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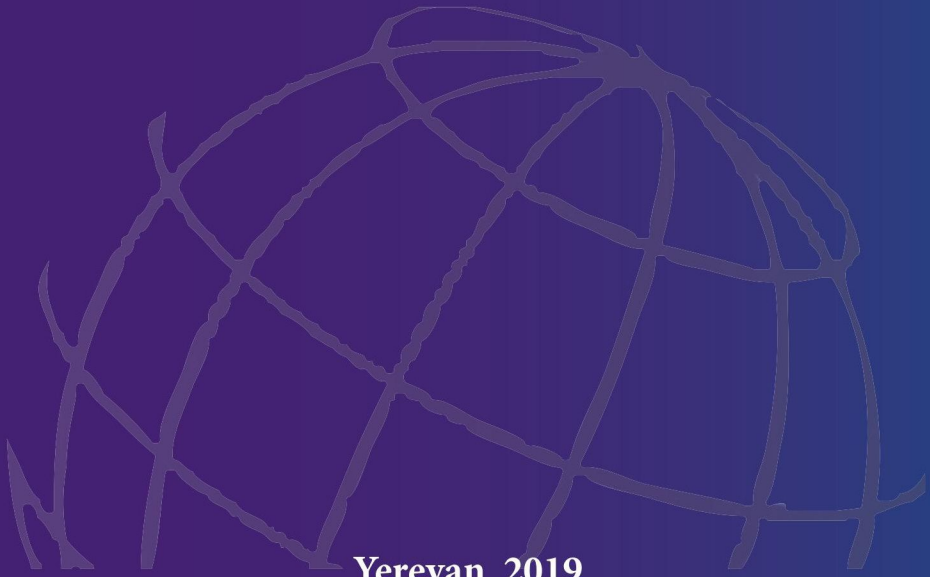

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Table of Contents

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BROADENING SECURITY STUDIES

The Education of Syrian Refugee Children in Host Countries

Hillary Ferreira | Stonehill College, USA

Session Chair and Discussant: Dr. Nikoloz Esitashvili, New Vision University, Georgia

Abstract: Syrian refugee children are receiving inadequate education in their respective host countries due to a variety of factors. The host countries have a lack of resources, which makes it increasingly harder to educate an influx of children coming into their education systems. Syrian students face many barriers access to basic education, and even when they receive a chance, the education is not of sufficient quality. Many schools lack proper teachers and have complex language barriers that hinder students' ability to learn. Most children are receiving little to no formal education, and this is a significant human rights issue.

This policy paper analyzes the quality of education that refugees have been gaining in host countries with the highest number of Syrian refugees. The countries that are discussed in this research include Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt, and Greece. This paper provides key policy recommendations that explore ways for Syrian children to receive a better-quality education in their host countries. The change that is needed will take much time and effort, but the outcome will improve the lives of millions of children whose right to a quality of education is being hindered.

Keywords: Syrian Refugees, Refugee Integration, Children, Education Policy, Host Countries

Background

Syrian refugees have been a long-standing topic of debate in recent years, but one objective that often gets left behind is lack of education the children are receiving. An estimated 800,000 school-aged children are out of school in host countries which does not account for the 2 million children out of school in Syria due to the conflict (Syria Crisis Fast Facts, 2019). More often than not, many children go years without schooling as they are forced out of their homes and are subjected to living in refugee camps that lack adequate living resources. Many refugees have found new homes in neighboring countries, but their struggles continue in these host countries. The lack of access to education for Syrian refugee children is a risk for the rest of the world, as an entire population of students is not being given the education they deserve.

Karim Shah, a film maker who traveled to Turkey to see the Syrian refugee settlements, observed the following at a school:

> It is hugely oversubscribed so even though it runs classes in two shifts, it cannot accommodate everyone. But some parents do not send their kids to school. When I asked why, I was told that the school was too far away. I was surprised by this answer because the school was maybe 20 minutes' walk away. But I guess the reasoning is simple - this is still a foreign country to them, many have lost so much, they now want to keep all their loved ones close and safe (Shah, 2014).

Shah's observation is an issue that is in every host country, as many of the school's lack basic resources and many of the parents are unwilling to send their children. Education is a building block to attaining more peace and security worldwide, and without adequately educating these children will eventually lead to a lost generation of students with profound potential.

Policy Analysis

Many countries throughout the world have engaged with helping Syrian refugees rebuild their lives in a new country. Although many refugees have fled Syria, many of them still face many challenges and obstacles to rebuilding their lives. Germany is the country in Europe that has taken in the most refugees, and neighboring countries of Syria have taken in the bulk of the refugees like, for example, Turkey and Lebanon (Crul et al., 2019). One major issue that most of these refugees face is the integration aspect of rebuilding their lives in a new country.

Many of the people of the host countries want to think that all Syrians are involved with terrorism and other negative traits. The rise of extreme right-wing parties in Europe and the United States have resulted in strict anti-immigrations reforms, and many politicians use the Syrian refugee crisis as an excuse to close their borders ("Europe and right-wing nationalism: A country-by-country guide", 2019). Many of the extreme right parties in the US and Europe want to ban mostly all immigration and see it as a threat to their own country. As the refugee crisis progressed, it revealed many European leaders to become xenophobic especially towards Muslims. The crisis caused many extreme right-wing groups to gain popularity in Germany, Spain, and Italy as well as many others. In Italy Matteo Salvini, a senator, has gained popularity due to his anti-immigration stance as he encouraged turning away humanitarian rescue ships from their ports ("Europe and right-wing nationalism: A country-by-country guide", 2019). The rise of Islamophobia became apparent in the United States as well as Europe, projected by President Trump with the ban that prevented citizens of seven predominantly Muslim countries from entering the United States. This executive order suspended the entry for all Syrian refugees as well ("Europe and

right-wing nationalism: A country-by-country guide", 2019). Most of the world's most powerful nations shut their doors to helping Syrians.

In the countries that do not shut their borders to helping Syrian refugees, children face many obstacles in their host countries school systems as they are being segregated from the other children (Simopoulos & Alexandridis, 2019). The children are often segregated due to the idea that many of them are behind in schooling due to the time many of the children have spent being out of school, which makes it even more difficult for the children to catch up. Also, the language barrier affects many of the students in school systems where they are unfamiliar with the language of they are being taught in. Children end up falling much further behind, and many of the students do not even end up finishing school (Carlier, 2018).

The struggles of integration into the new countries often affect how the Syrian refugee children are being taught, and more often than not, many of these children are not receiving the resources they need to succeed (Carlier, 2018). Some schools operate on a double shift system, where half of the children will attend in the morning and the other half in the afternoon. The double shift system has unintended consequences as many students are not receiving enough education to allow them to be at the correct grade level. Many of the schools also lack adequate curriculums, teaching materials, and the teachers are not trained properly. Overcrowding in schools is also common, as there are not enough supplies to teach them properly (Turn the Tide: Refugee Education in Crisis, 2017). In many countries that host Syrian refugee children, there is a discrepancy between the policies set out by the governments to educate these children, and what is actually being practiced in these classrooms.

In Lebanon, there have been a few policies enacted to help ensure the educational rights of Syrian refugees, but that is not always the

case in the classroom. Lebanon is a vital host country as it has about 500,000 school-aged Syrian children (Carlier, 2018). A study conducted by Buckner, Spencer & Cha (2018) found that much of the policies are not enacted within the schools to provide more extensive education to refugees. In many schools, policies enacted by the government are not fully implemented. This lack of implementation is occurring due to ineffective state authority and the lack of legal status for the refugees. Many unofficial, educational programs are running in Lebanon to help more refugees attain an education. More of an effort needs to be made at a local level to help achieve a better approach to this gap between policy and practice. The country struggles to keep up with the influx of Syrian Refugees, but they have created a few programs to help them. In 2014, the government implemented the "Reaching All Children with Education" policy, which has helped improve the number of Syrian children in school. Also, an accelerated learning program became introduced in 2016 to help children who have been out of school for an extended period of time catch up with their studies (Carlier, 2017).

Most of the refugees from Syria have migrated to Turkey as, at the end of 2017, 3.4 million Syrian refugees were registered in that country, 1.1 million being school-aged children. The government finally came to the realization that many of the Syrian refugees would not return to Syria. The government of Turkey has been welcoming of Syrian refugees, but access to basic resources like healthcare, education, and jobs has been extremely difficult (Carlier, 2017). The government has created temporary educations centers that help with the transition into the Turkish public schools. Although Turkey has improved the integration process of the refugee population, there are still many obstacles that refugees face in attaining an education.

Many refugees live under the poverty line. This is the most common reason why so many Syrian children are out of school. It is challenging for Syrians to find jobs and obtain work permits in Turkey as the unemployment rate is exceptionally high. Many of the temporary education centers are being shut down, and many Syrian teachers are losing their jobs (Carlier, 2017). Children are expected to work to help support their family as well. Also, many parents do not see the benefits of secondary education and see earning an income and helping their family to be more valuable. Enrolling in the Turkish school system requires students to have Turkish ID cards, which usually take an extended period to receive. In March 2016 the government issued a new step that included pre-registration and screening, that added to the already backlogged people trying to obtain ID cards (Carlier, 2017). Another obstacle in Turkey consists of the shortage of school buildings in high-density refugee areas, as well as the shortage of teachers. Many teachers are not equipped with dealing with refugee children, as many of them are learning new languages, and many are on different learning levels.

Before the Syrian refugee crisis, Jordan had excelled in its education systems performing better compared to most other middle-income countries (Carlier, 2017). During the crisis, Jordan allowed Syrians to attend public schools, and, in order to deal with the massive influx of enrollment, the Ministry of Education had introduced the double shift school system in many host communities. Furthermore, like many of the other neighboring host countries, many children do not attend school due to the economic aspect, as many families rely on their children for earning money. But many employers do not want to hire Syrians, as they do not want to pay them minimum wage, and this results in children going out and obtaining illegal jobs as their parents have to accept low-paying jobs as well. In host communities

it is found that about 46% of all school-aged children are out of school, and 15% of the children in camps are out of school. Many Syrians students in Jordan drop out due to the lack of teachers, buildings, and poor learning environments as with many other countries in the region (Carlier, 2017). Many children lack transportation, as many of the schools are located too far away to walk.

Another country that has integrated a high number of Syrians is Iraq, even though the security in the region is concerning. Most if not all of the Syrian refugees are located in the Kurdistan region and do not have access to formal education. (Carlier, 2017) The conflict in the region makes it extremely difficult for Syrian children to attend school. Many children in the region have no access to formal education due to the lack of resources, conflicts, and outdated infrastructure. Many non-formal educational programs have been developed in the region. Also, the Syrian students are obligated to learn Kurdish to attend public school, and the schools in the region use a multiple shift system, which is a drastic change from the children's prior experiences (Carlier, 2017).

Egypt is also another country that has attracted many refugees from Syria as well as many other places. Egypt has done particularly well with obtaining access for Syrian children to receive an education as most of the children do attend school. Although this country has done particularly well, some scenarios make it difficult to keep the children enrolled. Only about four percent of school aged children are not enrolled in school. An issue is that many of the children are living in overcrowded and impoverished areas that further prevent them from enrolling and attending school. Also, food insecurity has started to become an issue for Egypt, which leads to children dropping out of school to help support their families (Carlier, 2017). Also, the school

systems in Egypt require most students to have outside tutoring to help supplement their education to be able to pass necessary exams, for which many families lack the funds. Many of the students are not caught up enough or have the proper language training to excel in the Egyptian school systems.

Greece has also encountered many issues with implementing a schooling system for refugee children. In 2016, Greece had proposed three options to help improve the educational system for refugees that included creating supplemental educational centers, integrating all students into the public schools, and developing a "bridge system" between the two options.

After attending a traditional Greek public school, students would attend these centers to help them have a better understanding of their school work. Although this idea sounds promising, many challenges have arisen from this program. Many students only attended the supplemental after-school programs which did provide graduation certificates. Many of these programs had enrolled large amounts of students without adequate personnel or supplies (Simopoulos & Alexandridis, 2019).

Policy Recommendations

The education of Syrian refugee children is often neglected and not taken into consideration by governments. More often than not, many students' education is left behind due to the lack of enforcement of policies. An overlapping issue in many of the host countries is often the language barrier. Many students fall behind as many of them cannot catch up with all of the coursework they miss as well as learning a new language. Also, ensuring that parents can receive adequate jobs as well as work permits is an enduring challenge. As many parents have to take low-paying jobs to support their families,

many of them also rely on the income of their school-aged children. Access to ID cards is an issue in some countries as well, and many have a delay with getting them, and that puts their children even further behind in school. An effort needs to be made to help ensure children are allowed into school as quickly as possible. Entry requirements into schools should be not as restrictive and they should let far more children have fair access to public education.

Consequently, having adequate resources to help educate children are necessary for children to stay in school. Almost all of the countries have a lack of resources like classrooms, teachers, and textbooks. Also, many of the teachers are not well-equipped to teach refugee students, as many of them have a language barrier and have many different learning levels. More funding needs to be allocated to help improve the conditions in which the children are trying to learn.

Also, more of an effort needs to be made by states to enforce education policies for refugees. A lot of times, many communities do not have the resources or just choose to overlook government regulations. More needs to be done in small communities to help improve the education of Syrian refugees. NGOs and other donors need to collaborate more to help develop more resources to help children be able to catch up on things that they have missed and become more adapted into their new school system. The reintegration process into new schools should be made easier so the new children can adapt to the new environment much more quickly.

Many of the children are often harassed or bullied in the new school systems in which they are placed. Many of the students mistreat the refugees, and this makes the refugee children feel unwelcome, and many of them drop out of school. The schools should be teaching in an inclusive environment, and bullying should not be tolerated in any

form. More pressure should come from the government to require the schools to teach in an inclusive and welcoming environment.

Conclusion

Many Syrian refugees face challenges that affect the education that their children receive. Many children do not have adequate resources to attend school and be able to complete their education. The lack of resources in the various countries needs to be changed so more can be allocated to improve the educational system as a whole in order to allow refugee students to receive an education that is inclusive and helps them prosper. With adequate changes to the countries with the most Syrian refugees, these children will not become a "lost generation" and will become more informed individuals. The changes to the systems need to start from local communities and use a bottom-up approach to allow the communities to want this change in order to help their communities. Altering this system will take much time and effort, but the results will significantly benefit an entire generation which is losing its chance to receive an education.

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On the Problems of and Solutions to the Identification of Protected Groups of the Crime of Genocide in the Context of International Criminal Law

Ran Cao | Durham University, Great Britain

Session Chair and Discussant: Dr. Nikoloz Esitashvili, New Vision University, Georgia

Abstract: In the context of defining genocide, the concept of "protected groups" is not only a tool for the international tribunals like the ICTY and the ICTR to define the crime of genocide in the cases of the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, but also the prerequisite to confirming the crime of genocide under the Rome Statute of the ICC. However, the crime of genocide has never been clarified since Lemkin came up with the term "genocide" in 1944, which causes issues for the international legal community, in terms of regulating the crime of genocide. This essay argues that the difficulty in defining protected groups, and in identifying new kinds of groups in legal practice, are due to the theoretical weakness of the legal concept and defnition of genicide. This problem can be resolved by applying a new approach gleaned from political philosophy, *the theory of identification.*

Keywords: Genocide; International Criminal Law; Rome Statute; Holocaust; Human Rights

Introduction

Protected groups of the crime of genocide are the specific groups of people that the targeted killings of which are defined as genocide. The concept of protected groups is not only a tool for international and domestic tribunals to identify the victims of the crime of genocide, but also a prerequisite to confirm an act as the crime of

genocide in the context of international criminal law. The groups are defined as “in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group” in Article 2 of the Genocide Convention of 1948, which has been succeeded by later and the most current international legislation in this area including the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. However, this essential concept of the crime of genocide has never been clearly defined since Lemkin came up with the term “genocide” in 1944, which causes issues for the international legal system to regulate the crime of genocide. This essay argues that the difficulties in defining protected groups and identifying new kinds of groups in legal practice1 are due to the theoretical weakness of the legislation of genocide. This problem can be solved by applying a new approach with the theory of identification. To demonstrate this, the essay will first illustrate the theoretical and practical problems of defining protected groups, followed by a discussion on current approaches of defining protected groups. The theory of identification will be provided as a tool to develop the definition of protected groups.

Current Issues on Defining Protected Groups

This section will illustrate that defining protected groups was an unseen problem when the modern concept of genocide born in 1944. The Genocide Convention of 1948 also did not provide a detailed definition of this concept. This situation has not been resolved and the concept still “continues to generate controversy” (Mundorff, 2018, p. 227) in the most recent legislation of international criminal law.

First, the concept of protected groups lacked a clear definition at the birth of the word “genocide”. Protected groups is a part of the concept of genocide. Before Lemkin, genocide was “a crime without a name” (Kuper, 1981, p. 12). Though evidence shows that there were in the past an understanding of the scope of protected groups

since the targeted groups of massive killings were always clear (Naimark, 2016) the notion of protected groups was nonexistent. This situation had not been changed when the term “genocide” was coined by Raphael Lemkin, who paid limited attention to the concept of protected groups. In the most quoted paragraph (Lemkin, 1944, p. 76) describing the crime of genocide conducted by the Nazi regime, Lemkin mentioned crimes in political, social, cultural, economic, biological, physical, religious and moral fields, but ignored defining the victims of these crimes. The figures race and religion are mentioned in the paragraph as categories of criminal actions rather than standards to identify victims. Instead, the author applied a vague phrase “captive peoples” in the paragraph mentioned above and a clearer “national groups” in another paragraph to define the victims, without noting any other kinds of groups or describing the detailed definition of “national groups”. Moreover, Lemkin made the word “genocide” from the Greek genos (a people) and the Latin suffix cida (kill) but missed illustrating the connection between genos and “national groups” (Quigley, 2006, p. 5). Therefore, Lemkin’s concept is not a “broad and holistic” one of the discussions of protected groups.

Second, the Genocide Convention 1948 also lacks a clear definition of protected groups. The Convention uses enumerative classification as “in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group” in Article 2 to define the groups. On the one hand, it pays no attention to the definition of “protected” and “group”. On the other hand, the classification of four named groups derives from the legal practice on Nazi crimes after the Second World War (Taylor, 1949), which means this provision missed considering the similar cases happened in the history and the ones in other parts of the world. Moreover, the Convention missed providing miscellaneous provisions to illustrate the meaning of the four named groups.

Third, since the most recent international legislation of genocide including articles in the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) Statute of 1993, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) Statute of 1994 and the Rome Statute of 1996 are all considered to be successors of Article 2 of the Genocide Convention, the ambiguous and incomplete definition of protected groups still exist in international criminal legislation. This definition of protected groups has not been widely appreciated by genocide scholars since the Convention came into force. As instances, Schabas (2009) makes a harsh statement that, "the drafting history of the Convention does not record any meaningful discussion about use of the term 'group'", while Naimark (2017) also states in the notable Genocide: A World History that, although he has noticed the concept of protected groups in the Convention, the book will still see political and social groups as protected groups. This situation made some ICTR judges recognize in 1999 that, after a long-term discussion, there are still, "no generally and internationally accepted precise definitions" of protected groups. From that time, this point has been reclaimed again and again by Quigley (2006), by Schabas (2009), and by Mundorff (2018) who stated that this issue "continues to generate controversy".

In conclusion, the concepts of protected groups in international legal practice require more in-depth research to make the controversy at the theory and practice level solved. The unification of concepts of protected groups is necessary.

Two Approaches in Practice

The theoretical problems of legislation of genocide have led to the conflicts of application of the Genocide Convention and other related treaties since the 1990s. Article 2 of the Convention has been applied by international trials in the situation of Rwanda, Former Yugoslavia and Cambodia.2 During these trials, different approaches to solve the

problems and identify protected groups have been issued by international judges and scholars. This section, dividing these approaches into two main methods, will discuss the advantages and drawbacks of both of them.

One applied approach is keeping the four-group definition but adding elements to testify whether a group can be defined as one of the named groups, as the ICTR judges did in the Rutaganda case:

> "The Chamber notes that the concepts of national, ethnical, racial and religious groups have been researched extensively and that, at present, there are no generally and internationally accepted precise definitions thereof. Each of these concepts must be assessed in the light of a particular political, social and cultural context. Moreover, the Chamber notes that for the purposes of applying the Genocide Convention, membership of the group is, in essence, a subjective rather than an objective concept. The victim is perceived by the perpetrator of genocide as belonging to a group slated for destruction. In some instances, the victim may perceive himself/herself as belonging to the said group."

The basic idea of the approach is broadening the concept of ethnical groups by setting objective and subjective standards of identification to give Tutsi victims, who cannot be easily defined as protected groups under Article 2 of the Convention, a position as an ethnical group. The method is appreciated and applied by some of the later ICTR judgments.

However, this method raises serious problems. Firstly, May (2010) points out that not all the four protected groups require a subjective-objective-combined standard for identification. The Darfur Report (2015) goes further on this topic, arguing that, even for the ethnical groups, there is a process for the identification "from subjective becomes objective", as the theory of Ten Stages of Genocide (Stanton, 2013) suggests, rather than a process combined with subjective and objective elements. These debates reflect May's

perspective that no uniform standard to identify new groups can be set inside the four-group definition.

Secondly, it is hard to set the boundary of the interpretation of the four named groups. This becomes a critical problem in the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) Vasiliauskas case when the minority (8:9) of the court tried to use the concept "the part", a phrase in the Genocide Convention ignored by most lawyers during the past century, to challenge the existing categories of the protected groups. The judges argued that the victims, which defined by the majority of the court as a political group, should be counted as "the part" of a national group so that they can be defined as a protected group. This is a key argument since almost all kinds of human groups can be counted as "the part" of the named groups in the Convention. (Milanovic, 2015) Moreover, when the ICTY tried to extend the definition of national groups in Krstic case, it also faces challenges from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) Nottebohm judgment and Oppenheim's International Law (Jennings & Watts, 1996, p. 857), both suggesting a national group is different from a group based on nationality. As a result, it is not easy to seek support from legal theories to broaden or set boundaries for the original concept of the four groups in the Genocide Convention.

To sum up, the approach that setting subjective and objective elements to define the concept of protected groups and identify new groups is applicable in the situation of the Tutsi. However, this method can hardly be applied to all the four named groups, and it also lacks theoretical support to broaden or set boundaries for the original concept.

The other approach to identify new groups is extending the Article based on the original intent of the Convention, regardless of the restriction of four named groups or even redefining the whole concept of protected groups case by case (Schabas, 2009, p. 118). The ICTR applied this method in the Kayishema judgment and tried in the

Akayesu case to include other "permanent groups" into the concept of protected groups:

> "……the Chamber considered whether the groups protected by the Genocide Convention, echoed in Article 2 of the Statute, should be limited to only the four groups expressly mentioned and whether they should not also include any group which is stable and permanent like the said four groups. In other words, the question that arises is whether it would be impossible to punish the physical destruction of a group as such under the Genocide Convention, if the said group, although stable and membership is by birth, does not meet the definition of any one of the four groups expressly protected by the Genocide Convention. In the opinion of the Chamber, it is particularly important to respect the intention of the drafters of the Genocide Convention, which according to the travaux préparatoires, was patently to ensure the protection of any stable and permanent group."

However, the ICTR judges never positively respond to the external request for the identification of political and economic groups, which is promoted mostly by scholars, from Shaw (1989) who supposed that "an overly restrictive definition ought to be avoided", to Bruun (1993) who believed the "weakness" of the concept of protected groups in the Convention is the lack of political groups. A new effort is made by Abraham (2018), who is trying to distinguish the genocide against entire human groups and the one targeting small groups identified by social, cultural or historical features. However, the suggestions have not earned enough attention from legal scholarships.

To conclude, judges and scholars apply this approach only to make specific groups be added into the traditional concept of protected groups under Article 2 of the Genocide Convention. The approach is not used to set a new standard to make all relevant groups be identified as protected groups, which makes the method can hardly be applied as a general standard.

A New Approach with the Theory of Identification

This section will suggest that, since the two main approaches can hardly solve the problem, a combination of two approaches may need to be applied. That means setting elements which can be used not only to define all the four named groups but also to examine new groups suggested by judges and scholars. The chapter will propose that the theory of identification can be applied as the element.

First, identification can be used to define the four named groups. The theory of identification in international criminal law includes the self-identification and the one of identification by society. The Kayisema judgment gives a detailed illustration when it defines the ethnic groups that "an ethnic group is one whose members share a common language and culture; or, a group which distinguishes itself, as such (self-identification); or, a group identified as such by others, including perpetrators of the crimes (identification by others)". International judges only take this theory to define ethnic groups. However, this idea can also be applied to define the other three named groups because identification is a stage of any crime of genocide and the only difference between the four mentioned groups is that victim groups are identified with different reasons by themselves and by others. Moreover, international judges have used identification as a tool to feature other named groups such as racial groups. This also occurred in local legislation. For instance, in Latvian criminal law: "For a person who commits genocide, that is, commits intentional acts for purposes of the destruction in whole or in part of any group of persons identifiable as such by nationality, ethnic origin, race, or a defined religion …" (Section 71, Criminal Law of the Republic of Latvia 2013) Therefore, identification can be applied as a standard to define the four original protected groups in the Convention.

Second, international criminal law can use identification to examine new kinds of protected groups. In Genocide Studies, the theory of identification can be seen as a combination of classification and

symbolization. Stanton (2013) defined these two words in his famous Ten Stages of Genocide that classification means, “all cultures have categories to distinguish people into ‘us and them’” and symbolization refers to the stage when the society gives symbols like “Jews” or “communists” to specific groups of people. These are the pre-stages of crime of genocide and any groups symbolized during that period may be discriminated and attacked later. As a result, if any groups reaching the standard of identification (in other words, the stages of classification and symbolization) is categorized as a protected group, it may be much easier for international criminal law to determine the nature of every new kind of groups.

Moreover, in practice, a definition of protected groups based on the theory of identification is feasible to make. Though many countries keep following Article 2 of the Genocide Convention in dealing with the concept of protected groups, there are two states applying the idea of identification to define all kinds of protected groups. Besides Latvia which has been mentioned, Georgian criminal law defines genocide as, “an act committed in order to accomplish an agreed plan to annihilate, in full or in part, a group the members of which are united by national, ethnic, racial, religious or any other signs …” (Article 407, Criminal Code of Georgia 2016).

To conclude, the theory of identification can be applied in international criminal law not only to define all the four named groups but also to examine new kinds of groups appearing during the development of human rights. The legislative practice in Latvia and Georgia also illustrate the feasibility of this idea, which makes this suggestion a possible solution to the problem.

The Accessibility of Solutions in Legal Practice

This section aims to classify different approaches to bring the new method of identifying protected groups into international legal

practice. Genocide-protection activists believe international law is too weak to regulate genocide since it is always driven by superpowers (Mandel, 2014). However, there are still three ways that can promote the discussions and applications of new ideas on protected groups in the context of contemporary international law.

First, there is the possibility of revision of international treaties. The Genocide Convention of 1948 has never been revised since its creation. The possibility of an amendment or protocol of the Convention is still low (Short, 2016), but the Rome Statute may be the platform for the reform of the concept of protected groups, although the member states can hardly reach a consensus or a 2/3 majority opinion on the nature, scope and elements of protected groups currently. Besides, genocide is a topic related to human rights law, and the protected groups of genocide share the same nature as the ones of human rights. Therefore, amendments or protocols of international and regional human rights conventions may also be a proper way to promote discussions on protected groups.

Second, the Darfur Report shows an effective method that applies customary international law to promote the development of the concept of protected groups in the context of the domestic law of genocide, since the world has seen the trend that more and more countries are revising their domestic law which was originated from the Genocide Convention. Judgments in domestic case are a kind of official documents seen as the evidence for opinio juris which can make customary international law. For instance, Post-Soviet states always face the problem of prosecuting the massive killings of political opposition, which situation makes the relevant courts interpret the political group as a kind of protected groups. This shows the opinio juris of relevant states. However, states in different regions with different cultural and historical backgrounds always make different choices on the law of genocide. Also, some states and their society do not take the threat of genocide as a priority affair.

(Kaufman, 2019) Therefore, it is still a long way to go to reach a new customary rule on protected groups.

Third, this essay suggests that the international legal practice of the law of genocide is an essential way to reform and revise the law related to protected groups. Although international judgments are not primary resources of international law and always raise conflicts on the topic of protected groups, they provide the newest and comprehensive analysis of the issue, which will be quoted and reviewed by later cases and legislation. To reach a consistency of judgments in the future, this essay suggests that judges can make comprehensive case studies of relevant subtopics in judgments, which may contribute a lot to later legislation, judgments and the academic. The study of the concept of "part of" in the Vasiliauskas case is an excellent example for later judgments to follow.

To conclude, The way toward the revision of the law of genocide is a hard one since the direct change of the Genocide Convention can hardly be achieved in the current international legal system. In this situation, international human rights law, customary international law, and international judgments may be the proper platforms to promote the development of the concept of protected groups.

Conclusion

Defining protected groups was a forgotten problem when the modern concept of genocide born in 1944. The Genocide Convention of 1948 also did not provide a detailed definition of this concept, which has not yet been resolved. This makes international judges and legal scholars provide different approaches in practice to identify groups. But the methods can hardly cover the issues of all named groups and potential new groups. The theory of identification, however, can be used not only to define all the four named groups but also to examine new groups suggested by judges and scholars.

Therefore, this essay suggests the crime of genocide can be defined as the crime committed intended to destroy a group of persons identifiable as such by nationality, ethnicity, race, religion, or by other marks.

Notes

1. In legal practice, defining protected groups and identifying new groups are essentially the same problem, so this essay will use these phrases interchangeably.
2. The related international criminal tribunals are: the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), functioned from May, 1993 to December, 2017; the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), functioned from November, 1994 to December, 2015; the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC & Khmer Rouge Tribunal), functioning from June, 2003 to the present; the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT), functioning from December, 2010 to the present.

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20. Prosecutor v. Rutaganda, ICTR-96-3-T (6 December 1999)
21. Prosecutor v. Semanza, ICTR-97-20-T (15 May 2003)
22. Vasiliauskas v. Lithuania, ECtHR. App. No. 35343/05 (20 October 2015)
23. Prosecutor v. Radislav Krstic (Appeal), IT-98-33-A (19 April 2004)
24. Prosecutor v. Kayishema and Ruzindana, ICTR-95-1-T (21 May 1999)
25. Prosecutor v. Akayesu, ICTR-96-4-T (2 September 1998)

A Lost Generation: Syrian Refugee Children

Nicole Buchanan | Stonehill College, USA

Session Chair: Vazgen Karapetyan, Eurasia Partnership Foundation, Armenia

Abstract: The Syrian refugee crisis has been an ongoing struggle since 2011. Many human rights abuses are prevalent in this crisis, but this report focuses on how the Syrian refugee crisis specifically impacts education. Various countries, mainly those who were receiving the most refugees, such as Turkey, have vowed that these children will receive an education. These children should not have barriers to schooling because they have a right to education. According to article 26 in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, "Everyone has the right to education" (1948). Therefore, it is in the interests of states to ensure that these children are receiving an education, as it secures their future. There are, however, many barriers that these families face, which make it difficult for their children to have access to education. Identification cards in Turkey, discrimination in Lebanon, and restrictions to work permits for adults all pose threats to accessing education for these Syrian children. For the betterment of these children and for the sake of international security, the international community should come together to meet the financial demands of humanitarian programs, such as the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan and the No Lost Generation program.

Keywords: Syria, Children, Education, Barriers, Rights

Introduction

Syria has been in an ongoing civil war since 2011. This crisis, unfortunately, has had detrimental effects on the people and has

caused thousands of Syrians to flee the country. The Syrian people are reduced to drastic measures, and they will continue to migrate because of the hostile conditions in their country. The Syrian refugee crisis has become an international issue that has impacted various countries beyond Syria. Many of these countries have experienced an influx of refugees into their borders. Turkey has received a large number of refugees with about 3 million, Lebanon is second with nearly 1 million and then Jordan and Iraq. Recently, the number of people who have fled from Syria has reached 13 million people (Conner, 2018). Among these individuals, about 6 million are internally displaced, making this conflict one of the largest producers of internally displaced people. Furthermore, about 4.9 million Syrians are trying to move towards Europe (Batalova and Zong, 2017). While many countries have taken in refugees from Syria, there is still a need for other countries to grant refugees protection and to increase funding of humanitarian programs (Global Trends: Forced Displacement, 2016).

While the Syrian crisis encompasses many human rights and political issues, one concern that is worth noting is how this war impacts Syrian children. It is estimated that about half of the Syrian refugees are under the age of 18, and about 40% are under the age of 12 (Sirin and Rogers-Sirin, 2015). These numbers are concerning, and it forces the global community to question how the well-being of Syrian children are being secured. These children and teenagers are the future of their people, and currently, they are not receiving an education. The United Nations reported that, in 2016, around 715,000 Syrian refugees ages 5-17 were not receiving an education in Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan (Remove Barriers to Refugee Education, 2017). Many Syrian refugee children either face barriers that make it difficult to access education, or they are working because their family needs money. The increase in the lack of education for these children and teenagers is a significant concern

because it jeopardizes their ability to flourish in the future. Therefore, it is within the interests of states to ensure that these children and teenagers are receiving an education, so that in the future, these children can be successful and have a purposeful life.

Efforts to Alleviate the Syrian Refugee Crisis

Traditionally when dealing with refugees, countries offer stability and support on a short- term basis or for temporary protection, which is based on the 1951 United Nation Convention on Refugees. This document further explains that it is the obligation of states who are receiving refugees to not turn them away and to offer them safety. Due to the prolonged conflict in Syria, however, the traditional practice has been altered from "short-term humanitarian assistance... [to] permanent resettlement" (Lambert, 2017). This is the issue faced by the countries near Syria, which are receiving many of the fleeing refugees. These host countries find it challenging to provide supplies, resources, and services because they don't have the financial capabilities. The lack of funding is an issue that has wide-reaching consequences that not only affect the individual refugees, but puts pressure on host countries to provide resources and services that are not available. The refugee crisis is plagued with large-scale problems that are verydifficult to manage. It requires large amounts of money to be allocated to programs that provide healthcare, food supplies, shelter, and job opportunities. It requires extensive cooperation between the UN, the government of host countries, NGOs, and developmental programs. The burdens of this crisis cannot fall to one state or a single organization. It must be managed on a global scale. The United Nations and the many councils and groups within the organization have tried to alleviate the refugee crisis by fundraising, developing, and creating programs for long-term resettlement initiatives for refugees and host countries. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) since 2014 has

held numerous conferences to persuade states to help support Syrians with resettlement and humanitarian aid. As of March 2016, UNHCR was able to have 179 organizations within thirty countries to pledge to assist 130,955 Syrian refugees with resettlement (Khallaf, 2017). Arguably, this number is meager compared to the millions of Syrian refugees who need assistance.

One critical approach has been the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP), which is led by UNHCR. It encompasses the resources of five states, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and Iraq, and over 240 partners and donors. The primary objective of this plan has been to help alleviate the problems Syrian refugees are facing, by providing supplies to meet their basic needs and keep the refugees from further poverty (3RP Strategy Overview, 2017). The program has helped over 5 million Syrian refugees, as well as about 4.4 million people in host communities of Turkey, Jordan, and others (3RP Strategy Overview, 2017). The challenges that 3RP is experiencing is a lack of funding. The plan needs about USD 5.61 billion to support nearly 5 million refugees and host countries (Syria Emergency, 2017). Unfortunately, only about 62% or about USD 3.49 billion has been received (Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan, n.d.). While the amount of money the plan has received is not insignificant, it still needs more funding to carry out its efforts of providing food, protection, education, and various other services.

Furthermore, as was stated by Filippo Grandi, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in 2016, “Addressing [a Syrian refugee’s] plight cannot only be the task of countries and communities that are close to wars. It is a global responsibility that must be widely shared until peace prevails again” (Khallaf, 2017). This type of peace must include the well-being and development of children. A lack of education, unfortunately, has become one of the many consequences of the Syrian war and arguably one of the most detrimental.

Barriers to Education for Syrian Refugee Children

According to Article 26 in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, “Everyone has the right to education”. Therefore, Syrian refugee children have the fundamental right to access and receive a formal education. Many host countries, international organizations, and international donors have strived to meet this demand. For example, Turkey had pledged early on in the crisis that refugee children would attain an education. The state has tried to accomplish this by enrolling refugee children into public schools or through Temporary Education Centers (TECs) which are “developed specifically for Syrian refugee children, established and operated by Syrians in camps or urban settings" (Ozer, Komsuoglu, and Atesok, 2017). Similarly, the United Nations in collaboration with other organizations and UN agencies has done a great deal to try to fundraise, develop and create programs, such as the No Lost Generation program, to try to provide and improve education and the well-being of children affected by conflict.

While many of these efforts are commendable, there are plenty of other barriers that refugee families face that do not allow their children to attain an education. One barrier to education is registration. The regulations for identification cards and legal status makes it more difficult for children to access education. In Turkey, it can take refugees six months or more to receive a Temporary Protection Beneficiary Identification card. These identification cards are what allow children to be enrolled in school. Refugee children can still enroll without one, but they will be considered as guest students and will not receive any documentation or diploma of the child’s attendance in the public school (Asylum Information Database, 2019).

Consequently, delays in ID cards means a delay in attaining an extensive education for refugee children. In Lebanon, identification cards or documents that prove legal residency are not needed for

enrolment into public schools. This does not hinder some school officials, however, from demanding that parents present these documents for their children to attend school (Lebanon: Stalled Effort, 2019). Furthermore, challenges in obtaining legal status, and work permits for adult refugees increases the chance of poverty, which also means an increase in the possibilities of child labor and early marriages (Remove Barriers to Refugee Education, 2017). An increase in poverty among refugee families means that while public schools are free in countries such as Turkey and Lebanon, parents still can't afford the transportation costs to school or the costs for school materials. As a result, they can't send their children to school, or they must pick one child to send to school, leading to another problematic issue of families choosing to send their boys to school instead of their girls. Therefore, host countries and other international communities should look to ensure that restrictions on refugee families are not hindering the betterment of children and that the basic needs of these families are met.

Policy Recommendations

Regarding the host countries identification process, the government should lessen restrictions on children or speed up the identification process so that refugee children are allowed to attend schools without delay. Another initiative to help Syrian refugee children is providing financial support and job opportunities to adults. When the adults of the family can obtain a job and financially support the family, children will not have to seek out work. Therefore, the youth can spend their time on education and rehabilitate from their traumas of escaping the crisis in Syria. For these factors to be met the international community needs to come together to meet the financial demands of humanitarian programs such as the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan and the No Lost Generation so that the futures of Syrian children are secured.

Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan

The Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan has the potential to provide supplies and resources to host countries and refugee families. As was noted before, only about 62% of the $5 billion has been met. The program, however, has still been able to help millions of refugees. If 3RP were able to raise the total amount of money that it needs, the program would be able to assist far more individuals, as well as lessen the burden of host countries to fund supplies. The program should be advertised across the globe to bring attention to its initiatives. The Dead Sea Resilience Agenda, which is a part of the 3RP plan, is created "to provide a common basis for resilience-based responses across the countries affected by the Syrian refugee crisis" (3RP, 2018). This plan is impactful because it finds the mindset or moral of a host country to be a crucial factor in helping refugees. When the members of the host country view the refugees in a positive light, more stability and efficiency will come to the state. The Dead Sea Resilience Agenda would bring peacebuilding initiatives in communities and help reduce tensions and to create cooperation among Syrians and host county members (3RP, 2018). This collaboration will allow local agencies and nonprofits to work more efficiently in their areas. The importance of this is significant because local agencies and organizations know their communities and their members best. Therefore, they are better equipped to make decisions and regulations that benefit specific locations and countries. Cooperation and understanding among refugee communities and the local community could create a more positive and welcoming environment for children, which could also translate into a positive environment in schools. Overall, funding of this program could help ensure that the basic needs of refugee families are fulfilled while encouraging a positive outlook for Syrian refugees.

Syrian Refugee Children

Many of the Syrian youth and children are missing out on an education because of years of conflict in Syria. This is a problem because it creates a whole generation that lacks the proper education and communication skills to one day advance their country. Therefore, an increase in the funding and awareness of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan would also bring attention to the No Lost Generation program. UNICEF, in collaboration with other organizations, tries to emphasize the importance of the well-being and education of Syrian refugee youth (3RP Strategy Overview, 2017). Expanding this program would bring social care and education to traumatized children. Just as the United States took part in raising money for relief efforts in Armenia after the genocide, with such initiatives as the Golden Rule Sunday, states and its people could creatively organize events and showcase the No Lost Program to raise money. It is hard to galvanize a government to provide aid, but if the people of a nation become informed and spirited about a cause, they can enact real change. Many countries possess a significant influence at the international level. Therefore, these countries have the potential to create a chain of humanitarian awareness for this cause across the globe. Similarly, other states or large organizations should hold wide-scale events to encourage ordinary people to learn about the effects and dangers posed to Syrian refugees. In creating a broad audience, the No Lost Generation program will have a more substantial impact on Syrian children. An important aspect that must be emphasized in No Lost Generation, however, is being sensitive to Syrian culture and traditions. While both the Dead Sea Resilience Agenda and the No Lost Generation program would provide a supportive environment and solid education, these plans and programs should still maintain Syrian history and culture within their efforts. Therefore, Syrian history and way of life are preserved through the youth.

Conclusion

The Syrian refugee crisis has been the most significant migration of refugees to date. The effects of the civil war have created trauma and poverty that is not only felt by Syrians but by countries that have received Syrian refugees. Unfortunately, children make up a large number of Syrian refugees. These children have been psychologically damaged because of their migration, and they lack a stable environment and education. Many organizations have formed programs such as Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan or the No Lost Generation program, which have all been helpful. The problem, however, is the lack of funding that these programs receive. As a result, it makes it harder for the organizations and local members who are a part of these programs to succeed in assisting refugees because of a shortage of resources and services.

Therefore, it is the responsibility of the world as a collective whole to diminish the struggles of the Syrian refugees through donating, and fundraising for refugee programs, as well as altering our view of the refugee crisis.

The international community should actively change the way their nationals view the refugees. In many countries, immigration and refugees have increasingly been seen as a negative phenomenon of globalization and conflict. This can be observed throughout President Trump's presidential campaign with negative rhetoric about immigrants or refugees. This is also seen in France's 2016 presidential elections with Marine Le Pen. This type of diction and thoughts are what hinder many of the initiatives to help the refugee crisis. Instead of viewing the Syrian refugees as a burden and "[feeling] sorry for them, we should believe in them" (Mufleh, 2017). The international community should see it as an opportunity to help others attain a better life. Unfortunately, the issues and the financial demands to help the Syrians is understandably challenging to solve. To aid the

many Syrian individuals and children who have fled, however, the international community needs to come together to support not only the refugees but host countries. If we do not do more as a global community to combat this crisis, there will be no way of stabilizing or improving the Syrian refugee crisis.

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Gender-Inclusive Societies Lead to Longer-Lasting Peace

Hannah Prasad | Stonehill College, USA

Session Chair and Discussant: Dr. Nikoloz Esitashvili, New Vision University, Georgia

Abstract: Women's contribution to society is essential to making a community more peaceful and accommodating. This paper discusses the unique involvement they have in society that allows them to acknowledge vital issues that may not be noticed by decision-making groups, which are primarily composed of men. Women involved in their community are more attuned to abnormal activities, changes, and issues, all of which can be vital to peacekeeping strategies.

Agreements such as the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and the Broadening Participation in Political Negotiations and Implementation Project strive to address issues of women's voices being heard are adderessed in this paper. They promote the inclusion of women through Track I and Track II negotiations, marches and campaigns, and discussion workshops. These methods are just small steps in eventually reaching equal representation for everyone, leading to longer lasting peace negotiations and respect for all individuals.

Keywords: Peace Agreements, Inclusion of Women, Women and Violence, Non-violent Solutions

Introduction

The League of Nations was founded in January of 1920. With this organization, which was the first international intergovernmental organization, women came together to ensure everyone was included. When the Paris Peace Conference came together in 1919 to begin creating this worldwide body, women were there with their

own creation: the Women's Charter. They wanted to guarantee that they had a voice in making sure women were given equal opportunities, that violence against women was recognized and addressed, and that a woman could be independent in her day to day life. Article 7 of the League of Nations Covenant supported this in stating that "all positions under or in connection with the League… shall be open equally to men and women" ("Women and Global Diplomacy, 2019"). In addition, women in the United States received the right to vote in 1920. Continuing on through the years, women have marched and spoken up for their rights and inclusion in all parts of society. However, somewhere along the way, society began to lose again. Women have rights, but their image and portrayal has been tainted. They are sometimes made out to be incapable of a specific job, or too forward, or out of place, or better off in the household raising children. There is still much work to be done in making sure each individual is heard and recognized for their value and what they can offer.

Women are often portrayed as emotional and accommodating. They are not seen as vocal and aggressive. Often, in instances of violence, they are seen as the victim (Slutzker, 2018). Although much time and effort has gone into fighting for gender equality, as of 2018, only 39% of the workforce consisted of women. They are still expected to run the household, raise children, and express their femininity. In some countries, women may be restricted from going out in public, from going to school, from speaking in public, or getting a job in the first place ("Labor Force," 2018).

Why Women?

Contrary to popular belief, however, women's contribution to society is vital to becoming a more inclusive and peaceful community. Women offer critical insights into issues, as well as promote solutions that are more comprehensive of the needs of every individual in a

community. In peacebuilding discussions, their input into tense situations can result in increasingly stable, long-lasting, and inclusive solutions. Where male leaders and military officials will be more likely to focus on military and territory-related solutions, women include humanitarian and social needs in their solutions. This ensures that concerns of the civilian population will be met as well (Barsa, et al. 6, 2016). It is essential that women be included in developing conflict solutions to ensure that gender biases and underlying societal issues are publicized and addressed.

Unique Involvement of Women in Communities

Men and women have different and unique experiences in society. They interact with different people, are treated differently, and are more attuned to different details. Because of their constant involvement and presence in the community, women may notice early signs of violence, tendencies to hostile actions, gender inequality, and other issues that should be addressed (Barsa, et al. 6, 2016). For example, Afghan women in one rural community were aware of suspicious individuals asking about sons of the villagers. When further investigation led them to believes these were members of a militant group, they sought out a government minister to report the unusual activity. He laughed at them, and one month later, 32 civilians from a bus in the area were abducted, and many were later killed (Williams, 2016). In having access and experience in areas of society that men do not, women are more effective at bridging religious, ethnic, and political divides. In Liberia, Leymah Gbowee brought Christian and Muslim women together in successful efforts to end violence by peacefully pressuring the government to find a solution (“How Liberian Women”, 2012).

Violence from the Female Perspective

Women are more affected by and aware of gender-based violence, and therefore more likely to insist that these issues be addressed in peace agreements and ceasefires, thus making the overall discussions more representative of all who are affected (Barsa et al. 11, 2016). Sexual violence and exploitation during wartime is a particularly problematic and daunting issue. Women have been victims of sexual violence during conflicts in Vietnam, Sudan, Liberia, Uganda, and numerous other places (Jefferson, 2004). These issues, including rape, trafficking, and forced prostitution may not always be reported, and therefore are not addressed when agreements are formed. Women who are victims of sexual violence become invisible and unrecognized to the government. Orphans due to war and economic downfall are commonly targeted and trafficked without consequences. They are susceptible to influence and desperate for connection and safety (Exodus Cry, 2011). Perpetrators often escape without punishment for these acts and continue causing distress and unrest. Women who experience these monstrous acts first-hand, and who are then involved in conflict solutions, can ensure that issues such as these are resolved (Jefferson, 2004). Organizations and groups such as the Women's Charter of the League of Nations and the Elimination of Violence Against Women strive to address these issues ("Women and Global Diplomacy", 2019).

Women are more aware and more likely to advocate for these issues than men, who may be guilty themselves, or simply see incidents as irrelevant to conflict solutions. 98% of sex trafficking victims are women. Labor trafficking is also common, especially in conflict areas. Labor exploitation affects both men and women at about a 60:40 ratio. Incidents such as these need to be addressed in conflict resolution and peace agreements in order to develop stronger and longer-lasting peace ("What is Human Trafficking", 2019).

Statistics

Although it may seem irrelevant to include women in ceasefire and peace agreements because of their assumed lack of military knowledge, including humanitarian needs will create a more "positive peace" atmosphere, which focuses not just on a halt to violence, but lasting social amity between disputing parties (Barsa, et al., 2016). Research has proven that involving women in negotiations and allowing them to include these issues can result in agreements being 35% more likely to last 15 years or more (Dayal, 2018). Women have composed about 4% of all peace agreements over the past 20 years (Alam et all., 2015), despite the fact that agreements involving women and civil society groups are 64% less likely to fail (Bigio, 2017).

UNSCR 1325

In light of numerous studies demonstrating that women's involvement in peace negotiations and ceasefires results in longer-lasting agreements, treaties and initiatives have been put in place to support women in politics. The United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 was adopted on October 31, 2000 and focuses on women, peace, and security. All participants are strongly encouraged to increase the participation of women in politics, with a focus on the peace and security aspect. Sections of the resolution are also dedicated to crimes against women such as trafficking, prostitution, rape, and other forms of sexual abuse, particularly during armed conflicts (Inglis, 2006). Many countries across the world have instituted their own declarations and agreements about the importance of women's equality in negotiations.

Track I vs. Track II

In the past, some women have had opportunities to be heard through Track II efforts, in which women and civil societies are included in

informal negotiation-related conversations. They also encourage change through campaigning, peaceful protests, and sit-ins (Davel, 2018). Including women and civil society organizations (CSOs) into Track I negotiations gets them a seat in the room, where they have more opportunities to feel heard and get their point across (Alam, 2015). This can be done by bringing Track II interactions to the Track 1 discussion and requiring women and civil society representatives to be present at the table (Dayal, 2018). On September 20-21, 2018 thirty female foreign ministers from around the world gathered to discuss furthering women's participation in politics and negotiations. These women recognized that "gender equality [is] central to global peace and security." A wide variety of feminist foreign policy platforms have been discussed and applied by these countries in order to encourage the feminine viewpoint (Asquith, 2018).

Women in Rwanda

Women in Rwanda have made considerable progress in their political involvement since the 1994 genocide. In 2000, they were the 37th in the world in their representation of women in an elected lower house of parliament. Today, they are the first. They are also allowed to attend school, establish businesses, and own and inherit property. When questioned about his appointment of women to key parliament positions, President Paul Kagame referred back to his own experiences in activism and the importance of women's rights. Aloisea Inyumba, as the Minister of Gender and Family Promotion, started a listening tour in order to know in-depth the needs of various communities. She traveled from village to village and interacted with civil society organizations in order to set goals. After the war, she also developed an adoption program that saved hundreds of children of all ages and ethnicities (Hunt, 2014). With an increase in women in

parliament and inclusion in peace agreements, the level of violence in the country has decreased significantly and the levels of female empowerment, safety, and employment has increased ("Georgetown Institute", 2017/18).

Including women in these decision-making processes would build an otherwise lack of trust between the community and the government. Incorporating ideas and points provided by women will make the community more accepting and willing to depend on and agree with the government, rather than clash with it (O'Reilly, 2016). The variety of ideas and thoughts that women can provide is unique, extensive, and vital to lasting peace.

Negative and Positive Peace

Because of their proximity to community activities, women can report violations such as kidnappings, disappearances, sexual assaults, and murders that may be overlooked by military officials focused on negative, war-focused peace. It is often assumed that violence is one of the most effective ways of establishing peace in conflict situations. Research from 2000 to 2006 shows that civil resistance movements such as strikes, protests, and sit-ins can have an even greater effect on the peace of a region. Non-violent movements have proven successful 53% of the time, whereas violent campaigns are only successful 26% of the time. Peaceful negotiations and protests are more receptive by all parties. They are more open to negotiation, as well as more approachable and communicative overall (Stephen, 2008).

Women and Non-violent Campaigns

In initiating protests and marches, women are more prone to organizing non-violent advocacy events. In war zones, they are often

the individuals whom other women and children will trust and feel safer approaching for help. They focus on the humanitarian needs of a community, including therapy programs and temporary schools (Williams, 2014). Because women are more prone to promoting gender equality, impressionable women may be discouraged from joining extremist groups if they know they have an outlet they can depend on for support and inclusion (Slutzker, 2018).

Bantay Ceasefire

Ceasefires are "negotiated agreements between parties that define the rules and modalities for conflict parties to stop fighting" (Barsa, 2016). It is vital that these rules incorporate the needs of everyone in the community because ceasefire agreements "that exclude [women] are more likely to fall apart" (Dayal, 2018). Establishing the Bantay ceasefire agreements in the Philippines, Mary Ann Amado assembled a group of people, known as the Mindanao Peoples Caucus, to report violations of the agreement and ensure its universal application. The group now has over 900 members composed of a diversity of religions and ethnicities and reaching across multiple territories. This parallel structure, composed of civilians, has been heavily involved in monitoring the application of the peace agreement and is now part of the official international monitoring team (Noma, 2012).

Women Taking Action in Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka, a band of mothers joined together to seek peace with the Tamil Tigers in 2000. These were the mothers of Sri Lankan soldiers missing in action. They used their identity as mothers, and their past of non-violence, to enter Tamil territory and seek contact

with the Tamil Tiger commander. These mothers of lost soldiers brought letters from other families who had also lost loved ones. Five days later, when they returned to government-controlled territory, they carried a message from the Tamil Tiger commander to the Sri Lankan government, agreeing to a ceasefire. These mothers were able to appeal to the nurturing side of the commander, who was a father himself. This negotiation did not involve military tactics, but shared feelings of empathy and respect for women. By initiating and forming strong initial cease-fire agreements, later political agreements can be made as well (Holt-Ivry. 2019).

Women's Involvement in the Conflicts in Myanmar

The struggles in Myanmar is a third example of ceasefire negotiations and the importance of women's involvement. Myanmar has been in turmoil and struggle for years. It suffers from among the longest-running conflicts in the world. On October 15, 2015, the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) was signed by Myanmar's military and eight other ethnic groups (Dunant). Part of the agreement addressed women's involvement in the government, where civil society groups and female ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) advocated for at least a 30% involvement of women. It was the female participants who also reminded negotiators that, as a signatory of the Convention to End Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the 30% participation was vital. The involvement of women in the negotiation process, although minimal, "created opportunities to increase gender awareness" through the discussion. Although clauses of the NCA that addressed women's equality could have been more enforced and monitored with a greater number of women at the table, it is still notable that they were recognized to an extent (Federer et al., 2016).

The Broadening Participation in Political Negotiations and Implementation Project

Peace negotiations after a ceasefire have included similar efforts to allow women to participate. The Broadening Participation in Political Negotiations and Implementation Project, founded by Dr. Thania Paffenholz in Switzerland, examines 40 case studies of the involvement of women and the influence they had on the initial negotiations of the agreement, the content of the agreement, and the implementation of the agreement (Dixon, 2016). The seven modalities of inclusion that she developed address different ways in which women can be included in the negotiation process, including direct Track 1 representation and seats at the table, as observers, through consultations (formal and public), through inclusive commissions, problem-solving workshops, public decision-making through votes, and mass actions and marches (Dixon, 2016). Women in both the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somaliland have been persistent in encouraging negotiator to reach an agreement before leaving the table, ensuring that it is signed and implemented in a timely manner. Their impressions of impartiality have also helped "facilitate the smooth progress of negotiations" (Dixon, 2016).

Conclusions

Negotiations techniques that include women are vital to implement as they have continued to show that women's involvement in peace agreements will make the arrangements stronger and likely to last longer. Despite declarations, there is still much work to be done in ensuring that women are equally represented and included in these processes. By bringing awareness to the importance of women's representation, global processes can be made in bringing dignity and security to every individual.

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DEMOCRATIC TRANSITIONS AND POLITICAL IDENTITIES IN AN UNCENTERED WORLD

Spontaneous and Unorganized? Reconceptualizing Formal and Informal Activism in the Armenian Women's Movement

Ani Der Grigorian | London School of Economics, Great Britain

Session Chair: Garine Palandjian, Arizona State University, USA

Discussant: Dr. Vahram Ter-Matevosyan, American University of Armenia

Abstract: Dominant social movement theories, particularly Tarrow's contentious politics paradigm, suggest that the ability for movements to achieve change is linked to the extent to which they institutionalize within formal politics. However, the literature is inadequate for understanding movement development within a post-Soviet context where movements do not follow the linear informal-to-formal transition when trying to create change. In Armenia, institutionalized forms of activism, particularly non-governmental organizations (NGOs), have been working within the formal political sphere to address social issues since the 1990s, while more informal initiatives have only just emerged in the last decade but present new opportunities to exert agency and influence change from the margins of formal institutions.

The purpose of this study is to explore the dynamics within the Armenian women's movement in order to understand formal and informal avenues used by women in Armenia to

achieve gender equality and social change. Drawing from a dozen interviews conducted between March and April 2018, this research analyzes the various approaches used by movement actors to achieve their goals. The study argues that alternative forms of contention underscore the tactics used by the women's movement and that context-specific challenges have blurred boundaries between formal and informal activism.

Keywords: NGOs, contention, activism, mobilization, women's movement.

Introduction

Social movement theorists have traditionally viewed transition into formal institutions as the end of a movement – it is the point where movements win contentious challenges and are best positioned to succeed (Tarrow, 2011). The relationship between social movements and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has often been characterized within this normative framework. The transformation of social movements to NGOs, or "NGOization," has become increasingly expected with the rapid growth of the non-profit sector globally. NGOization has also been credited with depoliticizing discourses and professionalizing practices of social movements as they institutionalize (Roy, 2015). However, the expectation for movements to institutionalize is quite limiting when trying to understand more complex movement dynamics. This paradigm offers a simplistic understanding of social movement mobilization and success, particularly in non-democratic settings (Andrew, 2010).

Post-Soviet experiences pose as a good example for examining the inadequacy of Western-centric social movement theories. Following the collapse of the socialist regimes of the former Soviet Union in

1991, Western governments and international organizations (IOs) set out to bring democracy to the region during the transition period by introducing civil society strengthening projects (Ishkanian, 2008). Rooted in the global neoliberal shift, and the economic liberalization and state rollbacks which followed, democracy building resulted in an exponential growth of the NGO sector in the region. Through "imported" NGOization, civil society in post-Soviet states was diminished to Wester-funded NGOs preoccupied with service provision and advocacy (Ishkanian, 2009). Unlike movement institutionalization in the West, NGOization post-communism was not the natural process of civil society as it was artificially introduced. While the "non-participatory" and "weak" natures of post-Soviet civil society led scholars to deem social movements non-existent in the region altogether, the Western-centric expectation for mass mobilization effectively overlooks all forms of relevant mobilization and collective actions that existed beyond the institutionalization path (Ishkanian, 2009; Jacobsson & Saxonberg, 2013, p. 1). In Armenia, institutionalized forms of activism, particularly NGOs, have been working within the formal political sphere to address social issues since the 1990s, while more informal initiatives have only just emerged in the last decade. They present new opportunities to exert agency and influence change from the margins of formal institutions. This divergence from the contentious politics paradigm presents an opportunity to consider how imported NGOization has shaped both formal and informal approaches to social change in post-Soviet spaces.

To explore the ways in which social movements in post-Soviet contexts disrupt traditional contentious politics, this study uses the Armenia women's movements as a case study. Taking the assumption that post-Soviet movements do not follow a linear

movement institutionalization trajectory, I will present three trends emerging from research conducted on the Armenian women's movement to illustrate how post-Soviet movements continue to challenge hegemonic movement discourses. First, I will argue that actors within the women's movement take on alternative forms of mobilization that arise out of context-specific conditions, which characterize the movement landscape and challenge mobilization expectations set forth by protest-wave theorist. Next, I will argue that non-traditional forms of contention underlie the alternative forms of mobilization and are a determining factor in repertoires of action employed by women's NGOs and feminist activists. Finally, I will contend that the interdependence between movement actors has blurred the boundaries between formal and informal activism, ultimately leading to innovation of approaches used by women in Armenia to achieve change.

I begin my discussion by briefly introducing the relevant literature and methodological framework before presenting and examining the findings of my interviews with the movement's actors.

Literature Review

Understanding Contentious Politics and Movement Institutionalization

Contentious Politics.Attempts to understand how movements emerge, sustain themselves, and ultimately create change have been dominated by the contentious politics paradigm (Goodwin & Jasper, 2003). Contentious politics is the result of different actors coming together in opposition to those in power. According to Tarrow (2011), contentious politics is sparked when changes in political opportunity arise, thus incentivizing collective action by those who may have inadequate resources to mobilize on their own. While collective

action can take several forms, it becomes contentious when it is used by those with limited access to "better-equipped opponents and powerful states" as their main form of mobilization – the ability to sustain action is said to be the basis of social movements (Tarrow, 2011, p. 8).

Acts of contention are informed by repertoires of contention (or repertoires of action), which are "the ways that people act together in pursuit of shared interest" (Tilly, 1995, p. 41). Repertoires of contention consist of the different tactics activist draw upon in times of mobilizations – modern repertoires are thought to include mass mobilization in the forms of rallies, boycotts, strikes, and media campaigns (Della Porta & Diani, 2006). Repertoires of contention are often expanded and improved with each new cycle of contention (Tarrow, 2011). Cycles of contention are based on the idea that contention takes place in waves. With each new movement cycle, activists use new, innovative repertoires that are learned from previous movements (Della Porta & Diani, 2006). With each cycle, those positioned outside of formal politics make claims to institutional politics, using repertoires of action to challenge political elites (Tilly, 1978). Cycles of contention also bring about "the creation of new or transformed collective action frames, a combination of organized and unorganized participation, and sequences of intensified information flow and interaction between challengers and authorities" (Tarrow, 2011, p. 199). New cycles of contentious collective action are triggered by openings in the political opportunity structure. While new opportunities encourage new cycles of contention, threats, such as political repression, disincentivize them. Meyer (2004) further argues that political opportunity determines the context within which movements emerge. Thus, changes in the opportunity structure determine

grievances that movements organize around. With the political opportunity structure, the relationship between actors in social movements and institutional politics becomes clear – openings in the political structure allows for movements to challenge their peripheral position to institutions and make claims to ultimately join formal politics (Tilly, 1978).

Further focusing on the importance of institutional changes and external influence while still placing contention at its basis, McCarthy and Zald's (1977) resource mobilization theory (RMT) takes a rational approach in explaining how actors in collective action are able to attain the resources necessary to mobilize and sustain further movement formation. Resource mobilization theories emphasize the importance of structures and formal institutions to social movements, which they see as being made up of professional social movement organizations (SMOs). SMOs are important in movement maintenance as they consolidate many resources necessary for movements sustainability, such as specialization in skills, money, people, facilities, and legitimacy (Chester & Welsh, 2011). While RMT theorists argue that SMOs are a fundamental component of cycles of contention, critics argue that they have become more concerned with organizational sustenance (rather than overall movement sustenance) which has resulted in more conservative repertoires of action being taken up by SMOs, usually at the cost of more radical forms of collective action (Tarrow, 2011).

The contentious politics paradigm offers a convincing conceptualization of movement trajectories. Traditional conceptualizations of social movements emphasize the rationality behind movement actor choices in repertoires undertaken. While this is useful when accounting for movement dynamics in formal institutions, it does not fully account for informal movement actors, who may see emotion and grievance as equally important resource (Jasper, 1989).

Movement Institutionalization. Within social movement scholarship, the dominant paradigm views social movements as emerging out of non-institutional challenges in attempts to become part of formal politics. As such, institutionalization of movements has become an assumed stage in their lifecycle – it is presumed to be the natural progression for movement actors and organization (Della Porta & Diani, 2006; Tilly, 1978). Blumer (1951) identified institutionalization as the end of a movement's lifecycle, as it is when "the movement becomes an organic part of society and crystalizes into a professional structure" (cited in Della Porta & Diani, 2006, p. 150). Tarrow (2011) defines institutionalization as the "professionalization of a movement" – the movements organizational structures become more professional and replicate vertical social structures in order to better connect with those in power and be deemed legitimate within the socio-political sphere. (p. 21-22; Douglas, 1986). According to Tilly (1978), this professionalization results in loss of the movements grassroots nature. Meyer and Tarrow (1998) add that institutionalization is essential for movements to "self-sustain," and provide three main characteristics of institutionalization: 1) collective action routine, 2) inclusion of institutionally-oriented activists in the political system, while those who challenge institutional politics are marginalized, and 3) co-optation of activist activities.

Essentially, movements that are able to establish themselves within existing institutions are better positioned to sustain themselves and have an impact than movements that attempt to find new organizational spaces. Thus, movement institutionalization is seen as a logical progression for movements in achieving their goals (McAdams, Tarrow, & Tilly 2001; Tarrow, 2011).

Meyer and Tarrow (1998) further argue that institutionalized forms of social movements have become a conventional part of society, particularly in industrial democracies – a phenomenon they call "Social Movement Society." That processes of institutionalization and

SMO professionalization have brought movement behaviors within accepted democratic practices and conventional politics. With institutionalization becoming more commonplace, participation in contentious politics increases, but the repertoires of contention also become institutionalized. More disruptive forms of collective action are replaced by more conservative approaches (Chester & Welsh, 2011; Meyer & Tarrow, 1998). However, as the "Social Movement Society" age continues, not all movements institutionalize. In fact, movement institutionalization often coincides with the rise in radical activism made up of those who feel institutional politics will not resolve their grievances, thus they do not seek to be a part of the political system (Della Porta & Diani, 2006; Tarrow, 2011).

With the exponential growth in the NGO sector, the transition of grassroots movements to formal NGOs, or NGOization, has become a parallel process to that of movement institutionalization (Choudry & Kapoor, 2013; Jacobsson & Saxonberg, 2013). As the sector continues to grow globally, processes of institutionalization have become increasingly NGO-centric, which has ultimately created an NGO-movement dichotomy (Meyer & Jepperson, 2000). Rothschild and Whitt (1986) argue that the process of NGOization requires a movement's properties to shift towards that of an NGO. Characteristics of this include shift from consensus-based decision making to a hierarchal structure, formalization of organization activities within a legal framework, addition of material incentives for participation rather than reliance on solidarity-based participation, and increased technical specialization. These changes are credited for the deradicalization of grassroots initiatives from which NGOs emerge (Choudry & Kapoor, 2013; Kamat, 2004; Lang, 2013; Rootheschild & Whitt, 1986).

While NGOization has a similar impact on movements as other forms of institutionalization, what sets this process apart is the neoliberal policy context which gave birth to it and created a space within which

NGOs operate (Kamat, 2004). As a result, NGOization has shifted target issues of movements – turned – NGOs – organizational maintenance and institutional survival are prioritized, usually at the expense of mass mobilization. NGOization within a neoliberal context has further shifted the role of NGOs to that of gap filler, providing goods and services that the state is unable or unwilling to provide (Choudry & Kapoor, 2013).

The repercussions of this process have been highly contested. Arundhati Roy (2004) argues that that NGOization has undermined progress made by social movements that aim to create grassroots change. The negative impact of movement NGOization is felt more heavily in the Global South where top-down neoliberal policies have not only professionalized community-level organizations, but have also rendered them dependent on donors. As a result, securing funding and material support are prioritized over accountability to the communities from which NGOs emerged . Critics fear that NGOization, particularly within a neoliberal policy context, has rendered NGOs donor dependent entities that provide technocratic solutions rather than challenging structures of inequality, ultimately losing their grassroots base and support (Choudry & Kapoor, 2013; Lang, 2013).

Ultimately, expectations for institutionalization, including NGOization, create a dichotomy between social movements and formal institutions. This binary is rooted in the assumption that institutionalization is at the cost of mass mobilization, which presents a problem when accounting for movement landscapes that do not follow cyclical movement trajectories (Piven & Cloward, 1979).

NGOization in Post-Soviet Armenia

During the transition period, public spheres in post-Soviet states were deemed weak as they had low levels of public participation,

limited number of formal organizations, and reflected an overall disconnect between civil society and state. Furthermore, advocates of liberal democratization attributed the failure of democracy and the establishment of democratic institutions to this weakness of civil society (Ishkanian, 2008; Morje Howard, 2003). Jacobsson and Saxonberg (2013) further suggest that the conceptualization of civil society as weak has led to assumptions that social movements and other forms of mass mobilization have not occurred in the region.

NGOization in Armenia followed this path. Democracy-building efforts resulted in foreign-funded NGOs pursuing issues of human rights (which were seen as necessary for democratization), whose tactics mainly included technocratic policy solutions, advocacy efforts around narrow issues, and service provision (Ishkanian, 2008). Expanding on this claim, Ishkanian argues that the rapid growth of Armenia's post-communist civil society has resulted in a "genetically engineer[ed] civil society" which does not reflect Armenia's natural NGO arena (p. 23). This artificial growth of the public sphere ultimately thwarted the development of a healthy civil society and diminished the capacity of the public sector, further driving a wedge in the relationship between Armenians and the public sphere (Carothers, 2010; Choudry & Kapoor, 2013; Ishkanian, 2008).

Ultimately, NGOization in Armenia is rooted in realties that disrupt the contentious politics framework for understanding movement development. First, by placing entry into the formal sphere in opposition to movements, the institutionalization path assumes the existence of a democratic state and democratic institutions. Dynamics of contention often position social movements on the periphery of democratic institutions when accounting for the institutionalization path (McAdams et. al., 2001). When considering the case of Armenia, the assumption of democracy does not hold up as the country's political sphere does not mirror Western democracies, as Armenia is classified as a "semi-consolidated

authoritarian regime" . The political and economic elite continue to dominate an institutional sphere which is defined by its "limited respect for the institutions and practice of democracy" and characterized as "fail[ing] to meet the minimum standard" of a democratic state (Freedom House, 2018). Thus, assuming that the institutionalization path will guarantee access to formal politics presents bleak prospects for social change. Second, institutionalization was not the natural progression of grassroots movements in Armenia – the growth of the NGO sector is linked to the "imported" NGOization promoted by Western donors in the 1990s which aimed to establish the democratic institutions assumed to be necessary for the institutionalization path. As NGOization was not seen as a natural progression of grassroots movements, the NGOs that emerged in Armenia were seen as having little grassroots claims (Ishkanian, 2007).

Case Selection and Methodology

I have chosen the women's movement in Armenia as a case study to explore formal and informal activism and their divergence from hegemonic social movement paradigms by examining the dynamics between the movement's main actors: women's rights NGOs and independent feminist activists. Since post-Soviet civil society has been dominated by NGOs, women's movements have often been equated to the existence of women's rights NGOs; this has left informal feminist activism in the region understudied. Thus, for the purpose of this study I have expanded the understanding of women's movement to include grassroots feminist initiatives and will collectively refer to them as the Armenian women's movement. The origins, organizational structures, and tactics of the movement's actors present an opportunity to explore both formal and informal activism within one movement landscape.

In the 1990s women's rights activism in Armenia was dominated by women's rights NGO as the NGO sector experienced rapid growth during the "genetic engineering" of civil society in Armenia (Ishkanian, 2008). Imported NGOization has a few implications regarding the nature of the NGOs' work. First, donors have significant influence in setting NGO target issues and solutions, limiting NGO autonomy and diversity (Johnson & Zaynullina, 2010). In the case of women's NGOs in Armenia, women's empowerment and anti-domestic violence projects received a bulk of international funding – these issues remain a primary concern of NGOs today. Solutions pursued are generally policy- and service-oriented (i.e. anti-domestic violence law, shelter, hotlines, and police trainings). The second implication is that women's NGOs are not an organic product of civil society because they were institutionalized without grassroots support and continue to be entrenched in the formal setting within which they emerged (Ishkanian, 2007, 2008).

The rise in feminist activism in the country coincided with the growth of grassroots movement, also known as "civic initiatives," which took place in the late 2000s, over a decade after the rise of women's NGOs (Ishkanian, 2015). Feminist initiatives loosely mirror the non-hierarchal organizational structure of civic initiatives: they are volunteer-based and use consensus decision-making. Several grassroots groups coexist in the movement landscape today, and initiatives typically consist of 3-12 individuals. Although feminism in Armenia continues to be viewed negatively even by some women who work in women's NGO sector, feminist activism in Armenia engages a diverse range of feminist political thought, which plays a role in determining initiative issues and tactics (Ishkanian, 2007, 2015).

Ultimately, the Armenian women's movement is an appropriate case for studying divergence in post-Soviet movements from the contentious politics model because the movement landscape is

characterized by the "imported" NGOization of women's right NGOs within the formal sphere and informal grassroots feminist initiatives on the periphery. The dynamics from the Armenian women's movement landscape presents an opportunity to study emerging relationships and exchanges, which remain understudied and currently present challenges to the contentious politics paradigm.

Ideological Foundation of Feminism of Initiative/Organization	Main Issues	Main Tactics	Mobilization Type
Radical/ Anarchist	Anti-imperialism; Anti-neoliberalism; Anti-militarism; Anti-nationalism	Anonymous publications; group discussions; translating feminist text; protests and demonstrations; street art/graffiti	Civic self-organization; Radical
Communist	Anti-capitalism, anti-neoliberalism, economic/labor justice	Self-education groups; group discussions; protests and demonstrations; publishing texts	Civic self-organization; Radical
Eco-	Environmental Justice/anti-mining	Public actions; occupying public spaces	Civic self-organization; Radical
Liberal (NGOs)	Domestic Violence; Sexual and Reproductive Rights	Advocacy; policy-implementation; service provision; capacity building; issue networks	Transactional
Queer	Sexuality; Sexual Liberation; LGBT rights	Street art/graffiti; art exhibits; publishing text; discussions/forums	Civic self-organization; Radical

Figure 1: Armenian Women's Movement Landscape.

Because this study is exploratory in nature, using a semi-structured and open-ended interview style best allowed me to collect a wide range of perspectives to understand the emerging dynamics within the Armenian women's movement landscape. Interviews were

conducted between March 28 and April 12, 2018 and reflect the nature of the social movement landscape of Armenia up until that point. Using a purposeful sampling approach, and to a lesser extent snowball sampling (Bryman, 2012), I recruited respondents that represented the full spectrum of actors in the women's movement landscape. A total of 12 respondents were recruited (see Figure 2; additional respondent details can be found in Appendix 2).

Number of Respondents:	Category of Respondent:
4	NGO and/or IO Staff
3	Former NGO and/or IO Staff; Independent Activist
3	Independent Activist
2	NGO Staff; Identify as Independent Activist
	Total Number of Respondents: 12

Figure 2: Respondent Summary

In order to allow respondents to best express their ideas and positions, eight of the interviews were conducted in the respondents' native language (Armenian), while the remaining four were done in English. Each interview was conducted adhering to a topic guide which reflected the aim of the research and lasted between 26 to 90 minutes (see Appendix 1). Each interview was audio recorded with consent from the respondent. Interviews were then summarized, translated (if necessary), and time coded in preparation for thematic coding. Initially, a wide range of themes were identified from the data. Subsequently, they were divided into three overarching themes – "movement-relevant behavior," "contention and change," and "blurring of formal and informal." To further protect participants, each respondent was given a pseudonym (which they will be referred to by hereafter) to protect their identity and maintain confidentiality.

Finally, in order to ensure the research design chosen for this study centered the women interviewed, a feminist methodological approach underscored the research process. Qualitative research, particularly in the form of interviews, presents an opportunity to conduct feminist research free of hierarchies, thus my choice to conduct semi-structured interviews for this study stems from my wish to challenge inequality often reproduced in research (Bryman, 2012; DeVault, 1996). Additionally, particular attention was paid to my position as a "halfie" researcher (Subedi, 2006, p. 574). My "halfie" or semi-insider position is linked to my experiences as a diasporan Armenian, which has implications for how I perceive the field, as well as how respondents perceive me. Being a semi-insider to an extent legitimizes my presence in the field – knowing the language, sharing cultural practices, and having some experience working with women's movement actors in the country was an important entry point. However, these similarities are not enough to deem me a full-insider, because the uneven power dynamics that exist between myself and the respondents, informed by Western bias, privileges me for being from the West (i.e. Western "education privilege" and freedom of movement to travel to and from the field) (Subedi, 2006, p. 578). Therefore, acknowledging researcher positionality becomes particularly important in this case because of the complex relationship between researcher and field, and the power dynamics which emerge from it.

Main Findings and Discussion

Movement Relevant Behavior

In this section I focus on the alternative forms of mobilization which do not align with dominant expectations for mass mobilization set forth in the contentious politics framework for understanding

movement trajectories. Throughout my interviews with movement actors in Armenia, it became evident early on that that conceptualization of what and who constitutes a "movement" was quite expansive. I will argue that actors within the women's movement in Armenia take on alternative forms of mobilization that arise out of context specific conditions. These "movement-relevant behaviors" ultimately characterize the movement landscape and challenge mobilization expectations set forth by protest-wave theorists (Jacobsson & Saxonberg, 2013).

The traditional movement institutionalization path is contingent on engaging with contentious politics to gain access to the formal political sphere (Tilly, 1978). However, the contentious politics paradigm described before does not adequately explain the Armenian women's movement landscape, particularly because mass mobilization, or any form of mass participatory actions, is not a common occurrence. Additionally, Armenian civil society is characterized by the imported NGOization that gave rise to formal NGOs rather than the movement-to-NGO institutionalization path. From my conversations with movement actors, it was clear that disenfranchisement from public sphere presented bleak prospects for mass activism. In reality, the movement landscape in Armenia cannot be separated from the post-Soviet transitional period experienced in the 1990s which shaped civil society development and altered perceptions of public space in pursuit of democracy. Disappointment in this era has been met with limited engagement and participation by citizens with civil society (Morje Howard, 2003). Reflecting on the virtual nonexistence of mass mobilization in Armenia, Gohar, a local NGO co-founder explained,

> "There is limited movement from society. People don't take to the streets or participate in any civic or political activism. They are

> disheartened, they don't think they will make any change." (Interview, April 4, 2018).

Gohar's statement reflects the fact that widespread participatory movement behavior is not commonplace throughout the Armenia. However, while mass mobilization is limited in the wake of failed democratization, alternative forms of mobilization do exist, and are used in pursuit of social change. When a narrow conceptualization of contentious politics is used to understand movement trajectories (as in the institutionalization path), "movement-relevant behavior" is effectively overlooked (Jacobsson & Saxonberg, 2013, p. 1). Among several of the respondents I spoke to, there was a shared concern with narrow conceptualization of what a movement is, as it runs the risk of dismissing the grassroots activity and more peripheral forms of activism that do exist in Armenia, which may not fit traditional expectations for mass mobilization.

Rather than fitting into the boundaries and stages of the traditional contentious politics paradigm, the women's movement in Armenia emerged from context-specific conditions which manifest as alternative forms of mobilization and thus constitutes movement-relevant behavior (Petrov & Tarrow, 2007). Despite concerns for limited space for activism in the public sphere, as expressed by Gohar, women's movement actors engage in movement-relevant behavior.

On the one hand, NGOs mobilize within the formal sphere. Entrenched in the neoliberal policy-context of NGOized Armenian civil society, women's NGOs' mobilization can be described as "transactional activism" (Cisar, 2013, p. 143). Transactional activism is employed by more organized actors to form coalitions and strengthen networks to engage with political elite, usually while pushing forth a specific issue. As women's NGOs engage with

narrowly-defined issue areas within the policy sphere, we can place NGO activism within the boundaries of transactional activism. While the transactional activism undertaken by women's NGOs was an "imported" phenomenon, it has become an arena for mobilization. Although the transformative and emancipatory potential of NGOs' transactional activism has been questioned, their relative achievements, particularly in policy spheres, is worthy of acknowledgment.

Parallel to NGOs, independent feminists organize outside of formal politics. Arising from grassroots movement to re-politicize wider civil society and radicalize the women's movement, feminist activists' mobilization can be classified as "civic self-organization" and "radical activism" (Cisar, 2013, p. 143). Civic self-organization and radical activism manifest as independent initiatives without serious organizational ties, consisting of informal networks and individual activism . Though grassroots feminist initiatives are not widespread throughout civil society and are not able to mobilize the masses, feminist activists stress their importance. Not only do feminists see their initiatives as pertinent to the success of the women's movement, but also throughout wider efforts for democratization in the country, as they are described by feminists as the "most consistent grassroots civic initiative" within Armenia (Araz, Interview, March 28, 2018). As one feminist activist expressed, "A movement isn't only about numbers – we may be small, but we exist nonetheless" (Knar, Interview, April 5, 2018).

Ultimately, what we see is, despite the non-democratic setting and limited opportunity for mass participatory actions, different forms of movement-relevant behavior taking place within the movement landscape. Considering alternative mobilization is an important step in recognizing that context shapes what direction movements

assume and that activists have the agency to employ different repertoires to achieve change, even when mass mobilization is not a viable option.

Contention and Change

As alternative types of mobilization exist within the Armenian women's movement landscape, this section aims to explain why actors choose to mobilize differently. While hegemonic conceptions of contention view a movement's ability to achieve change in conjunction with gaining access to formal politics, both women's NGOs and feminist activists in Armenia diverge from the classical dynamics when acting contentiously. I argue that non-traditional forms of contention underlie the alternative forms of mobilization present in the women's movement landscape – women's NGOs and feminist activists engage in "consentful" and "contentious" contention respectfully, which is determined by their approaches to change (Turbine, 2015, p. 330). The departure from classical contentious politics not only explains the divergence in issues targeted and repertoires of actions adopted, but also begins to unravel how each group attempts to achieve their goals. To best illustrate these dynamics and relationships, I will use engagement with domestic violence as a consistent example in my discussion and examine attitudes and reactions to anti-domestic violence legislation in the country.

Women's NGOs and Consentful Contention.Consentful contention underscores women's organizations' transactional activism. Organizations engaging in "consentful" contention do not challenge the state, nor are they in opposition to the regime, rather changes they pursue are defined within the frames of the existing power structures (Turbine, 2015, p. 330). The issue of domestic violence has

been a central part of NGO work – during the process of NGOization in Armenia, women's organization were subsidized to pursue solutions for domestic violence as it was seen as essential to democratization (Ishkanian, 2008; Johnson & Zaynullina, 2010). However, because of donor constraints and the deradicalized environment, NGO mobilization around the issue has be consentful in nature and therefore framed within the formal political sphere (i.e. laws, trainings, shelters). This can explain the technocratic repertoires of action which have predominantly materialized as advocating for a law which criminalizes domestic violence, and providing specialized services for survivors (i.e. shelters, hotlines, legal support). The rights-based framing (i.e. "Women's Rights as Human Rights") employed is an additional indicator to the consentful nature of NGO work, as it is necessary to maintain legibility within state-apparatuses, which are obliged under state and international law to protect human rights (Johnson and Zaynullina, 2010). Thus, maintaining a relationship with the political elite is an important component of transactional mobilization: NGOs recognize that the government is a "partner" and a potential "avenue for change" (Knar, Interview, April 5, 2018).

In December 2017, women's NGOs in Armenia reached a milestone with the passage of a law by the country's National Assembly criminalizing violence in the family, which is derivative of an anti-domestic violence bill presented by a coalition of women's NGOs (Nikoghosyan, 2017). While some within the women's NGO sphere were upset with the dilution of the cause, other NGO representatives were clear in stating that, "working within the system" was a critical approach for achieving a comprehensive domestic violence solution, even if it is gradual (Knar, Interview, April 5, 2018). Narine, a lawyer at a local NGO, states, "We recognize that we need to target societal

thinking, but we need governmental change too" (Interview, April 8, 2018).

When asked about the anti-domestic violence legislation, particularly whether it should be considered a victory for women in Armenia in pursuit of gender equality, Gohar responded:

> "This is a victory because now we have a preventative mechanism in place. We don't know how it works exactly, but it's there and that's progress." (Interview, April 4, 2018).

From Gohar's statement it became clear that "progress" was measured within the boundaries of formal politics. NGO support for the domestic violence law is an act of consentful contention because it addresses the specific issue that organizations are after but does not necessarily touch upon or push back against the structures that are in place. For women's NGOs, having a formal tool to maneuver political structures is part of the rational progression for NGOs in pursuit of greater gender equality. Ultimately, by engaging in consentful contention, women's NGOs side-step mass mobilization and attempt to create change while also maintaining their relevance within the formal political sphere.

Independent Feminists and Contentious Contention. In contrast to the technical and depoliticized repertoires that emerge from consentful contention, independent feminists engage in "contentious" contention in an attempt to "re-politicize" the movement landscape that was deradicalized as a result of NGOization (Turbine, 2015, p. 330). Independent feminist activism presents an important challenge to classical contentious politics by going against the assumption that the goal of mobilization is access to formal institutions (Tarrow, 2011; Turbine, 2015). Unlike women's rights organizations, grassroots mobilization is not defined by structure, rather they make an active effort to disrupt it (Jacobsson and Saxonburg, 2013). In a deliberate

attempt to remain informal, grassroots initiatives maintain opposition to structures by engaging in activism that is overtly contentious and addressed using “spontaneous and unorganized” (ink'nabukh yev ankazmakerp) tactics (Araz, Interview, March 28, 2018). This is further rooted in the fact that grassroots feminist initiatives are meant to reclaim the “emancipatory potential of civil society,” which was diminished with NGOization, as they see it as linked to the emancipation of women (Ishkanian, 2009, p. 10). For feminists, grassroots mobilization is rooted in addressing wider structures of inequality.

Ideological and political motivations underscored informal feminist activism – an aspect that is not as obvious in NGO work (Polanska and Chimiak, 2016). Thus, the most important factor in informal feminist activism is that it is political. As Tatev, who formerly worked at a local NGO but has since left because she felt it was too constraining, states, “It’s about politicizing your own experiences” (Tatev, Interview, April 11, 2018). This sentiment was echoed by all feminist activists I talked to, and it was a basis of their feminist activism. Additionally, although many of the feminist activist respondents I spoke too identified differently along the ideological spectrum, they all agreed that the policy and service-oriented solutions of NGOs did not present promising prospects for ending domestic violence. With particular reference to the anti-domestic violence bill mentioned before, Araz states, “This law does not end domestic violence” (Interview, March 28, 2018). Lilit further elaborates,

> “This law is not a victory, it doesn’t solve the problem, and it problematically draws boundaries around what is considered a women’s issue. … From a feminist perspective it is mournful and makes it seem like women have no other issues.” (Interview, April 4, 2018).

Lilit's dissatisfaction with the repertoires used by women's NGOs reflects a wider issue feminist activists have with NGOs "working within the system." In fact, several feminist activists laughed when asked if they thought the bill passed in December was a victory for women. For Tatev, criticism of NGOs and their tactics is linked to a wider criticism of structural inequality, which is integral to her feminist activism. She explains,

> "The freedom and ability to express myself as a feminist is also linked to criticism of NGOs, and criticism of the neoliberal system [NGOs] represent. And criticism of the colonial system, and the top-down structure of the donor agenda." (Interview, April 11, 2018).

The informal types of activism undertaken by independent feminists is to an extent a response to the degree of NGOization taking place within Armenian civil society – contentious contention is an attempt to balance uneven power relations within the public sphere (Polanska & Chimiak, 2016). When asked what contentious solutions to domestic violence would look like, the most common answer was "cultural revolution," which "comes from the grassroots," not the IOs, the state, or NGOs (Araz, Interview, March 28, 2018).

Ultimately, the dynamics of contention women's movement with which actors engage diverge from one another based on the mobilization type they undertake, but both present a challenge to classical contentious politics nonetheless. Women's NGOs engage in consentful contention because they emerged within a formal political sphere: rather than seeking to transition to an institutionalized form, they work to maintain their formal status. On the other hand, in an attempt to re-politicize the movement landscape, feminist activism engages in contentious contention. With the intention to remain informal and peripheral, grassroots feminist repertoires are "spontaneous and unorganized." Therefore classical contentious

politics and the assumed movement trajectory are diverted by women's movement actors in Armenia.

Blurring of Formal and Informal

Perhaps the most commonly recurring theme to emerge from my interviews was the fact that no movement actor, formal or informal, was completely detached from the other. While the divergence in activism between the two groups discussed in the previous section presents the impression that women's NGOs and feminist activists are disconnected, the reality is much more complex. In this section I will argue that boundaries between the groups are constantly distorted as the women's movement actors engage in "surreptitious symbiosis" (Glasius & Ishkanian, 2015, p. 2620). This interdependence between the two groups poses an additional challenge to the contentious politics and because it begins to break down the dichotomous understanding of formalized and informal actors within the movement.

On the most fundamental level, NGOs play an important role as intermediaries between feminism and young women in Armenia. Emerging from the NGOization of women's rights in the country, training and NGO projects actually became an important "entry point to information" for many independent feminist activists. Several respondents mentioned NGO-led women's rights and gender equality trainings as being their first introduction to feminism (Araz, Interview, March 28, 2018). As Anahit emphasized, "I know that if there weren't NGOs, I wouldn't be a feminist today, I know this (Anahit, Interview, April 12, 2018)." Women's NGOs are "institutional channels that transmit feminist ideologies and concepts" to women in Armenia who may not have any other formal introduction to them, and ultimately play an important role in the formation of feminist

consciousness (Chen, 2014, p. 192). For instance, Tatev, who formerly worked at a women's NGO, explained that she got involved with the NGO through a "My Body, My Rights" training. For her, this was the first time she was able to engage with issues that resembled her own bodily experiences. While today Tatev is highly critical of the liberal feminist discourses NGOs promote, she recognizes the important role they played in her own feminist consciousness building and entry into more contentious activism.

Moving beyond construction of feminist consciousness, there is an indisputable interdependence between NGOs and independent feminists in terms of resources and reliance within the movement landscape that further complicates the binary between formal and informal. This phenomenon is known as "surreptitious symbiosis" and has several implications regarding the dynamics within the women's movement in Armenia (Glasius & Ishkanian, 2015, p. 2620).

The first significant effect of this relationship is that NGOs provide support to grassroots feminist initiatives, which then allows independent activists to have greater access to resources without having to compromise informality. Commenting on this relationship, Knar, an NGO staff member and an active independent feminist, said, "NGOs are a resource, you just have to know how to use them" (Interview, April, 5, 2018). Using the example of her own personal grassroots initiative – an anti-militarism street-art activity – Knar continued to describe the dynamic:

> "I applied to [X] NGO's grant to do my project. … In the end, this isn't an NGO project, it was my idea that came from me and it reflects local issues and local concerns. It's grassroots! The NGO just gave me the resources to do it." (Interview, April, 5, 2018).

Access to NGO resources allows for grassroots initiatives to maintain their mobilization without having to institutionalize. This is an

important aspect of post-Soviet movement dynamics which do not reflect a dichotomous choice between grassroots activism and NGOization. Knar's situation also reflects another reality within the movement's landscape – many of the independent feminists in Armenia also work in the women's NGOs. Glasius and Ishkanian (2015) argue that "the reason NGOs support activists is because NGO staff are themselves activists" (p. 2638). Every single person I spoke to had at some point been a staff member or contracted employee of a women's NGO. Araz explains, "Activists work in the NGO sphere because of financial difficulties, it is their source of income (Interview, March 28, 2018)" Referring to spontaneous actions by feminists and planning meetings for grassroots initiatives, Tatev explains, "You will see NGO people there, but they are not there as representatives of NGOs, they are there as independent feminists." She then adds, "There is only so much you can do within an NGO (Interview, April 11, 2018)." Like Knar, many independent feminists engage in more radical forms of activism in an individual capacity, while continuing to work in NGOs.

Another effect of surreptitious relationships between movement actors is that it provides NGOs an opportunity for "de-coupling" (Jacobsson & Saxonberg, 2013, p. 6). By de-coupling, NGOs continue with the projects they are required to do in order to formally meet the needs and criteria of the donor they are accountable to, while also supporting the needs of the local grassroots feminist base. By providing organizational space, material and financial support, and specialized information, NGOs are able to meet the needs of independent feminist activists and support grassroots approaches to change (Glasius & Ishkanian, 2015). While some in the Armenian women's movement landscape welcome the NGOs' attempt at de-coupling, others question if it is really possible, stating that it remains

rooted in the uneven dynamics which give NGOs more control and power in grassroots initiatives.

Ultimately, the women's movement landscape in Armenia challenges classical contentious politics and the assumption that formal and informal activism are dichotomous. Not only do informal grassroots initiatives and formalized NGOs exist within the same movement sphere, but the boundaries of the formal and informal are being pushed by movement actors who cooperate, cross-over, and challenge traditional organization lines by engaging in "surreptitious symbiosis." As Araz states,

> "It is problematic to pit NGOs and grassroots organization against each other, because the reality of Armenia doesn't allow for NGOs and grassroots activists to be separate." (Interview, March 28, 2018).

Conclusion

With this study, I set out to explore the ways in which the dominant movement institutionalization paradigm is inadequate when studying post-Soviet movement development. Using the Armenian women's movement as a case study, I argued that classical contentious politics is challenged by movement actors in Armenia because alternative forms of contention underscore tactics used by women's movement actors in their pursuit of social change. I further argued that context-specific challenges have blurred the boundaries between formal and informal activism, ultimately leading to innovation of approaches used by women in Armenia to achieve change.

Despite the non-democratic context and limited space for mass mobilization, the women's movement in Armenia is characterized by alternative types of mobilizations that emerge from context-specific

conditions. For women's NGOs, their transactional activism is a product of imported NGOization, while more radical forms of activism undertaken by grassroots feminists is in response to the deradicalization of civil society because of NGOization. Although movement-relevant behaviors in Armenia's women's movement do not meet expectations for mass participatory action set forth by classical contentious politics, they are important avenues for creating change.

Additionally, approaches to change in the movement are underscored by non-traditional forms of contention. While the traditional institutionalization path identifies transition to formal politics as a goal of social movements, women's NGOs in Armenia were developed within an institutionalized setting. Thus, they seek to maintain their position within formal politics rather than transition into it. As such they engage in "consentful' contention, presenting limited challenges to the structures of power with their activism. On the other hand, grassroots feminists actively choose to stay informal. By engaging in "contentious" contention, which presented overt disruption to structures of inequality, activists maintain "spontaneous and unorganized" mobilization. Furthermore, women's NGOs and feminist activists had a surreptitious relationship which allowed for cooperation and resource sharing, while maintaining different forms of mobilization. This relationship blurs the boundaries between formal NGOs and informal activist and challenges the dichotomous understanding of the two presented in hegemonic movement discourses. Ultimately, the context within which the Armenian women's movement operates diverge from the contentious politics framework. These discrepancies have become a source for innovation and alternative approaches to change pursued by movement actors.

Finally, in presenting my concluding thoughts it only seems appropriate to reflect on the current condition of Armenian civil society. On April 12, 2018, I completed my final interview for this study while sitting in Yerevan's Mashtots Park – the site of an early grassroots civic initiative. The next day, thousands of Armenians took to the streets against former president Serzh Sargsyan's strangle hold on the country's political system, effectively marking the beginning of the Armenian Velvet Revolution. Following ten days of mass civil disobedience, Sargsyan resigned after a week as prime minister.

Reflecting on the events which took place in April, the research for this study presents a valuable snapshot of Armenian civil society right before movement dynamics were drastically altered. Although the long-term effect of such rapid transformation is unknown, the short-term impacts suggest an undoubtable shift in societal perceptions of public space and renewed faith in the transformative potential of mass mobilization. As such, I suggest the findings of this study as a baseline pertaining to the post-Soviet challenges to hegemonic movement discourses, rather than a definitive reality. I began this study hoping not only to present the discrepancy of the movement institutionalization paradigm when exploring movement dynamics in Armenia, but also to begin reconceptualizing what alternatives better account for the women's movement landscape. Bearing in mind that movements are not static, I leave off with the prospects of furthering this research, in an attempt to understand how democratization and changes in the civil society-state relationship further impact both formal and informal activism within Armenia's public sphere moving forward.

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Appendix 1: Interview Guide

1. About Respondent:
   a. Background? Organization affiliation? Women's movement involvement?
2. Women's NGOs:
   a. About your organization
   b. Issues organization targets? How are target issues selected?
   c. Is feminism central to the work of your organization?
   d. Do you engage with feminist organizers outside of your organization?
3. Independent Feminists:
   a. What is the driving force behind your activism?
   b. What type of initiatives do you take part in?
   c. How does your work differ from NGO work?
   d. Are you affiliated with a specific group/organization?
   e. Do you get funding/resources for your activities?
   f. Organizing tactics? Structure? Decision making process?
   g. What challenges do you face as an independent organizer?
4. Grassroots Movement:
   a. What is your understanding of a grassroots movement and does it exist in Armenia?
   b. Is feminism central to the work you do?
   c. What does the movement comprise of? What is the demographic make-up of grassroots feminist organizers?
   d. What issues are mobilized around? How are they chosen?
   e. What do you see as the ultimate goal of the movement?
   f. What challenges does the movement face?

5. Women's NGOs and Grassroots Movements:
    a. Do you consider women's NGOs as part of a grassroots movement?
    b. Do you agree with the tactics of NGOs?
    c. What is the relationship between NGOs and independent feminists in Armenia?
    d. Do you ever work together? What challenges do you face when working together?
    e. Do NGOs provide support for independent organizers?
6. Domestic Violence (DV):
    a. In what capacity were you or your organization involved in the anti-DV campaign?
    b. Opinion on DV law
    c. What other actors have you worked with regarding this campaign?
    d. Who has been absent from these efforts?
    e. Do you consider the DV law a victory for the women's movement?
7. Visions for Change:
    a. What is your vision for the future of women in Armenia?
    b. What keeps you motivated to continue organizing around these issues?
    c. Do you think women's NGOs are important in reaching these goals?
    d. Are you optimistic about the future/fulfillment of these goals?
8. Looking ahead: Problems and challenges
    a. What challenges do you/your organization face?
    b. What challenges does the wider women's movement face?

Appendix 2: Respondent Details

Respondent	Affiliation	Fem. Ideology
Araz	Independent Activist	Communist
Gohar	Local NGO	Liberal
Lilit	Independent Activists	Radical/Anarchist
Shushan	INGO; Independent Activists	Radical/Queer
Gayane	Formerly IO; Independent Activist	Anarchist/Queer
Knar	Local NGO; Independent Activist	Radical/Queer
Tamar	Local NGO; Independent Activist	Radical/Queer
Narine	Local NGO	Liberal
Rimma	Independent Activist	Anarchist
Nvart	Former INGO; Independent Activist	Anarchist
Tatev	Former NGO; Independent Activist	Anarchist/Queer

Anahit	Former NGO; IO; Independent Activist	Radical

Notes:

i. It is important to note here that this was the classification for the Armenian state in the year 2018. Since the events of the Velvet Revolutions, the status of Armenia has changed under the Freedom House country report. It is now considered "partly free."

ii. While women in Soviet Armenia experienced a high level of formal gender-equality, opposition to feminism itself can be linked to Soviet-era critiques of feminism as being a bourgeois ideology (Ishkanian, 2007).

Participatory Budgeting as a Social Innovation: Motives and Outcomes of Enactment /Based on the example of the city of Tartu/

Meline Avagyan | University of Tartu, Estonia

Abstract: The diffusion of Participatory Budgeting (PB) at the local level has attracted the attention of many researchers, because it is so well-suited as a tool for new democracies to prove their intention to bring about participatory democracy, reform, and social change. PB was invented in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 1989, during a time of re-democratization, and it has been diffused globally, currently existing in almost all continents. This study explores the diffusion of PB at the local level, how it travels around the world, more specifically, how, why and with what results it was adopted in the city of Tartu, Estonia. The main aim of this study is to understand the motives of PB adoption in Tartu and whether the expectations from this initiative have been met or not. A basic assumption of this study was that Tartu city government adopted PB for gaining popularity and votes, as well as for increasing levels of citizen participation and awareness.

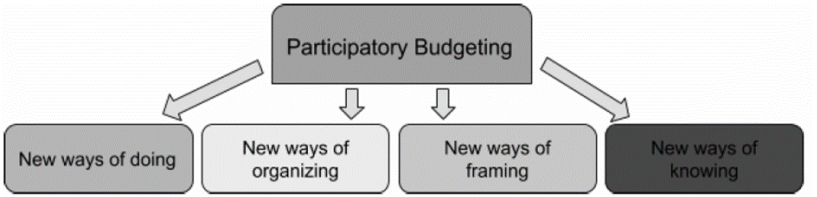
Qualitative methods of analysis were used to conduct this research, relying on elite interviews with employees of Tartu city government and e-Governance Academy as the primary sources of empirical information. Examining the case of Tartu has brought new to the field of PB implementation. The study demonstrates that PB enactment in Tartu was the result of cooperation between the NGO and the city government, both having the same incentives and expectations from the initiative. The main incentives of PB implementation in Tartu were citizen

education about the city budget and citizen engagement. The results of this research indicate that the case of Tartu corresponds to the previously existing theories of citizen engagement and citizen education on budgeting processes, and some of the expectations of the research have been met (citizen engagement and awareness), whereas the expectation that city government adopted PB for the reason of gaining votes and popularity was not supported. In sum, this study contributes to the field of PB diffusion at a local level, and its results can be applied both in and outside of Estonia to other cases of PB enactment.

Keywords: Participatory Budgeting, Social innovation diffusion, citizen engagement

Introduction

Participatory Budgeting is a form of participatory democracy, because citizens take part in decision-making processes concerning the city budget in a transparent way, including all kinds of citizens. Cipolla et. al. (2016, p. 6) consider participatory democracy as social innovation for certain reasons, first of all, because participatory democracy creates new ways for representative democracy and elective institutions. In this framework, participatory budgeting is the most spread and well-known practice of participatory democracy, simply to put, participatory budgeting is fulfilling all the requirements to be considered a social innovation in the form of participatory budgeting. It is believed that first and foremost, Participatory Budgeting is an idea, initiative, activity and at the same time a process, which are associated with certain social relations related to novel ways of doing the following things: (Cibolla, 2016, p.7):



Source: Author

Figure 1. Novel ways of doing things, which bring changes in social relations

Since its emergence, Participatory Budgeting started to diffuse around the world quite quickly, and this research paper seeks to understand why and what are the main incentives for cities to adopt innovation. The main goal is to find answers to why PB is enacted in the city of Tartu and whether the initial expectations/motives have been met or not. Thus, this paper seeks to answer two main research questions:

> RQ. 1 What were the main motives of the city government and Non-Governmental Organization(NGO) representatives to enact Participatory Budgeting in the city of Tartu?
>
> RQ. 2 Has Tartu's experience with participatory Budgeting lived up to the expectations of PB enactors, namely, the city government and specialized NGOs? Why or why not?

There are more than 2800 cases of PB worldwide (Porto et al., 2017, p.63), and year by year, more and more cities are adopting the practice. However, there is no one clear explanation for PB implementation.

A qualitative case study based on expert interviews allows us to explore the motives and perspectives of politicians, administrative workers, and NGO employees who were directly involved in the process of PB enactment in Tartu. The experience of Tartu, the first Estonian city to enact PB, which by now has over six years of PB experience, needs to be explored in more detail and discussed in the

context of existing theories and broader trends and patterns. Thus, I have taken the case of Tartu to understand whether it corresponds to any of the theories, what exactly were the expectations from PB implementation in Tartu and whether they were confirmed or not. The study fills the gap of research on the cases of newly democratized countries, in this case, Estonia.

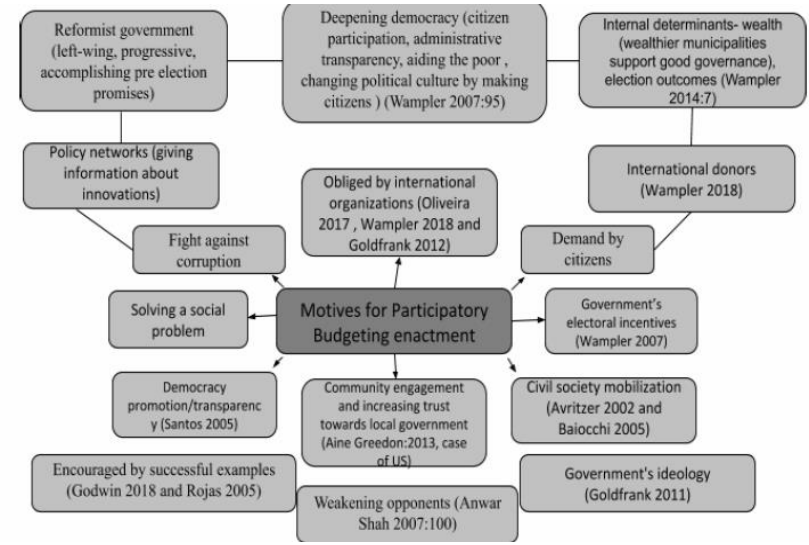
1. Origins and Motives of PB Implementation

Participatory Budgeting was first introduced during the 1980s in Porto Alegre, Brazil, by the Workers Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores) after the long-term military dictatorship in Brazil was over and the party managed to win the elections. The practice of PB was new and aside from political reasons, it aimed to solve certain social problems, such as the inclusion of disadvantaged groups and equal distribution of resources. According to Cipolla et al. (2016, p. 6) PB is a form of participatory democracy; hence, it is a social innovation, as it alters the mechanisms and practices of representative democracy and elective institutions, changes the relationships between the citizens and local government, and, moreover, includes more citizens in the decision-making process and connects the citizens and government officials. Andreas Novy et al. (2005, p. 2023) consider PB as a social innovation, which links civil society and state. Moreover, it is an entirely new way of local governance. Novy et al. (2005, p. 2033) highlight that PB was used by the citizens and civil society to solve social problems and form new processes for doing various things in the city. It is crucial to note that, since its implementation, Participatory Budgeting had a great social impact in various cities. For example, in Brazil, the initiative raised the participation levels of women and poor people, improved infrastructure, and made the political culture more transparent and comprehensive (Godwin, 2018, p. 145).

In the case of Tartu, when Participatory Budgeting was implemented, there were local government elections in all Estonian municipalities, which gives a reason to have assumptions that the elections (gaining votes) were one of the motives for the adoption of Participatory Budgeting in Tartu. There is a growing literature addressing the question of why PB is being enacted in certain cities and whether it fulfils the expected goals. In Porto Alegre, for example, one of the reasons was strengthening social movements against the government before elections in 1988. It was called the Landless Workers' Movement, and the main aim was to demand more participation by citizens in the decision-making process as a part of social inclusion (Rojas, 2005, p. 11).

Another factor was the issue that left-wing parties (such as the Workers Party) were able to win more and more votes, and the implementation of Participatory Budgeting was at the centre of their electoral campaign as a form of governance reforms. According to another stream of literature, the motives of PB enactment were mainly government's ideology (Goldfrank, 2011), civil society mobilization (Avritzer, 2002 and Baiocchi, 2005), democracy promotion (Santos, 2005), international organization (Porto de Oliviera, 2017 and Goldfrank, 2012), a government's electoral incentives (Wampler, 2007), and nationally-mandated programs (McNulty, 2013). Godwin (2018, p. 135) mentions that the successful example of Porto Alegre and cities like that which adopted Participatory Budgeting and managed to make reforms such as inclusiveness, more participation of the poor and women, and transparency, can have other motivations for enacting PB. Moreover, another reason can be the will to deepen democracy, increase citizen participation, ensure administrative transparency, decrease poverty, and also change the political culture by making citizens more participative (Wampler, 2007, p. 95). In addition to this, other factors can be the government's electoral incentives (Wampler, 2007),

community engagement and increasing trust towards local government (Aine Greedon, 2013) and the desire to weaken the opponents (Anwar Shah, 2007, p. 100). Overall, to conclude the investigation about the motives for enactment of Participatory Budgeting in various cities of the world, the following table presents the most widespread ones taking based on the diverse streams of literature.



Source: Author

Figure 2. Motives for Participatory Budgeting enactment

This research is a single case study, as it aims to answer the question of why a certain decision has been made to implement Participatory Budgeting in Tartu and whether the expectations have been met (Yin 2009, p. 17), at the same time trying to find out whether the case of Tartu corresponds to any of the theories explaining PB diffusion as a social innovation in other cities. In addition to this, as this study is not for proving a certain theory, random sampling is not used. Instead, in-depth interviews were conducted using purposive (quota) sampling (Mosley, 2013, p.19), which means that interviewees were

chosen based on the role/association they had in the process of enacting Participatory Budgeting in the city of Tartu. Thematic analysis of qualitative data analysis has been used while analyzing the raw data (i.e., a process of segmentation, categorization, and relinking of aspects of data before the interpretation; Grbich, 2007, p.16). In order to ensure the validity of the findings, strategies suggested by Creswell (2003, p. 196) have been taken into account, namely triangulation, which involves gathering data from interviews, statistical data and media articles and also member-checking, meaning that the researcher has discussed his or her own understanding of what the interviewee says with the interviewee.

A wide range of literature was reviewed in order to form a theoretical framework for the study. Moreover, semi-structured key informant interviews have been conducted with the people most knowledgeable on the topic, such as with the mayor of the city, elected representatives in the city council, administrative workers and NGO representatives. In addition, various statistical data and documents provided by the city council were used, including information about the number of voters each year, gender, age, and number of ideas. Moreover, several up-to-date media articles on the topic were analyzed. After all the data is gathered, thematic analysis was conducted to analyze the data and to draw conclusions. Thematic analysis, according to Braun et al. (2006, p. 2) offers a theoretically flexible approach for analyzing the data. The qualitative research has been chosen because it is the most suitable method for the research questions, as it requires talking to the politicians and policymakers, and get the information directly from them. The research questions are formulated in a way that the answers are directly needed from policymakers.

The limitation of the study is that one can not generalize the motives of diffusion and challenges and outcomes just based on a single case study. However, it can be useful for further research on the same

topic, especially if one considers the diffusion in cities like Tartu having the same political, societal and economic environment (e.g. a small city, new democracy, level of prosperity, and so on).

The main expectations of the study are:

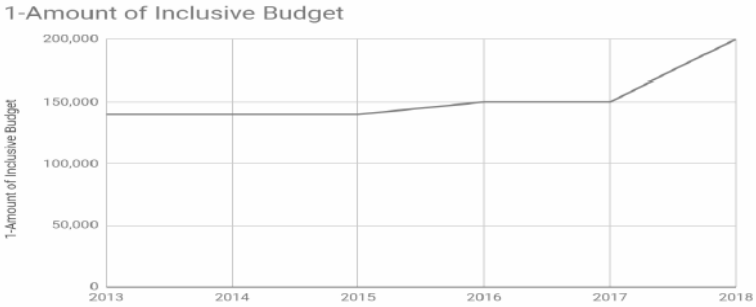
> Expectation 1. "The city government enacted Participatory Budgeting because they wanted to gain more popularity and votes."
>
> Expectation 2. "The city government decided to enact Participatory budgeting because they wanted to increase citizen participation and awareness levels."

2. Evaluations of Participatory Budgeting

Tartu adopted PB in 2013 and was the pioneer among other municipalities of Estonia. After the successful implementation in Tartu, other municipalities also started to practice the innovation. e-Governance Academy mentions on its website that the results have been quite meaningful and successful. It has already been six years (2013-2018) that the city of Tartu city is practicing PB, and there are prominent results on the number of people voting and presenting ideas, which is being increased every year. The first year, activism from the side of citizens was quite big, because there were 2600 voters and 156 ideas. However, the final list of ideas was 75, and the winning idea of the first year was audio-video equipment for Genialistide Klubi (a local cultural center/club.). The procedure consists of, first, citizens presenting their ideas. Then, the best ideas are selected by experts and the rest of the participants following a discussion. Later, those selected ideas are presented for voting both in an online and traditional way (in the polling station).

So, every year, the city government had to dedicate a certain amount of money for the PB process, which would be placed aside as a separate budget and be used only for selected ideas. The first year, the city government dedicated a large amount of money for the

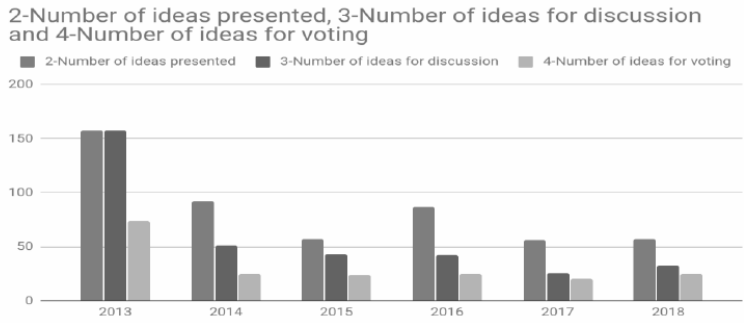
campaign of the initiative. They also used high-tech screens, as there was a need to raise citizens awareness on the process in general. The budget dedicated for the first year was 140,000 euros. The total amount became 150,000 euros in 2016, staying the same in 2017, later rising to 200,000 euros (see figure 3).



Source: Tartu city government (figure made by the author)
Figure 3. Amount of inclusive budget from 2013 to 2018

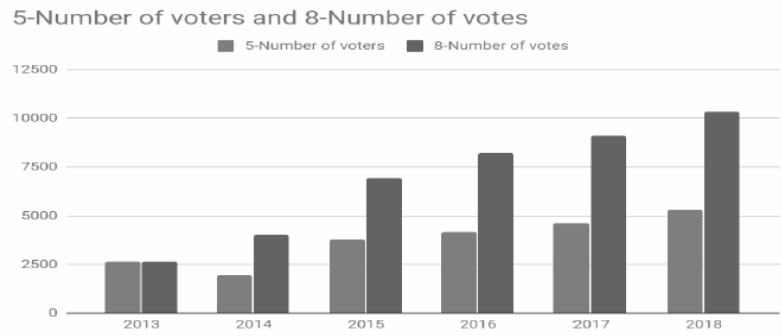
The voting was both online and in polling station, and during the first year the citizens were able to see how many votes have been given to each of the ideas. That was changed, however, because there was a tendency by citizens to vote and stick to the winners (interview with Kristina Reinsalu). Moreover, the first year the city government received huge attention from the media. The ideas came from all parts of the city. Most of the ideas were submitted in an online form. If we look at the overall data, we can note that the number of ideas presented has been drastically reduced since 2013, decreasing from 158 in 2013 to 57 in 2018. The number ideas which were presented to the discussion were also decreased, dropping from 158 (2013) to 33 (2018). Also, the number of ideas which went for voting were 74 in 2013, then it gradually decreased up to 25 in 2018 (see figure 2). It can be concluded, that the citizens were excited during the first year and there was a big campaign, however, little by little, they started to lose interest and the same group of active people started to take

part every year, which is one of the loopholes of the initiatives in Tartu, and there is a need to pay attention to it. Last but not least, the number of ideas presented for 64 voting was 74 in 2013. Afterward, it dropped to 25 in 2018 which is a signifier that there were not so many ideas anymore. Also, another crucial issue here is that the policymakers also decided to reduce the number of ideas for final voting, because if they are a lot the citizens will be lazy to look all of them and will just choose from one of the first ones.



Source: Tartu city government (figure made by the author)
Figure 4. Number of ideas presented, discussed and voted

The participation of citizens in voting for the first year was active enough because, taking into account that it was the first experience, people might not be very much aware of the process. It is worth mentioning that the number of voters and actual votes (as each citizen was able to vote for up to three votes starting from the second year) increased every year. For example, in 2013 the number of voters was 2,645, while it went up to 5,291 in 2018. Following the same logic, the number of votes was 2,645 in 2013 and 10,318 in 2018 (see figure 5). The results show that every year people are more actively engaged in the voting process because they get to know the initiative better due to the campaigns both by the city government and by the authors of ideas presented for voting.



Source: Tartu city government (figure made by the author)

Figure 5. Number of voters and votes (NB: Since the second year, each voter could give up to 3 votes)

It should be noted, however, that one disappointing thing was that only 3% of the voters represented the youth. All opportunities have been created for the youth to take part in the process. For example, for the first time in Estonia, citizens were allowed to vote from the age of 16, and only for PB. However, the voting age for Estonia in general was 18. The decision-makers thought that 16-year-old people were already able to decide on their own (interview with Kristina Reinsalu). Nevertheless, the results showed that even those steps did not encourage the youth to participate in the process. As a result, the highest percentage of young citizens voted for PB was in 2016 (3.2%). The rest of the years it was approximately 2%. The people with the most voting record were at the middle aged people, whereas the least were at the age of 70-79 (3% in 2018) , 80 and above (1% in 2018; see table 1). Moreover, if we compare the gender differences, we can note that the participation rate of the women was higher (66.1% in 2018) than that of men (33.9 % in 2018). There is a need to pay attention to the fact that the participation of women gradually increased from 2013 (58.2%) to 2018 (66.1%), which is quite promising. Meanwhile, the men's participation dropped year by year.

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
16-19 year olds	66 voters (2.5%)	52 voters (2.7%)	51 (1.4%)	132 (3,2%)	101 (2.2%)	126 (2%)
20-29 years old	584 voters (22.1%)	452 voters (23.3%)	614 (16.3%)	738 (17,7%)	695 (15%)	786 (15%)
30-39 years old	958 voters (36.2%)	679 voters (35%)	1192 (33.1%)	1389 (33,2%)	1535 (33.1%)	1730 (33%)
40-49 years old	540 voters (20.4%)	412 voters (21.3%)	929 (31.6%)	934 (22,4%)	1237 (26.7%)	1386 (26%)
50-59 years old	284 voters (10.7%)	187 voters (9.6%)	514 (13.6%)	460 (11,0%)	554 (12%)	633 (12%)
60-69 years old	113 voters (4.3%)	86 voters (4.5%)	267 (7.1%)	298 (7,1%)	314 (6.8%)	401 (8%)
70-79 years old	77 voters (2.9%)	59 voters (3.1%)	148 (3.9%)	175 (4,2%)	149 (3.2%)	174 (3%)
80 years and older	23 voters (0.9%)	10 voters (0.5%).	57 (1.5%)	52 (1,2%)	50 (1.1%)	55 (1%)
Male votes	1106 (41.8%)	806 (41.7%)	1620 (42.9%)	1474 (35,3%)	1,589 (34.3%)	1793 (33.9%)
Female votes	1539 (58.2%)	1132 (58.4%)	2152 (57.1%)	2704 (64,7%)	3046 (65.7%)	3498 (66.1%)
Avergae age of voter	38 years	38.6 years	42 years	41 years	42 years	42 years
Oldest voter	92 years	93 years	94 years	89 years	94 years	95 years

Source: Tartu city government (figure made by the author)
Table 1. Voters according to age and gender

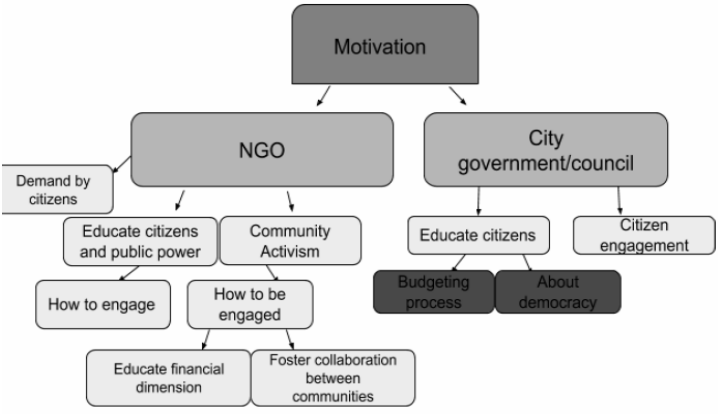
3. Main Findings

In total ten key informant and elite interviews were conducted. The list of the interviewees is as follows: Urmas Klaas (mayor of Tartu), Kristina Reinsalu (programme director of e-Democracy, e-Governance, e-Academy), Lemmit Kaplinski (Social Democratic Party), Lilian Lukka (project manager of PB from city government), Mati Raamat (city engineer and deputy head of the department of urban planning, land survey and use), Vladimir Sokman (Center Party), Indrek Mustimets (Former head of the public relations department, now advisor on memory topics in the city of Tartu), Kaarel Kullamaa (Reform Party), Anneli Apuhtin (head of the legal department) and Raimond Tamm (Reform Party). The interviewees were chosen based on their experience and knowledge on PB implementation in the city of Tartu.

In order to answer my research questions (RQ.1 What are the incentives of PB implementation and RQ.2 Are the expectations met?), a thematic analysis of interviews and articles from online Estonian newspapers were conducted. Moreover, the documents

and statistical data provided by Lilian Lukka (project manager of PB from Tartu city government) were analyzed in order to ensure the validity of the results.

The overall results showed that the main incentives for Tartu to adopt PB were citizen engagement and giving the citizens the opportunity to learn about budgeting process (see figure 6).



Source. Author

Figure 6. Main incentives for PB adoption by the city government and NGOs (taking into account that an NGO was the main one to initiate PB in Tartu)

The idea of PB implementation in Tartu was offered by NGOs, and the city government accepted the idea with excitement, both having the same motives and expectations from the initiative. Since in Tartu many of the social problems regarding the city have been solved by the city government, the only reason for the city authorities to implement PB was to increase citizen engagement in the decision-making process of the city's most important issue, the budget, and education about how the budget works.

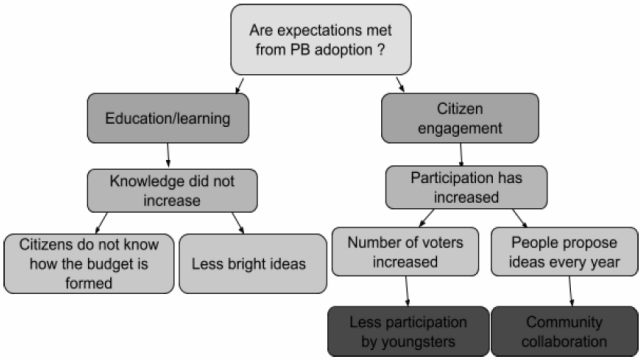
On the one hand, community passivism and less knowledge about the city budget can be considered social problems, on the other hand, that is not an issue which bothers all segments of the community. In many cases, PB has been diffused because it aimed to solve social problems, which is not the case of Tartu, because, in Tartu, the aim was simply to make the city's governance more democratic and direct, with the help of two important factors: citizen engagement and increase of citizens knowledge.

As a result of qualitative research, it turned out that only one of the expectations of the involved actors from PB implementation has been met, namely citizen engagement, as the number of citizens taking part in the process of PB is increasing year by year. However, there is still much work to do to activate as many citizens as possible. At the same time, the goal to teach/give a chance to the citizens to learn about how the city budget is formed and spent has failed in Tartu, because the PB budget is just 1% of the city's budget put aside for the citizens to decide what to do with it, but the overall picture of the whole budget is not so visible and accessible to the citizens. Thus, they were ultimately made less aware of the whole budgeting process.

engagement and education, and giving citizens the opportunity to learn about how the budget is formed. According to another respondent, *"With the help of this initiative people can learn more what it means to make the budget...they can understand why the city government, city council are making those decisions. It is not easy to satisfy them... We wanted to give them an opportunity to learn" (Kristina Reinsalu interview).* Last but not least, PB gave the chance to educate citizens on democracy, so they can assess their own value, and if they all come together they can take impactful decisions. After deeply analyzing the data, it turned out that for the city government,

a very crucial motivation for enacting the PB was to make citizens more informed about the budgeting process as it will make them to go for compromises and understand why the city government and city council is making one decision or another.

In addition to the above mentioned, there have been many other expectations, some of which have been addressed due to PB, some which continue to be concerning issue for the city authorities. As a result, only one of the two main expectations have been met (see figure 7), as most of the key-informant interviewees pointed out that citizens knowledge and education about how the budget is formed and decided has not been increased, even though every year more and more citizens are being engaged in the process of decision-making (see figure 5 above).



Source. Author

Figure 7. Main expectations of PB adoption and their accomplishment

Last but not least, from the existing theories of PB diffusion as a social innovation which explain the main reasons it is being diffused, the case of Tartu offers a new theory to the study of PB diffusion, which is, that, PB is being diffused simply for the sake of educating the citizens about the city's overall budgeting process and citizen

engagement. At the same time, it explains that PB can fail to be an educational tool because it includes only a small portion of the city's budget, meanwhile, it can definitely serve as a tool for activating the citizens and creating synergy between the communities.

Summary and Conclusion

In this piece of research, the diffusion and adoption of Participatory Budgeting were examined. The main objectives of this study were, first, to understand the incentives of PB enactment in the city of Tartu, and, second, whether the initial expectations of the PB enactors have been fulfilled or not. PB was adopted in Tartu six years ago, which is enough to draw conclusions about overall results. As the innovation was enacted a few months before local elections, it was expected that Tartu city government adopted PB because they wanted to gain more votes and popularity. Finally, yet importantly, it was expected that the city government decided to enact Participatory Budgeting because they wanted to increase citizen participation and awareness levels. There is a wide range of theories explaining the incentives of city governments adopting PB. For example, in some cities where PB was implemented, it was implemented in order to democratize the country. Moreover, some governments wanted to solve certain social problems such as inequality and poverty. However, according to other theories explaining the diffusion of PB, the motives can range from a government's electoral incentives and deepening democracy (Wampler, 2007) to fight against corruption and weakening opponents (Anwar Shah, 2007, p. 100), the government's ideology (Goldfrank, 2011), civil society mobilization (Avritzer, 2002 and Baiocchi 2005), democracy promotion (Santos, 2005), international

organization (Porto de Oliviera, 2017 and Goldfrank, 2012), and the government's electoral incentives (Wampler, 2007).

Thus, in order to understand what was the case of Tartu, a qualitative thematic analysis has been conducted using the method of data triangulation (elite interviews, statistics, media articles), in order to ensure the validity and reliability of the single case study. Ten interviews have been conducted with the representatives of the Tartu city government, representatives of some of the political parties from the city council, and an NGO (e-Governance Academy). In addition to the interviews, statistical data for the period of 2013-2018 was provided by the city government, and several media articles were analyzed in order to have a rich and valid data.

The main incentives of PB implementation in Tartu were citizen education about the city budget and citizen engagement (out of which only the latter one was accomplished during the six years under scrutiny). As a result of the research, it turned out that the case of Tartu corresponds to the previously existing theories of citizen engagement in the budgeting processes, and some of the expectations of the research have been met (citizen engagement and awareness) whereas the expectation that city government adopted PB for the reason of gaining votes and popularity was not supported.

However, the results have shown that there is a slight possibility that gaining votes and popularity was one of the factors which motivated the government to adopt PB because the idea was mentioned by several key-informant interviewees. The study has shown that the Tartu city government has gained significantly more votes after the implementation of the initiative, but that doesn't serve as a motivation for city council to adopt PB, because, it played quite a small role in gaining votes.

The PB implementation of Tartu had the goal *to give the citizens a chance to learn and educate themselves about the budgeting process* which would result in having more satisfied citizens. The second direct incentive was *to engage as many citizens as possible in the decision-making process* because the city government wanted its citizens to get closer to the city government and feel that their opinions matter. In addition to this, a very prominent result of PB implementation was citizen cooperation. After a few years of experience, the communities in Tartu city (as mentioned by Kristina Reinsalu during the interview) started to be less individualistic and cooperate with each other for common goals, for example, schoolchildren, parents, teachers and neighbours started to design projects.

The second aim of this study was to understand to what extent did the expectations from PB adoption come true in the case of Tartu. Did citizen engagement increase and did the citizens become more knowledgeable about Tartu's budgeting process? The results of the thematic analysis of elite interviews, triangulated with statistical data gathered from the city government and several up to date media articles, showed that *the participation of citizens and overall citizen activism increased and communities started to cooperate more and more, meaning that they started to understand and evaluate each others needs and put privileges among them*. Every year the citizen participation increased. However, the main challenge in this regard remains the engagement of the youth, as only 3.2% of all the voters are young people (this being the highest result in 2016). Tartu city government initiated some changes in legislation, allowing for voting at the age of 16, and is still planning to lower the age limitation for voting (most probably down to 14 years old), in order to activate and encourage young people to take part in the decision-making process

of the city of Tartu. As for the education of citizens about how the budget is formed and how it is allocated, the results showed that PB has *failed to be an educational tool in Tartu*. Most of the interviewees expressed their disappointment from the results of PB implementation so far from the perspective of education even if most of them did find the initiative important and worth implementing. However, it did not serve as an educational tool. Moreover, the research contributes to the crucial aspect of the main incentives and expectations from PB and to what point the expectations have been met.

The present study has answered the main research questions and brought out interesting facts about PB implementation in Tartu as a single case study. However, it would have been better to make a comparison with a small city like Tartu, in order to find out more about the reasons for implementation and why some of the expectations from PB adoption did not come true. However, it is worth mentioning that the single case study was beneficial for Tartu city itself, as it can be applied in the future for making the process better. Moreover, the case study can be generalized to other small cities deciding to enact PB.

The study has shown the perspectives of PB enactors (the city government and NGOs). However, the final picture of the results will be visible if separate research will be conducted with citizens. The future research on PB diffusion can be done both with the citizens who participate and those who do not, in order to understand what are the reasons for many of the citizens remaining passive.

In conclusion, even though the research has shown that PB implementation and overall process still have many challenges in Tartu, the significance and role of PB should not be underestimated. PB has served the goal of citizen engagement and community

cooperation in an individualistic community such as Estonia (as mentioned by one of the interviewees), whereas the aim of making the citizens more aware of how the budget works, is an issue of time and more creative strategies are needed to be implemented in the PB process. In order to make the citizens more knowledgeable about how the budget works, there is a need to show more things and give more information on the budgeting processes, as, having a certain amount of money put aside for an idea to win is not serving the purpose of educating the citizens about how the budget is formed.

If we compare the case of Tartu with the case of Porto Alegre, for example, we can clearly note the similarities between the two cases, for example in the both cases the citizens are producing the budget themselves (Krenjova J. & Reinsalu K., 2013, p. 38).

It is recommended to apply the results of this study both in and outside of Estonia for understanding the objectives and already existing results of PB enactment. The study can be useful, especially for those countries which are newly democratized and there is a need to use participatory democratic methods to engage and educate citizens.

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RETHINKING AND RECASTING REGIONAL SECURITY

The Iranian Factor in South Caucasus: Prospects of Cooperation and Possible Threats

Ani Hovasapyan | Yerevan State University, Armenia

Session Chair: Richard Giragosian, Regional Studies Center (RSC), Armenia

Discussant: Dr. Anna Ohanyan, Stonehill College, USA

Abstract: The author presents the main factors explaining the Iranian policy towards the South Caucasus. After the collapse of the USSR, the world assumed that after eliminating the "threats from the North," Iran would play a crucial role in the region and implement its plans: to eventually reach Europe through the South Caucasus. However, reality did not coincide with the forecasts. The South Caucasus Republics, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, chose different paths toward further development, turning their gaze instead to the west and to the north, pursuing opportunities to join European structures (ie. Council of Europe and OSCE). Iran did not participate in these processes and removed itself from new regional relations. However, without becoming a key player in the region, the Iranian factor continued to be present in South Caucasian politics.

Iran's involvement in regional relations within the South Caucasus is manifested in five key factors: 1) deepening relations with Armenia (with a sufficiently restrained position on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict); 2) the

establishment of its influence in Azerbaijan - the only country in the region with a majority Shia population (just like Iran); 3) the establishment and development of pragmatic relations with Russia and Georgia; 4) the desire to reduce the Turkish influence in the region, 5) the development of energy infrastructures and paths through its territory.

Keywords: Iran, foreign policy, Iranian factor, South Caucasus, security.

Introduction

The South Caucasus is one of the priorities of Iran's foreign policy. The South Caucasus is a large region where various nations have been creating conditions for living thousands of years. Since time immemorial, this region has been one of the most important crossroads of trade routes linking the Middle East and Europe. At different times, it was dominated by the Ottoman, Iranian and Byzantine empires. Over the last two hundred years, the South Caucasus and the territories of the Caspian Basin were part of the Russian Empire and later of the Soviet Union. Today, "South Caucasus" is a political concept that includes territories of three independent states – Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

Since the first half of the 20th century, the issue of forming a regional structure capable of guaranteeing peace and security of the peoples living in this territory has been a point of discussion among the politicians. An outstanding writer one of the leaders of the Georgian Menshevik Party Tsereteli, who considered the Caucasus to be a solid historical and economic region, as early as 1917 proposed to create the Caucasian Republic ("Caucasian Switzerland"), which would include all countries of the region as cantons. His idea was realized, though for a very short time. In April 1918, the states of the South Caucasus established the Transcaucasian Democratic Federative

Republic (ZDFR, in Russian abbreviation), which had its own government consisting of 12 ministries, headed by political representatives of Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia on a parity basis. It also had its own flag, official language (Russian), monetary unit (ruble) and the general course of peaceful coexistence. This was the only case in the entire history of the South Caucasus when the three countries found the strength to become one. It should be noted that after the collapse of the USSR, when territorial and inter-ethnic conflicts became more acute in the region, the president of the Georgian republic, Eduard Shevardnadze, intensely popularized the concept of creating a peaceful region. Thus, on June 3, 1996 a meeting was held in Kislovodsk including the heads of the South Caucasus states and the leaders of the North Caucasus region. During the meeting a proposal was made to establish a continuously functioning security and cooperation body in the Caucasus region, i.e. the creation of a Caucasian counterpart of the OSCE (Molladze, 2001). But all these plans were never realized. Moreover, all the attempts by the leaders of the South Caucasus countries were made to normalize the current situation in the Caucasus by reaching a consensus on the principles of peaceful coexistence in the region were ideological in nature. Moreover, the above-mentioned idea itself was actively influenced by the main players of the geopolitical battles that unfolded here – the Russian Federation, USA, Turkey and, of course, Iran.

Regional Security and Iran

Today again, particular attention is paid to the idea of creating a regional security system in the South Caucasus. Undoubtedly, such a high interest in this idea relates to the growing interest of world economic centers in natural energy resources of the region, particularly oil and gas, the problem of ensuring the safety of

transport routes and oil pipelines, as well as new twists in the global "battle for the Caucasus" (Williamson, 2006).

The geopolitical role of the South Caucasus is truly unique, both in terms of its potential and geographical location. It is a simmering pot that is exerting increasing pressure in many directions, and, above all, in the northerly direction, on the countries of the South Caucasus and south-eastern Europe and through them on other European countries. In this regard, the South Caucasus region is legitimate to consider as an integral part of the belt of countries that identify themselves as belonging to Western civilization and are generally loyal to the policies pursued by the leaders of the Western world, including the United States.

But at the same time, because of the fact that a certain proportion of the population of the region professes Islam, as well as its geographical position, the countries of the South Caucasus are in closer relations with the states of the greater Middle East. This intermediate position of the South Caucasus determines its unique opportunities both in the implementation of plans for the modernization of the greater Middle East and in the establishment of a constructive dialogue between Europe and the countries of the Muslim world.

It should also be taken into account that the South Caucasus republics, formerly part of the Soviet Union, are secular states that are much closer in their "state mentality" to Western countries than to their southern neighbors. Another particular feature of the South Caucasus carries an important geopolitical burden. Some hardliners in the West regard the South Caucasus as part of the "cordon sanitaire" from the Baltic to the Caspian Sea and, further, to the Chinese border, which they are trying to build around Russia and thereby neutralize its attempts to restore, at least partially, its former influence (Svante E., 1997). Historically, Russia has always had a

strong influence in all countries of the South Caucasus. This applies to both civilizational influence, economic, social and cultural spheres.

Iran's interest in the region is predetermined by various factors, among which are a common history, common territory, established connections, a lucrative market for its products and technologies, large deposits of oil and other minerals, etc.

Against this background, since the 1990s, the role of the South Caucasus in the region and in the system of international relations has increased significantly.

The principles of the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran are based on the implementation of sovereignty principle which does not depend on any state, as well as on the protection of the interests and rights of Muslims in the world. These principles and objectives are set out and enshrined in the concept of Iranian foreign policy. First of all, the main emphasis is on the possibility of ensuring the sovereignty of the country in the political, economic and military spheres. At the same time, under Article 152 of the Iranian Constitution, Iran's foreign policy does not allow any kind of expansion by other foreign states, and also builds relations only with those states that do not seek global supremacy in the world (Constitution of Islamic Republic of Iran).

It is also worth noting that one of the strategic goals of Iran has always been and remains the maintenance of stability and security in the South Caucasus region. This interest is primarily based on the fact that uninterrupted oil production and its export to international markets can only be determined in conditions of peace and the absence of tension in the region.

At a time when Western sanctions are in force, the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is concentrated on overcoming international isolation and enhancing its own regional security both

in relations with post-Soviet countries, and Central Asia, and with the South Caucasus (Chuck, E, 2016).

The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict and the Iranian Factor

Ensuring security and stability in Central Asia and the republics of the South Caucasus is a priority for Iran. Tehran has always linked its national security with stability in this region, so it has always acted with mediation initiatives, for example, in Nagorno-Karabakh. The position of the Iranian leadership on ensuring regional security without the participation of non-regional players has remained unchanged.

The ongoing Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is one of the factors of the established system of relations in this region. The positions of Iran and Turkey on this issue are completely different. Turkey was one of the first to officially recognize the independence of Armenia and Azerbaijan and expressed its readiness to mediate in resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. For Armenia, it was obvious that Ankara would not be able to take the position of an impartial mediator, because it was clear in advance that the decision would be in favour of Azerbaijan, and this in turn would bring Turkey solid political dividends.

Generally speaking, Iran's bilateral relations with the countries of the South Caucasus can be described as situational, that is, aimed at solving the day's specific issues.

Thus, in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Iran initially showed peace-making initiatives. The first president of Armenia Levon Ter-Petrosyan and the acting Azerbaijani president Yakub Mammadov signed a joint agreement in Tehran in May 1992, whose provisions

were much better and weightier than the "Madrid Principles" (Markedonov, 2019)[1].

But, if we look at this situation from another side, Iran in the early 1990s had its own ideological reasons for providing military-strategic assistance to Azerbaijan. At that time Iran supported the Afghan Mujahideen and their leader Hekmatyar. The Mujahideen fought on the Azerbaijani side in the Karabakh conflict. All factors – participation, as well as the Iranian ammunition used by the Azerbaijani army during the war – indicate that Azerbaijan was an important and strategic country for Iran at that time. Meanwhile, the historically-formed mutual resentment towards Turkey also makes Iran and Armenia geopolitical allies. That is why Tehran was interested in supporting the interests of Armenia and the special status of Nagorno-Karabakh. However, it should be admitted that after cease-fire agreement in 1994, when the role of Russia and the OSCE Minsk Group increased in the region, the political leadership of Iran (the only country with borders with direct participants of the conflict) withdrew from the conflict and inclined only to support friendly relations with the conflicting parties.

In contrast to Turkey, which still does not have diplomatic relations with Armenia, Tehran, on the contrary, is one of Yerevan's closest

[1] The Madrid Principles are one of the proposed peace settlements of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The original version of the principles was presented to the Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers at the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) ministerial conference in the Spanish capital Madrid in November 2007. They originated from a revised version of the peace settlement proposal unveiled by the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairing countries (France, Russia and the United States) in the early summer of 2006. In 2009 at the urging of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen the Madrid Principles were updated.
In August 2016, the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) – an Armenian-American lobbying organization – launched a campaign against the Madrid Principles, claiming the Madrid Principles based on the Helsinki Final Act were "reckless" and "undemocratic".

allies. Moreover, it was good-neighborly relations with Iran that allowed Armenia to minimize the consequences of the Turkish blockade.

At the same time, with the help of private investors Tehran wanted to establish close military-political relations not only with Armenia, but also sought to participate in joint economic projects in the territory of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (Goble's plan on Karabakh problem still remains , 2008). Iran's interest in pursuing a policy of full support for Nagorno-Karabakh is considered by the country's leadership as a means of putting pressure on Azerbaijan, by and large, as a strategically-important buffer zone between Azerbaijan and the Turkic-speaking ethnic peoples of the northern province of Iran, known as Azeris. Furthermore, the control of Azerbaijani territories by the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic's army further distances Nakhichevan (The Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic is a landlocked exclave of Azerbaijan. It has three borders: with Armenia, with Iran and 15 km with Turkey.) from Azerbaijan – by about 250 km – which in turn contributes to the real remoteness of this area from Baku. Iran pursues an active policy of isolation of Nakhichevan, focusing on the ethnic and religious proximity of the population, economic and political factors, as well as a large increase in separatist sentiments in Nakhichevan. Iran played a decisive role in the refusal of Muslim volunteers from various countries on the Karabakh front to fight on the side of Azerbaijan (Giragosian, 2001).

Thus far, two main concepts on the conflict and its regulation methods have emerged in the diplomatic scopes of Iran. The first position comes from the point of view that the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh resembles the position of "neither peace nor war." Tehran is of the opinion that direct negotiations are necessary between the conflicting parties, which themselves must decide and determine the fate of their respective countries. The second principle is based on the recognition of historically-established religious and international

relations between Azerbaijan and Iran. Consequently, the conflict will be resolved through more active interference in the formation of public opinion within Azerbaijan. That is, in fact, Iran's policy towards the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict changed depending on which of the two positions prevailed. Today Iran opposes the "renewed Madrid principles", as they include the presence of foreign, non-regional international peacekeeping forces in the region.

Iran's Involvement in Energy Policies of the South Caucasus

Iran is trying to make the most advantageous use of its geographic position (at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, plus access to the open seas) and is actively involved in the formation and modernization of transport infrastructure to create a transport hub on its territory. Under this program, in 2014 a direct railway line Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran was put into operation. And in February 2016, a new route China-Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran was launched, which is an important decision on the speed and logistics of cargo delivery (10 days) from eastern China (Iran-Turkmenistan-Kazakhstan railway, 2015). Iran intends to build a highway together with Armenia, which will connect the Persian Gulf with the Black Sea on the territory of Iran, Armenia and Georgia. In March 2017 the pilot launch of the railway line Astara (Iran) - Astara (Azerbaijan) took place, which is part of the International North-South Transport Corridor. The plans for 2018 include the connection of this line with the Qazvin-Rasht section, which connects to the Iranian port Anzali (Vardomsky, 2014).

In the context of considering the expansion of economic cooperation, the formation of a partnership between the EEU and Iran is promising, which implies the creation of a free trade zone. But it must be admitted that the signing of the agreement on the free trade zone, which was scheduled for April 2017, did not take place, because it

was not possible to find a compromise between the positions of the EEU member states and Iran.

Energy cooperation with the adjacent regions of Central Asia and the republics of the South Caucasus involves the provision of domestic needs and the export of Iranian energy resources to external markets, as well as transit transportation of energy resources of Central Asian countries. In the field of energy, Iran continues to implement a program with Armenia of electricity in exchange for gas. In 2016, Iran signed a quadripartite agreement with Russia, Georgia and Armenia, under which it will build a north-south energy corridor, which will link the energy systems of all four countries (Abrahamyan, 2016).

An important strategic goal of Iran in the region is also to ensure its share in the Caspian oil and gas resources and to maintain the status of the main transit country. To achieve this goal, Iran shows a high level of pragmatism. For these very reasons Iran is interested in ensuring economic and political stability in the region (Kandiyoti, 2008).

Today, in the diplomatic scopes of Iran, two basic concepts have been formed on the conflict and the methods of its resolution.

According to the principles of the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the main tasks are the possibility of carrying out free activities, independent of any state. Iran seeks to create a new concept of relations in the region, and due to this, obtain the status of a leading country.

The strategy of the Iranian foreign policy is intended to ensure its officially proclaimed tasks – to serve the goal of turning the country into a superior force. To implement these goals and targets, Iran cooperates with all countries, counteracts the United States and Israel, maintains ties with many countries with majority-Muslim population, including in the region, the Third World, as well as

keeping close engagement with Persian-speaking states. In a situation of ongoing global and sometimes contradictory processes in our world and with a complex system of international relations, it is almost impossible to achieve synchronization in various areas of foreign policy activity. That is why, depending on the situation in the international context and the situation in Iran, one or the other direction becomes relevant each time, which generally leads to very inconsistent and contradictory steps in foreign policy.

The Iranian Factor in the South Caucasus and Other Regional Powers

The Iranian factor has had an important place in the South Caucasus region since the dawn of time. Iran was one of the major powers with which Russia and Turkey competed for influence in the South Caucasus. Over the centuries, nothing has changed and today the Turkish-Iranian-Russian rivalry is manifested in new areas (particularly within the energy sector). However, it should be kept in mind that the struggle for their interests in the South Caucasus was conducted and continues to be waged by non-regional forces, primarily the United States. The main geopolitical task can be considered the stability in the region, which has acquired the character of a national goal in Iran and Russia (Yurtaev 2015). It involves the prevention of separatism and the collapse of the two countries under the influence of confessional or national factors. Both countries oppose the presence of third countries and their military forces in the region (including in the Caspian Sea).

One of the general principles guiding the Iranian authorities in pursuing their foreign policy is that the security policies of the South Caucasus region should be addressed by the states located in the region or directly sharing a border with them. Based on this principle, Tehran has always proven to be quite sensitive about the encroachments of other global extra-regional players, especially the United States and the European Union.

As we see, the Iranian factor has always been present in the South Caucasus region and has manifested itself in various fields – ideological, political, cultural, and economic. Despite the fact that Iran wanted to establish bilateral relations with all countries of the region, the mutual cooperation of the Islamic Republic with each of them was at different levels.

The main emphasis in the export of Iranian culture was placed on Persian language and literature. However, the major focus in relations with most countries of the region was made on the economic aspect. Economic interests of Iran included not only trade, but also the development of energy cooperation. In bilateral relations official Tehran attached a special place to the transport sector.

In general, Iran's regional policy is to increase its influence in the Central Asian region and in the South Caucasus, applying steps aimed at expanding bilateral and multilateral trade and economic cooperation. We can already see the growing interest of Iran in the states participating in the EEU and in transport and communication projects (Hille, 2010).

The South Caucasus is a strategic crossroad of interests for Iran and Russia. For the Russian Federation, the Caucasus plays an important role and is a link for Iran and other countries of the Middle East. Meanwhile, the countries of the South Caucasus for Iran are an alternative route to the Black Sea and Europe. Any instability or crisis in neighboring countries is a danger to the national interests of Iran and Russia. Both countries constantly express their concern over territorial and ethnic conflicts, social-economic instability, and the inconsistent strategies and uncertainty of the foreign policy of the states of the South Caucasus.

The strategic interests of active participants in geopolitics in the South Caucasus (Russia, Iran, Turkey and of course the West) intersect, first of all, in the economic and military-political spheres.

At the same time, the religious factor and the propaganda of chauvinism play an important role in the intersection of strategic interests. For instance, Russia naturally considers the propaganda of Turkism in the region from Turkey as a direct threat to its national (and state) interests, primarily due to the possible negative impact of this factor on the Turkic-speaking region of Russia. For its part, the Western world opposes Iran's use of religion in the region for its own purposes.

The leaders of the states of the South Caucasus will have to work out a common policy and take joint decisions to ensure security and counter external threats. In fact, we are talking about creating such a mutually beneficial model of regional cooperation, in which all the states of the region would participate.

Conclusion

Taking into account the above-mentioned concepts, the following conclusions can be drawn.

In the Caucasus region, Iran pursues mainly the following goals:

1. Preventing Turkish influence in the region and restricting the activities and growth of the Turkish presence there, and
2. Compiling and collecting information on the strategic activities in the region of special services of various states and their influence on Islamic communities.

Summing up the analysis of the main conceptual directions of the Iranian foreign policy in the South Caucasus, it should be noted that the South Caucasus is the most important region for ensuring the national security of Iran. On its territory, Iran risks facing security threats such as the potential expansion of the military presence of the EU and Western countries, competition for the region's energy resources, refugee migration, drug trafficking, terrorism, etc. Iran is

striving hard to develop a balanced policy towards the South Caucasus states.

Recommendations

In order to strengthen its influence in the region, Iran needs:

1. to maintain smooth, friendly, and at the same time non-binding relations with all the countries of the region (acting as a good market), ensuring stability and the balance of forces while enhancing their own role and authority in the region,
2. to preserve the current status quo (generally suiting both Russia and Iran), preventing dramatic changes in it, especially when it comes to strengthening the remaining players, especially in the form of the presence of their troops in one capacity or another (for example, as peacekeepers),
3. the widest possible involvement in regional projects, especially energy and transport, as well as willingness to participate in mediation activities aimed at resolving the most dangerous dispute in the region – the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict,
4. a fairly calm attitude towards the presence of others in the region. Russian diplomacy at this stage does not perceive Iran as a source of threat to its own security, and Iran, in its turn, considers Russia to be the decisive factor in containing the political influence of the West at its north-western borders.

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Challenging the Reality-Conception Split in Conflict Studies: Participatory Methodologies Under Focus

Hayk Smbatyan | Yerevan State University, Armenia

Session Chair: Richard Giragosian, Regional Studies Center (RSC), Armenia

Discussant: Dr. Anna Ohanyan, Stonehill College, USA

Abstract: In the contemporary world, the study of conflicts has progressed to the study of meta-conflicts. The detachment of the knowledge of the conflict from the conflict itself creates a new conflict around the conflict's definition. From this perspective, there is a need for an inclusive social science methodology to observe and accumulate practical knowledge of conflicts, aiming to combine the everyday and scientific discursive spaces.

Participatory research methodology allows a detour from the reality-conception gap and the split between scientific knowledge and practical knowledge, as well as the creation of a platform for scientific observations to be embedded into local and situational contexts. Through comprehensive analysis of the methodological literature, the purpose of this paper is to discuss participatory methodology, its advantages, limitations, and applicability in the process of accumulating practical knowledge on social conflicts in general, and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, in particular.

Keywords: Research Methodology, Participatory Research, Conflict Studies, Sociology

Introduction

Social scientists find themselves in a vocational pit. Some authors argue that the field is divided into two hierarchical parts, with

academicians as “official” researchers developing pure conceptual theories on social phenomena, taking the higher level, and practitioners taking the lower level, engaging in everyday activities and generating practical knowledge on everyday practices yet not being considered creators of theory.

This division widens when social scientists deal with problems with deep emotional, social layers, with one layer consisting of conflict. This concern manifests twofold – within social perceptions and within the model of knowing.

In Armenian society, conflict studies are perceived as the “art of winning the conflict”. As a result, the field is open to lawyers and political scientists, whose approaches predominantly represent society’s legal and political interests, thus supporting whatever is considered the “best” for one side. On the other hand, in the political, economic, social and historical contexts of the society, reality is guided largely by technical interests through the production of rational knowledge which aims to boost the technical and scientific progress.

This tends to be a dominant epistemology in technological societies, yet provides a considerably narrow viewpoint to interpret knowledge as an instrumental action that can be quantified and precisely measured. This issue shadows the importance of practical knowledge, and, with the dominance of the scientific community, makes the process of legitimizing local theories based on the practitioners’ experience even more strict.

In this view, a need for an inclusive methodology arises in the social sciences, that would observe practical experience, form a practical knowledge on the spot, and undergo a justification phase by peers, with the aim of becoming a well-grounded theory based on practical

and local know-how. At the same time, considering the urgency of conflicts in Armenian society, there is a need to reexamine the above-mentioned challenge to the formation of practical knowledge about the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Discussing the epistemology and the worldview of participatory methodology, and addressing contemporary challenges facing social sciences in general and conflict studies in particular, this paper introduces a comprehensive analysis of methodological literature on participatory research[2], exploring its main characteristics, advantages, limitations and possible ways of application in the studies of conflicts. Following the principle of selective sampling, the work delivers a secondary analysis of the most popular and the most cited works on participatory methodologies, including ones positioned in the studies of conflicts.

Findings

Current Problems of Practical Knowledge: Conceptualizing the Social Reality

In post-industrial knowledge-generating societies, knowledge is viewed as a product that can be acquired, transmitted and exchanged with other goods; as Lyotard argues, "… knowledge is and will be produced in order to be sold" (Lyotard, 1984, p. 4). Although in technological societies this tends to be a dominant epistemology, it provides a considerably narrow viewpoint that interprets the knowledge as an instrumental action that can be quantified and precisely measured. However, the sociological theorist Habermas

[2] A form of understanding and the reality, a research approach that can be especially productive in finding ways to solve contemporary problems societies face, by minimizing the hierarchic relations between the researcher and the researched, turning the researcher into a facilitator, and the researched into researchers.

(Habermas, 1972) denies that the generation of knowledge is an impartial activity that is done in an external environment leading to production of pure knowledge. Instead, he argues that knowledge is an action that is taken by a real individual who is led by certain wills and interests. In this view, knowledge permanently consists of human interests.

Habermas categorizes personal-social practices into three groups of interests: technical, practical and emancipatory.

Technical interests mainly govern the reality by producing technical rational knowledge, with the latter aimed at promoting technical and scientific progress. Technical rationality generally is considered as the most appropriate form of knowledge in contemporary social and labor practices.

Practical interests focus on understanding, creating and interpreting knowledge. Habermas (Habermas, 1990) notices that communicative action abstracts from being a solely rational interaction and a scientific study and is rather composed of a need for understanding other people and their habitus as well. Communicative action aims to form an inter-subject contract where people can unite around common ideas, even when an agreement is needed in the conditions of disagreement. This process, however, can distort research understandings, due to the fact that whatever we do and whatever we think, always becomes the subject of much wider historical and cultural contexts.

Emancipatory[3] interests help society get rid of dominant powers and the knowledge they dictate, as well as to control and govern their own knowledge and actions. In the frames of emancipatory interests,

[3] Emancipation is the condition of being free and liberated from legal, social and political limitations

it is acknowledged that all social practices bear a political influence and have to be liberated from contextual influences to the maximum extent possible, forming their own identities. Hence, in participatory research, ideas can be developed and turned into practical theories of social evolution and leave the abstract level.

Nevertheless, paradigmal theory continues to have a dominant role in the studies of human societies. Many researchers believe it is more productive to speak about theory than to apply it to real life and produce tangible knowledge. This, according to Žižek (Žižek, 1990), leaves theory stranded in the field of ideological fantasy, cut off from real life.

Schön (1995), drawing on Boyer's (Boyer, 1990) thoughts on contemporary challenges of scholarship, argues that there is a need for a new scientific approach, that will surpass the traditional approach of theory being just a systematized knowledge, and will start to be applied, as the existing research traditions do not lead to individual or social change. Schön believes practitioners have to first study their own experience and the theories derived on the basis thereof. This is explained by the idea that the theories that form from the researchers' practice, are in a direct contact with them and feed the practice with a spiral logic, later bringing to the advancement of the theory; in other words, theory and practice are not considered as separate phenomena but rather present different perspectives of the same experience, or as the feminist author Mary Midgley (1981) illustrates it, "the inside and outside of a teapot" (p. 102).

In his work "Knowing-in-action" Schön (1995) proposes a metaphoric model trying to draw on the situation in the fields of social science and education. The model explains the main levels of professional landscapes dividing the space into "swamp valleys" and "highlands" (see Figure 1). "Highlands" are occupied by the scientists who are

officially considered researchers and who develop pure conceptual theory around different social issues. Conversely, practitioners are located in the “swamp valleys”, engaged in everyday activities and generating knowledge on everyday practices.

Using this analogy, Schön (1983) criticizes the approach where the knowledge of the practitioners cannot be considered a theory and they should not call themselves creators of legitimate knowledge. The author mentions that it had been possible to convince the whole research community that on one hand there are “real” theorists (who Schön calls “professional elite”) who create abstract conceptual theories, and on the other hand there are practitioners who generate practical knowledge in their workplaces, which is useful yet not to be considered a “real” theory.

The author finds irony in that knowledge produced in “swamp valleys” is greatly beneficial for ordinary people, while knowledge created in the “highlands” is often distant from everyday practices and does not correspond to the living needs of ordinary people. This distance becomes especially obvious in the language structures. Professional elite representatives communicate with each other in a special language which is hardly ever understandable and is rather expressed in codes, which, according to Schön and others (Jenkins, 1992; Thomas, 1998), is the result of the elite’s intentional actions.

Nonetheless, Schön mentions that, so as the propositions of the practitioners to be considered valid and trustworthy by the community of the “highlands” and the general public, practitioners have to put their practical knowledge through the process of testing and critique. In this view, Kuhn’s (1971) thesis becomes very actual stating that paradigm becomes a paradigm only when the members of the scientific community share it among each other.

The authors' thoughts that were proposed in the previous century can nowadays be observed in a more moderate form, due to the dissemination of participatory studies. The differentiation of the researchers' topology has decreased (McNiff & Whitehead, 2006); many officials in leading positions as well as specialists in the field of higher education consider themselves practitioners whose main responsibility is to support people in other workplaces, as well as structuring practice-based theories.

The network logics and the recovery of scientific resources are possible due to the existence of the individual theories of practitioners, which is one of the core ideas of participatory research tradition. From the perspective of the stability of theoretical progress, a postmodern approach argues that researchers have to acknowledge their influence on the subject of their research, and at the same time become influenced by it accordingly. Some researchers, for instance John Law (2004), notice that when researchers infer that they have formed a theory, they essentially mean that they have created knowledge never having existed before, at least not in its complete sense. And when practitioners systemize the parts of that knowledge, it creates an opportunity to ensure scientific stability.

In brief, viewing participatory research in the context of generating knowledge, it is becoming possible to conclude that the approach addresses the need for the theory to refuse to solely be a system of knowledge and aspire to be applied, inasmuch as the traditional research practices hardly ever lead to any individual or social change.

Historical, Philosophical and Methodological Underpinnings of Participatory Research

It is largely considered among social scientists that the concept of participatory research was first circulated by the German experimental and social psychologist Kurt Lewin (1946) in his article "Action Research and Minority Problems". Lewin would especially highlight the importance of "the iterative (self-repeating) process between the researcher and the researched, which is based on shifting from actions to reflections and the way back" (Fisher & Ball, 2004), also known as "spiral science."

The studies conducted in this methodology became popular in the late 20th century, trying to create a research environment where it would be possible to design an understandable and applicable "local theory" based on "local knowledge" (McNiff, 1998). However, social scientists believe that prior to entering the field of participatory research, it is extremely vital to acknowledge its epistemological basis and to be ready to apply a participatory worldview.

In general, the history of establishment and development of the methodology can be divided into two main directions – European and North-American tradition and Southern tradition (Africa, Asia, Latin America) (Tadevosyan, 2013, pp. 67-72).

European and North-American approach is mostly connected with the name of Lewin. Aiming to decrease the space between theory and practice, Lewin was the first to use the term "action research" to describe a process that engages social scientists with the studied groups, communities, and organizations. Lewin described the approach as a comparative study that "concerns the consequences and social conditions of different social actions and results in another social action." The critique of positivist paradigm led social scientists to finding new and practical tactics for creating social change.

These studies were mainly conducted in schools and workplaces thus highlighting the most prioritized spheres – education and employment – in terms of nudging the element of participation in that particular time context. Action and participatory research were a completely new approach targeted at promoting social change.

There are certain characteristics that differentiate action and participatory studies. Theoretically, action research in its essence is not as participatory as pure participatory studies, inasmuch as action research is commonly organized by external researchers.

Participatory research tries to create an environment whereby generating local knowledge will be possible in order to design a "local theory" that will be easily perceivable and very practical. The researcher and the research subject actively engage in defining group processes and redefining social reality. The research participants fully become part of all the stages of the research. Meanwhile, the action researcher has a direct purpose of advancing the research potential and expertise for future steps, not just structuring a local theory. The researcher leads the process of the statement of the problem, the data collection and analysis, and guides the group in filling the information gaps.

In the Southern tradition, the approach has mostly developed in the form of rapid rural appraisal methodology, encouraging communal participation in villages. This was later transformed into participatory rural appraisal, highlighting the process of empowering local peoples to undertake a more active role in exploring their own challenges.

Lewin was followed by Chris Argyris (1978) with the work “Organizational Learning: A Theory of Action Perspective” co-authored by Schön, in which the authors develop the concepts

proposed earlier applying them in improving the organizational productivity.

Putting this concept forward in the post-war United States, Lewin was anticipating to define such a research procedure where "theory is constructed and tested by practical interventions and actions, and the means and desirable outcomes are in a precise accordance with each other and are based on the needs of the group of the researched community" (Stull & Schensul, 1987). Lewin specifically underlined "the continuous iterative process between the researcher and the researched, in which actions and reflections shift" (Fisher & Ball, 2004). This process is also known as "spiral science." At around the same time period, Tax and Foote Whyte began conducting studies that allowed the people of local communities speak about their problems without the intervention of an "external" (Grillo, 2002).

In 1960-70s, Paulo Freire (1972), an emancipatory educator from Brazil, developed community-based research approaches aiming at promoting people's participation in generating knowledge and social transformations. Freire was principally interested in the processes of "awareness" (pt. "conscientização"), in the form of self-awareness brought about among the poor and vulnerable groups about the problems that influence their lives. These participatory ideas also spread in other parts of the world, where people were dissatisfied with the colonial rule, modernist development interventions and the way university-based researchers were preaching the positivist paradigms of research.

In 1970s, participatory and participatory action research spread in Africa, India and Latin America. This development was an evidence of the establishment of a new epistemological practice, with people's problems and the local knowledge lying in its core. This came to contradict, for instance, the movement that rose in India on the

ideology of Mahatma Gandhi. His method of non-cooperative and passive resistance was allowing to develop, as he called it, the “power of the soul”, since people would rely on their own knowledge of the triggering issues in the resistance against the British colonial order (Sivananda, 2017).

Marja-Liisa Swantz has been considered the first who conducted participatory research in Tanzania. Swantz described her own work as an effort to integrate the knowledge and experience of the locals with the development programs initiated in the community (Hall, 2005). Rajesh Tandon titled this kind of approach as “community-based research” (Hall, 1981). The same research tradition was followed in Colombia in the work of Orlando Fals Borda, where the approach was named “participatory action research”. It attempted to evolve alternative research institutions and procedures which would give more space for emancipation and would stimulate social change (Lykes, 2001).

The second wave of participatory action research emerged in 1980s in the contexts of community and international development. Rapid rural appraisal and participatory rural appraisal frameworks were practiced as alternatives for the complicated studies of development, engaging people as agents of their own development (Chambers, 1994).

Participatory research gradually merged with action research and the philosophy of critical social science (Park, Brydon-Miller, Hall, & Jackson, 1993). Nowadays, “action research”, “participatory action research”, “action teaching” describe studies that present a participatory and democratic process, where generation of practical knowledge is of key importance for humane dedications. It is based on participatory worldview, combines action and reflection, and theory and practice.

Although these studies have many similarities, some authors keep strictly differentiating participatory research and action research. They argue that the first is more focused on the teaching element, namely the process of promoting citizens' voice and power in several contexts. The second one is more concentrated on improving social action, policy, and other similar systematic social change (Taylor, et al., 2004).

Regardless of the sensitive methodological, epistemological and political differences (Greenwood, 2004), the terms describing the methodology almost entirely overlap. At the same time, the element of "participatory" added into the action research attempts to signal about the collaborative ambitions of the research (Reason & Bradbury, 2006). Nevertheless, some authors believe there is no need to add the word "action" in participatory research, inasmuch as emancipation and transformation already assume action. At the same time, the addition of "action" component serves as an important reminder that it is the actions of participants that should certainly matter in the research (McTaggart, 1997).

There are several schools of participatory research (see Box 1) formed within different intellectual traditions and contexts, linking academic and community research with different types of participatory research. The schools present the geography of the methodology, giving an idea of how it was contextualized in different communities, environments and institutions (Fals-Borda, 2006).

The diversity of terminology and approaches is both useful and problematic. On one hand, it epistemologically and methodologically corresponds to participatory research target – the improvement of local communal participation. One the other hand, this can politically limit the public accessibility of participatory research.

The diverse theoretical and practical discussions on the methodology lead participatory tradition into the academic environment. The active collaboration between the researcher and the participants around put a very important stress on the opportunity to redefine the traditional conceptualizations of the researcher's position.

The epistemology of participatory research combines three theoretical grounds in social sciences – critical theory, postmodern philosophy, and pragmatism.

Contradicting to positivism, critical social theories argue that the social reality continuously undergoes changes due to the distress, disagreement and conflicts in social relations (Calboun, 1995, pp. 5-35). Interpretive approach is problematized for its sole focus on individual worldviews and subjective realities, this way undervaluing the significance of long-term common processes.

Participatory philosophy also overlays with the postmodernist tradition claiming “objectivity is impossible” and “multiple and shared realities do exist” (Kelly, 2005, p. 66). Finally, participatory methodology also feeds from pragmatism setting out the research not from predefined scopes of paradigms but from the research problem itself.

From this perspective, Reason and Bradbury (2006) argue that having a participatory worldview means researchers should “be both situational and reflexive at the same time, seeing the social inquiry as a process of understanding.” (p. 7) Hence, it is not the toolkit but rather the level of relations and distance between the researcher and the researched that significantly differentiates participatory research from other methodologies (Sara, Rachel, & Kesby, 2007, p. 14).

Participatory research is a specific type (see Box 2) of inquiry that requires methodological innovations, particularly achieved by

adapting and responding to people's needs in certain contexts (Reason, 2004). Participatory research procedure is as valuable, as its results, since the successful research is not only assessed by the quality of the gathered information but also by the extent of the skills, knowledge and capacitiesdeveloped among the participants in the course of the research (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995). The typical participatory action research process is presented in the Figure 2.

Participatory approach creates an opportunity for generation of different forms of knowledge, especially through methodological innovations. This is the main reason why participatory research practitioners utilize wide range of theoretical sources, including feminism, post-structuralism, Marxism and critical theory, as well as working closely within pragmatic psychology, democracy practices, liberalism, humanist and interactive psychology, structuralist theory, systematic thinking, and complexity theory (Brydon-Miller, 2001; Latrobe City and Monash University, 2001; Kesby, 2005).

Social Conflicts Through Participatory Lenses

Despite the fact that the conceptual literature of conflict studies moves towards alternative directions, the practical conflict resolution continues using the frames of political realism. This leads to the marginalization of conflict discourses and conflict-affected groups, and leaves them out of the conflict resolution processes. It also gives more importance to the international relations paradigms highlighting the significance of competition and hierarchy in social relations. Conflict mediations, aimed at analyzing and addressing violent ethnic and religious conflicts, fall yet traditionally in the field of international relations where conflicts are viewed through binary concepts. Many of these theories and practices, including the

problem-solving seminars, consultations and multi-track diplomacy, keep standing in the context of international relations, using its conceptual apparatus and the methodic toolkit (Themnér & Wallensteen, 2011).

Throughout the development of conflict studies, alongside the dominant positivist paradigm, some minor approaches began to emerge in the 1990-2000s, including narrative mediation, proposing constructivist practices in working with interpersonal and intragroup conflicts. Despite being hardly applicable with violent political conflicts, these approaches presented an alternative to the binary styles.

One of those approaches was the model of multi-track diplomacy proposed by Diamond and McDonald, who highlighted the importance of engaging third actors alongside the state actors into the process of negotiations. Multi-track diplomacy was suggesting to work in several levels, including the levels of state, non-state/professional, business, research, education, activism, religion, finances, as well as communication and media (Diamond, 1996).

Network theory was another approach arguing that social network of non-governmental organizations should become wider in the context of the conflict. According to some authors, inclusive and wide networks can potentially "contribute to the conflict resolution by creating crossing ties and relations in the resolution processes" (Allen Nan, 2008).

In the work "The Third Side" by William Ury (2000), the author defined the conflicts in binary terms, saying "two sides are enough for a fight, but a third side is needed to stop the fighting". With this approach, Ury argues that there should always be a third side of a conflict and mentions ten functions that the latter can take, including

mediator, lawyer, equalizer, teacher, healer and so on. This approach had emerged and practiced even earlier within the work “Getting to Yes” by Ury, Fisher and Patton (1991).

Field specialists, however, notice that although these approaches give importance to the engagement of the whole community in the process of conflict resolution, terminologically they still view the conflict as a contradiction between two sides, where the third side is only needed in order to have a dialogue between those two. In response to this, at the end of the 20th century, constructivist approaches to conflict analysis spread around, viewing the identity and other concepts related to conflict as socially constructed categories which in transformable interrelations.

As part of the constructivist approach, reflective practices were first discussed by Schön, who suggests to pass from technical rationality towards reflective action (1984). Self-questioning, changeability and reflection on every action are central in this approach. Participatory studies stand on the viewpoint that structures heavily influence the opinions, choices and reflections of individuals they contain. At the same time, individuals can influence and change those structures, with the support of the researchers in the development of practical knowledge. Coenen and Khonraad (2003) believe the role of the researchers is not to “observe people from above, but rather from within, as social actors.” In their opinion, a researcher should acknowledge that the problems that the researched community proposes can be understood only on the basis of the knowledge they have access to and the practical knowledge shaped around their social structures.

Participatory research methodology is a relatively novel approach in the studies of conflicts. Conflict resolution practices keep gradually

diversifying taking different forms and involving a wide range of activities, from negotiations to collaboration between artists.

There are a number of ways participatory research has been applied in the context of conflict analysis and generation of practical knowledge around conflicts. This is well illustrated in the research "Participatory Action Research (PAR) as a tool for transforming conflict: A case study from South Central Somalia" conducted by the Life & Peace Institute (2016), which studies the applicability of participatory methodology in the context of peacebuilding initiatives in South Somalia, trying to find out whether PAR as a methodological approach contributes to the reduction of local tensions, and whether it can be adapted and standardized in the scopes of some projects and disciplines.

Another example is the research work of Gamaghelyan (2017), in which the author attempts to find out the characteristics of exclusion and marginalization, as well as the reproduction of conflict frames in the cases of the Nagorno-Karabakh and Syrian conflicts.

In her article "Lewin's action research model as a tool for theory building: A case study from South Africa", Anastasia White (2004) underlines the significance of action research strategy in the field of conflict resolution from the perspective of developing the theory and practice at the same time. Exemplified by the South African case, this research aims to find out the opportunities of community-police interrelations by shaping local mutual trust and elimination of discrimination, making use of the Lewin model, and highlighting the processes of reconciliation and social healing, which took place on the communal and national levels.

Another example of the application of the methodology is the 1994 project conducted by Berghof Research Center for Constructive

Conflict Management. In her article, Johannsen (2001) presents the research done in Eritrea, Guatemala, Mozambique and Somalia, on post-conflict cooperation opportunities. The case study co-authored by Lundy and McGovern (2006), is yet another example of the application of this methodology. The article discusses the role of PAR in conducting studies on sensitive issues within societies undergoing violent conflicts, using Northern Ireland case as an example. This research especially underlines the ethical aspect in similar studies, to make sure they do not harm the participants and the researchers.

The inevitable subjectivity of participatory methodology makes it important to address the issue of trustworthiness of the research. The term “trustworthiness” in the qualitative research is the analogy of the concepts “validity” and “reliability” used in quantitative studies. The term has been first circulated by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

As Rahman (1993) puts it, action research is an attempt to legitimize public knowledge; it is a “political practice that challenges such production of knowledge that leads to oppression and domination, which is actualized with the social power to decide which knowledge is valid” (p. 83). Continuing this idea, Hall (2001) argues that action research tries to “gain a spot around the table of knowledge production” (p. 176). It aims at validating and disseminating public and community-based knowledge trying to problematize social marginalization and oppression typical of societies affected by armed conflicts or in the process of conflict transformation and post-conflict reconstruction.

According to logical scheme (Marshall & Gretchen, 2011) of theoretical justification, certain questions need to be addressed in the scope of participatory research on conflicts, the answers to which assure its trustworthiness.

The questions are:

1. On what ground is it possible to presume that the statements proposed in the research are reliable?
2. How are the proposed statements justified?
3. Do the statements address the research problem?

In order to get the answers to these questions, Creswell and Dana (2000) suggest a number of procedures, which include triangulation, justifications, discomforming evidence, reflection, member checking, prolonged engagement in the field, peer debriefing and so on.

Following this logics, participatory research produces more reliable and convincing results, as they "unite the expert evaluations with the local knowledge" (Brydon-Miller, Greenwood, & Maguire, 2003, p. 25), while the local stakeholders are to the maximum extent engaged in the process of gathering of knowledge and problem-solving recommendations. This is important from the perspective of the philosophy of participatory research, which advocates for tangible benefits to the community brought by the research procedure and the results (Flaskerud & Anderson, 1999; Reason, 1999).

The cooperative application of these techniques allows one to propose participatory action research as an applicable and grounded methodology for studying the accumulation of practical knowledge around the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, nevertheless acknowledging the limitations of the methodology.

The inevitable subjectivity of participatory methodology creates a more or less risky situation from the perspective of trustworthiness of the gathered information. In this respect, this work suggests not to follow ambitions to be representative, but rather to apply the methodology, at all times considering its subjectivity.

Discussion

Considering that the end goal of participatory research is to create tangible social change in the life of the researched community or group, this paper, too, anticipates an innovative methodological approach to the scientific studies of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, thus offering a change both in the current research traditions adapted in conflict studies by social scientists, and in the way conflict-affected communities should interact with the conflict knowledge.

Participatory methodologies can potentially become a way for members of society to be able to take much more actively engaged roles in the discussions on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, thus realizing the importance of practical knowledge even in academic-level studies, as well as giving the researchers an opportunity to plant themselves into the lives of ordinary people. This perspective is crucial especially when dealing with complex and long-lasting conflicts especially in light of recent political transformations in Armenia that took political participation more seriously.

Moreover, these methodological practices, in case of more frequent applications, will help restore the interconnection between the social reality and its conceptions, by minimizing the distance between the researchers and the researched, and consequently chaining the everyday and scientific narrative spaces of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Highlighting the importance of overcoming societal alienation from the conflict discourses, participatory methodologies may emancipate discussions of meta-conflict from conceptual deadlock, in favor of inclusive, down-to-earth understanding of the conflict that may bring about actual individual and social transformations.

Boxes and Figures

Box 1. Some Current Schools of Participatory Research

- ∴ Action Research: Cornell University, USA (Greenwood)
- ∴ Action Research: Scandinavia (Gustavsen)
- ∴ Action Research: Austria (Schratz)
- ∴ Action Learning: Australia (McTaggart)
- ∴ Participatory Research: International Council for Adult Education and Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Toronto (Hall)
- ∴ Participatory Action Research: Germany (Tillman)
- ∴ Participatory Action Research: Peru (Salas)
- ∴ Participatory Action Research: Colombia (Fals-Borda)
- ∴ Participatory Action Research: India (Rahman)
- ∴ Participatory Action Research: USA (Park, Whyte)
- ∴ Participatory Action Research: University of Calgary, Canada (Pyrch)
- ∴ Feminist Participatory Action Research: USA (Brydon-Miller, Maguire)
- ∴ Participatory Community Research: USA (Taylor, Jason, Zimmerman)
- ∴ Community-based Research: India (Tandon)
- ∴ Community-based Participatory Research: USA (Stoeker)
- ∴ Tribal Participatory Research: American Indian and Alaskan Native Communities, USA (Fisher and Ball)
- ∴ Constructionist Research: University of Texas, USA (Lincoln)
- ∴ Participatory Learning and Action (PLA): University of Sussex, UK (Chambers)
- ∴ Cooperative Research: University of Bath, UK (Reason)
- ∴ Participatory Learning and Action (PLA): MYRADA, India (Shah)
- ∴ Critical Systems Theory: University of Hull, UK (Hood)

(Kindon, Pain, & Kesby, 2007, p. 12)

Box 2. Key Characteristics of Participatory Research

Participatory Action Research

- ∴ Aims 'to change practices, social structures, and social media which maintain irrationality, injustice and unsatisfying forms of existence' (McTaggart, 1997)
- ∴ Treats participants as competent and reflexive agents capable of participating in all aspects of the research process
- ∴ Is context-bound and addresses real-life problems
- ∴ Integrates values and beliefs that are indigenous to the community into the central core of interventions and outcome variables
- ∴ Involves participants and researchers in collaborative processes for generating knowledge
- ∴ Treats diverse experiences within a community as an opportunity to enrich the research process
- ∴ Leads to the construction of new meanings through reflections on action
- ∴ Measures the credibility/validity of knowledge derived from the process according to whether the resulting action solves problems for the people involved and increases community self-determination.

Participatory Action Researchers are generally

- ∴ Hybrids of scholar/activist where neither is privileged
- ∴ Interdisciplinary
- ∴ Mavericks/heretics
- ∴ Patient
- ∴ Optimistic, believing in the possibility of change
- ∴ Sociable and collaborative
- ∴ Practical and concerned with achieving real outcomes with real people
- ∴ Able to be flexible and accommodate chaos, uncertainty and messiness; able to tolerate paradoxes and puzzles and sense their beauty and humour
- ∴ Attracted to complex, multi-dimensional, intractable, dynamic problems that can only be partially addressed and partially resolved
- ∴ Engaged in embodied and emotional intellectual practice.

(Sara, Rachel, & Kesby, 2007, p. 14)

Figure 1. Schön's Professional Landscape

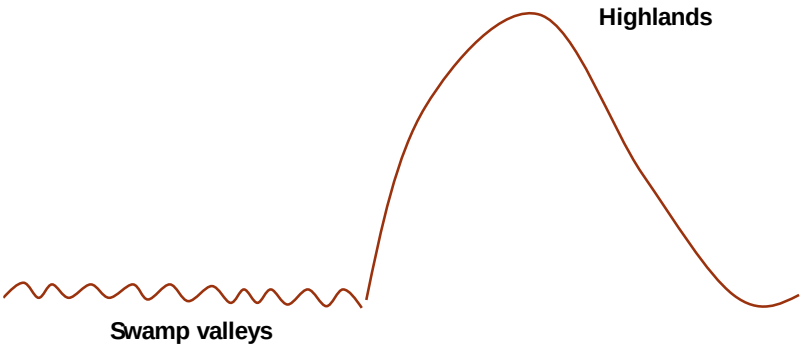

Figure 2. Typical Description of Participatory Action Research Phases

Phase	Activities
Action	Establish relationships and common agenda between all stakeholders Collaboratively scope issues and information Agree on time-frame
Reflection	On research design, ethics, power relations, knowledge construction process, representation and accountability
Action	Build relationships Identify roles, responsibilities and ethics procedures Establish a Memorandum of Understanding Collaboratively design research process and tools Discuss and identify desired action outcomes
Reflection	On research questions, design, working relationships and information requirements
Action	Work together to implement research process and undertake data collection Enable participation of others Collaboratively analyze information generated Begin planning action together
Reflection	On research process Evaluate participation and representation of others Assess need for further research and/or various action options

Action	Plan research-informed action which may include feedback to participants and influential other
Reflection	Evaluate action and process as a whole
Action	Identify options for further participatory research and action with or without academic researchers

(Kindon, Pain, & Kesby, 2007, p. 15)

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Notes

1. A form of understanding and the reality, a research approach that can be especially productive in finding ways to solve contemporary problems the societies face, by minimizing the hierarchic relations between the researcher and the researched, turning the researcher into a facilitator, and the researched into researchers.

2. Emancipation is the condition of being free and liberated from legal, social and political limitations.

ARMED CONFLICTS IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS

Institutional Frailty as Leverage in Abkhazia

Kathryn Butterworth | University of Massachusetts Boston, USA
Session Chair: Isabella Sargsyan, Eurasia Partnership Foundation, Armenia
Discussant: Dr. Anna Ohanyan, Stonehill College, USA

Abstract: Since the August 2008 war in Georgia, Russia has actively sought to extend its influence in the de facto states of Abkhazia and South Ossetia by using a multifaceted approach ranging from soft-power policies, such as social welfare, to military-related overtures. including the establishment of military bases and accession of South Ossetian military units into those of the Russian Federation. Due to the differences between Abkhazia and South Ossetia with regard to political contexts as well as ethnic and geographic heterogeneity, it is necessary to examine each independently. The focus of this article is therefore limited to a discussion of Abkhazia, in order to more accurately examine indicators of strength and weakness within its political institutions. It seeks to examine how Russia manipulates vulnerabilities in the Abkhazian regime and the consequent policy reactions of the Georgian government. Additionally, in order to explore the motivations of Abkhazia, Russia, and Georgia, it is necessary to examine the political, ethnic, and economic dimensions contributing to this institutional frailty.

The theoretical grounding of this qualitative research is three-pronged. The first uses Barbara Walter's (2006) work on reputation building in seeking to explain, in part, why the Georgian government is wary of engaging in substantive negotiation with Abkhazia. Walter explains that capitulation to one movement could encourage further irredentist appeals. The second uses Monica Toft's (2003) theory on indivisibility of territory as a lens through which to see ethnic violence, specifically in de facto states. Toft's theory argues that there is a correlation between an elevated level of regional clustering and ethnic violence, especially when there is a history of territorial claims. The third employs Levitsky and Way's (2007) model of linking and leveraging when analyzing levels of democratization in post-Soviet spaces. In short, weaker interest in certain post-Soviet states on behalf of international democracy-building institutions correlates to weaker democracy-building initiatives on behalf of the domestic regimes.

Keywords: Political institutions, De facto states, Russia, Abkhazia

Introduction

When considering Russian influence in Abkhazia's regime, it is important to examine the strength or frailty of institutions. Particularly after the August 2008 war, it is through political institutions that Russia acts to manipulate vulnerabilities in Abkhazia. It must be noted that the EU, U.S., and other western democratic institutions operate similarly in order to establish and maintain regional influence within the South Caucasus, including in Georgia. Moreover, Georgia, as well as Armenia and Azerbaijan, have been unable to conduct an independent strong foreign policy and as such are reliant on major geopolitical powers for security (Ohanyan, 2015). The success of Georgia's counter recognition efforts of both Abkhazia

and South Ossetia in part relies on support and linkages with western institutions (Ó Beacháin, Comai & Tsurtsumia-Zurabashvili, 2016). However, the scope of this article will primarily focus on Russia's use of the Abkhaz regime as a conduit through which to acquire greater strategic influence in the region.

Additionally, examining the regime from the perspective of institutional frailty will also provide insight into the effectiveness of Georgian policy, specifically, to what extent Georgia's policy towards Abkhazia is affected by Russian involvement with the regime and institutions of the de facto state. Andre W. M. Gerrits and Max Bader (2016) argue that Russian leverage manifests in Abkhazia via legislative and institutional design by mirroring the design of Russian institutions and legislation. However, there is no mention of intentional weakness in institutional design and processes, which this article argues is a key Russian intention in its provision of support and involvement regarding Abkhaz institutions.

Russia's interest in capacity building in Abkhazia is only conducted to the extent that Russia will find it useful. Thus, Abkhaz institutions are intentionally hollow in order to be easily exploited by Moscow. Counter to Gerrits' and Bader's (2016) claim, this article seeks to prove that Moscow does exercise a substantive degree of control over political processes in the Abkhaz regime.

Methodology

Linkage and Leverage, Reputation Building, and Indivisibility

The theoretical framing to contextualize this research stems from Levitsky and Way's model of linkage and leverage, and the impact it has on levels of democratization in post-Soviet spaces. This article also draws on frameworks expounded by Barbara Walter (2006) and

Monica Toft (2003) concerning theories of reputation building and indivisibility of territory. These theories will anchor a discussion of regional ethnic conflict and outline motivating factors regarding how Russia approaches policy regarding Abkhazia. Levitsky and Way's (2007) theoretical framework can also be applied to frame the discussion of the spread of authoritarianism and the conduits by which external actors, such as Russia, use political, economic, and social institutions to assert and maintain control in spaces of geostrategic and political interest.

Levitsky and Way (2007) define their model of linkage and leverage in relation to how susceptible a government is to political influences on behalf of western democracies, as well as the scope and depth of linkages a government has to Western countries and institutions. It is noted in their research that even more so than economic development and leverage, the robustness of linkages with democratic regimes and institutions is more of an impetus for democracy building. While Levitsky and Way specifically apply this model to democratic influence and transition in post-Soviet spaces, we can also use this theorization to elaborate a more authoritarian Russian policy toward Abkhazia, which is dedicated to maintaining robust linkages to sustain regional control (Gerrits & Bader, 2016). Where Levitsky and Way employ this framework in relation to Western linkage and leverage for democratic purposes, here it is used pertaining to Russian leverage and linkage regarding Abkhazia for the objective of blocking democratic and Western influence. At this juncture, a brief discussion of generalizability regarding this framework and its bearing on the spread of authoritarianism is important. The generalizability of this framing is limited to a discussion of states or de facto states experiencing transitional governance due to the presence of weak and quasi- democratic

institutions, phenomena illustrative of transitional governance (DeGrasse & Caan, 2006). States that have strong histories of democratic institutions are less likely to be susceptible to the spread of authoritarianism; thus, the application of this conceptualization is inconducive to explaining authoritarian linkage and leverage in regard to solidly democratic states (Horwitz & Anderson, 2009).

In these cases, linkages range anywhere from those of politics, telecommunications networks, currency, business, and military, to those associated with soft-power linkages, such as shared language, social welfare, and education policies. Moreover, the strength of linkages with Russia correlates to a high degree of russification in both de facto states, regardless of what distinct aspirations each may hold. Importantly, there is a notable distinction between objectives and aspirations advocated by regime elites and political leaders, and those of the general population in Abkhazia regarding independence from, or incorporation within Russia. According to the Caucasus Times, in the summer of 2016 there was an almost even split between a percentage of the population that sought an independent state, and the remaining percentage of 45.3 seeking integration with other entities such as the Eurasian Union, Russia or the Commonwealth of Independent States (Kushev, 2016). The Abkhaz regime continues to hold presidential and parliamentary elections and seeks an independent state, with the acknowledgement that Russia is the primary guarantor of its ability to pursue independence (Gerrits & Bader, 2016). In September of 2019, the Kremlin issued a statement that both congratulated re-elected President Raul Khadjimba and reaffirmed Russia's commitment to deliver socioeconomic and national security guarantees (Office of the President of Russia, 2019).

Findings

Institutional Frailty and Russian Dominance

The delineation of powers in Abkhaz political institutions mirrors those of Russia in design. However, Abkhazia relies considerably on Russia to support its economy and state function and is subjugated to operate as a kind of satellite state. The ethnic discrimination against Georgians in the Gali region, as well as underrepresentation of Georgians and Armenians in the National Assembly is tearing at a threadbare institutional fabric. The design of political institutions as outlined in the Abkhaz constitution is hollow because its capacity is undercut by Russia's wide-ranging involvement with key sectors of military, business, government, education, transportation, and telecommunication discussed below.

Discussion

Abkhazia prior to 2008

Central to this work is the question of why Abkhazia initially sought independence from Georgia. There are different ways to address this question, and it is at this point Monica Toft's work is particularly relevant in examining conflict in Abkhazia and its appeals for independence from Georgia. Toft (2003) asserts that when there is an instance of ethnic clustering combined with a history of territorial claims, appeals for self-determination are likely and that over time, compounded grievances correlate to a higher tendency for violence in territories seeking independence. Here, a historical perspective is especially helpful to contextualize this discussion. Abkhazia was absorbed into the Russian Empire as a principality in 1810 until its fall in 1917. Though initially seeking independence, Abkhazia was incorporated into the Soviet Union and remained within until its

collapse in 1991. The Soviet way of ethno-federalism provided a basis for Abkhazia to constitute an Autonomous Republic and primed the political environment for self-determination movements upon the disintegration of the overarching system (Grigoryan, 2012). Abkhazia suffered from war and ethnic cleansing in the early 1990s. Many Georgians living in Abkhazia before the war were either displaced, killed, or fled, and many Abkhazians were killed. The war destroyed Abkhazia's economy and infrastructure, and it became economically isolated from the international community, and most importantly, from Russia and its immediate neighbors. This prompted such a crisis that international aid organizations became vital to the basic needs of the population (Ó Beacháin et al., 2016). After the wars, many foreign actors, including Russia, operated to keep a tenuous peace in the conflict zones. It would not be until 1999 that Abkhazia would officially declare independence (Clogg, 2008). Russian presence on the borders with Abkhazia became an increasing aggravation for Georgia. During the 1990s, Russia had no interest in supporting independence movements in the Abkhaz regime and, in fact, placed an economic embargo on Abkhazia. However, Russian policy toward Abkhazia started to change in the early 2000s. As a result of Russia's policy shift, railways gradually reopened, and the exchange of goods and services across the border resumed.

Additionally, Russia issued its first passports in Abkhazia in 2002, simultaneously granting Russian citizenship and easier movement across the border. This citizenship also allowed ethnic Abkhaz to begin collecting pensions from Russia. Georgia perceived these actions as further russification, and during this time both governments intensified their rhetoric toward the de facto states.

The presence of de facto states aligns with Russia's national security interests for a few reasons. First, by further disrupting Georgia's

efforts to integrate Abkhazia, Georgia remains a weakened unconsolidated state. Second, it is possible that, as in Crimea, Russia initially perceived independence as necessary to eventual incorporation into Russia, and not an end in itself (Ó Beacháin et al., 2016). Third, support for these independence movements wards off encroachment of Western diplomatic and security paradigms, such as NATO and the EU, especially due to weariness to fully take on a Georgian state that is entangled in two volatile semi-frozen conflicts. Notably, prior to 2008, the EU and international aid organizations were the primary sources of monetary assistance in Abkhazia. As late as 2006, then Abkhazian president Sergei Bagapsh openly courted Europe and his government's willingness for an independent Abkhazia within a European framework (De Waal, 2018). However, this European orientation was cut short by the August 2008 war, and Russia not only assumed the position of guarantor but also began a comprehensive policy towards the two unrecognized states designed to deepen linkages formed in years previous and establish new lines of relations.

Russian Policy toward Abkhazia

Russian policy toward Abkhazia is designed to protect its national security interests by supporting it both financially and in terms of expertise regarding institution building. Substantial reforms in the sectors of government, business, trade, military, and education increased exponentially after 2008, when Russia began a comprehensive policy towards Abkhazia intended to deepen linkages formed in previous years and establish new lines of relations. While Abkhazia has slowly been recovering from war, it has only done so with comprehensive subsidies and economic aid from Russia (Ó Beacháin et al., 2016). In 2017, it was announced that in a two-year

period, Russia would allocate 5.8 billion rubles (101.8 million USD) to Abkhazia (Civil Georgia, 2017).

One of the most visible overtures regarding Russian policy is that of military integration with Abkhazia. After officially recognizing Abkhaz independence, Russia entered into an "Agreement on Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Support" with the country. Importantly, aside from affirming the sovereignty of Abkhazia and their mutual defense, Russia also affirmed its commitment to military and economic integration (Gerrits & Bader, 2016). In 2014, a bilateral agreement set the stage for combined Abkhaz and Russian military units (Harding, 2014). Most recently, in September 2019, an agreement for financial aid was announced in which an overhaul of Abkhaz military units is intended (Al Jazeera, 2019).

Moscow's pretext for this support lies in the Treaty of Alliance and Integration. This treaty outlines a synchronized foreign policy and a common space for security and defense. Both Georgia and the US dismissed these unified forces as lacking legal basis under international conventions, considering them to be as such illegitimate (RFE/RL, 2018). Aside from this recent development, over the past decade, Russia established multiple bases and thousands of troops and FSB in Abkhazia. It is notable that these official agreements (either with Abkhazia, South Ossetia, or other entities in the post-Soviet space) not only serve to assert influence but also legitimize Russia's status as a regional hegemon (Klein, 2019). These treaties and their language are important because they articulate deepening links between the Abkhaz regime and Russia. Additionally, Russian dictated policy actions resulting from these agreements further detract from any bargaining power Georgia might have regarding Abkhazia, challenging Georgia's concept of

territorial integrity and widening the schism between Tbilisi and Sokhumi.

As Barbara Walter (2009) notes in her theory regarding reputation building, it is in the best interest of states like Georgia, which already faces multiple challenges to its statehood, to not capitulate to irredentist or separatist movements in fear that it could encourage similar future movements. Georgia's apprehension toward bargaining with Abkhazia continues to plague any chance of realistic negotiation. Similarly, Russia's ability to provide an alternative for both Abkhazia and South Ossetia obviates any need to meet Georgia's demands.

Russia is motivated by its perception that the post-Soviet space is intrinsically tied to its national security, and maintaining control is thus an important component of its national security policy, often asserting shared history when pursuing relations regarding economic, political, and military ties (Klein, 2019). Abkhazia can rely on tourism and goods such as wine and foodstuffs that it exports to Russia (President of the Republic of Abkhazia, 2015). As in the Soviet period, Abkhazia is now again home to resorts on the Black Sea and frequented by a large percentage of Russian tourists and government officials, thereby informally strengthening ties and infusing money into the economy (Nemtsova, 2010). It is notable that the Russian ruble is the currency of business in Abkhazia. The Abkhaz economy is very dependent on Russian aid, and thus, the regime has a deeper financial incentive to integrate with Russia. As of September 2019, 45 percent of the Abkhazian economy is reliant on Russian aid, and trade with Russia accounts for 56 percent of all exports (Al Jazeera, 2019).

Further ties are evident in the realm of telecommunications and transportation. Russian led telecommunications networks have operated in Abkhazia for more than a decade. The vice premier and

minister of finance in the Abkhaz government as of this writing, Dmitry Serikov, worked at the Russian telecommunications company MegaFon-Moskva which is alleged to have provided telecommunications coverage to Abkhazia starting from 2005 – illegally, according to the Georgian Law on Occupied Territories (Menabde, 2015). Serikov had been the financial director for Aquafon, the larger of the two telecommunications companies operating in Abkhazia, before being appointed to his government posts (Apsnypress, 2016). This remains relevant to a discussion of Russian power because it further illustrates that Moscow is aware of the frailty in the Abkhaz system and exploits this to its own ends.

Such links are also constructed in the realm of education policy and language. The reforms made in Abkhaz education policy throughout the past decade have deepened russification of society. During the Soviet period, Abkhazia witnessed widespread suppression of its native language in lieu of Georgian. The Abkhaz alphabet was replaced with Georgian script, and Abkhaz ceased to be taught in schools. In addition, Abkhaz broadcasts were shut down. Such Soviet policies produced a situation in which only a minority of Abkhaz could speak their native language. Post-independence language policies in Abkhazia are a direct result of the chauvinism that the Abkhaz experienced for much of the twentieth century. However, the financial situation in Abkhazia renders the state at a loss to develop an educational system using the Abkhaz language. At present, after the fifth year in school, all classes, apart from specialized literature courses and materials are in Russian. While there have been multiple programs established to advance the Abkhaz language, the status of Russian is such that it is seen as more lucrative academically and professionally. The Russian government provides scholarships to Abkhaz for study at Russian universities upon completion of

secondary school, further incentivizing the favoring of Russian language (Zhunussova, 2017). In the Gali region of Abkhazia, in which many ethnic Georgians reside, this policy excludes them from learning their native language. In response, the Georgian government instituted the program "A Step to a Better Future" aimed at Abkhazia and South Ossetia in order to support economic and educational ties. However, these attempts are largely unsuccessful because the program was implemented well after Russia solidified its relationship with both de facto states.

Political Institutions in Abkhazia

For the purposes of this discussion, political institutions are referring to the structures of the judiciary, executive, and legislative sectors in Abkhazia. The ethnic demographics in Abkhazia are evident in the make-up of the regime and political institutions. The most recent census data in Abkhazia dates to 2011. According to this census, Abkhazians represented roughly half of the population while Armenians, Georgians (Mingrelians), and Russians constitute the remainder of the population (Unrepresented Nations and Peoples, 2015).

For instance, Article 6 of the constitution mandates the state language be Abkhaz and that Russian, along with Abkhaz, are recognized by the state and other institutions (Constitution of the Republic of Abkhazia, 1999). Additionally, it is codified in law that the president must be ethnic Abkhaz and fluent in the Abkhaz language. In Abkhazia, anxiety over ethnic demographics renders Georgians and Armenians at a severe disadvantage regarding representation. After the latest parliamentary elections in 2017, the National Assembly consists of 88.5 percent Abkhaz. Further, in 2014, a substantial number of Mingrelian Georgians were barred from

voting. Consequently, there is only one representative in the National Assembly from the Gali district. The Abkhaz regime is not reflective of its population, leading to prejudiced legislation (such as the educational policies in Gali mentioned above) and contributing to turbulence, distrust in political institutions, and a fractious environment in which grievances multiply rendering institutions weak (Ó Beacháin, Comai & Toal, 2017).

Following the Russian recognition of Abkhazia as an independent state in 2008, Moscow has exercised tacit and explicit forms of control. For example, an information leak illustrated that Russia interfered in the Abkhazian presidential election in 2014, in which Moscow-backed candidate Raul Khadjimba won (Piirsalu, 2018). This is a salient point because it illustrates that, aside from Russia acting as a benefactor by providing economic aid and social welfare, as well as training for military and government operation, Moscow can and does exercise a high degree of control over Abkhaz political affairs. Abkhaz political institutions are similar and, in some instances, modeled after their Russian counterparts, in which executive powers are disproportionately substantive and broad compared to those of the legislative or judiciary (Gerrits & Bader, 2016). Moreover, evidence that Vladislav Surkov, an aide of Putin, had legislation for Abkhazia in his possession, was released in 2016 (Troianovski, 2018). Notably, Surkov was also involved in the 2014 election scandal mentioned previously.

Abkhazian political institutions are more sophisticated than they were ten years ago, but only due to Russian support. Importantly, Abkhazia cannot have true autonomy without economic independence, as well as diplomatic and trade relationships with the international community (Ó Beacháin et al., 2016). Particularly through financial and military integration, Russia's power and

influence prevent any resolution of conflict and saps any strength from Georgian policies toward reconciliation. Notably, the nature of reforms may be designed in order that Russia benefits from political, military, and banking institutions, and not in order to operate for the sole benefit of the de facto regime. This is not to say Abkhazia has not benefited at all from the influx of Russian aid, but rather that frail institutions are easily exploited, and it is in Russia's best interest to ensure that institutional frailty is inherent to the Abkhaz regime.

The institutional frailty of the Abkhaz regime lies in the fact that it cannot exist apart from Moscow. This would imply that while Abkhazia witnessed an upturn in these sectors, any appearance of vitality is superficial, and the institutional edifice is vulnerable because it is easily manipulated and exploited by the Russian government. The breadth and depth of Russia's scope only serve to increase its leverage at a loss for Abkhazia, and as Abkhazia continues to become inextricably linked to Moscow, it also becomes increasingly frail.

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