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THE GEOPOLITICIZATION OF MIGRATION PROCESSES IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (USING THE EXAMPLE OF ITALY AND LIBYA)

ANNOTATION

for the degree of Candidate of Political Sciences

5.5.4 International relations, global and regional studies

Scientific supervisor:

Doctor of Political Sciences, Professor

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The main results of the dissertation of A. Y. Soroka

"The geopoliticization of migration processes in international relations (using the example of Italy and Libya)"

The dissertation for the degree of Candidate of Political Sciences in the specialty 5.5.4. International Relations, global and regional studies by A. Soroka is a complete independent study of the geopoliticization of migration processes in the system of modern international relations using the example of the interaction between Italy and Libya. The paper presents conclusions containing scientific novelty and developing political science ideas about migration as a factor of international relations, regional security and foreign policy interaction. The results of the study have a practical component in terms of identifying promising areas for regulating migration processes and developing cooperation between Italy, Libya and the European Union.

The relevance of the thesis is determined by the increasing scale and intensity of migration processes, accompanied by their inclusion in the sphere of political and geopolitical confrontation. Migration is no longer considered exclusively in the demographic and socio-economic dimension, acquiring the importance of an instrument of foreign policy influence, a mechanism for redistributing responsibility between States and a factor of domestic political mobilization. These processes are particularly pronounced in regions where the interests of various international actors intersect and a high level of conflict persists. The central Mediterranean is one of these spaces, since migration flows here are directly related to political, economic, and military-strategic processes.

The relevance of the study is also related to the state of Italian-Libyan relations, in which migration issues occupy a stable place. The destruction of Libya's centralized State institutions and prolonged political fragmentation have led to a weakening of State regulation of migration flows and the consolidation of the country's function as a transit area between African States and the European Union. In these circumstances, Italy's cooperation with Libyan political structures

combines bilateral cooperation, the transfer of certain functions for regulating migration flows and the use of migration issues in interstate cooperation.

An equally important area is the transformation of the migration policy of the European Union. The differences between the member States regarding the distribution of the migration burden, solidarity mechanisms, quotas and the transfer of migration regulation beyond the EU's external borders have determined the persistent nature of contradictions in this area. Italy, which is located directly on the Central Mediterranean route, simultaneously participates in pan-European mechanisms for regulating migration, develops bilateral cooperation with Libya and uses its own tools to limit migration flows.

Migration processes also have an impact on the internal political dynamics of Italy. The scale of migration, the distribution of arrivals between regions, the costs of their admission and integration affect the content of party-political competition and state migration policy. The gradual strengthening of restrictive mechanisms and the transfer of some functions to curb migration flows outside Italy indicate the consistent inclusion of migration issues in the sphere of national and regional security.

Within the framework of the dissertation research, the geopoliticization of migration processes is considered as the process of integrating migration flows into the system of international political interaction and redistributing influence between actors. In this case, the migration flow becomes not only an object of state regulation, but also a factor affecting Italy's relations with Libya, other member states of the European Union and EU institutions.

The purpose of the dissertation research is a comprehensive analysis of the state of geopoliticization of migration processes on the example of Italy and Libya, and the identification of priority areas for institutional and political-legal improvement of their regulatory mechanisms.

To achieve this goal, **the following tasks** were set and solved in the dissertation:

– to conceptualize the historical and political prerequisites for the formation of migration flows between Italy and Libya, to clarify the conceptual and categorical apparatus of the study;

– to reveal the contractual and legal foundations of Italian-Libyan cooperation in the migration sphere and to determine their importance for the institutionalization of joint flow management;

– to analyze the geopolitical factors, scales, routes and structural characteristics of migration processes in the Mediterranean region;

– to identify significant causes and trends of the geopoliticization of migration, including its transformation from a humanitarian problem into an element of the foreign policy toolkit of states and supranational institutions;

– identify promising areas of cooperation between the EU, Italy and Libya in the field of filtering and regulating migration flows, taking into account the transformation of Libya's security sector and political institutions;

– to substantiate key practice-oriented approaches to the settlement of migration processes in Italy, including institutional, legal, diplomatic and organizational measures.

The object of the study is migration processes in the system of modern international relations using the example of the interaction between the Italian Republic and Libya.

The subject of the research is the mechanisms and tools of the geopoliticization of migration processes in the system of Italian–Libyan interaction, including contractual, legal, institutional, and political-strategic forms of their regulation within the framework of the European Union.

Theoretical and methodological basis of the research

The theoretical basis of the dissertation research is based on the conceptual provisions and conclusions of Russian and foreign researchers developing theories of political realism, social constructivism, systemic analysis of international relations, as well as modern migration theories. The work uses the principles of political realism by G. Morgenthau, K. Waltz and J. Mearsheimer, social

constructivism by A. Wendt and P. Katzenstein, system analysis by D. Easton and M. Kaplan, the theory of "push–pull" factors by E. Lee, the theory of transnationalism by N. Glick-Schiller and L. Bash, concepts of securitization by B. Buzan and O. Wever. D. Easton and M. Kaplan, theories of "push–pull" factors by E. Lee, theories of transnationalism by N. Glick-Shiller and L. Bash, concepts of securitization by B. Buzan and O. Wever. When studying the systemic characteristics of political processes, the stability of state institutions and the interrelationships between the elements of the political system, the scientific positions of A.G. Likhonosov, N.A. Vasetsky and Yu.F. Pivovarov were taken into account. The issues of ethnopolitical security, interethnic relations, and the impact of migration processes on society were considered based on the research of A.G. Likhonosov, N.A. Chichulin, and D.Yu. Burchakov. The scientific conclusions of K.N. Lobanov were used to analyze the impact of armed conflicts on international relations, political and territorial transformations and forced population movements. The provisions of A.G. Likhonosov and V.M. Shevtsov on the stability of the state and the importance of internal and external public relations were taken into account in the study of the political and social prerequisites for the formation of migration flows between Libya and Italy.

The socio-constructivist approach allowed us to explore political practices through which migration is interpreted as a security threat, a humanitarian problem, or a development resource. A systematic approach is used in the study of migration processes in relation to international political, economic, demographic and institutional processes. The application of migration theories has made it possible to identify a combination of structural causes of the formation of migration flows and political mechanisms for their regulation.

The methodological basis of the work was a set of general scientific and special research methods. The use of analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction, and logical analysis made it possible to identify cause-and-effect relationships and systematize empirical material. The methods of political and historical-political analysis were used in the reconstruction of the evolution of Italian-Libyan

relations. The comparative historical approach made it possible to compare the various stages of migration cooperation between Italy and Libya and the changes in the pan-European migration policy. The problem-chronological method was used in the study of the dynamics of crisis processes and regulatory transformations.

The work also used statistical analysis of data from Eurostat, ISTAT, Frontex and UNHCR, content analysis of political statements and official documents, analysis of international treaties and regulations, monitoring of migration indicators, institutional and structural-functional analysis, as well as case studies in relation to individual episodes of Italian-Libyan cooperation and security sector reform in Libya..

The field of dissertation research corresponds to paragraph 2 "Subjects of international relations. The activities of state and non-state actors. Formal and informal institutions in international relations and in world politics. ""Formation and implementation of foreign policy strategies, concepts and doctrines"; item 9 "Geopolitical factors and processes"; item 15 "Demographic and migration processes in international relations and world politics" passport of scientific specialty 5.5.4. International relations, global and regional studies.

The scientific novelty of the research lies in the fact that in this dissertation research:

– the concept of the geopoliticization of migration processes in relation to the Central Mediterranean region is conceptualized; the geopoliticization of migration is revealed as the process of integrating migration flows into the system of international political interaction and the redistribution of influence between actors;

– The article substantiates the position of Italy's colonial heritage as a stable structural factor of modern Italian-Libyan interaction, influencing the formation of migration routes and the nature of the parties' foreign policy strategies in the Mediterranean.;

– the causes and trends of the geopoliticization of migration flows along the Central Mediterranean route have been identified, including the institutional fragmentation of Libya, the transformation of the regional security system, the involvement of external actors and a change in the balance of power in North Africa;

– it has been established that the transformation of Italy's migration policy is accompanied by a transition from an integration model to a model of securitization of migration flows, in which migration regulation acquires the functions of an instrument of foreign policy strategy and ensuring national and regional security;

– the specifics of a multi-level mechanism for regulating migration processes based on a combination of national restrictive measures, bilateral cooperation between Italy and Libya, tools for the externalization of migration regulation and coordination mechanisms of the European Union are revealed.;

– promising practice-oriented approaches to improving international political mechanisms for regulating migration processes are proposed, aimed at increasing the effectiveness of interaction between political actors in changing the regional security system and increasing geopolitical competition in the Mediterranean.

The main provisions submitted for defense:

1. The article introduces into scientific circulation and conceptually substantiates the position of the Italian colonial heritage as a structural factor of modern Italian-Libyan interaction, influencing the formation and geopoliticization of migration processes in the Central Mediterranean region. Geopoliticization is defined as the process of transformation of migration regulation into an instrument of strategic interaction between external actors. The formation of Libya's state borders, elements of its institutional architecture and basic parameters of the economic model in the first half of the 20th century predetermined the long-term dependence of bilateral relations on the historical experience of the colonial period. The colonial legacy continues to be reproduced through economic, social and migration channels of interaction. His research allows us to consider the colonial experience not only as a historical prerequisite, but also as an active element of the

international political process, influencing modern forms of foreign policy interaction and migration regulation in the Mediterranean.

2. The geopoliticization of migration processes in the Central Mediterranean area is determined by a change in the political function of migration. Its content is expressed in the transition from regulating population movement mainly by internal means to including migration issues in Italy's relations with Libya and the European Union, the regional security system and the processes of coordinating the interests of states. Unlike securitization, which is primarily associated with the perception of migration flows as a security problem and the expansion of border and administrative restrictions, geopoliticization manifests itself when migration regulation affects interstate relations. For Italy, both processes are interrelated, since increased migration security is accompanied by the development of cooperation with Libya, the use of European Union mechanisms and the expansion of independent tools to influence migration flows.

3. The main geopolitical determinants of migration processes along the Central Mediterranean route are the institutional and territorial fragmentation of the Libyan state and the associated weakening of state control over land and sea borders; the presence of competing centers of power and armed groups controlled by them; the involvement of external states in the Libyan conflict; a change in the balance of power and security configuration in North Africa; the use of migration regulation in relations between Libya, Italy and the European Union as an instrument of political interaction. The impact of these factors is expressed not so much in the direct formation of the migration of the Libyan population, but in the transformation of its territory into a stable transit space for the movement of migrants from African countries to the southern border of the European Union.

4. Migration flows from Libya have a complex impact on the socio-economic and political dynamics of Italy. Migration performs a compensatory function in the face of demographic decline and labor shortages, while increasing the burden on the infrastructure of coastal regions and the social security system. The primary migration burden is concentrated mainly in the southern regions of

Italy, while the opportunities for subsequent employment of migrants are more concentrated in the economically developed northern provinces. Italy's position as a country directly receiving migration flows on the Central Mediterranean route contributes to the tightening of national migration regulation, a change in political rhetoric and increased demands for the redistribution of migration burden between the member States of the European Union.

5. The transformation of Italy's migration policy is accompanied by the formation of a multi-level regulatory mechanism combining national restrictive measures, bilateral cooperation with Libya, the mechanisms of the European Union and the transfer of some functions to curb migration flows outside the Italian territory. After the migration crisis of 2015-2016, and especially under the Government of J. Tools for the externalization of migration regulation have been developed by Meloni. The specifics of the Italian approach are a combination of cooperation with Libya, the use of European Union mechanisms and the creation of procedures controlled by Italy for handling migration cases outside its territorial borders. This approach complements the pan-European mechanisms with national instruments for the preventive restriction of migration along the Central Mediterranean route.

6. Promising areas for the development of Italian-Libyan cooperation in the field of migration regulation include strengthening bilateral mechanisms for regulating the Central Mediterranean route, developing institutional cooperation with Libyan structures in the field of border security, and coordinating Italy's national initiatives with the mechanisms of the European Union and the United Nations. The possibilities of implementing these areas are determined by Libya's institutional fragmentation, the state of its security sector, and the involvement of external actors. Italy's transition to a securitization model expands the use of independent tools to curb migration flows, but their effectiveness depends on restoring the managerial capacity of Libyan institutions and combining bilateral cooperation with multilateral mechanisms.

Approbation of research results

The main results and content of the dissertation research have been scientifically validated in scientific publications with a total volume of 1.85 pp. 5 scientific papers have been published on the topic of the dissertation, 4 of which are in peer–reviewed scientific publications included in the List of the Higher Attestation Commission under the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation:

1. Soroka A.Y. Evolution of modern migration policy in Italy // Issues of national and federal relations. 2021. Vol. 11. No. 5 (74). pp. 1686-1693.

2. Soroka A.Y. Migration problems in relations between Italy and Libya: a history of the issue // Bulletin of International Scientists. 2023. No. 4 (26). pp. 310-320.

3. Soroka A.Y. The geopolitical consequences of the Libyan factor in the migration crisis of the European Union // Socio-humanitarian knowledge. 2025. No. 11. pp. 402-405.

4. Soroka A.Y. Issues of socio-cultural integration of refugees in Italy // Issues of national and federal relations. 2021. Vol. 11. No. 6 (75). pp. 1970-1975.

5. Soroka A.Y. The geopolitical consequences of the Central Mediterranean route for the internal political stability of Italy // Original research. 2026. Vol. 16. No. 1. pp. 226-232.

The results of the research are also presented in the form of reports and discussed at scientific and practical conferences of international and national level.

The structure of the work. The thesis, in accordance with the purpose and objectives of the research, consists of an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion and a bibliographic list.

_____ / A.Y. Soroka /