specialty: 5901.01 – International Relations

Field of science: Political Sciences

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Baku – 2025

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GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESEARCH

Relevance of the Topic and Degree of Elaboration. The concept of the global information society retains its theoretical and practical relevance in the modern era. The widespread use of the Internet, mobile communication tools, social media platforms, and cloud technologies strengthens the status of this society as a reality. One of the main theoretical pillars of the concept is the idea that through information and communication technologies (ICT), it is possible to reduce information inequality and overcome the existing digital divide among states, regions, and social groups. At the same time, the development of the global information society brings to the forefront such priority issues as information security, the protection of personal data, and the assurance of ethical principles in the use of technology.

At the same time, the impact of ICT on modern international relations has become one of the most pressing issues of diplomacy. Through ICT, states are now able to communicate their foreign policy positions to a global audience more rapidly; diplomatic dialogue and negotiations are increasingly shifting into the digital sphere, thereby expanding the boundaries of traditional diplomacy. Moreover, the digital flow of information ensures greater transparency in diplomacy and strengthens public diplomacy, contributing to the formation of a new communication paradigm in international relations.

The impact of information and communication technologies on international relations has increased dramatically in recent years, and this technological factor has significantly changed the structure of interstate interactions, competition and conflicts. ICTs have become not only a means of communication, but also an instrument of geopolitical power. States perceive cyberspace as a strategic space, where they try to gain a positional advantage over their opponents by using methods such as interference in information systems, cyberintelligence activities, influencing electoral processes and paralyzing critical infrastructure. At the same time, in a world where “color revolutions” are taking place, disinformation campaigns

carried out through social media platforms, botnets and fake news are widely used to manipulate public opinion in international conflicts. In such an environment, cybersecurity policy and strategic preparedness against information warfare have become among the foreign policy priorities of states, confirming the role of ICT as both an element of risk and power in international relations.

In other words, the development of ICT has led to the intensification of information wars and the relevance of information security issues. States are trying to gain strategic advantages through information manipulation and disinformation on digital platforms, which leads to the transformation of diplomacy into a new battlefield. As a result, information security has become a priority on both the national and global diplomatic agenda, directly affecting the stability of international relations. The challenges created by ICT show that information security is not only a technical issue, but also an area that must be supported by political and legal mechanisms to protect national security.

In turn, the threats facing Azerbaijan in the field of information security are becoming increasingly complex and multifaceted. Foreign states and non-state actors, especially organizations of Armenian origin, are trying to gain access to Azerbaijan's political, economic and military information through cyber espionage, which poses a serious risk to national security. At the same time, information technologies are used to paralyze critical infrastructure and disrupt public stability through cyberterrorism acts. The main directions of the information warfare directed by Armenia are to influence public opinion and international image through the spread of disinformation, fake news and coordinated social media campaigns. Therefore, scientific research into information security and modern information warfare methods is an important direction of Azerbaijan's national security strategy.

The foreign policy of our state shows that digitalization has expanded the communication capabilities of the Republic of Azerbaijan in its foreign policy, has become an important tool in shaping the country's international image and reaching a global audience. Through this process, Azerbaijan is shaping its diplomatic

initiatives more effectively, strengthening its positions in regional and international cooperation formats. At the same time, increasing activity in the digital sphere increases information security risks, highlighting the need for a new approach in foreign policy.

In this regard, the second Karabakh war that took place in 2020 clearly demonstrated the role of information technologies in modern conflicts. Armenia and its supporters tried to negatively portray Azerbaijan's just struggle by spreading fake news to influence international public opinion. Azerbaijan, on the other hand, waged an information war against these attempts and proved that the other side was spreading false information.

Thus, based on the above, it is possible to express the relevance of the impact of ICT on international relations in the following four main aspects:

- ICT has become not only a technological development, but also an indicator of the geopolitical power of states. Control over information systems, cyberintelligence capabilities and digital diplomacy tools act as key tools for states to increase their influence in international relations and manage “color revolutions”. This changes the traditional concept of power and leads to the rise of digital power to the same level as diplomatic and military power.

- ICT increase the flexibility and maneuverability of diplomacy, allowing states to gain greater influence in international relations. This, in turn, leads to the formation of digital diplomacy and the emergence of new communication mechanisms in global political processes.

- Digitalization, as a new factor, ensures the management of information flows in Azerbaijan's foreign policy strategies and demonstrates an operational position at the international level. At the same time, increasing digital activity requires new approaches to protect the state's national interests, strengthening information security challenges.

- Cyber espionage, disinformation campaigns, and information warfare pose serious threats to the information security of states. For countries in conflict environments, such as Azerbaijan, the use of information technologies generates not only strategic risks

but also heightens the necessity of countermeasures. This underscores the relevance of ICT not merely as a tool of communication, but also as a critical factor in matters of security and diplomatic strategy.

Scientific research on the subject in Azerbaijan began in the years of independence. Although certain studies have been conducted during these years, this problem has not been studied in Azerbaijan in the form of a systematic study. However, H.Babaoğlu's works occupy a special place in the degree of development of the subject; the author has conducted fundamental research that systematizes the theoretical framework of international relations and world politics at the global level, and has also highlighted Azerbaijan's position in modern international politics with a separate monographic study, and at the same time, he has touched on both theoretical and practical aspects of the issue, emphasizing in the media that disinformation has become an integral part of political diplomacy.¹

E. Ahmadov, in turn, comprehensively investigated Armenia's aggression against Azerbaijan in his multi-volume research works in the context of documents, materials, facts of ethnic cleansing, genocide, terror and occupation, as well as the policies of international organizations and major powers. At the same time, he highlighted Heydar Aliyev's state policy based on national interests in a separate monograph and, in a collection dedicated to the history of the Patriotic War, analyzed President Ilham Aliyev's victory strategy in terms of diplomatic activity, making a comprehensive contribution to both the historical, political and diplomatic aspects of the subject.²

¹ Məmmədov, H. (Babaoğlu). Dünya siyasəti və beynəlxalq münasibətlər / H.Məmmədov (Babaoğlu). – Bakı: Bakı Universiteti, 2014. – 676 s.; Məmmədov, H. (Babaoğlu). Azərbaycan Respublikasının müasir dünya siyasətində yeri və rolu / H.Məmmədov (Babaoğlu). – Bakı: Aypara-3, 2009. – 328 s.; Məmmədov, H. (Babaoğlu). Dezinformasiya siyasi diplomatiyanın bir parçasına çevrilib // Şərqi qəzeti. – 2024, 22 iyul; Məmmədov, H. (Babaoğlu). Xarici siyasət / H.Məmmədov (Babaoğlu). – Bakı: Bakı Universiteti, 2019. – 324 s.

² Əhmədov, E. Ermənistanın Azərbaycana təcavüzü: Sənədlər və materiallar. I kitab / E.Əhmədov. – Bakı: Letterpress, 2015. – 324 s.; Əhmədov, E. Ermənistanın Azərbaycana təcavüzü: Etnik təmizləmə, soyqırım, terror, işğal. II kitab /

E. Nasirov extensively analyzed the role of the United States in global politics in the period after the September 11 events, and also examined the anti-terrorism doctrine of the United States of America and its implementation mechanisms in a separate research work, revealing the theoretical and practical foundations of security, the fight against terrorism, and geopolitical strategies in the system of international relations.³

H. Hüseynova and T. Tagiyeva examined the theoretical and practical foundations of lobbying in international relations, highlighting the relevance of the topic within the diplomatic sphere. V. Zifəroğlu studied the theoretical frameworks of information warfare and the problem of manipulation. A. Gasimov shed light on the role of information security in a practical dimension within the context of the Patriotic War, while R. Mammadov provided an analytical perspective on disinformation, assessing it both as a deliberate method of public influence and as a manifestation of non-professionalism.⁴

E. Əhmədov. – Bakı: Letterpress, 2015. – 408 s.; Əhmədov, E. Ermənistanın Azərbaycanı təcavüzü: Beynəlxalq təşkilatların və böyük dövlətlərin siyasəti. III kitab / E. Əhmədov. – Bakı: Letterpress, 2015. – 368 s.; Əhmədov, E. Heydər Əliyev və Azərbaycanın milli maraqlara əsaslanan dövlət siyasəti / E. Əhmədov. – Bakı: Zərdabi, 2023. – 200 s.; Əhmədov, E. Prezident İlham Əliyevin qələbə strategiyası: əsas istiqamətlər. Diplomatik fəaliyyət. III fəsil, s.97-127 / E. Əhmədov // Vətən müharibəsi tarixi. Şəxsiyyət faktoru (27 sentyabr – 10 noyabr 2020-ci il). – Bakı: Şərq-Qərb, 2021. – 444 s.

³ Nəsirov, E.X. ABŞ və dünya 11 sentyabrından sonra / E.X.Nəsirov. – Bakı: Bakı Universiteti, 2003. – 262 s.; Nəsirov, E.X. Amerika Birləşmiş Ştatlarının antiterror doktrinası və onun tətbiqi mexanizmləri / E.X.Nəsirov. – Bakı: Elm və təhsil, 2010. – 392 s.

⁴ Hüseynova, H. Beynəlxalq münasibətlərdə lobbizm / H.Hüseynova, T.Tağıyeva. – Bakı: Bakı Dövlət Universiteti, 2024. – 272 s.; Zifəroğlu, V. İnformasiya müharibəsi: nəzəri əsasları və manipulyasiya problemi / V.Zifəroğlu. – Bakı, 2019. – 208 s.; Qasimov, Ə. Vətən müharibəsində informasiya təhlükəsizliyi: [Elektron resurs] / Müdafiə Nazirliyi. – 16.03.2022. URL: <https://mod.gov.az/az/pre/39556.html>; Məmmədov, R. Dezinformasiya: düşünülmüş ictimai təsir metodu, yoxsa, sadəcə, qeyri-peşəkarlıq?: [Elektron resurs] / AZƏRTAC. – 04.05.2022. URL: https://azertag.az/xeber/dezinformasiya_dusunulmus_ictimai_tesir_metodu_yoxsa_sadecə_qeyri_pesekarliq-2121107

In U. Alakbarov's work, particular emphasis is placed on the integration of digitalization with sustainable development and the decisive role of digital technologies in managing ecological civilization.⁵

In addition to the aforementioned authors, the studies of Azerbaijani researchers R. Aliguliyev, E. Ahmadov, A. Valiyev, A. Piriyeu, K. Ruintan, F. Aliyeva, J. Eyvazov, A. Rzayev, T. Jafarov and others have shed light on these and other aspects of the current problem. However, most of these studies have been reflected only in articles.

However, recently, monographs and dissertations have been written on various specialties about the information society, the threats of the development of the new information society to the political sovereignty of states, as well as its effects on the economy and social development. For example, R.M. Aliguliyev in his work "Information Technologies in Economic Processes" talks about the technological innovations brought by the information society and the impact of these innovations on the socio-economic life of society. The work presents the ideas of the classical ideologists of the information society and expresses their attitude towards it.⁶

Kh.G. Niyazov studied the formation, development and aspects of information security of the state information policy, E. Talyshinsky analyzed the role of Azerbaijan in the information struggle and security issues in the virtual world, A. Imanova highlighted the philosophical foundations of the information society and the socialization of personality, R. Hajiyeua studied the political aspects of information security and its place in state policy, E. Bayramzadeh analyzed the interaction between globalization and the information society, and T. Jafarov studied the legal problems of cyberspace within the framework of global Internet governance.⁷

⁵ Ələkbərov, U. Davamlı inkişaf və ekoloji sivilizasiyasının idarə edilməsinin əsasları / U.Ələkbərov. – Bakı: Təhsil, 2017. – 175 s.

⁶ Əliquliyev, R.M. İqtisadi proseslərdə informasiya texnologiyaları. / R.M. Əliquliyev, Ə.Q. Əliyev – Bakı: Elm, –2002. – 48 s.

⁷ Niyazov, X.Q. Azərbaycan Respublikasının dövlət informasiya siyasəti: təşəkkülü, inkişafı və əsas istiqamətləri: / siyasi elmlər üzrə elmlər doktoru dis. / – Bakı, 2021.; Talışinski, E. Azərbaycanın informasiya mübarizəsində yeri və rolu

Y. Aliyeva's research examines information security in the context of religion and society, highlights the impact of the Internet, the attitude of the religious factor to information security, and the issues of the legal framework in Azerbaijan. V. Gasimov's scientific work analyzes information security problems, computer crimes, and cybercrime arising from the development of information and communication technologies based on international experience.⁸

The textbook prepared by M.N. Alizadeh and others extensively presents the theoretical foundations of information security, as well as the basic principles of security policy, cryptographic methods, and the application of defense algorithms.⁹ In addition, G.Abdiyeva-Aliyeva's textbook systematically presents the fundamental concepts and theoretical foundations of cybersecurity, and also includes information on the practical application of knowledge in the field of cybersecurity.¹⁰

Likewise, in E. Hasanli's articles on information security in Azerbaijan and Kh. Niyazov's articles on the legal foundations of information security, the protection of national interests, the

(şərq-qərb kontekstində): / siyasi elmlər üzrə elmlər doktoru dis. / – Bakı, 2021.; İmanova, A. İnformasiya cəmiyyəti və şəxsiyyətin sosiallaşması: sosial-fəlsəfi təhlil: / siyasi elmlər üzrə fəlsəfə doktoru dis. / – Bakı, 2018.; Hacıyeva, R. Azərbaycan Respublikasının informasiya təhlükəsizliyinin tədqiqinin siyasi aspektləri: / fəlsəfə üzrə fəlsəfə doktoru dis. / – Bakı, 2015.; Bayramzadə, E. Qloballaşma və informasiya cəmiyyəti: qarşılıqlı təsirin dinamikası (sosial-fəlsəfi təhlil): / fəlsəfə üzrə fəlsəfə doktoru dis. / – Bakı, 2013.; Cəfərov, T. Qlobal internet idarəçiliyi müzakirələri çərçivəsində beynəlxalq hüquqda kiberməkana yönəlik yurisdiksiya problemi: / hüquq üzrə fəlsəfə doktoru dis. avtoreferatı. – Ankara, 2023. – 21 s.; Əliyeva, Y. İnformasiya təhlükəsizliyi və din. – Bakı: TUNA, 2018. – 128 s.; Qasimov, V.Ə. İnformasiya təhlükəsizliyi: kompüter cinayətkarlığı və kiberterrorçuluq. – Bakı: Elm, – 2007. – 192 s.; Əlizadə, M.N., Orucova, T.V., Hacızadə, S.M. və b. İnformasiya təhlükəsizliyi: dərs vəsaiti / elmi red. Ə.Ə. Əliyev. – Bakı: MSV Nəşr, – 2018. – 388 s.

⁸ Əliyeva, Y. İnformasiya təhlükəsizliyi və din. – Bakı: TUNA, 2018. – 128 s.; Qasimov, V.Ə. İnformasiya təhlükəsizliyi: kompüter cinayətkarlığı və kiberterrorçuluq. – Bakı: Elm, – 2007. – 192 s.

⁹ Əlizadə, M.N., Orucova, T.V., Hacızadə, S.M. və b. İnformasiya təhlükəsizliyi: dərs vəsaiti / elmi red. Ə.Ə. Əliyev. – Bakı: MSV Nəşr, – 2018. – 388 s.

¹⁰ Əbdiyeva-Əliyeva, G.Ə. Kibertəhlükəsizliyin əsasları: dərs vəsaiti. / G.Ə. Əbdiyeva-Əliyeva. – Bakı: KingPrint, – 2022. – 174 s.

improvement of legal and normative frameworks, and comparative approaches with international experience are highlighted.¹¹

Modern international relations are developing under the influence of the ideas of the formation of a post-industrial society. Research on this topic can be divided into two main groups. While the authors of the first group argue that the nature of conflicts has changed radically in the context of the information revolution (D. Ronfeld, M. Kreveld, M. But, J. Baudrillard, A. Toffler, J. Der Derian, J. Arkilla, K. Gray, S. Merden, V.I. Slipchenko, A.G. Dugin, S.N. Konopatov, V.V. Yudin), the authors of the second group state that the information revolution and the social changes arising from it have a certain impact on the nature of conflicts, and that the essence of the conflict, its main motives and dynamics remain in the material sphere, not in the information space. (M. O'Hanlon, F. Kaqen, K. Makinnes, D. Betz, M.A. Gareeva, O.A. Belkova, O.N. Kalinovski, V.İ. Orlyanski, V.N. Konıŝeva)¹².

A.I. Smirnov examined the impact of ICT on international relations in the digital era, information security issues in the context of electronic diplomacy and hybrid warfare, and G. Pochepsov compared color revolutions in different regions and showed their similarities with the Bolshevik revolutions.¹³

¹¹ Niyazov, X. İnformasiya təhlükəsizliyi, hüquqi əsasları, müqayisəli yanaşma // İnformasiya təhlükəsizliyinin aktual multidissiplinar elmi-praktiki problemləri: IV respublika konfransının materialları. – Bakı – 14 dekabr – 2018. – s. 22–26.; Həsənlı, E. Azərbaycanda informasiya təhlükəsizliyi milli maraqlar kontekstində // İnformasiya təhlükəsizliyinin aktual problemləri: III respublika elmi-praktiki seminarının materialları.– Bakı – 8 dekabr – 2017. – s. 42–45.

¹² Журавлева, Е.Ю. Глобальная информационная компьютерная сеть интернет: проблемы становления и развития (социально-философский анализ): автореф. дис. ... канд. филос. наук [Электронный ресурс]. – URL: <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/197379898.pdf>

¹³ Смирнов, А.И. Современные информационные технологии в международных отношениях: монография [Электронный ресурс] / А.И. Смирнов. – Москва: Мгимо-Университет, 2017. – 334 с. – URL: https://mgimo.ru/upload/iblock/b41/Смирнов_СИТМО_10_2017.pdf; Почепцов, Г. Революция.com: основы протестной инженерии / Г. Почепцов. – Москва: Европа, – 2005. – 513 с.

I.A. Isayev presented the Internet as a new technology of political management and a form of global power, R. Barbrook and G. Lovink analyzed its role in color revolutions, political transformations in the Arab countries and the post-Soviet space, D. Sharp explained ICT as a soft power tool that undermines authoritarian regimes and promotes democratic transition, D. Bell emphasized the end of Western ideology and the transition to a post-industrial society, and Z. Brzezinski predicted that technological development, occurring mainly in developed countries, would lead to the weakening of nation-states and new socio-political changes against the background of globalization.¹⁴

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¹⁴ Исаев, И.А. «Машина власти» в виртуальном пространстве (формирование образа) / И.А. Исаев. – Москва: Проспект, – 2021. – 384 с.; Барбрук, Р. Интернет-революция / Р. Барбрук. – Москва: Ad Marginem Press, – 2015. – 128 с.; Ловинк, Г. Критическая теория интернета / Г. Ловинк. – Москва: Ad Marginem Press; Музей современного искусства «Гараж», – 2019. – 304 с.; Шарп, Д. От диктатуры к демократии: стратегия и тактика освобождения / Д. Шарп; пер. с англ. Н. Козловской [Электронный ресурс]. – Москва: Новое издательство, – 2005. – 84 с. – URL: <http://filelibsnu.at.ua/navchalno-metod/uchebniki/Sharp.PDF>; Bell, D. The End of Ideology // Government and Opposition. – Vol. 23, № 2. – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, – 1988. – p. 131–150. – URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44482382>; Bell, D. The Coming of Post-industrial Society: a venture in social forecasting / D. Bell. – New York: Basic Books, – 2001. – 616 p.; Brzezinski, Z. Between Two Ages: America's Role in the Technetronic Era [Electronic resource] / Z. Brzezinski. – New York: The Viking Press, – 1970. – 123 p. – URL: <https://solipsyzm.pl/between2ages.pdf>

the weakening of nation-states and new socio-political changes against the background of globalization.¹⁵

Thus, we see that the literature reviewed on the topic makes a significant contribution in terms of covering various aspects such as information society, information security, state information policy and the political, social and economic impacts of digital transformation. However, most of the studies are either based on general approaches in the conceptual framework or cover individual aspects in a fragmentary manner. There is a lack of systematic and structured research, especially in the context of the role of ICT in international relations, geopolitical impacts and global information warfare. The paucity of large-scale scientific works in this field, based on empirical data, rich in comparative and multi-level approaches, indicates the need for a more in-depth and integrated development of the topic. The emergence of our dissertation work also arose from this necessity.

Object and subject of research. The object of the study is the application of information and communication technologies in modern international relations, and the subject of the study is the place, role and impact of ICT in modern international relations.

Goals and objectives of the study. The purpose of the study is to study various aspects of the impact of ICT on modern international relations in the context of the Republic of Azerbaijan. To achieve this goal, the following tasks have been set:

– To work out the theoretical foundations of the concepts of the global information society;

¹⁵ Drucker, P. Management – Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices [Electronic resource] / P. Drucker. – New York: Truman Talley Books, E.P. Dutton, – 1986. – URL:

https://www.academia.edu/7194379/Management_Tasks_Responsibilitiesit_Peter_Drucker_; Тоффлер, Э. Третья волна [Электронный ресурс] / Э. Тоффлер. – Москва: Центр гуманитарных технологий, 27.01.2011. – URL: <https://gtmarket.ru/library/basis/4821>; Masuda, Y. The Information Society as Postindustrial Society / Y. Masuda. – Washington: World Future Soc., – 1983. – 171 p.; Castells, M. City, Class and Power / M. Castells. – London: St. Martins Press, – 1978. – 244 p.

- To study the ICT factor in the formation of the global information society and global governance;
- To conduct a systematic analysis of the impact of ICT on modern diplomacy;
- To analyze the ICT factor in international information wars;
- To study information security as a factor of national security;
- To study the impact of digitalization on the foreign policy and information security of Azerbaijan;
- To reveal the main directions of Armenia's information war against Azerbaijan;
- To reconsider the Second Karabakh War in the context of international information war.

Research methods. Within the framework of the study, various methodological approaches were used to comprehensively assess the development trends and prospects of the Internet against the background of global political and socio-economic transformations. First of all, systematic analysis and comparative analysis approaches were applied to study the current situation in depth and analyze the role of the Internet in the system of international relations in a comprehensive manner. Analytical-methodological principles formed in Western socio-philosophical thought and the concrete-historical method played an important role in establishing the theoretical framework of the study. When preparing the conceptual foundations of the dissertation research, reference was made to the scientific works of both local and foreign specialists, more specifically, political scientists, political sociologists, scientists conducting research in the field of international relations, economists and philosophers. At the same time, the analysis of statistical and analytical materials made it possible to identify the mechanisms of the Internet's impact on international relations and the long-term consequences of this impact.

In addition, in some areas of the study, the inductive method was applied to generalize and systematize empirical data, and on the other hand, the deduction method based on the cyclical nature of events and processes was used to analyze the changes observed in the

foreign policy of developing countries. To form the empirical basis of the study, official documents adopted by the UN General Assembly, in particular decisions and resolutions on the application of information and communication technologies, as well as international analytical documents on the spread of ICT in developing countries, were used. In addition, published scientific articles on the topic, materials of round table discussions, reports and presentations of scientific and practical conferences, as well as indicators reflected in other official UN Internet resources and statistical collections were involved as an empirical basis.

The research also used the analysis-synthesis method. First, the opportunities and risks created by ICT in international relations were analyzed separately. Then, the results obtained were synthesized to present a comprehensive scientific picture of the topic.

Main Theses to be Defended. As a result of the research, the following provisions were defended:

- The concept of a global information society is based on the idea that information technologies and the dissemination of information related to them play a key role in the modern world and have a significant impact on various areas of society.

- The factor of information and communication technologies plays an important role in the formation of a global information society; the development of ICT has both positive and negative effects on international relations.

- In the context of positive effects, the development of ICT strengthens international relations, facilitates communication, expands global markets, makes education accessible, increases business efficiency, and accelerates international cooperation by promoting cultural exchange.

- – In the context of negative impacts, the development of ICT has a negative impact on international relations, increasing cybersecurity risks, facilitating the spread of disinformation, creating privacy problems and deepening inequalities in access to technology.

- The development of ICT has become the main driving force in the formation of a global information society, ensuring decision-making in international governance based on real-time information,

and inequalities in access to technologies are shaping new power relations.

- Information security is an important factor of national security in the modern world. In this regard, the ICT factor plays an important role in international information wars.

- The integration of ICT into diplomatic practice increases the ability of states to reshape international agendas and influence public opinion, transforming traditional closed diplomacy models based on mass participation and reducing information asymmetry.

- The application of ICT increases the speed and influence of interstate diplomatic relations, forming new forms of communication in international politics.

- Digitalization, while expanding global communication opportunities in Azerbaijan's foreign policy, makes information security risk management a new necessity.

- In terms of information security, there are external threats to Azerbaijan's state security.

- The Armenian side, particularly the revanchist opposition channels, are conducting a large-scale biased information warfare against Azerbaijan by exploiting all aspects of information warfare.

- The Second Karabakh War is a modern, hybrid war in which information warfare plays an important role. It has further confirmed the importance of the information space in modern conflicts in the context of international information warfare.

Scientific novelty of the study. The study has the following scientific innovations:

- For the first time in Azerbaijani political science, the effects of information and communication technologies on international relations have been studied in a dichotomous manner, so that both positive and negative effects have been identified.

- The study found that the positive impact of information and communication technologies on international relations is mainly manifested in areas such as increased trust between states and peoples through the acceleration of information exchange and improved mutual communication, the strengthening of democracy

and civil society through the expansion of citizens' opportunities to participate in political processes, the deepening of cultural integration against the background of easier access to knowledge and educational resources, and finally, the increase in global prosperity through the expansion of economic relations; the negative effects are primarily manifested in risks such as the increased vulnerability of states to cybercrimes and cyberattacks, the deepening of conflicts and strained diplomatic relations as a result of the spread of disinformation and hate speech, as well as the strengthening of inequalities between states and the violation of national sovereignty due to increased dependence on technology.

– For the first time in Azerbaijani political science, the phenomenon of digital diplomacy (e-diplomacy) has been systematically studied in theoretical and practical aspects, and its place and role in international relations, the new opportunities it creates in political communication, and the transformative changes it brings to the national diplomacy model have been included in scientific circulation.

– The interaction between the opportunities of digitalization and the challenges of information security in Azerbaijan's foreign policy has been systematically analyzed for the first time.

– Unlike previous works, the study has analyzed the concepts of the global information society in a comparative manner and presented a critical approach to them, and the development of the information society has been analyzed from the perspective of nation states in the case of Azerbaijan.

– For the first time in Azerbaijani political science, the impact of ICT on diplomatic processes was considered as a separate direction and the conceptual framework of the concept of digital diplomacy was formed.

– Finally, the study analyzed the main directions and strategies of the information war waged by Armenia against Azerbaijan, evaluated the strategies applied by Azerbaijan against this war, identified the strengths and weaknesses of the parties, and put forward proposals aimed at ensuring national security; against the background of this analysis, the second Karabakh war was studied in

the context of international information war and the hybrid nature of the conflict was determined on scientific grounds.

Theoretical and practical significance of the study. The theoretical significance of the study is that it serves as a systematic and comprehensive basis for future scientific research in the field of the impact of information technologies on international relations. Based on various directions of the study, it is possible to prepare scientific articles, dissertations and analytical studies on different topics. At the same time, the research materials can serve as an original and rich source for monographs and textbooks.

The practical significance of the research is that the scientific results and analyses presented in the dissertation can serve as a valuable theoretical and practical source in the field of information security and international information relations for employees of relevant state agencies. At the same time, for practitioners working in this field and media representatives, especially journalists, the research materials can serve as a reliable database that can be referred to on current topics.

Approbation and application of the research. The materials of the research were reflected in the articles of the dissertation published in scientific journals at different times. Some of the theses of the work were voiced at a number of scientific conferences and seminars held in the republic and abroad. In addition, a number of articles on the topic of the dissertation were published in scientific journals recommended by the AAK, and the research on “virtual reality and international diplomacy” was published in a scientific-theoretical journal included in the international index.

The name of the organization where the dissertation work was performed. The research work was performed at the Department of “International Relations and Foreign Policy” of the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The total volume of the dissertation in characters, indicating the separate volumes of the structural sections of the dissertation. The dissertation consists of an introduction, three chapters, eight sub-chapters, a conclusion and a list of used literature.

The total volume of the dissertation consists of 242057 characters. In particular, the separate volumes of the structural sections of the research work are as follows:

- Introduction– 25018 characters;
- Main content of the dissertation – 210809 characters, including the first chapter 70253 characters, the second chapters 69122 characters, the third chapter is 74434 characters;
- Conclusion– 6230 characters.

MAIN CONTENT OF THE RESEARCH

In the "**Introduction**" section of the study, the relevance of the topic of the dissertation work is justified, the object and subject of the research, as well as the goals and objectives, the scientific novelty, theoretical and practical significance of the research are determined, the provisions put forward for defense are given, and the structure and scope of the work are briefly indicated.

The first chapter of the study is entitled "**Conceptual Issues of ICT and Global Information Society Governance**". This chapter consists of two paragraphs. The first paragraph of this chapter, entitled "**Theoretical Foundations of Global Information Society Concepts**", analyzes the theoretical foundations of the global information society and the approaches to this concept put forward by various researchers. The paragraph discusses the impact of the development of information and communication technologies (ICT) on all spheres of society, the change in traditional socio-political structures and the formation of the virtual environment as a new reality. Various theoretical approaches are examined, such as D. Bell's ideas of post-industrial society and meritocracy, Z. Brzezinski's technocratic society and globalist views, A. Toffler's ideas of participatory democracy and computerization, M. Castells' emphasis on information networks and economic integration, Y. Masuda's utopian "*Computopia*" model and P. Drucker's knowledge-based transcaptalist society. At the same time, the limitations of these approaches, the risks associated with technological totalitarianism, information imperialism, cultural control and the dangers of a new

type of colonialism are also noted. The author provides a critical analysis of the information society not only as a technological advance, but also in terms of political manipulation, social inequality and the replacement of democratic processes by artificial intelligence, and justifies that this model of society is not an absolute, but a process that can have contradictory and serious consequences.

This paragraph examines the political and ideological controversies, criticisms, and contradictions that the information society has raised. The paragraph highlights the ideas of left-liberal thinkers about a “humanist post-industrial” society versus a technocratic “super-industrial” society, their concerns about the transformation of information technologies into a centralized, manipulated system of governance under the control of artificial intelligence and the knowledge elite, instead of expanding democracy, and the fact that this situation contradicts the concept of true democracy. It is noted that computerized decisions replace human responsibility, the concepts of law and social equality are weakened, and inequality in access to knowledge and technology exists. At the same time, the positive aspects of ICT - the development of civil society, the strengthening of the positions of states in the international system, the opportunities for increased transparency - are also recognized. However, the author notes that supporters of the information society explain technological progress in a one-sided and utopian way, do not take into account realities such as global poverty, war, unemployment, social inequality, and put forward the concept of "common good" without substantiation. Thus, the author suggests that the claims regarding the transition to the information society are contradictory from both technological and social points of view, and the uneven implementation of this transition in the world has created a problematic situation with the very concept of knowledge in postmodern thought.

The second paragraph of the chapter is called “**The ICT factor in the formation of the global information society and global governance**”. This paragraph takes into account two main directions in the formation of the regions’ readiness index for the information society and notes that one of them is the development

factors of the information society, and the other is the use of ICT for development. Within the framework of development factors, the availability of human capital, the level of ICT infrastructure and the quality of the general economic environment play a special role. Human capital reflects both the availability of the necessary knowledge and skills for the application of ICT and the social potential for the effective use of new technologies; ICT infrastructure, on the other hand, shows the real state of technological networks, Internet access and the spread of technologies; the economic environment implies economic stability and resource provision that create conditions for the realization of these opportunities. On the other hand, it is noted that in the field of using ICT for development, the application of digital technologies in state and municipal administration, the expansion of digital solutions in entrepreneurship, and the use of ICT in the daily life of the population are of great importance. At the same time, the application of ICT in the field of culture opens up opportunities for the preservation and dissemination of various values, the use of ICT in healthcare improves the quality of medical services, and ICT in education creates conditions for the dissemination of knowledge to a wider audience and the application of modern teaching methods. Thus, it is emphasized that the index of readiness of regions for the information society is determined not only by technological and economic factors, but also by the level of use of ICT in the social, cultural, healthcare and educational spheres of society.

The author concludes that ICT was first created for military purposes during the Cold War between the USA and the USSR after World War II. However, since the 1990s, its commercial and politically useful potential has been revealed, and as a result, a global network called the “Internet” was formed. The main purpose of the Internet’s transition from a purely military sphere to a social sphere was to create a global information society and a new world order. In this new information environment, social, cultural, political and economic institutions are increasingly transferred to the virtual plane, where they undergo profound changes as a result of global integration.

In the first paragraph of the dissertation titled **“The Impact of ICT on Modern Diplomacy”** in Chapter II entitled “Mechanisms of ICT Impact on Modern International Relations”, the author notes that the application of ICT in the modern system of international relations has radically changed the traditional structure of diplomacy. Initially, digital diplomacy and its various forms – diplomacy via social media such as *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *Instagram*, online diplomacy, real-time diplomatic communication, video conferences, virtual summits and online forums – have made the relations of states and international organizations more flexible and dynamic.

Virtual reality technologies create new discussion spaces in international diplomacy, opportunities for flexible and effective cooperation, and enable states to establish faster and larger-scale relations, overcoming the limitations of distance and time. At the same time, problems such as cybersecurity and digital inequality remain the main challenges in the application of these technologies¹⁶.

On the other hand, it is emphasized that the use of artificial intelligence in diplomacy has become an important trend in recent years. Artificial intelligence diplomacy is used in the application of “soft cyber power” in international relations, strengthening public diplomacy, as well as in the processes of modeling diplomatic decisions. Artificial intelligence creates new opportunities for studying public opinion, predicting risks and shaping digital geopolitics through the analysis of *big data*. This, in contrast to the classical mechanisms of diplomacy, has developed technology-based forecasting and strategic planning capabilities.

Finally, the impact of ICT on modern diplomacy is also reflected in the application of power resources by states. The use of the concepts of “*soft power*”, “*smart power*” and “*sharp power*” in diplomacy has been further expanded through ICT. Soft power in the digital environment has become an important tool of public diplomacy, increasing the ability of states to influence culture, values and ideologies. Smart power has enabled the synthesis of soft and

¹⁶ Mehdiyev, N. Virtual Reality and International Diplomacy // – Riga: Baltic Journal of Legal and Social Sciences, – 2025. – № 2, – p. 205-212. URL: <http://baltijapublishing.lv/index.php/bjls/issue/view/177/368>

hard power with the support of technology; sharp power has created new threats and opportunities in diplomacy through disinformation, cyber influences and digital manipulation, shaping unconventional directions of international relations. In this regard, the impact of ICT on diplomacy has led not only to technical and communicational changes, but also to the introduction of new forms of power politics and fundamental changes in the ways in which states shape their positions in the international arena.

In the second paragraph of the chapter, entitled “**The ICT Factor in International Information Wars,**” the author shows that in the modern military doctrine of the US and NATO, information warfare is conducted as “phase zero of war” before military aggression: the international image of the target country is damaged by digital propaganda and disinformation, narratives are built for the “legal basis,” isolation is deepened by infosanctions (financial and communication blockades), and in parallel, cyberespionage and cybersabotage (infiltration of critical infrastructure, “logic bombs” in communication and management systems, placement of malicious codes) are carried out. The goal of this stage is to create division in the enemy society, weaken the decision-making elite through psychological pressure, erode internal legitimacy, and approach the strategic goal with as little military risk as possible.

When military aggression begins, information warfare enters the second phase and intensifies with psychological operations synchronized with combat operations, real-time disinformation, mass influence through the media and social platforms, as well as cyberattacks aimed at disrupting the chain of command: silencing or seizing television/radio centers, spreading fake leader speeches, paralyzing the army's logistics and communication systems, and attacks on energy and financial infrastructure, all aimed at maximizing internal demoralization. In these circumstances, defense can be ensured not only by kinetic capabilities, but also by the stability of the national information ecosystem; otherwise, the side that gains dominance in the information environment predetermines the fate of the military phase.

This sub-chapter also examines color revolutions in the context of information warfare and notes that, although there are debates about the role of social networks and ICT in the “*Arab Spring*” processes, their main impact was related to the coordination of protests, the dissemination of information and the formation of public consciousness.

At the same time, it is emphasized that ICT and social networks were not the main triggers of color revolutions, but acted as an important tool in their management and expansion.

In the third paragraph of the chapter, “**Information security as a factor of national security,**” the author notes that information security is a key component of national security: against the backdrop of the expansion of digital technologies, risks such as cyberattacks, data leaks, and the paralysis of critical infrastructure are increasing, therefore, protecting confidentiality, integrity, and availability is becoming a priority of state policy.

Cyberterrorism poses a serious threat to national and international security not only through its technological, but also legal, political and social dimensions. Combating it can only be possible through a multidisciplinary approach, enhanced international cooperation and the application of modern technologies.¹⁷

This policy requires a complex of legal and regulatory framework (data processing and protection, prevention of cybercrime), institutional management (roles and powers of cyber institutions), as well as technical and organizational measures (network protection, software updates, staff training, monitoring and incident response).

The paragraph also indicates that the security concepts of international organizations play an important role in the formation of regional and global security policy in the modern era. The Security Concept of the European Union (2003) is aimed at preventing threats

¹⁷ Mehdiyev, N. Cyberterrorism and National Security // International and National Security: Theoretical and Applied Aspects. Theses of the IX International Scientific-Practical Conference. In two parts. – Part II. – Dnipro: Dnipro State University of Internal Affairs – March 21, – 2025, – p. 403-405.

such as terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, conflicts and cybersecurity; NATO, based on the principle of collective defense and resilience in cyberspace, strengthens the joint cyber defense capabilities of its member states and coordinates its activities through the CCDCOE located in Tallinn. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (2001) has declared the fight against terrorism, cross-border crime and cyberattacks a priority and has strengthened cooperation on information security within the framework of the Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS). The Organization of Turkic States defines information security, the fight against corruption and crime, the protection of intellectual property and measures against the threat of terrorism as the main directions of its security policy. At the G20 level, the issues of digital security, the protection of critical information infrastructure and the fight against cybercrime were confirmed by the documents adopted at the Osaka Summit (2019), and the need to strengthen international cooperation was emphasized. These concepts show that information and cybersecurity have become an integral part of the modern international security agenda.

The last - third chapter of the study studies the "**Impact of ICT on Azerbaijan's international relations**". The first paragraph of this chapter, entitled "The Impact of Digitalization on Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy and Information Security", determines that digitalization, as one of the main trends in modern international relations, has a significant impact on Azerbaijan's foreign policy and information security. Since the acceleration of global information flows, the expansion of digital diplomacy tools, and the increase in cyber threats require new approaches in Azerbaijan's foreign policy, this process, on the one hand, increases the country's international cooperation opportunities, and on the other hand, increases the risks of cyberattacks and disinformation.

Azerbaijan's steps in international ICT cooperation are noteworthy. At the same time, Azerbaijan faces information threats from all sides. The intensity of cyberattacks from Armenia, Russia, Iran, China and Western countries reflects the interests of great powers in controlling the country's geopolitical importance and

strategic resources. In this context, ICT is becoming a tool of political and psychological pressure on Azerbaijan. However, Azerbaijan is implementing a multifaceted policy by formulating a perspective development strategy in the ICT field in order to defend its national interests and strengthen its international position. Cooperation with the USA, China, Turkey, South Korea, Qatar, Israel, Hungary, the UAE and other countries, as well as joining the Council of Europe Convention on Cybersecurity, are important steps taken in this direction.

The second paragraph of the third chapter, titled "**Directions of Armenia's information war against Azerbaijan,**" emphasizes that the directions chosen by Armenia in its information war are comprehensive in nature: to undermine the moral and psychological state of the army by questioning Azerbaijan's superiority, fighting spirit and spending in the military field, and to try to prevent its representation on international military-political platforms; to falsify information about the country's oil and gas reserves and damage its economic image by highlighting internal problems in the economy; to promote separatism and commit provocations by targeting institutions and the diaspora in politics; to present Azerbaijan as a party causing a crisis in the Caspian and South Caucasus regions in ecology; to undermine national identity by falsifying the origins of historical figures and claiming that toponyms belong to Armenians in the field of science; in culture, to shape an uncultured image of Azerbaijanis and highlight Armenian achievements; and in the area of human rights and democracy, to create international pressure by accusing the government. In the face of this, Azerbaijan does not just remain on the defensive, but also takes an offensive stance and, unlike the Armenians, uses information based mainly on real facts.

The paragraph also analyzes that Armenia and some pro-Armenian Russian channels are waging a systematic disinformation war in order to damage Azerbaijan's international image and national interests, which manifests itself in the form of large-scale campaigns covering various areas. During the Tovuz battles and the 44-day Patriotic War, they tried to distort the course of the battles, to make our country guilty, to minimize the successes of the Azerbaijani

Army, to exaggerate its losses, and to question the country's military superiority in the international community. In the economic sphere, they targeted Azerbaijan's strategic energy projects such as TAP and TANAP, claiming that they were creating instability and an ecological threat to the region, thus seeking to diminish the value of Azerbaijan's role in Europe's energy security. In the political sphere, they conducted special campaigns against the image of President Ilham Aliyev, trying to tarnish his leadership qualities and influence in the international arena. In the cultural sphere, they spread misleading information about Azerbaijani culture, claiming that historical heritage and cultural achievements belong to Armenians. To summarize, these disinformation attacks, covering military, political, economic, cultural, and strategic directions, have become key components of an information war purposefully carried out to weaken both Azerbaijan's internal stability and international positions.

The last paragraph of the dissertation analyzes the impact of ICT on international relations “**The Second Karabakh War in the context of international information warfare**”. Here, the author notes that although propaganda resources such as Semyon Pegov and the War Gonzo he runs played a disinformative role in Armenia’s information attacks during the 44-day Patriotic War, Azerbaijan won a decisive victory both on the military field and in the information space. President Ilham Aliyev gave extensive interviews to the world’s leading media outlets to convey Azerbaijan’s position to the international community, prevent disinformation campaigns, and present arguments. Such extensive participation in media resources not only defended Azerbaijan’s rightful position, but also ensured the country’s superiority in the information war and made a significant contribution to legitimizing the victory among the international audience.

This part of the study also emphasizes that during the 44-day war, Armenian media resources tried to confuse the international community by spreading unfounded claims about the participation of Syrian and even Uyghur fighters. However, research has shown that the people in the disseminated photos were not killed in Karabakh,

but earlier in Syria and Iraq.

The author especially notes that during the 44-day war, the head of the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service, Sergey Naryshkin, also made claims about the presence of terrorists allegedly brought from Syria in Azerbaijan, but no evidence was provided to the Azerbaijani State Security Service's request to provide facts. This confirmed that the news spread was actually just fake news circulating in the media and social networks, and the strongest response to this disinformation, which was repeated in some media outlets from France to Germany, from the United States to other Western countries, was the argumentative interviews given by President Ilham Aliyev through international media.

The "**Results**" of the study, in turn, show that the rapid development of information and communication technologies has radically changed the nature of international relations, taking them to a new stage; ICT is no longer just a means of communication, but acts as one of the main pillars of the global politics, diplomacy, and security architecture.

In this regard, the concept of a global information society, as a theoretical framework explaining the political, economic, social and cultural impacts of ICT, creates opportunities for innovation and economic growth, as well as risks such as a digital divide and cyber threats. Although ICTs promote the acceleration of communication in international relations, the expansion of markets, the accessibility of education and cultural exchange, they weaken interstate trust through factors such as disinformation and digital inequality. Information security has become an integral part of national security, and it has become necessary to apply technical, legal and institutional measures to prevent cyber espionage and cyber attacks. Information warfare has become a key tool in modern security, and has gained the opportunity to influence the political and geopolitical positions of states through disinformation and digital propaganda.

As a result of the impact of ICT on diplomacy, traditional diplomatic frameworks have changed, and states have formed digital diplomacy as a new paradigm, gaining more flexible and global communication capabilities.

Azerbaijan has faced cyberattacks and espionage activities against the backdrop of accelerating digitalization, and has strengthened its legal and institutional frameworks, as the targeting of critical infrastructure poses a risk to national security and economic stability, and has fought against Armenia's disinformation, cyberattacks, and social media manipulation. Digitalization has strengthened Azerbaijan's international positions, allowing it to act more promptly in foreign policy, but at the same time has increased information security risks, making the protection of national interests in the digital-virtual space a special necessity. The 44-day Patriotic War has proven that information superiority in hybrid conflicts directly affects military, diplomatic, and psychological outcomes; Azerbaijan has gained an advantage in information warfare, while Armenia has sought to strengthen its position through disinformation. Based on the results, the author recommends that cybersecurity in our country should be strengthened with comprehensive programs, emphasis should be placed on specialist training, international media platforms should be created, and a joint strategy should be developed with Turkic-speaking countries.

Published scientific works reflecting the main results of the dissertation:

1. Beynəlxalq informasiya müharibələrində İKT amili //– Bakı: Elmi əsərlər. AMEA Fəlsəfə İnstitutunun beynəlxalq elmi-nəzəri jurnalı, – 2019. № 1(32), – s. 97-103.
2. Azərbaycana qarşı aparılan informasiya müharibəsinin əsas beynəlxalq aspektləri // “Heydər Əliyev ideyaları və müasir Azərbaycan” mövzusunda doktorant və dissertantların elmi-praktiki konfransının materialları. – Bakı: Aspoliqraf, – 2019, – s. 139-156.
3. İnformasiya-Kommunikasiya Texnologiyalarının beynəlxalq münasibətlər sisteminə təsiri // – Bakı: Dövlət İdarəçiliyi: Nəzəriyyə və təcrübə jurnalı, – 2019. № 02(66), – s. 271-280.
4. International aspects of problems of security in an information society // The 5th International scientific and practical conference “Dynamics of the development of world science” (January 22-24,

- 2020). Perfect Publishing, Vancouver, Canada, – 2020, – p. 210-214.
5. Qərbin Azərbaycana qarşı informasiya müharibəsi // – Bakı: Geostrategiya jurnalı, – 2020. № 03/04 (57/58), – s. 14 - 19.
 6. The Media and Social Networks as factors in the ‘Colour Revolutions’ // Technium social sciences journal. – Constanta: Technium Press, – 2020. – vol. 11, p. 364-370. URL: <https://techniumscience.com/index.php/socialsciences/article/view/1458/601>
 7. Qlobal informasiya cəmiyyəti konsepsiyalarının nəzəri əsasları // “Dövlət idarəçiliyində islahatların yeni mərhələsi” mövzusunda doktorant və dissertantların onlayn elmi-praktiki konfransının materialları. – Bakı: Aspoliqraf, – 2020, – s. 86-101.
 8. İkinci Qarabağ savaşında informasiya müharibəsi // – Bakı: Dövlət İdarəçiliyi: Nəzəriyyə və təcrübə jurnalı, – 2020. № 4(72), – s. 233-244.
 9. Ermənistan – Azərbaycan münafişəsi beynəlxalq informasiya müharibəsi kontekstində // “Heydər Əliyev və Azərbaycan Respublikasının müasir innovativ inkişafı” mövzusunda doktorant və dissertantların elmi-praktiki konfransının materialları. – Bakı: Aspoliqraf, – 2021, – s. 65-76.
 10. İnformasiya təhlükəsizliyi milli təhlükəsizlik amili kimi // – Bakı: Geostrategiya jurnalı, – 2024. № 2(80), – s. 15-20.
 11. Cyberterrorism and National Security // International and National Security: Theoretical and Applied Aspects. Theses of the IX International Scientific-Practical Conference. In two parts. – Part II. – Dnipro: Dnipro State University of Internal Affairs – March 21, – 2025, – p. 403- 405.
 12. Virtual Reality and International Diplomacy // – Riga: Baltic Journal of Legal and Social Sciences, – 2025. – № 2, – p. 205-212. URL: <http://baltijapublishing.lv/index.php/bjlss/issue/view/177/368>



The defense of the dissertation will be held on "30" October 2025 at 13:30 at the meeting of the Dissertation Council – FD 2.30 of Supreme Attestation Commission under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan operating at Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

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Dissertation is available for review at the library of the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

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

The abstract was sent to the necessary addresses on "29" September 2025.

Signed for print: 25.09.2025

Paper format: A5

Volume: 43309

Number of hard copies: 25