GROUP 1- Democracy

The establishment of **democracy** in Armenia was a complex process, with a mix of political instability, power struggles and a weak institutional foundation. The transition was characterized by the formation of a democratic framework and institutions, increased citizen participation in public and political life and the emergence of a multi-party system, free press and civil society organizations. Nevertheless, Armenia's political landscape eventually became dominated by rigged elections, oligarchs and political elites, which resulted in a system often criticized for corruption and authoritarian tendencies. There has been civic unrest and protest after every major election since 1996, culminating in 2008 when the government used force against protesters at mass rallies that erupted after the presidential elections. This resulted in the death of at least 10 people. In the 2020s, however, Armenia witnessed a significant shift after the Velvet Revolution of 2018, which was a direct response to frustrations with the entrenched elite and a perceived failure of the political system to address citizens' needs.

GROUP 2- Decolonization

Decolonization in Armenia's context is more nuanced than the typical understanding of breaking free from colonial powers. After centuries of foreign domination – whether Ottoman, Persian, or Russian – Armenia's independence in 1991 was the result of a long struggle for national sovereignty and political agency, as well as for liberation from internal and external foreign domination. However, while Armenia was among the first post-Soviet countries to initiate a de-Sovietization process, the early 1990s also saw it becoming heavily dependent on Russia for military and economic support, especially due to regional instability and the unresolved Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. This dynamic shaped the country's foreign policy choices, especially in relation to its disputes with Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh, and in securing economic aid and military support from Russia. During this period, Armenia was often seen as politically bound to Russia, limiting its ability to diversify its international relations. The 2020s, however, have seen increasing calls for greater autonomy in domestic and foreign policy. The 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War further exposed the limits of Russian support. The aftermath of the war, along with shifting regional dynamics, has prompted the country to reconsider its strategic alliances. Armenia's calls for a stronger European orientation has been indicative of its evolving stance toward decolonization and a desire for a more autonomous identity on the international stage.

GROUP 3- Demography

Demographically, Armenia's population has seen significant shifts over the last 30 years. First, at the beginning of the Karabakh conflict, there was an influx of over 360,000 ethnic Armenians from Azerbaijan to Armenia, and an outflow of over 160,000 ethnic Azerbaijanis from Armenia to Azerbaijan. At the same time, there was a significant population decline, mostly due to emigration and decreasing birth rates. The immediate post-Soviet era in the 1990s was marked by substantial emigration, driven by economic hardship, political instability and the consequences of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. A large portion of the Armenian population, particularly the younger generation, sought better prospects in Russia, Europe and the United States. According to census data, Armenia's population declined from about 3.5 million in the early 1990s to 3 million by the early 2000s. According to UNFPA data, Armenia has a total fertility rate below replacement level at around 1.6. In the 2000s there were new immigration waves to Armenia. First, Iraqi and then Syrian Armenians moved to Armenia to escape the war and violence in those respective countries. Then, after the 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Armenia had an influx of Russians and Ukrainians. Finally, in the aftermath of the 2020 Karabakh war, over 100,000 Armenians were forced to leave their homeland in Nagorno Karabakh and move to Armenia. This followed a blockade imposed by Azerbaijan from December 2022 until September 2023. The refugees had to flee an attack from the Azerbaijani army, fearing ethnic cleansing and genocide.