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A Sociological Approach to Police Officers' Conflict Management Tools

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Abstract

Conflicts are inseparable part of human society all over the world. Although much contemporary conflicts seem to be about political, ethnic, or religious differences, in fact these conflicts generally have an economic, and a political basis. One of the most important nowadays issue is how people manage conflict situations, driven by interests, seemingly incompatible values and hostilities. Albanian State Police strategies vision is supporting new arrangements and innovation about police communication services. In addition, it appears necessary for police officers to be prepared for effective intervention and conflict resolution. *The objective* of this research is to examine conflict situations and relationships in police institution. The aim is to find out which appropriate methods of analysis or management strategies are better for solutions between parties of conflicts. *The method* used for the conduction of this work is a qualitative one, combined with analyses of data of a short survey process. Through the literature research and analyses of the data collected from the survey there are provided ways or manners of dealing and managing conflicts situations between police officers, people and police officers or police officers in front of people who conflict to each other. Analysis of the collected data have revealed in the conclusion that in order to perfectly resolve and manage conflict situations, it's necessary to primary deeply analyze situations. This works in police officers case, too. As *a main conclusion* of this paper, each police officer who deals with a conflict situation has to structure their work plan and has to mention the main points like: description of the situation, identification of six phases of a conflict situation, deepening analysis based on the "mapping" method, following police procedures and finding a path for an adequate management and solution. Mapping method is used in terms of in-depth analysis of conflict situations to bring out better understanding of conflicts causes and parties.

Keywords: conflict analysis, police officer, mapping method, management strategy, procedures, solution.

1. Introduction

According to communications and conflicts scholars/authors, there are not any exact applied formulas that perfectly resolve conflicts in all professional or personal fields, even in the police officers. Conflicts have engaging personal, professional, ethnic, religious and any other character.

There are many definitions of conflicts, but the most appropriate one according to the police context and the objective of this research is: "*Conflict is related with any situation in which two or more parties feel they have mutually incompatible intensions*" (Albanian Police Standard Procedure, 2017).

Police organization conflicts are usually presented between: police officers, people and police officers, or police officers in front of people who conflict to each other.

Professional conflict situations of police organization may occur as a result of misunderstanding of roles or functions, as well as divisions of duties, modes of promotion, ways of promotion in duty or rewards, lack of transparency among colleagues, disagreements, etc. In the personal view, conflicts may occur due to social disagreements, dishonesty, lack of respect, family problems, acting behind the shoulders, disrespect of unwritten social rules est.

2. The method

The method used for the conduction of this work is a qualitative one, combined with analysis of data of a short survey process. Literature researchers are focused on conflicts situations between police officers, people and police officers, or police officers in front of people who conflict to each other. Also it is collected data from the strategies, police procedures, or other similar sources to introduce the best foreign and Albanian practices for police conflicts management. The literature suggests “mapping method” as an appropriate one to in depth analyze conflict situation. The elements of this method help police officers to get detailed information about causes of conflict and the parties. This method will be presented in detail in a specific topic through this paper below.

A short survey process has also been conducted with twenty police officers, respectively student in Academy of Security in Tirana, with a low rank of police grades, and under the commissar grade expected, in order to get information about their experience in resolving conflict situations. They used to be patrol officers or investigation crime specialists. They were faced with different kind of conflicts in their previous jobs, from the usual up to the most dangerous or difficult ones.

All the twenty of them said that it is very difficult and idealistic that you have to take your time and communicate in peace with parties in a conflict situation.

3. Communications and conflicts according to “Community Policing Strategy”

Price, Straus and Breese (2009: 40) say that “community policing is problem-solving policing”. Community Policing Strategy defend the idea of moving from a reactive response to crime, in proactive responses to community problems which hold the potential to further reduce crime and improve public safety (SACP, 2014).

Community policing makes policing services different from traditional law enforcement. Building structures of trust and sharing information across community agencies, in order to resolve resident problems, is the core of community and problem-solving policing. All is about knowing how to behave and communicate with other parties in order to find better solutions, as well as dealing with daily conflict situations or intervening in high-risk situations.

In the framework of community policing and sociology programs, police officers should be familiar with people in the neighborhood and not be affected by prejudices or rumor. This can help them peacefully resolving and intervening in conflicts situations. According to those programs (Price, Straus & Breese, 2009), a police officer must:

- a. Identify and then face the problem;
- b. Ask as many question as possible to get many information about the problem;
- c. Reflect on the information received;
- d. Analyze all responses and witnesses and take care about future actions.

In order to reach a reaction to some kind of problem, one must first understand the problem.

This requires a profound analysis of the situation of conflict. Any conflict situation goes through some stages of development. Being able to identify the stages in which conflict develops can be useful in gaining insight into the interventions, which may be necessary to properly handle and deal with the situation.

4. Stages of a conflict development

When a police officer faces with a conflict situation, the first step he must do is to comprehend deeper that situation. The officer may interfere and calm the situation. Then he/she needs to act and reflect. A police officer tends to behave differently in several types of circumstances of a conflict situation. It all depends in the kind of level a police intervene. In the discomfort level (CRANA Plus, 2011), it is easiest to deal with and head off the issues by speaking directly with the other party to establish if there is a problem. Good will is established by being prepared to address the issue. But there are other levels where it becomes more difficult facing with parties or trying to calm and resolve something. The best theory and practices about the best ways on behaving in different levels of conflict situation are listed as follows (*Ibid.*, 2011).

It is differently called “incidents level” (CRANA Plus, 2011) and it appears when the incidents happen and a police officer may face with an issue causing irritation or frustration. It is suggested to intervene successfully by raising the issue with the other party and realize an open and non-confrontational manner with an opening statement that a solution is being sought. It can be helpful to say something like “I would like to discuss what is happening as it appears there is a problem”. It is important that a non-judgmental stance is taken.

It is not easy for police officers to intervene and deal with parties in a conflict situation.

During the short survey process with twenty students of Academy of Security (patrol officers and investigation crime officers, 2018), they revealed that in some cases they have risked their life because of the incomplete information about the situation or as a consequence of intervening in a dangerous hassle. They also claimed that it’s difficult to deal with people when they are under the pressure of the moment of conflict: “*After facing with parties and calm them down it comes the most difficult part – in-depth analyze of the case*” – they said (A short survey, 2018).

There are higher level or conflict escalation “misunderstandings”, “tension” or crisis that need to be explored (CRANA Plus, 2011). In the first one, it is recommended that police officers should involve the parties to clarify what might be happening. It can be useful to ask questions such as: “When you said that, what you meant?” or any question which can shed light on the nature of the problem. The focus here is on clearing any confusion around the issue.

At the “tension level” (CRANA Plus, 2011), it is hard for people to be objective enough to discuss the matter in an open and constructive manner. That’s why Albanian police officers emphasize this moment as being risky to intervene. During the short survey process they talked about many dangerous cases where their colleges have been hurt or dead. In those cases, police officers must get a lot of information before intervening and facing with the conflicts parties (Albanian Police Standard Procedure, 2017).

The lack of information had cause serious consequences. Also, the literature suggests that it may help to call upon a trusted and impartial manager or someone from nearby to the work unit to assist. Such a person will informally mediate and may speak separately to each party in the dispute. This can often resolve misunderstandings or set some boundaries to the situation.

The “crisis level” (CRANA Plus, 2011) is difficult to handle. It is recommended to call on the services of an external mediator, who will work with the parties and assist them to find a workable solution.

It is very difficult for people who are at this level of escalation in a conflict to be sufficiently objective and sufficiently clear headed to work on and arrive at a resolution. That's why police officers need collaboration of other professionals like mediators, psychologists, etc. Albanian police officers emphasized the need for this cooperation during the short survey process. In most of the cases the theory recommends a mediator to objectively work with the parties and their both perspectives and interests to resolve the case. A mediator will ask each individual to reflect upon the contribution they made to the dispute and how they see themselves contributing to the solution. Mediation is rarely suitable when bullying or violent behaviors have been experienced.

A police officer need to be aware of those stages of conflict because of knowing how to react in each kind of situation. They first need to notice the signals of a conflict situation and then the causes of misunderstandings, the risk level of the situation, the distance between parties or the tendency to neither compromise or not with each other. They should be alert to the type and the risk of conflict, so they should know what to do next.

When you intervene during a conflict, it is difficult to think rationally about how you got, where you are, and how you might make things better. So it becomes a necessity to explore elements of a conflict situation in order to get an in-depth analysis.

Program on Negotiation by Harvard Law School revealed three of the most notable elements of conflicts, and those are interests, alternatives and identity (Shonk, 2018).

It is suggested that professionals should focus in long-term interest to get effective resolution of conflicts. If they focus on long-term interests of parties or encourage them to do so, there is more probability to grow the relationship strongly and give better solutions.

Fisher, Ury and Patton (2004: 34-35) have revealed four fundamental principles of negotiation:

- Separate people from the problem;
- Focus on interests, rather than positions;
- Create common benefit options;
- Insist on using objective criteria.

By respecting and following those principles, negotiators, mediators or other professionals as police officers, will get better results in their job. They will be able not only to perfectly resolve a conflict situation, but they will help other parties to save their relationship and keep it in the long run, too. In order to follow those principles in conflict situations, it is necessary that a police officer should know how to keep calm, to listen more carefully, to construct a logical and objective perception of the case, to communicate with parties, to identify different solution options of both parties and then get a direction, advice or order to solution. It is necessary to keep calm and stay reasonable.

Professional police officer who will negotiate in hostage cases, in violence cases, in young's disagreement or other ones, should look and listen carefully, target the main problem and make it easier in front of parties eyes (see Staff, 2018). They should be able to understand parties' needs and interest. They should compare the importance of the problem with parties' interest in resolving it and then, they should know how to present the entire situation in concordance to their perception. A good conflict management police officer is someone between a psychologist,

mediator and police officer. You should be three in one, in order to get a solution which should be adapted to each side.

When a police officer makes a negotiation process, it is suggested them to apply brain storming process. So it will help in conducting different opinions, interests and possibilities for solution and direct to the right one.

5. What should contain a conflict report according to sociological analysis?

In order to design a conflict situation report, it is necessary to gather in-depth analysis, enable elements of the situation and then find effective solution strategies. You may not get successful solution, without accurate data or information about what happened. These should be analyzed and interpreted so that the solution fits with the conflict case or parties. Professionals like mediators, negotiators, police officers or others must get in touch with a conflict report elements or a conflict profile (Barrena, 2003, Resource Pack).

The elements that should contain a conflict report (see Medam & Aboya, 2013) are as follows:

- Information on the basic features of the conflict object;
- How's the possibility for opponents to get in touch with the conflict object;
- The opponent's profile (their psychic properties, status, power; their goals, needs, interests, experiences, thoughts analysis, etc.);
- Evidencing conflicts sources and causes which encourage their development or persecution;
- Social environment detailed analysis where the conflict issue has happened;
- Who and how to support the opposite parties;
- Impact of public opinion on conflict development.

Once the data are collected and a specific case analysis is carried out, then it is possible to choose the best strategy for resolving the conflict situation. And now the question is: what method should police officers or other professionals use, in order to get all this information and to complete that conflict report?

6. "Mapping method" elements

Exploring conflicts needs to base on conflict models or schemes to distinguish their composite parts and issues. Reflecting on different conflict degrees of complexity and dynamics, it is more likely to face with different processes and results. The conflict situation profile arises from the opposing relationships' context and dynamics investigation. In addition, a "conflict tree" can be also used to shed light on the parties' manifestations or tensions.

In this paper, as a result of the literature research, it is suggested "mapping method" (Ho-Won, 2008) to illustrate the purpose of a conflict through evaluating the purpose of parties and also their relationships' type and kind of issues. Identifying conflicting parties is an essential step in understanding their attitudes, interests, capacities and their support's external level.

Evolution of the relationship between parties and their social context can be considered in short-term and long-term dynamics, which makes mapping analyses method as one of the most necessary and important one. Based on this method, we analyze a conflict situation by

separating in various part related with the context and other details. Those various parts are used to explain the whole event meaning within a certain timeframe.

This method is recommended to police officer's conflict analysis and investigation, when they have to deal, to resolve or to intervene in cases like that, because of opportunity to analyze parties in details. The mapping method analysis is realized in terms of some milestones keys that serve to divide and orient the information. And that's useful for police officers work.

Mapping method, as Ho-Won specified (2008: 20-43), aim at identifying key conflict actors from the viewpoint of:

- a. Interests, values and needs related to the motive;
- b. Purposes, representing by aims and perspectives;
- c. Issues arising from concerns about well-being.

Those milestone keys are important for conflicts situations' in-depth analysis and conflict management strategies. Each of those perspectives has its own sub-issues, so that any part of a situation can be pulled-apart and analyzed. Relationship dynamics are determined by parties' identity, self-esteem, sense of reality and development conflict level.

Conflict management and solution processes can be analyzed by exploring security, politics and economics, social or other fields. Micro-level versus macro-level analysis covers obstacles that work against a peaceful solution, as well as internal and external factors which influence the prolongation of the conflict.

Mapping method (see Department de Justicia, 2014) includes essential information on planning a constructive response, including violence control. One of the most important goals of this method is that it considers the conflict as helpful as to differentiate opposites parties existing attitude from their true interests and needs by explaining a variety of conflict resolution options.

The key point of view that this method suggests is that a professional worker should go beyond what appears. When a police officer deals with a conflict issue, should analyze any detail, in order to a better understanding and a useful solution. Mapping gives the opportunity to get in-depth analysis of conflict cases and that is helpful for police officers, too.

7. Conflicts management by police officers

It's difficult for police officers to interfere in conflicts between individuals who know each other because they may be hurt. For example, police officers who are called to a domestic violence accident scene face the threat and possibility to violence. There is always risk when low enforcement officers interfere in conflicts between foreigners, too. The stressful nature of police and angers' management difficulties increase life and work risk for low enforcement officers.

Police conflict management training programs have been developed to enhance their ability to manage conflict.

Initially, some police department was resistant and didn't support these training programs, because of the deep-rooted military culture. However, these conflict management training programs have gained acceptance over time. The conclusion is that nowadays many large urban police department uses these programs.

In fact, law enforcement agencies have operational conflict management units. For example, Delaware State Police (2015) uses a Conflict Management Team to help negotiate hostages, media abductions and other crises. In addition, low enforcement agencies have early

warning systems for identifying and responding to officers who have difficulties in conflict management or other (American Department of Justice, 2001).

Nowadays discussions follows on the elements of conflict various approaches to conflict management, interpersonal skills needed for conflict management and researches on effectiveness of police conflict management training.

8. Five strategies to manage conflicts situations from a sociological point of view

There are many strategies that suggest different ways of behaviors, in order to a better resolving of conflict situations. Sociological studies have pointed out five conflict managing strategies. Those ones are also used in the field of economy, psychology, security and beyond. They are used to show the position that each party faces in a conflict situation (see Hiemer, n.d.).

As mentioned above, knowing as more as possible about details, sources and causes or parties position in a conflict situation, it's important for every professional or police officer, in order to get the necessary information to resolve the situation.

The first conflict strategy management is "Cooperation". It is called "win-win" strategy and is considered the best way to deal with conflicts. The purpose is to reach agreement on goals. Through this strategy you can lead to commitment to goals and reduce bad feelings. The disadvantage of this strategy is that it can consume time and require energy.

The second one is "Compromise". It is called "win some-lose some" strategy and is used to achieve temporary solutions, avoid conflicts or resolve the problems in a short period of time. A disadvantage is that people can ignore important values and long-term goals in order to resolve the case in the pressure of time. In addition, this strategy may lead individuals to ignore the importance of an issue and may lead to cynical attitudes.

The third one is "Competition". It is called "win-lose" strategy and it involves attempts to defeat your opponent, in order to gain scarce resources. Conversation is a form of competition. This strategy can lead to an escalation of conflict, where the party who lose can try to retaliate against the winner's one.

The fourth one is "Accommodation". It is called "lose-win" strategy and is used in those cases when the problem is more important for other parties than for you. This strategy promotes goodwill. It's also effective when you make a mistake. The disadvantage is that your point of view is secondary to others. In addition, you may lose credibility and the ability to influence in the future.

The fifth conflict strategy management is "Avoidance". It is called "lose-lose" strategy and is used in those case when the issues is not so important for both parties or other issues are more important for them. This strategy is also used in those cases when the conflict can be very dangerous or otherwise it is needed more information to solve the problem. The disadvantage is that issues can be settled by default.

One of the first efforts to help police officers become more effective in managing interpersonal conflict was a program developed by Morton Bard at the City University of New York. In addition to helping participants become more competent in conflict management, this program included training in the competencies of influence, communication, empathy, and self-awareness (Zacker & Bard, 1973). There are also some types of techniques related with police officers behavior and attitude during a conflict situation (Albanian Police Standard Procedure, 2017), divided in two parts:

- A. The techniques used by police officers to calm down a conflict or discussion situation;

B. The action procedures of police officers after they are notified about a conflict or discussion situation.

In the first one there are described behavior's techniques of police officer, in order to calm down the conflict situation. There are relaxing techniques, control techniques, management techniques of anger and management techniques after calming the conflict situation. All those techniques guide police officers how to intervene and to communicate with other parties that are involved in a conflict situation. They should get some information about a kind of situation so that they should be prepared about the intervene plan. Through those techniques police officers should control their anger, listen carefully and show empathy, avoid hasty reactions, encourage parties to exhaust their anger, etc., when deal with a conflict case. They can't go further to police procedures if they can't emotionally and psychologically control the situation or they can't find ways of communication with parties.

For conflicts in which the police intervene, acting either as a primary or a third party, effective conflict outcomes do include restoring order. This usually implies reducing or preventing escalation of the situation, and solving the issue in an efficient way. Particularly escalation, with the threat, for example, of having to make arrests, implies a great deal of work for the police and the judicial system. Therefore, preventing escalation is a key element of effective conflict management by the police.

In this framework, police officers should take part in various trainings with the focus on sociological and psychological factors of communication and behaviors, in order to manage or resolve a conflict situation.

In a study made in the Netherlands by Euwema, Kop & Bakker (2004: 23-38), it was concluded that dominance plays an important part in police-civilian interactions. The benefits of reduced dominance in these situations should be taken into account in the training of professionals. In this study, there were related conflict behavior to burnout and performance. Researchers have conducted the study among police officers, who have both a stress- and conflict-prone occupation. In another observation study among police officers (Euwema & Kop, 2001), it is found that officers using verbal or physical force in interactions with civilians, all scored high on burnout, particularly on depersonalization.

It is very important to know how to understand and how to communicate with parties. If you keep a certain attitude when you are facing a discussion or conflict scene between parties you will be able to expect a similar attitude. So it is recommended that professional ones like nurses, mediators, and police officers should know how to look calm, audibly, communicative, and under stable as much as possible. Only in this way then can better show their professionalism.

According to Kiesler's interaction theory (1983), leading behavior of one party is complemented by submissive behavior of the other party.

In the case of professional interactions, the client or patient follows, while the professional, being a teacher, nurse or police officer, leads and directs the interaction (Euwema, Kop & Bakker, 2004).

During the short survey process (2018), one of the police officers said: "You just don't have time for this kind of things because you may be in a hurry to resolve some other problem. You are not quiet to involve in one case and to analyze it. So we choose the shorter way. We go there, to the conflict scene, give some order, complete the necessary documents and we go away".

Here there comes two problems of Albanian police officers: first one is related with organizations of work, and the other one, with the police culture to give little importance to communication, in order to end up things and cases in a quickly and military way.

In the Table 1 there are demonstrated three communication problems in police conflicts resolving case in Albanian Police (A short survey process, 2018).

Table 1. Communication problems

Communication problems in police conflicts resolving case in Albanian Police	
Lack of time	1
A lot of other responsibilities	2
Police culture	3

Community policing is the philosophy and organizational strategy which aims to establish a partnership between the community and the police, to enable a common analysis of problems and to identify possible solutions based on the concept of sharing responsibilities, in order to maintain security in the community. As a result by OSCE study (2008: 19) this philosophy is built on two basic principles that are improving the quality of service and building trust.

The criteria of community policing are the following (OSCE, 2018):

- Show respect for parties;
- Respect for human rights;
- Effective and mutual conversation;
- Frequency of bilateral contacts;
- Non-use of abusive, discriminatory or prejudicial practices by the parties;
- Display of professionalism and preservation of ethics;
- Integrity thought and care for the common good as the goal of post modernity.

9. Conclusions

As a conclusion of the literature research and analysis of data of the short survey process with Albanian police officers, it is concluded that each police officer who deals with a conflict situation has to structure their work plan and has to mention the main points like: description of the situation, identification of six phases of a conflict situation, deepening analysis based on the “mapping” method, following police procedures, as well as finding a management and solution path. First of all, police officers are suggested to deeply analyze conflict situations by using the structure and proper elements offered by “mapping method”, which came out from the researches in the literature. Then they are expected to intervene following police procedures orders.

Even though, every professional one like mediators, negotiators, police officers who deals with conflict cases, must know how to keep calm, to communicate, to behave and to listen carefully to each party and respect police procedures orders, principle of negotiation, methods of conflict analysis and management strategies by constructing an individual work plan to intervene, manage and give the right solution.

It is important that police officers should be further trained about analyzing, managing and resolving conflict situation. It will work in their better work performance, as well as in in-depth resolving real problems of society and keeping long term community relation. All the above mentioned strategies will be help in the State Police Department and the society in the whole.

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¹ Survey included twenty police officers, respectively students in Academy of Security Tirana, with a low rank of police grades, under the commissar grade expected and patrol officers also investigation crime specialist.

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Understanding Student Retention in Greece: The Impact of Socioeconomic Factors on Academic Success

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Abstract

This article focuses on the issue of retention in Greek higher education institutions. It is an issue of growing significance in the last decades, after the expansion of higher education and the increase in the number of university students. It is based on a literature review and the results of a research the aim of which was to investigate the factors to which students' attribute the fact that they have either not completed their studies in the period nominally expected for their study programme, or have withdrawn. Research data show that retention constitutes a complex social problem and that there is a relationship between retention and socioeconomic factors. We conclude that a full understanding of the issue, as well as efforts to increase student success presuppose the study of social parameters, which will examine the relationship between students' socioeconomic background and their studies, within each country's specific financial, social and cultural framework.

Keywords: retention, higher education, social class, drop out, academic success.

1. Introduction

In the last decades there has been a shift in research interest from access to higher education to participation and success in it, while issues such as retention, defined as “the extent to which learners remain within a higher education institution and progress to complete their study programme within a given time frame” (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2014: 29) have gained prominence. This shift is mainly due to the following factors. First, it is now generally recognized that retention is linked to social justice and that the expansion of higher education does not necessarily entailing equal opportunities. It is now widely recognized that participation in higher education should be accompanied by opportunities for success within it. Official data show that although access to higher education has expanded greatly in the last decades, completion rates (the proportion of students who start and complete their studies) have remained roughly the same (Tinto, 2012). A growing number of students either do not complete a programme of study in a pre-determined time-period or drop out. Research data show that on an international level one in four students drop out from their studies, while in Britain many higher education institutions have high drop out rates (HEFCE, 2006).

Retention and success in higher education for students from disadvantaged backgrounds are persistent issues for governments and policy makers through the world (Yorke &

Thomas, 2003). Governments invest in higher education having adopted a “human capital” approach towards it, believing there are constructive associations between higher education, transition to the labour market and economic growth (Quinn, 2006; Shavit et al., 2007; Sianou-Kyrgiou & Tsiplakides, 2011). Apart from governments, these issues also occupy in a large extent higher education institutions. Due to their commitment to the students whom they enroll, high levels of attrition “raise questions about the fulfillment of that commitment” (Yorke & Longden, 2004: 1). The repercussions of the problem lead institutions and those responsible for the planning of education policy to take measures aimed at increasing retention rates.

- Fifty percent (50%) of students has father in partly-skilled occupations.
- Sixty percent (60%) of students have father who has reached secondary education level.
- Seventy percent (70%) of students come from urban areas.
- Students from lower socioeconomic background were not well informed before they enter university about the academic life, they lack preparation for decision-making, they didn't meet academic demands and that they didn't develop academic expectations.
- Social class is closely related to retention.

On the basis of the above discussion, the aim of this article is to investigate the factors to which students attribute the fact that they have either dropped out or have not completed their studies in the period nominally expected for their study programme. To achieve this aim, the article is organized as follows. In the next part we present the explanatory frameworks put forward for the examination of retention and attrition. This is followed by a brief description of the situation in Greece and a description of the research methodology. We then present the research findings and the conclusions drawn from the discussion of the findings.

1.1 *Explanatory frameworks*

The issue of student retention has attracted much research interest and effort is made to make recommendations in order to increase student success and completion rates. A number of different approaches have been proposed, and the relevant literature draws mainly from the disciplines of sociology and psychology (Yorke & Longden, 2004). Many studies investigate the issue of retention and attrition from a psychological perspective placing emphasis on students' personal qualities and characteristics (Bean & Eaton, 2000). More recently, a growing number of studies attempt to investigate the issue based on sociological theories και explanatory frameworks. The most commonly used frameworks that draw inspiration from sociology are that of Tinto (1975, 1987, 1988, 1993) and Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979; Bourdieu, 1986).

According to Tinto, there is a relationship between retention and students' academic and social engagement (Tinto, 2012). He argues that “the greater students' involvement in the life of the college, especially its academic life, the greater their acquisition of knowledge and development of skills” (Tinto 1997: 600). In this framework, the main reason for non-completion is the fact that students do not manage to “integrate into the institution, academically and/or socially” (Yorke & Longden, 2004: 78). The lack of academic and social integration has detrimental effects to completion of a programme of study and leads students to the decision to leave early. It is important to note that in Tinto's work, social and academic integration are considered as separate concepts who are, at the same time, interrelated. This means that the lack of either social or academic integration is not enough for university success, when there is a noticeable deficit in the other.

Studies based on Tinto's theoretical framework, mention three factors that impact on retention and drop out: students' incompatibility with the programme of study, financial

difficulties and poor experiences from student life (Thomas, Adams & Birchenough, 1996; Yorke, 1999). Other studies mention factors such as students' academic background, academic and social integration, attitude towards studies, motivation and compatibility between students and the higher education institution (Moller-Wong & Eide, 1997).

In the framework of Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction, the concept of "cultural capital" is a useful tool in understanding academic trajectories, especially as regards the comparison between the students' and the universities culture (Bourdieu, 1986). Cultural capital, which can be transformed into financial capital, determines the degree of student integration in the university's culture and academic life. Students from families with a high level of financial and social capital with parents who have participated in higher education are usually integrated easier and faster in the academic environment. They are, thus, more likely to complete their studies in the predetermined time period. Their social capital helps them decode faster the norms and the requirements of the university as a social framework, which allows them to have higher achievement levels and makes it easier for them to deal with potential academic difficulties and problems.

Contemporary studies suggest that retention is a multifaceted issue and that it cannot be examined and explained in an easy, linear fashion (Harper & Quaye, 2009). Research has shown that social parameters play an important role, since there is a relationship between social class and academic trajectories from the first year to higher education to graduation. The family's financial and cultural capital determines preparation, student life, the cultivation of the relationship with knowledge, factors which result in inequalities as regards academic trajectories. Students with parents who have not participated in higher education are more prone to prolong their studies or drop-out, because they lack knowledge of the academic environment and familiarity with academic traditions and behavior patterns (Astin, 1993). They delay to develop expectations for their studies in relation to students who possess the necessary knowledge from their parents (Hossler et al., 1998).

Other parameters related to retention are the social and friendly circle of the students (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005), as expectations regarding successful completion of studies are associated with social interactions with their peers (Hossler et al., 1998). In addition, there is a relationship between retention and the extent to which students interact socially with other students and academic staff (Astin et al., 1987; Tinto, 1997). Finally, many studies have established a link between retention and students' performance in the lower educational levels and especially in secondary education (Tross et al., 2000), which is, in turn, greatly influenced by social class. Students with higher performance in secondary education are more likely not only to participate in higher education, but succeed within it.

In a similar vein, many studies conclude that socioeconomic factors differentiate academic trajectories and university success. For example, they are related to financial barriers in study completion, especially in higher education institutions with fees, which brings to the surface the importance of family income in academic success. Students from families with a low income have fewer possibilities to participate in higher education and complete their studies within the specified time-period (Adelman, 2006). Financial difficulties contribute to delay, since most of the students work in order to cover the cost of their studies (Ozga & Sukhmandan, 1997).

1.2 Student retention in Greece

In Greece entrance to higher education institutions is based on the results obtained in the national exams at the end of upper-secondary education, while there are no fees for higher education. The number of students admitted is determined by the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs (numerous clauses). The limited number of places available in high-status

university departments (e.g. Law or Medical School), coupled with the high demand for these departments has led to strong competition in the higher education entrance examinations. As a result, most upper-secondary school pupils receive out of school support (e.g. private tutoring) to be prepared for the exams and ensure admission to higher education. Less or no preparation decreases the opportunity to gain access on a department that is in high demand (Stamelos & Kavasakalis, 2011). This privatisation of education makes the Greek educational system a highly selective one (Sianou-Kyrgiou, 2006).

Taking this into account, many students enter higher education without having succeeded on the desirable department. Under those circumstances, the problem of student retention in Greece seems to be greater in relation to other European countries. Official data show that for every ten “active” students in higher education institutions there is an equal number of students who have not completed their studies, and, thus, about 51% of all university students are characterized as “non-active” students. There is a large percentage of students who have either not completed their studies in the pre-determined time-period and are still studying or have dropped out (ELIAMEP, 2006). According to the Annual Report of Quality Assurance and Certification Authority of Higher Education (ADPI) (2015: 13), the graduation rate in Greece is ten percentage points below the average graduation rates of UNESCO countries in 2014.

Despite the urgency of the issue, however, research on student retention in Greek higher education institutions is very limited. The few studies that have been conducted show that students who are more prone to attrition or drop out are those studying in university departments which are dominated by lower social class students. Drop out rates are lower in higher status university departments which are dominated by students from more privileged social classes, such as the Medical or Law School (Stamelos, 2002).

It has also been argued that attrition is attributed to the reduction of the exchange value of university degrees in the labour market. As it has been argued “for the first time in Greek history there is a trend to disconnect university qualification from the labour market as a great percentage of university graduates does not find a job soon. This trend together with the substantial increase in the number of university students increase the tendency for non-completion and dropping out, especially for specific university departments and population categories (Kiprianos & Koniordos, 2003).

In general, in Greece research usually focuses on access to higher education rather than participation and success within it. Thus, researchers are now focusing on student retention in an attempt to examine social parameters, to find the underlying causes and make suggestions to deal with the problem. In this framework, the research data presented in this paper form part of a greater research study which was conducted in the University of Ioannina, a peripheral university in Greece.

2. Research methodology

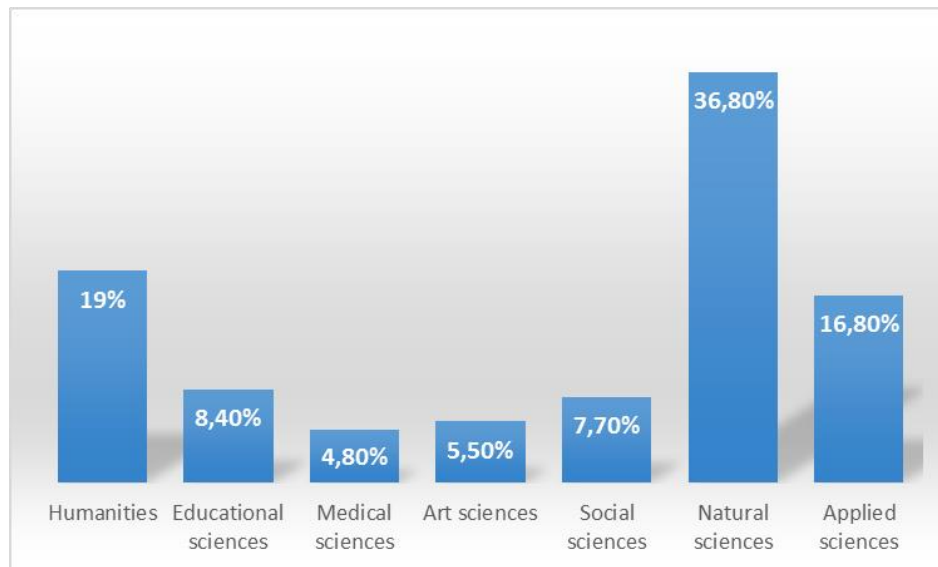
The research was carried out, employing both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. More specifically, questionnaires were answered by a number of 766 students (N=766) who had not graduated from the University of Ioannina two years after the pre-determined time-period for their program of study and had started their studies after the academic year 1999-2000. In addition, 30 semi-structured interviews were conducted. The triangulation of collecting data (Gohen & Manion, 2002) helped us to better explain and analyze the research questions. Students personal information were obtained by the university register, which provided us with the relevant information, including telephone number and email address. It is a part of a larger research conducted in the University of Ioannina for the students who don't complete their studies in the normal period of time. University of Ioannina was established in 1964. It includes

22 academic departments which count 13,500 undergraduate students.

According to this data, the students who had not graduated from the University of Ioannina two years after the pre-determined time-period for their program of study and had started their studies after the academic year 1999-2000 were 2,921. From which 766, that is, 28.3%, participated in the study. The composition of the sample by university department is shown in Table 1. After completing the quantitative research, we analyzed the questionnaires data using the program SPSS. Then, after we made a careful choice of the most important student-cases for our topic, for example, students in high risk of no completing their studies or withdraw, we conducted the qualitative research. In other words, we had 30 in-depth semi-structured interviews with students in high risk of dropping out. Students in a high risk of dropping out are thought to be those students whose age and social characteristics are, in a general literature view, included to non-traditional students.

The characteristics of the whole sample, according to the study department are shown on the Table 1. According to the gender characteristics, the majority of students were girls (55.8%). As for their age, 88.6% were between 26-29 years old. A small percentage (11.4%) had undergone 30 years old.

Table 1. Percentage of students who participated in the study by university department



The variables we use to measure the socioeconomic characteristics of students are (a) father profession, (b) father's educational level, and (c) place of residence. Father's profession is measured according to the following categories: I=Professional occupations, II=Managerial and technical occupations, IIIa=Skilled non-manual occupations, IIIb=Skilled manual occupations, IV=Partly-skilled occupations (CASMIN Educational classification). Father's educational level was measured according to National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC) in the three following educational categories: (a) secondary education, (b) high education and postgraduate studies. Place of residence was measured according to the place that students live permanently, (a) in a big city center, (b) in a small city, and (c) in a small urban area. The reason we didn't measure mother's profession and educational level has only to do with the limitations of the article size and with the notion that we didn't expect to observe many differences between fathers and mothers socioeconomic background.

With this in mind, the research questions were:

- (a) What are the demographic and social characteristics of the students who have not

completed their studies in the period nominally expected for their study program or have withdrawn;

(b) What are the reasons to which they have either not completed their studies in the period nominally expected for their study program, or have withdrawn.

Our hypothesis is that students who are more likely to drop out or not complete their studies in the period nominally expected usually come from lower socioeconomic background and they reasons for that are associated with their cultural capital.

3. Research findings

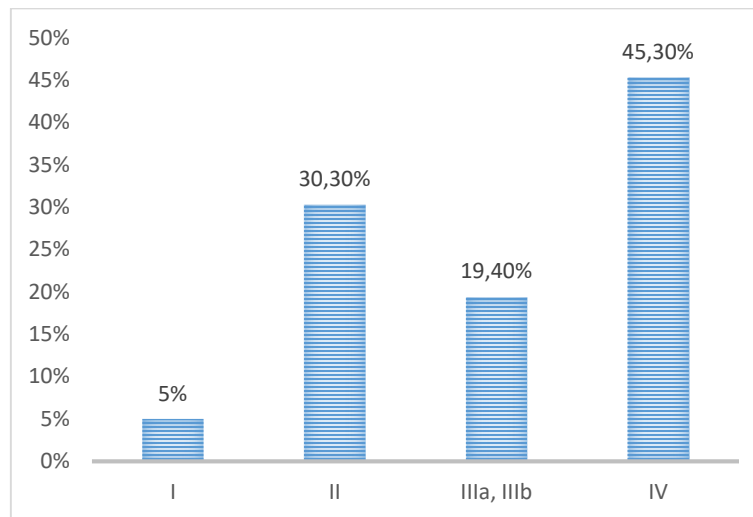
3.1 *Demographic and social characteristics*

In answer to the first research question, we present the data collected concerning the demographic and social characteristics of the students who have not completed their studies in the period nominally expected for their study program or have withdrawn.

Retention and father's occupation

The statistical analysis of the research data provides strong evidence that the majority of students who have not completed their studies in the pre-determined time-period come mostly from families with low social and financial backgrounds, as shown in Figure 1. Similar studies conducted in other countries have shown similar findings (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Figure 1. Distribution of students who have not completed their studies in the pre-determined time-period according to father's occupation (percentage)

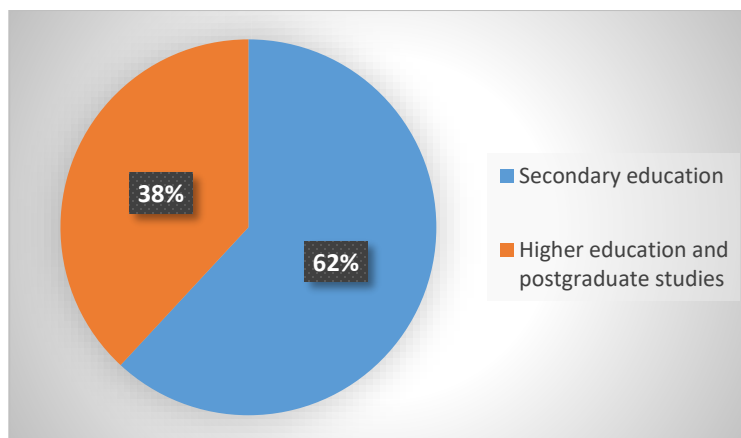


According to the table, it is interesting to note that only 5% of the students have father from the highest occupational categories. In addition, research data show that 45.3% of the students who have not completed their studies in the pre-determined time-period come from low family occupational background.

Retention and father's education level

In order to explore the relationship between social class and retention, we also collected data as regards father's education level. The research data are presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Students who have not completed their studies in the pre-determined time-period according to father's education level (percentage)



On the basis of the above data, we conclude that most students who did not complete their studies in the pre-determined time-period have a father with a lower education level. Data show that 61.9% of those who did not complete their studies in the pre-determined time-period have a father who is a compulsory education graduate, while only 36.2% have a father who is a university graduate.

Retention and place of residence

Research data reveal that place of residence is also associated to retention. The greatest percentage of students who did not complete their studies in the pre-determined time-period (70.4%) come from a provincial city, 14.5% from a small town or village, while only 15% live in Athens, the capital. These data show that geographical inequalities exist, since students from agricultural areas are more likely to have lower retention rates compared to students from urban areas (Martin et al., 2001).

In the next part of the study we present the findings related to the second research question. In other words, the students' beliefs about the factors to which they attribute the fact that they did not complete their studies in the pre-determined time-period are presented and analysed.

3.2 Interview analysis

Above all, the analysis of qualitative data were collected by 30 semi-structured in-depth interviews with students that were in a high risk to drop out, shows that students attribute failure to complete a study program in a pre-determined time-period because of a number of factors related to social class.

More specifically, the majority of students, 89.9%, attributed the fact that they did not complete a programme of study in a pre-determined time-period to their low educational background. They argue that the knowledge gained from secondary education was not sufficient, and as a result they could not meet the academic demands. This was a factor mentioned most often by students from working class backgrounds. This is evidenced by the remarks of a female working class student who mentions:

“My parents didn’t care about in which department I’d study. I wanted to study to feel free and have the experience of student life. So I filled in the forms almost by chance, after taking into consideration only my grades and the grades needed for university entrance. When the course started I realized that I didn’t have the necessary knowledge to attend the course, so I almost dropped out”.

Another reason concerns higher education attribute attrition has to do with the issue of low decision-making. A large percentage of students (73.7%) studied in a department that they didn't like to, was not one of the first choices but because of their performance in the national university entrance examinations. As has already been mentioned, students' admission to a department of a higher education institution is dependent on the grades they have been awarded in the national exams for university entrance, their preference for the different departments (as shown in the application they submit), and of the number of available places existing in each department (Kyriazis & Asderaki, 2008).

For example, a student from lower middle class background mentioned:

“I chose the university department on the basis of my [secondary education] professors’ judgment and university entrance exams, because I wanted to study at a department that would offer employment. My parents were neutral in relation to this. They had instilled to me the idea that I had to enter university and that after that all would be ok, but they didn’t interfere about which department to choose. So I made my choice on the basis of occupational trajectories, but my choice wasn’t correct”.

Apart from the influence of the admission procedures, it is also interesting to note that 61.5% of the students attribute the fact that they did not complete their studies in the pre-determined time-period to the fact they could not meet the academic demands. They did not attend classes and preferred to enjoy university life, especially during the first year. They relate this tendency to the pressure they suffered preparing for the university entrance examinations, which in Greece also entails long hours dedicated to out-of-school support. This factor was more frequently mentioned by students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Students with parents who had studied at university were far less likely to mention this factor compared to students with parents who had no experience of higher education. As a student from the Department of Mathematics with parents who are secondary education graduates mentions:

“From the moment I entered university I felt free. Even if my performance in the first year was good, then I was influenced by the “sweet life”. I lived my lost teenage years at university. I started to work. I didn’t work to earn money, but because of the pressure I felt while at secondary education. I realized my mistake, but got carried away”.

Expectations disappointment is another important factor, since it was mentioned by 74% of the students. It is related to the returns of the university degree for earning a high qualified job in the labour market. Research findings provide evidence that socioeconomic background determines students' expectations. For example, one student from the Department of Computer Science and Engineering dramatically expressed her feelings:

“I didn’t graduate within the pre-determined time-period because the crisis made me lose my motivation for my studies. No one was praising me for my effort to graduate. Dead ends everywhere. Why should I study if the degree has no value? I expect nothing from my studies, I’ll simply try to graduate so as not to feel I wasted all those years”.

Research data show that students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds don't raise expectations. They believe that their study programmes at university do not provide them with the skills necessary for the labour market. This is exemplified by a student from the Department of Computer Science and Engineering who expresses doubts about the usefulness of his programme

in the transition to the labour market:

“I study at the department of computer science and in all these years they haven’t opened a computer to tell us ‘this is a processor’. The courses have no practical value, they are highly theoretical and are useless in the labour market. And while we do not get skills, the professors’ demands are extremely high. If one wants to graduate within the specific time-period they should face the situation as if attending upper secondary school, studying long hours, and going out only on Friday” (Student from the Department of Computer Science and Engineering).

Other factors were also mentioned by the participants. 64.2% of students mentioned that an important reason was the fact that their professors did not seem to evaluate positively their efforts, while 56.2% expressed the view that the program of studies was not well organized. It is also worth noting that 87.3% of the participants mentioned that they were not able to engage to the academic environment.

However, before presenting the conclusions of the study, it is important to acknowledge a limitation. It refers to the fact that a study which explores the reasons for students’ withdrawal from higher education “risks various kinds of bias, including non-response, self-justification, misattribution of cause, selective memory, distortion due to the passage of time, and so on” (Yorke & Longden, 2004: 104). Consequently, generalizations are risky and may be addressed misleading outcomes.

4. Conclusion

Retention and success in higher education constitute a central theme in sociological research in recent years. Despite policies adopted in many countries aiming at widening participation in higher education, social inequalities remain (Raftery & Hout, 1993). It has been argued that the expansion has often been accompanied by qualitative differentiation and stratification within higher education (Morley & Aynsley, 2007; Sianou-Kyrgiou & Tsiplakides, 2011). In general, this study shows that widening access to higher education has not provoked equal chances within it (Sianou-Kyrgiou, 2008), and that the issue of retention and success in higher education should be given priority.

As regards to the first research question about the demographic and social characteristics of the students who have not completed their studies in the period nominally expected for their study program or have withdrawn, the study shows that fifty percent of students has father in partly-skilled occupations, sixty percent of them have father who has reached secondary education level and seventy percent of them come from urban areas.

As regard to the second research question about the reasons to which they have either not completed their studies in the period nominally expected for their study program, or have withdrawn, the study shows that the majority of students who come from lower socioeconomic background expressed the following reasons: they were not well informed before they enter university about the academic life, they lack preparation for decision-making, they didn't meet academic demands and that they didn't develop academic expectations. On the basis of the research data presented above, it can be argued that there are many reasons why students leave their studies, and the boundaries between these reasons are not necessarily clear-cut. However, in accordance with studies conducted in the European Union countries, a major finding is that social class is of paramount importance, as “coming from a poor socio-economic background is the most significant factor leading a student to drop-out” (Quinn, 2013: 9). More specifically, research data reveal that social class is closely related to retention, since there is a relationship between the students’ cultural capital and retention and success at university. Bourdieu’s cultural capital theory constitutes a useful tool in understanding this relationship, the impact of financial, cultural

and social capital in participation and the difficult position of students from less privileged social classes, even if they have overcome the difficulties by entering higher education.

This, in turn, means that social inequalities as regards success in higher education and transition to the labour market are maintained (Sianou-Kyrgiou, 2006, 2010). On the basis of the above discussion, it can be argued that the expansion of higher education may offer more opportunities in relation to access, but social inequalities remain, since the factors that lie behind students' decisions to drop out are closely linked to social class.

The research findings presented in this article are of significance for higher education research and policy which seeks to implement an institutionalised quality assurance system (Stamelos & Kavasakalis, 2011). Any attempts to understand and deal with the issue of retention require (a) holistic approach to retention, acknowledging and addressing all factors' impact on retention (Quinn, 2013), and (b) a sociological perspective that examines the linkage between social class and educational success. In the same vein, measures aimed at reducing dropping out need to take into account the wider socioeconomic and cultural inequalities, as well as the broader structural, educational and societal characteristics in a country.

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An Approach of Shadow Education in Greece: Sociological Perspectives

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to investigate the phenomenon of shadow education in Greece during the second decade of the 21st century, focusing on the differences between formal and shadow education, the characteristics (of shadow education) and the reasons of its existence. The results showed that the liberalization of education during the recent decades was accurately implemented in the institution of shadow education. Knowledge is becoming a commercialized product and the choice for private education is made through private-financial criteria. Restrictive and maladaptive educational policies and decisions about the educational needs of Greek students exacerbate the purposes of shadow education development.

Keywords: Greece, shadow education, tutoring, private lessons, students, graduates.

1. Introduction

The institution of shadow education is mentioned as such in Western Europe, Southeast Asia and Africa, as Buxiban in Taiwan, as Hagwon in Korean, as Juku in Japanese, as Crammers in Britain, as Preuniversitario in Spanish, as Tutorials in India, as Dersane in Turkey, etc. (de Castro & de Guzman, 2014; Kennedy, 2007). In countries like Japan, Cambodia, Malaysia, Taiwan, Korea, India, this institution has been developed so much that it has been thought to be another business sector (Aslam & Atherton, 2012; Baker et al., 2001; Kenayathulla, 2013; Song, Park & Sang, 2013; Zhan et al., 2013). Indeed, after the disappearance of the Second World societies, that is the fall of former Communist regimes in Eastern Europe (Giddens, 2006), shadow education was expanded in these countries as a way of rapid adaptation to new socio-economic changes, because it was difficult for the public school system to incorporate these changes directly

(Silova, 2010). Shadow education is associated with the general privatization of education and the introduction of principles and rules of neoliberal market to learning.

The privatization of education is associated with neoliberalism, and especially with the “small state-free market” approach of the 1980s (Ball & Youdell, 2007: 13). This juncture between public and private sector emerges from the new dimensions of the interrelationship between neoliberal policy and state-economy and the commercialization of goods (Getimis & Kafkalas, 2003), while social relations and human values are alienated and identified with exchange value (Narosky, 2007: 103-104). The privatization of education affects the operation of public education, and its organization, its curricula, student assessment, teacher training and salaries, and students’ and their parents’ perception of schools and teachers (Ball & Youdell, 2007: 16). Within this context, the signification or meaning that individuals give to their needs, and mostly for more or different education, regulates their behavior and forms the conditions of growth of the private education in a neoliberal environment with many technological characteristics. Individuals in the competitive and individual-based social and educational post-modern environment regard shadow education in Greece as an inevitable factor that will enable them to cope with the inconsistencies of public education system and derive the benefit from their increased institutionalized cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1997) in the case that they would succeed to the higher education entrance exams (Kassotakis & Verdis, 2013; Kelpanidis & Polimili, 2012; Papamathaiou, 2014; Sianou-Kyrgiou, 2006, 2008).

2. Shadow education in Greece

Shadow education school, as an institution in Greece, was established in the beginning of the 20th century, through the applicable educational policies as a compelling social reality, which can take the form of legal non-formal education, or illegal-undeclared “private” (personalized) education (Dimou, 1999). Although, shadow education is not a mandatory “social institution”, it is “widely recognized” as a necessary social activity. The development and the function intensity of shadow education (if we think that this begins in elementary school and is maximized in high school) emerges as an objectified social reality formed in Greece and makes this institution an inevitable success factor in educational system. According to Tsaousis, along with the national education system, a system of educational services has been developed¹, which is divided in two sections: the first one was informally incorporated in public education, while the other seeks a position in the national education system (Nova-Kaltsouni, 2010: 149-150). In Greece, shadow education has basically two forms: (a) the legal non-formal education accommodated in specific building facilities with registered staff and function license granted by the Ministry of Education, which has the name “frontistiria” (shadow education schools), and (b) the illegal form of undeclared work in private courses, known as “idiaitera mathimata” (private lessons, tutoring), which is not accommodated in specific place but it often occurs at student’s residence. The second form belongs to undeclared work, and is often held (without the permission of Greek educational legislation) by several teachers, who permanently work at public schools. In recent years, with the proliferation of the internet, many forms of online real time or asynchronous shadow education have been expanded.

It was found that the more advanced the school level, the more students attend private education. In Primary School, children attend courses in order to learn foreign languages, since it is the only reliable way to obtain certification qualifications. In Junior High School, students, apart from foreign languages, receive extracurricular support for prestigious subjects of the curriculum such as Language, Mathematics, and Physics. The same happens in the first grade of Senior High school, while during the attendance to the 2nd and 3rd grade of Senior High school students attend shadow education or private lessons only for “interesting subjects”, subjects which are needed for students’ entry to higher education (Vlachos, 2008: 156-158). A survey made by Kassotakis and

Photiadou (1996, *op. cit.*, in Kassotakis & Verdis, 2013: 99) in students of the third grade of Senior High School showed that 75.3% attended courses at shadow education schools (*frontistiria*) and 36.5% were being tutored (privately). In a survey (2000) in about 3,500 first-year university Greek students, it was noted that over 80% of these students had attended shadow education schools for their entry to higher education, 50% had attended private lessons, while one student out of three had paid for both forms of shadow education (Psacharopoulos & Papakonstantinou, 2005).

In a survey conducted by Kelpanidis and Polymili (2012) in 596 students in the third grade of Senior High school in urban and suburban areas in Thessaloniki, researchers found that: (a) students of this grade were spending 11-20 hours at shadow education schools or private lessons; (b) 93.2% were attending shadow education; (c) 48.8% were paying 300-400 € a month for these lessons; (d) 20.7% were paying more than 400 €; and (e) the rationale behind choosing one or both kinds of the shadow education was that students (and their parents) desired to be better trained and prepared for the exams, to have a better control of their progress and to be taught more effectively than they were in the public school.

In a survey of Metron Analysis² in 2007, it was found that: (a) two thirds of the parents viewed negatively the educational system; (b) after finishing the first grade of high school, 76% of students were attending classes in context of shadow education; and (c) more than 90% of parents believed that shadow education helps students achieve their aims (OEFE³, 2007). According to a survey carried out from 2009 to 2013 by Palmos Analysis⁴ in 534 parents of high school graduates it was also found that: (a) the lack of extracurricular support to students of High School is associated with economic distress (47%). 91% of families with incomes between 1,500 and 2,000€ provide to their children additional extracurricular help. For families with income over 2,000 €, the percentage rises to 94%, while for families with an income of 500 €, the percentage reaches 65% of families; (b) one to three students who have extracurricular support in high school does not take part in national exams, though they are coming from low income groups; and (c) the failure rate for students with extracurricular support is 12%, while for students without high school extracurricular support is tripled (35%) (Papamathaiou, 2014). In a study from the University of Macedonia (2012) on shadow education in Prefecture of Attica, it was shown that: (a) the initial selection criteria for shadow education are the quality of staff, students' performance and achievements (45%), and finally, the cost (37%); and (b) parents prefer shadow education schools than private lessons because of their lower cost, their better organization and students' needs.

The sociological research, investigating the phenomenon of shadow education schools in Greece, has concluded that not only methods, programs and examinations but also language teaching and pedagogy has contributed to the exacerbation of this phenomenon (Kassotakis & Verdis, 2013). Private education was spread to such an extent from the beginning of its existence, despite the fact that it appeared in the 19th century, although the reasons of its existence were not the same as today.

In Greek literature, the Greek government's current educational policy on teachers' employment, the restrictive policy of the Greek Government on students' accessibility in higher education and the importance of obtaining a degree and professional success are presented as causes of the phenomenon of shadow education school (Sianou-Kyrgiou, 2008). Indeed, the prestige, income growth and the specialization of individuals in the labor market intensified this phenomenon of admission to higher education and hence the development of shadow education (Kontogianopoulou-Polydorides, 1997: 31-33). Furthermore, the excessive growth of public sector over the past decades, the high absorption of higher education graduates in various forms (permanent position, permanent or part-time employment contract etc.) and the objectification of recruitment criteria consolidated the importance of "collecting" qualifications for social mobility and success in life. Vlachos (2008) notes that the traditional evaluation of the student in Greece and the connection with the qualifications that are necessary for the transition to higher education, the decreasing disbursement on education, the discontinuities of curricula between

grades, the tight timetable and the absence of time in order to meet the school work requirements, the mass of textbooks, the lack of infrastructure and, finally, the weaknesses of teachers' retraining are the factors which are contributing to the spread of shadow education.

In the present article, we are presenting part of the outcomes from a wider research study that explores the influence of the shadow education on Greek educational system and its impact on learning and the transformation of public education in consumer product. The purpose of this research was to investigate the phenomenon of shadow education school in Greece, focusing on the differences between this and formal education system, its characteristics and its causes.

3. Method

This study, which is part of a wider research, was carried out during the academic years 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 and lasted from September 2015 till May 2017 with the participation of individuals (Universities' students and secondary education graduates) who lived in the Prefectures of North Aegean islands. The triangulation was chosen in the research since were used in a supplementary way the tools of questionnaire and structured interview (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2008; Creswell 2011).

3.1 *Participants*

The sample of our quantitative research consists of 418 respondents, of which 148 (35.4%) are male and 270 (64.6%) are female. Regarding to their fathers' level of education (from primary to higher education), it was shown that 76 fathers (18.2%) have completed primary school, 54 (12.9%) have graduated from junior high school, 134 (32.1%) have completed senior high school and 154 (36.8%) are university graduates. Regarding to their mothers' educational level, primary school is completed by 66 (15.8%) mothers, junior high school is completed by 61 (14.6%), senior high school is completed by 169 (40.4%) and 122 have graduated from university or technological educational institutes (29.2%). At the same time, 44 structured interviews were received from 11 men and 33 women, whose ages ranged from 24-35 years, and they were all graduates from university or technological educational institutes.

3.2 *Research instruments*

A questionnaire and the structured interview were chosen for the data collection about shadow education. The structure of questionnaire was based on: (1) respective research studies and findings from international bibliography; (2) the School Curriculum for the subjects (YPEPTH, 2002, 2003); and (3) YPEPTH's guidelines on the particular course. The questionnaire included questions related to the structure and function of public education, the comparison with private education, the usefulness and importance of shadow education, its extent, and cost.

The structured interview was necessary for the researchers in order to interpret what people think about the characteristics and development of shadow education in Greece. In essence, there were used predefined questions that have specific order in the interview process with the interviewee (Robson, 2007). The structured interview consisted mainly of questions in order to clarify the reasons and causes of shadow education and its differentiations from formal education.

4. Results

Throughout the description of the findings, there were used quantitative descriptive methods, which were combined with reports of qualitative research, in order to be better analyzed.

In question about comparing public and private education and if the first one is worse than the second in terms of quality, 34 (8.1%) respondents answered that public schools do not fall short of private ones at all, 30 (7.2%) respondents answered that public schools do not keep up private education, 100 (23.9%) individuals answered that public schools are below average in relation to the quality of education they provide, 165 (39.5%) individuals said that public education is enough below average, 86 (20.6%) respondents said that public schools fall far short in relation to private ones, while 3 (0.7%) people answered that they do not know. As stated above, the majority of people believe that public schools are little below average from private ones. The interviewees said characteristically that:

“The education system is not working properly due to many endogenous and exogenous factors ... Firstly, I think ... there are not given enough funding to education from state, compared with European standards ... because in Greece, it is given in education approximately 2.4% of GDP, while in Sweden, it is given about 10% of GDP ... in addition I believe ... in public schools, the majority of teachers do not work properly” (Interview 12 - I.12).

“Teachers are not mindful of their job ... In addition, if students were interested of school work ... they would get the knowledge they need from public school and they would not be resorted to private schools and shadow education schools” (I.41).

When the research subjects were asked if during their student life they attended some kind of shadow education, 278 (38%) respondents from all 720 stated that they attended shadow education. From them, 211 (29%) referred to a specific course, 128 (17.8%) additional teaching support, 78 (10.8%) said that they attended not only shadow education but also private lessons and 25 (3.5%) said that they did not attend anything. The most of the interviewees (37 individuals, 84.1%) argued that this is *“a phenomenon that you cannot escape from”*. Additionally, few individuals (2 persons, 4.5%) said that they did not attend any lesson because their parents *“did not have any money to spend”* and some interviewees (5 persons, 11.4%) said that they had attended only the extracurricular additional instructional support offered by the public senior high schools:

“The public additional support those extra hours. I went for two weeks in math ... I think the two weeks were enough” (I.24).

As to whether the individuals of the sample consider shadow education unnecessary cost without return, 197 (47.1%) respondents answered negatively, 96 (23%) answered “a little bit”, 72 (17.2) answered moderately, 37 (8.9%) reported that it is enough unnecessary and 12 (2.9%) answered that they consider it unnecessary. For the 70.8% of people, it is little unnecessary or necessary, while 11.8% of them say that it is quite or much unnecessary for them. The interviewees pointed out that there was a kind of exploitation. The following comments are characteristic:

“Yes, there was a kind of financial exploitation, due to the increase of tuition fees using as a pretext the lesson repetitions and the larger classes” (I.31).

“Eh ... basically, these schools are involved with commerce that definitely makes for competition between them” (I.8).

The interviewees also noted that there was an increased cost of the weekly or private training:

“In general you could say that the extra-curricular support costs from 70 to 150 euro per week. The amount was ranged in different levels depending on the number of courses” (I.15)

“Specifically, the third grade of high school with a full package of course costs around 110 euro a week” (I.7)

“The weekly cost of a family especially for shadow education schools was about 250 euro” (I.36).

To the question whether they consider this training important for the entrance in Universities or Technological Educational Institutes, 162 respondents (38.8%) answered that it is very important, 185 (44.3%) said enough, 45 (10.8%) answered moderately yes, 13 (3.1%) said a little bit and 8 respondents (1.9%) that it is not at all. Therefore, 83.1%, of them think that additional educational support is quite or very important for the university entrance, while a small percentage of 5% opposes this view. Similar results are noticed in the question: “If there was lack of shadow education in the current educational system, do you think that there would be more barriers in university entrance?” 22 respondents (5.3%) disagree with this view, 36 (8.7%) slightly agree, 66 (16%) agree moderately, 166 agree (40.3%) and 122 respondents think that this is true (29.6%). Interviewees answered to the specific questions as follows:

“I attended shadow education for the simple reason of success in higher education” (I.31).

“A child attends shadow education schools because he does not care to entry higher education” (I.44).

“It is generally thought that if you do not attend this kind of lessons, you have no chance to entry in higher education and this mainly comes from the fact that most schools have serious shortages” (I.25).

“It is widely known that most shadow education schools have well prepared students for the exams. So, every family prefers to give money from their savings for their child’s success” (I.19).

In the multiple choice question: “What do you think that contributed in your educational support choice”, we received 603 responses. From these, 171 respondents (28.4%) said that the first reason was the more organized and effective delivery of knowledge than school, 53 (8.8%) responses focus on the teachers’ experience, 118 (19.6%) responses focus on teachers’ interest in students, 140 (23.2%) said the timely completed curriculum, 49 (8.1%) mentioned the good ratio of learning benefit-cost, and 72 (11.9%) focus on the information about the possible choices of schools. Some interviewees stated answering to the specific question:

“I believe that it is more the insecurity that parents feel about the ability of public school to help their children get adequate knowledge” (I.4).

“Many teaching hours are lost, teachers do not have time to complete timely the curriculum, the majority of students make trouble and all these have as a result the interruption of the lesson and the retardation of the education process” (I.13).

“Shadow education school has specific curriculum, specific days and hours where the courses are conducted and the child has not the ability to change it” (I.3).

“In private lessons, the student can make a choice of his teacher” (I.21).

From the above extracts arises that it is important for every student to have a teacher next to him, who can make him learn and understand easier.

The choice of a specific shadow education school is done for the following reasons: The most important factor is the quality of the provided educational services [203 replies in total 883 responses (23%)]. The second reason is the smaller student groups [151 responses (17.1%)]. The

third reason is the reliability of the specific shadow education school [149 responses (16.9%)]. The fourth reason is its reputation [115 responses (13%)]. Other reasons are friends' and relatives' opinions [75 responses (8.5%)], the "distance from home" and "what others suggest" [65 responses (7.4%)] and, finally, financial reasons [60 responses (6.8%)]. Another remarkable thing is the fact that 23% of the respondents stated that the quality of education is the prime factor in selecting a particular shadow education school in contrast to financial reasons, which possess the last position in this list (6.8%). The argumentation of the universities graduates of the sample on the reasons that they had chosen to attend in shadow education is characteristic:

"A shadow education school, that has a good reputation and good teachers. Secondly, I would like it to be relatively close to my home, so I can have easy accessibility in case of adverse weather conditions and not to lose a lot of time from my schoolwork. Thirdly, I would try to find out a cheaper one (if this is possible) in order to pay the fees from my paycheck" (I.40).

"The criterion of my choice was the fame and success of the shadow education school" (I.19).

"The main criterion for me has always been the teachers' experience and communicability" (I.26).

"Worthwhile, the teachers were very good. They did their job properly. That's why they were paid for! They made me understand new knowledge and be interested in all courses. This was important for me in order to overcome several difficulties" (I.30).

5. Discussion and conclusions

Shadow education is not a phenomenon that emerged neither at recent decades nor during this century, but has made his appearance long ago. However, the current form and the excessive growth cause several questions about the role of public educational system, and the involvement of private sector. The public sector has reduced its participation in providing education to the citizens. As a result, education in most economic developed industrial countries has been commercialized and the education content and outcomes acquired exchange value (Abrams, 2016; Apple, 2000, 2006; Simons, Lundahl & Serpieri, 2013).

In our study, the majority of people view public education negatively, associating their opinion with the function and structure of the education system, its funding and the quality of teachers' work. These findings are consistent with other relevant research studies in Greece, which have been reported before, and confirm the weakening of the welfare state, which is affected by the major changes imposed from liberalized society (Grolios & Kaskari, 2005; Sianou-Kyrgiou, 2008). Thus, the state in order to be able to cope with the challenges and be part of the economic and competitive market is making its services tradable commodity (Ekonomou, 2004). All these are validated by the finding that only a small percentage of people (ranging below 5%) was not included in shadow education. The historicity of the institution of shadow education schools which was not addressed in an appropriate manner by the respective education policy, and the prestige which was attributed by Greek society to every university graduate, were the reasons for the prevalence of the institution and high expenditure by Greek households for their children's education (something that was recorded by official state entities). The weekly cost for shadow education can reach up to 250 euro. The need for monitoring this institution for students' success in school and in admission to higher education is reflected both in the words of the interviewees and the quantitative findings of our research study, and in other studies conducted in Greece (Kelpanidis & Polimili, 2012; Macedonia University, 2012; Papamathaïou, 2014). This was helped by the insistence of Greek government for a limited number of students admitted in universities, something that was remained in effect for many years but has been partially lifted in our days. The

occasional educational policies, which were strengthened by the restriction in students' grades or the number of students' admitted to universities, have intensified the problem of competition and educational inequalities and made shadow education a parallel road to formal education for students' success, i.e., university entrance (Kyridis, 2003; Psacharopoulos & Tassoulas, 2004; Sianou-Kyrgiou, 2006, 2008, 2010). The endorsement of degrees is evident in every feature of educational system. Educational policy opposes its contradictory symbols. On one hand, it upholds the equal opportunities and its democratic character and, on the other hand, the pupils and their families are becoming "customers" of the commercialized private education. The ideological progressiveness of education does not conform to the widening of social inequalities, the non-recognition of the diversity of the student population and the prevalence of economically privileged "clients".

On one hand, the Greek unions of shadow education schools, through their own research studies, advertise and emphasize the importance of their existence for the students' success, and, on the other hand, the state education policy cannot cope with the increased needs of students (OEFE, 2007; Papamathaiou, 2014). In this context, the liberalization of education affects the way of funding, service provision and also, parameters such as supply and demand for services, availability, quality, and access to them (Apple, 2000, 2006; Robertson, 2010; Robertson, Bonal & Dale, 2002; Simons et al., 2013). Simultaneously, it redefines the role of the state in the formation of educational policy and its practice. The choice of shadow education schools is made with market practice conditions, supply and demand, as a product that is advertised through its results, the quality of service, the reliability and satisfaction of the "client" (locality, economic criteria). The competition is not only between the public and private sectors, but also between business interests on the market of shadow education. The speculation against public sector, which is unable to respond because of its unilateralism and inelasticity, can lead to a dualism of educational services by restricting the access to qualitative education of poor social layers, which will have as a result the increasing of social inequalities, more commercialization of education and the reproduction of social hierarchy.

In conclusion, liberalization of education during last decades has been the institution of shadow education in Greece very well. Knowledge is becoming a marketable product and the preference for private education services from the public is made through private and economic criteria (Abrams, 2016; Apple, 2006; Robertson et al., 2002). Restrictive and maladjusted educational policies in Greece and decisions relating to individuals' needs support the development of this institution, highlight the exchange value of objectified cultural capital of the individual and exacerbate social inequalities. The paradox is that the Greek educational system (which is thought to be democratic) and the "equality of opportunities" are invalidated in daily practice in favor of the privileged individuals, who have the ability to pay for educational services. The declining state investment in Greek education creates individuals educational and socially disqualified, who do not have equal access to learning and knowledge resources. The elimination or even restriction of the institution of shadow education is a complex issue, which must rely on changing the education culture, on the reform of function and structure of education and the orientation change of the educational system (which is based only on the examinations).

Notes:

1. It should be noted that shadow education is called "parapaideia" in Greek. On the one hand, the prefix, "para-" carries two connotations: (1) along/in parallel with something; and/or (2) against something; on the other hand, the main word "paideia" means education in the wider and narrower sense. Thus, the signification of "parapaideia" meets the reality of education in Greek: "parapaideia" is an education that runs (1) along/in parallel with and/or (2) against the mainstream education.

2. Metron Analysis is a Greek company of social, political and market research.

3. The abbreviation OEFE means Greek Confederation of Educational Institutes of School Support and Evening Schools.
4. Palmos Analysis is a Greek company of market research.

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Sociopolitical Challenges of Afghan Society: Post 9/11 Scenario

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Abstract

Purpose of the Research: The article examines various issues in Afghanistan in the context of post- 9/11 scenario. It focuses on security, maintenance as well as various development pursuits encompassing the social, political, and economic dimensions of Afghanistan.

Method: The respective study is qualitative and secondary academic sources have been used.

Conclusion: The process of rehabilitation in Afghanistan is directly connected with Pakistan. Pakistan with the cooperation of China is heading for such projects that will unquestionably benefit the whole region, especially Afghanistan. Gwadar port and China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project will open the doors for landlocked Afghanistan. On the other hand, Afghanistan is gateway for Pakistan to the Central Asian countries, which possess abundance of natural resources that can be of great use for Pakistan in the near future. Moreover, to fight the common foe, i.e., terrorism, both countries need cooperation on intelligence and strategic level.

Keywords: Afghanistan, Pakistan, sociopolitical challenges, post-9/11, qualitative.

1. Introduction

Pakistan and Afghanistan share a 2,240 km border known as the Durand Line, and since 1893 it has divided the region of Pashtun and Baloch ethnic groups' majority into two countries. As immediate neighbors, Pakistan and Afghanistan have religious and ethnic resemblances, but unfortunately the relation between the two countries have never been smooth. A secure and calm border at the Afghanistan side is always in the national interest of Pakistan, having historical and traditional rivalry with India at the eastern borders. But, the unpleasant condition on both sides of the country made it a pincer movement for Pakistan (Durani & Khan, 2002).

Pakistan is unable to enjoy a peaceful and secure border with Afghanistan except the period of religious rule in Afghanistan known as the Taliban era from 1996 to 2001. Different Afghan governments have always shown disaffection towards Pakistan. While, the core issues are always the Durand Line and the Pashtun belt, which Afghanistan wishes to govern as around two

and a half centuries ago these areas were ruled by Ahmad Shah Durrani, also known as Ahmad Khan Abdali (Burke & Ziring, 1991).

- Better Pak-Afghan relation will bring peace in the region.
- Pakistan and Afghanistan can become economically stable.
- Pakistan and Afghanistan need to be attentive of their policies.
- Foreign powers can try to sabotage all attempts for a cordial relation.
- External influences can jeopardize Pak-Afghan interest in short and long-run.

The relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan are more complex due to the similarities both sides inherit. Islam is the religion of the majority of Pakistan as well as Afghanistan, and ethnic groups like Pashtun and Baloch who have identically similar language and culture (Malik, 2008).

However, the particular region has never been fully ruled by any of the government. These cultural and geographical conditions helped the United States of America and its allies to use the border area to combat the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in the past and thus intersecting both sides of the respective border according to strategic needs (Kakar, 1997).

Before the emergence of Taliban in Afghanistan in the decade of 90s, i.e. right after the Soviet Union's exit, the fight among local groups intensified towards the completed destruction of Afghanistan. However, the Taliban regime was toppled by America along with its allies and the region again gained world focus as the toppled power and its supporters used the specific land to reorganize and fight back the American forces along with attacking the border areas (Fair, Howenstein & Thier, 2006).

The particular situation of the war zone made it possible to be considered as the safe heaven for the insurgents, which enhanced the difficulties of traditional war in the Pashtun belt. When it comes to Pakistan, the international powers pressurize Pakistan to "do more", i.e., to eliminate insurgencies on both sides of the border. Consequently, the situation on the ground continued after several efforts and both countries held each other responsible for insurgencies in their territory.

2. War against terror

As the international political scenario changed after 9/11, Pakistan as a front-line state was under a huge pressure to take a "U-turn" in its policies for neighboring countries and Afghanistan in particular. Pakistan had to stop political and diplomatic support of the Afghan government of Taliban. As a state, Pakistan ensured the international community to fight against terrorism and rehabilitation of the region. Thus, Pakistan had played a significant role in the rehabilitation of Afghanistan. On demand of the international community over cross border terrorism, Pakistan increased the number of troops up to eighty thousand at the Afghan borders (Grare, 2006).

As the attacks in Afghanistan continued, the Afghan political regime blamed Pakistan for not doing demanded efforts to stop infiltrators crossing the border line from Pakistan and targeting it and international forces. International political observers were also indicating the viewpoint that toppled the Afghan regime of Taliban and Al-Qaeda along with their top leadership hiding themselves and operating the insurgent activities from 'safe' heaven (Tarzi, 2006).

Far beyond this "safe" heaven allegation, Afghanistan even blamed Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), i.e., Pakistan's top security agency that an insurgent force in the region and especially the Taliban were supported by ISI as it was providing them strategic support. It became more expressive and intense when top political leadership in Afghanistan blamed the Pakistani

security agency for involving in an attack on the Indian embassy in Kabul which caused huge damages not only as a direct effect on Afghanistan, but also deteriorated the relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan. In this attack, there were a number of casualties reported and Afghanistan held the ISI directly responsible for all the distractions and anxiousness in Afghanistan. Similarly, a day earlier when the NATO forces came under attack and several of the NATO soldiers were killed, Afghanistan blamed Pakistan for these attacks (Khan, 2008).

Pakistan has always denied such allegations, as a peaceful and prosperous neighboring country is in vast favor of Pakistan and denied any connection to the insurgency in Afghanistan. Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani, a newly elected Prime Minister of Pakistan in 2008 came forward with a reasoning for denial of any insurgency in Afghanistan and stated that peaceful Afghanistan was in the great interest of Pakistan rather than the disturbed one. He often expressed his concerns regarding the Afghan leadership's blame game that it may distract the peace process in the region. The official statements from Pakistan's foreign office also denied the charges and urged Afghanistan not to blame Pakistan in the future without any concrete evidence.

3. Emancipation

There are around three million Afghan refugees in Pakistan who regularly travel to their homeland and this is humanly impossible to identify between an Afghan national and a terrorist. Relatively, Pakistan has been asking Afghanistan and the international forces that are present there to control the situation in the Afghan region, and without having control in the Afghan territory, allegations on Pakistan are not more than an attempt to obliterate the incompetence and the failure of the allied forces (Qarabaghi, 2005).

The failure is actually of Afghanistan's administrative incapability to assure a solution. They rather endeavor to create an impression to the world that for all what happen, actually "misshapen" in Afghanistan is the sole responsibility of Pakistan.

The violation of international border laws by forces in Afghanistan had a disastrous effect on the relationship with Pakistan. Pakistan considers it as a blazing assault on its sovereignty. The weak Afghanistan government could not put an embargo to the allied forces in their territory and Afghanistan gave a freehand to the international actors not only to its land, but also to strike its neighbor, i.e. Pakistan. Afghanistan policies have weakened the Pak-Afghan relation altogether.

National interests of both the countries emphasize on the main objective to fight terrorism in the region via helping each other and respecting the sovereignty of their neighbor. Thus, securing each others' interests from the insurgents.

4. Indian influence

The relations between Pakistan and India in the context of Afghanistan are often considered as a useless business, because whatever is considered as an achievement of Pakistan is only what India loses there, while what Pakistan loses is what India achieves. After the 9/11 incident, India has used the changed circumstances in its favor and modified its political and diplomatic goals. India has used the scenario to strengthen its influential lobbies and groups in Afghanistan. Almost in all important cities of Afghanistan, India has set up diplomatic missions to weaken Pakistan's interests.

Pakistan has been officially addressing its concerns over the Indian's suspicious activities near its border. Pakistan has officially shown concerns regarding India for printing

forged Pakistani currency at a large scale to weaken the Pakistani economy and direct support of its ongoing operations involving terrorist activities in Pakistan.

Geographically closed cities of Afghanistan to the Pakistani borders have been used by India to create an anti-state terrorist network in Pakistan along with terrorist camps in the provinces of Helmand, Panjshir, Nimruz, and many other areas. Even the name of Afghan military base camps near Kabul was listed in Pakistan's allegations of Indian involvement to destabilize the region's peace for their political goals (Grare, 2006).

For the burning situation of Balochistan, Pakistan holds India responsible for militancy in its largest province along with the northern areas of Pakistan, including the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). On 13 August 2004, Jam Mir Mohammad Yousaf Aliani, the Chief Minister of Pakistan's largest province Balochistan expressed his concerns that, the Indian security agency Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) up holds more than forty terrorists training camps in Balochistan (*Ibid.*).

Pakistan accused India of provoking and supporting terrorist organizations in Waziristan valley where the Pakistani army was fighting with Al-Qaida and Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Pakistan clearly mentioned that terrorist organizations like TTP and others have been provided a direct support in terms of money, ammunition, and tactical guidance by the Indian consulate in southern Afghanistan.

Similarly, the Chairman of Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs expressed in July 2006 that, the nexus of Afghan intelligence agency, i.e., the National Directorate of Security (NDS), and RAW was provoking the Baloch anti-state militancy, and as a result more than 600 Baloch and many members of the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) were trained by these respective agencies (*Ibid.*).

The non-regional powers in Afghanistan have used the Afghan land to control the regional power game, and Pakistan's territory as well as sovereignty has been often violated. Such foreign actors severely affected Pakistan's trust in Afghanistan. Thus, the war against terror in the shared border territory couldn't reach to a macro-level success. If Afghanistan manages to handle this issue and prevent foreign elements from sabotaging, then Pakistan's confidence in Afghanistan will certainly increase. After that, both countries can take security measures in a much better way. If Pakistan gains its confidence back, then it will surely tone up the process of rehabilitation of Afghanistan.

As compared with India, Afghanistan's relations with Pakistan have more significance and should be given more attention to enjoy peace on either side of the borders. Regional peace and long-term interests of the two countries are directly connected with Afghanistan's foreign policies, especially towards Pakistan. Pak-Afghan relationship can only be strengthened by cooperation, while Afghan-Indian nexus for supporting anti-Pakistan activities will undermine the aspiration of betterment in regional rehabilitation.

Realizing the geographical conditions of the region where India does not have any border connected with Afghanistan, but Pakistan has more than two thousand kilometers long shared border with Afghanistan. Afghanistan will need an undisturbed and cooperative neighborhood when international powers will vacate, and then a cordial relation with Pakistan will save Afghan interest more effectively. On the other side, Pakistan has to find possibilities to fortify relations with Afghanistan on the diplomatic front.

5. Afghan exiles element

Around three million of Afghan exiles in Pakistan after the Soviet war, and it is also an important element between the two countries' relationship as Pakistan provided them

accommodation. Most of these refugees have never left Pakistan and are still living here. This provides Pakistan a moral whip hand, as in the early twentieth century Afghanistan refused to open their borders for asylum seekers during the Tehrik-e-Khilafat in the Subcontinent.

A fresh influx of refugees knocked Pakistan when the United States of America along with its allies invaded Afghanistan after 9/11. The Afghan started leaving their homeland due to drought in some parts of the country and feared of a fresh war right after bearing the long civil war (Hussein, 2002). But, this time Pakistan couldn't welcome this new wave due to the reasonable causes of economic and political issues as unlike the previous scenario. This Afghan exiles inflow had to be hosted by Pakistan alone.

The existence of some militants cannot be brushed aside, involved in the cross-border, anti-government activities that creates several long-term difficulties for Pakistan and Afghanistan. The Afghan government considers this as Pakistan's mishandling that allows militants to cross the border, while Pakistan has always categorically stated that it has performed its responsibilities to check and filter out such elements (Nuri, 2007).

6. Territorial issues

Pak-Afghan relations have often been severely deteriorated due to their border issues. On the issue of the Durand Line, Afghanistan, even controverted Pakistan's membership in the United Nations. The Durand Line remains the bone of contention between Pakistan and Afghanistan till the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979.

However, with respect to a huge number of refugees towards Pakistan and striking change in Afghan internal politics, the issue of the Durand Line with Pakistan got hibernated. This hibernation continued after the Soviet Union left Afghanistan in 1989, and a conservative Taliban government continued. But, after the pro-American government was established in Afghanistan, the issue of the Durand Line resurged as Hamid Karzai's cabinet awakened controversial and dormant territorial issues.

The cross-border terrorism echoed the international community and mass media. To get rid of this particular issue, in early Spring 2006 Pakistan's Interior Ministry officially offered to seal its borders with Afghanistan. Then interior minister Aftab Shair Pao even proposed to land mine the respective border by using tactically advance military practices with reference to its rivalry with India, which made both of the country world experts at it.

The Durand Line was actually a single-page agreement and seven short articles between Sir Mortimer Durand from British India and King Abdul Rehman Khan of Afghanistan on 12 November 1893 (Smith, 2004). Afghanistan rejected all offers from Pakistan and arrogated that the Durand Line was not an international border, thus could never be treated alike. Afghanistan's stance over Durand Line was exposed influence by non-regional powers that intent to damage Pakistan's interest in the region and accomplishing their own agenda.

The Pakistani declaration of the Durand Line as a recognized and an established international boundary that the distinguished two counties has also been acknowledged by Afghanistan at various occasions. Moreover, Pakistan's stance for Durand Line is quite justifiable that no agreement shall be believed or considered legal among sovereign countries until both of the entities approve or agree upon (Grare, 2006).

The treaty between King Abdul Rehman Khan and Sir Mortimer Durand was signed in a well-disposed environment, as the King in his address to Afghan tribal leaders having political and military powers summarized the understanding of the treaty and totaled the outlook of Durand Line arrangements. He advised Afghan lords to a candid adherence to the British alliance and clearly mentioned that Afghanistan by the Durand line has demarcated its proper boundary

to prevent from any future misunderstanding. The King adapted the Durand Line as the security line that would fortify Afghanistan.

If Afghanistan and Pakistan are able to settle down the Durand Line issue, then a serious concern in a bilateral relation will be removed. It will be a significant measure for both the countries to develop a long-term, friendly relation and to accelerate the process of rehabilitation. Resolving the Durand Line issue will also help the parties to resolve major issues of the region. The historical commitment and adherence to the international law will help Afghanistan shutting down the issue in a great sense.

7. The border seal issue between Pakistan and Afghanistan

The Durand Line is almost 2,240 km long. The cost of setting up a barbed wire fence along the border would be in millions, and even this cannot stop people from crossing it. Watchtowers and check posts are needed, if the watchtowers are built after every two km then at least 1,120 watchtowers are required. For instance, check post is built after every ten km, so it sums up to 224 check posts. Additionally, the landscape of Durand Line is very treacherous and unforgiving. Transporting raw materials and labor work force to build these would be a very difficult job as there are no roads.

Even after setting up the barbed wire, check posts and watchtowers, the next step would be to establish a new Army unit or Force that can guard it. Pakistan Army is very busy in combating internal terrorism and securing our border on the eastern front. So, it will be a tough job for the Army to deploy a unit or brigade on these borders and new recruitments will also be required.

If the army somehow pulled it off, then the problem arises that the respective soldiers will need supplies, i.e., food and ammunition. Delivering supplies to the soldiers will also be really difficult because of the terrain. The army would need to build new roads to tackle the problem or they would require helicopters for supplies. If the army decides to build roads, then it would be a long-term solution which would require years to complete and if it decides to take the second way out then a new aviation crew would be required. In both cases the expenses would be enormous.

If we add up all the operational, maintenance cost and manpower required, it would not be feasible for Pakistan to initiate such a mega-project because of economic issues. The terrain is very rough and if a check post is attacked, it would take hours before backup forces could reach which would result in either loss of life or territory.

8. Social issues in Afghanistan

8.1 Opium cultivation

Afghanistan has been the world's largest opium producer, i.e., ahead of Myanmar and Latin America since 1992. Opium production in Afghanistan has been on the rise since U.S. occupation in 2001. Based on UNODC data, more land is now used for opium in Afghanistan than is used for coca cultivation in Latin America. Afghanistan is also the largest producer of cannabis (mostly hashish) in the world Helmand is the largest province in Afghanistan with regards to opium production (Nawa, 2011).

8.2 Child labor in Afghanistan

According to the Government of Afghanistan, the Central Statistics Organization report (2013), at least a quarter of Afghan children between ages 5 and 14 work for a living or to

help their families. Children in Afghanistan generally work long hours with little or no pay. They work in the home-based carpet industry; as bonded labor in brick kilns; in the metal industry as tinsmiths and welders; in mines; in agriculture; and on the streets as vendors, shoe shiners, and beggars.

Landlessness, illiteracy, high unemployment, continuing armed conflict in much of the country, and a corresponding lack of able-bodied male adult workers in many families are among the most important factors contributing to chronic poverty and, by extension, child labor (Nilsson, 2013).

8.3 Child health in Afghanistan

According to the report of a Swiss organization (Humanium, 2017), people living in Afghanistan today have a limited number of medical facilities. They would have to travel for hundreds of kilometers for the treatment due to which many of severe patients faces death.

Another dilemma lies with the very fact that the medical officers also lack proper training and they do not have even appropriate equipment for a checkup and treatment of the respective patients. About 70% of the population does not have access to drinking water, which is a major cause of health problems, especially among young children.

8.4 Child education in Afghanistan

Humanium (2017) further claims that, the total literacy rate in Afghanistan is hardly around 38%. Only 60% of the children are sent to school for studies. The education system even lacks infrastructure. In Kabul, the schools are so small that in many of the schools a single class holds 60 students, which is creating a problem for every single student.

Afghanistan has the highest ratio of terrorist attacks mostly targeted at schools, especially girls' school. Progress has to be ensured regarding the security of students as Afghans are afraid to send their children to schools because of threats by extremists. The government should ensure the right of education for every Afghan child, which it has failed to do so.

8.5 Women rights in Afghanistan

After the continuous attacks of Taliban regarding women's rights in the past, women living in Afghanistan are still suffering abuse as well as extreme oppression. A research conducted by Global Rights estimates that around 90% of the women in Afghanistan are facing psychological and physical violence, and are often forced into child marriages as well as forced marriages.

Most of the time it is seen that the physical abuse is performed by the most trustworthy people, i.e., their family. Even though some organizations are trying their best to provide protection and legal assistance, but it is unsatisfactory on the macro level. Most of the women have to return to their homes in the absence of such alternative and after that they have to face more of these domestic problems. Some are even bound to take drastic measures like self-immolation.

To a great extent Islamic fundamentalism has influenced the Afghan government's policies. Alarming suicide rates of Afghan females are often the result of forced marriages. Thus, in comparison with women in other countries and their male counterparts Afghan women are facing a very miserable life (Mehta, 2002).

9. Conclusion

As immediate neighbors, Pakistan and Afghanistan must recognize each other significance. Long shared-border countries have ethnic, political, and religious similarities. They must have a friendly relation in order to uphold peace and prosperity. Better Pak-Afghan relation will bring peace and lead this region to fortify with respect, peace and economic stability. A supportive environment will certainly help both countries get rid of many difficulties.

The process of rehabilitation in Afghanistan is directly connected with Pak-Afghan relation. For Afghanistan, Pakistan is the best available opportunity at the door step. Pakistan with the cooperation of its natural ally China is heading for such projects that will unquestionably benefit the whole region, especially Afghanistan. Gwadar port and China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project will open the doors for landlocked Afghanistan.

On the other hand, Afghanistan is the gateway for Pakistan to the Central Asian countries, which possess abundance of natural resources that can be of great use for Pakistan in the near future. It is only possible with Afghanistan's assistance, thus a cordial relation with Afghanistan is even essential for Pakistan.

Moreover, to fight the common foe, i.e., terrorism, both countries need cooperation on intelligence and strategic level, as it cannot be handled alone by any country. By overcoming the Afghan refugees' issue, both countries need to have a constructive dialog for bringing back refugees to their homeland with dignity. Terrorism and the issue of refugees is closely related to each other. It can only be solved by ensuring concrete initiatives rather than accusing each other.

During the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan the drugs business was enhanced in Afghanistan by local and foreign elements. However, during the conservative religious government of Taliban the drug business was successfully prohibited as they put a ban on its cultivation. But, right after the Taliban rule the drug business started again. It is the support system of various criminal activities and is responsible for a lot of social issues in Pakistan and Afghanistan. A mutual combat against it will support ceasing the entire network that causes a great disturbance in the region.

However, Pakistan and Afghanistan need to be attentive of their policies, as the foreign actors will by all odds strike hard for sabotaging all the attempts for a cordial relation and jeopardize the Pak-Afghan interest in the short as well as long-term. Despite everything went wrong the hope is still there.

10. Recommendations

1. Afghanistan must strengthen its internal socio-political policies along with its foreign policy.
2. Afghanistan must deploy its experienced and qualified diplomats all over the world.
3. Afghanistan needs to improve its internal as well as external economy.
4. Afghanistan direly needs to resolve all the issues with its neighbors, especially with Pakistan, as these two countries can be natural allies.
5. The United States of America as the superpower must assign a special coordinator to resolve the issues between Afghanistan and Pakistan.
6. Respect as well as the dignity of Afghans must be maintained with due regard to the religious and cultural context in Pakistan and *vice versa*.
7. International organizations and UN specialized agencies should assist Afghanistan to lead it towards development.
8. Special attention must be paid towards children and women's rights in Afghanistan.

9. As there is a high risk of insecurity, therefore effective humanitarian interventions are needed in the long run.
10. Indian intervention in Afghanistan has deteriorated Pak-Afghan relations and the global image of Afghanistan, thus the blame game should be immediately stopped, thus ensuring a healthy relationship.

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State-building and Development Challenges: The Case of Armenia

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Abstract

The research explores the political, economic, social challenges and security priorities in state building in Armenia. It examines the government's efforts directed towards state-building, depicting the major challenges involved and exploring the framework of reforms that would measurably contribute to state-building. The study uses a qualitative explanatory research design based on content analysis of literature, interviews, a “roadmap” speech by the former president of the republic and the current government strategic plan. The study then focuses on state building primarily focusing on good governance and associated elements of democracy as prerequisites for a high-functioning state. The findings reveal a relationship between the quality of public institutions and state-building attributing the relatively slower democratization and state building progress to institutional deficiencies in governance. We claim that resolving each of the political, economic and social challenges separately would not lead to state-building. It is important to tackle the root causes of these challenges by focusing on increasing the capacity and efficacy of public institutions guided by the pillars of democracy and good governance.

Keywords: good governance, institutional capacity, state building, democratization, rule of law.

1. Background

Despite considerable national and international efforts expended in the past two decades – conceptualizing, analyzing, formulating and implementing various policies and development programs at different levels and with varied emphases – several countries of the former USSR continue to be underdeveloped. To this date, many of the post-Soviet states depict the symptoms of weak states (Riemer, 2005). The challenges that those CIS countries face vary considerably but may have a common thread of factors that runs through most, including high inequality (urban-rural and class inequalities), lack of adequate resources or uneven access to available resources, social exclusion, insecurity, etc. These challenges are usually elicited by the triggers as well as the consequences of weak governance caused by deficient or inexperienced institutions, which have low functionality and fail to adequately manage the resources available in the respective country. Though there may be visible advances from time to time, sustainable state-building is almost out of reach in such malfunctioning circumstances as institutions play a crucial role in strengthening the state and improving productivity.

2. The concept of state-building

Weak states have been at the center of the literature on state-building since 1990s, a period that has witnessed drastic changes in the world order when several new states emerged following the demise of the Soviet Union. Weak states are generally described as states whose public institutions lack the framework, capacity and determination to generate change for performing core state functions, particularly in providing the necessary public goods and services and for pushing forward development while safeguarding national security (Fritz & Menocal, 2007; Karimi, 2012; Rotberg, 2003). Particularly after the Cold War, weak states invited the attention of scholars on the importance of state-building as a means of dealing with conflict and tackling post-war challenges, as well as securing economic and social development. Nevertheless, the adoption of a coherent model to help identify the most pressing issues in the process of state-building and differentiating among diverse reform priorities and requirements for pushing forward the weaker states continues to be challenging.

Until the 1990s, state-building was largely viewed as an internal process essentially initiated and driven by internal actors. However, beginning with the new millennium, a new wave of arguments emerged claiming that state-building is an exogenous process triggered by the international community in response to the socio-economic difficulties in the world (Berger, 2006; Karimi, 2012). Currently, scholars argue that although many external factors, such as donor impact, may be crucial to the onset or acceleration of the process, state-building is mainly the outcome of local dynamics (Fritz & Menocal, 2007; Whaites, n.d.). In other words, state-building is a process that takes place as a result of national reform efforts and relevant programs that often extend beyond the borders of a given state.

A somewhat different view of the concept supports the argument that state-building is an internationally triggered local process that occurs in response to the emergence of weak states requiring attention by the international community (Fritz & Menocal, 2007; Karimi, 2012). This view touches upon the notion of global governance and the mission of institutions and organizations to make transnational impact with the aim of regulating world order (Battacharya, 2001). However, scholars also propose that since the process of state-building takes place *within* the defined borders of a given territory, Weber's concept of legitimacy along with territorial authority can be viewed as essential variables to consider in studying state-building (Bogdandy et al., 2005; Brinkerhoff, 2006; Whaites, n.d.).

Despite the lack of consensus among scholars on the exact definition of the concept, state-building in its broadest sense is understood as the process of establishing or strengthening government institutions through reforms undertaken by national or international actors (Caplan, 2006; Fukuyama, 2006). The definition adopted by the World Bank places emphasis on the significance of reforms that improve governance, including adoption of mechanisms that increase accountability and government action in support of business and civil society (The World Bank Group, 2012). The most noteworthy push factor that has drawn international organizations into projects for building capacity and strengthening weak states is primarily driven by the desire to minimize undesirable spillover effects that produce hindrances to development in other parts of the world. These effects could range from epidemic ailments and poverty to mass migration and refugee settlement crises. From the standpoint of national priorities, however, state-building is directed more to achieving and preserving security, embracing the rule of law, delivering basic public goods and services, as well as establishing political legitimacy (Brinkerhoff, 2006). In the case of the latter factor, dominant approaches include growing the capacity of institutions and embracing the principles of good governance.

Without doubt, state-building priorities are contingent upon country specific circumstances (The World Bank Group, 2012). In fact, failure of state-building often arises because the model used by the respective country is not tailored to the specific circumstances and

priorities of the state and, as a result, does not produce the intended outcomes (Eriksen, n.d.). Existing studies and especially evaluations of state-building lay out a rather dim picture of success attributing failures to the absence of the foundational elements of state-building. In line with that, some scholars advocate state-building requisites, such as national security, justice system, legitimacy and authority, and institutional capacity (International Dialogue on State-building & Peace Building, 2013; McCandless et al., 2012; The World Bank Group, 2012).

3. State-building v. nation-building

In the current study, state-building is understood as “*the set of actions undertaken by national and/or international actors to reform and strengthen the capacity, legitimacy and the institutions of the state where these have seriously been eroded or are missing*” (Fritz & Menocal, 2007: 13). This definition implies that understanding state-building requires a multidisciplinary approach, which, besides politics, may include other scientific principles.

In this regard, a confounding yet closely related concept to state-building is nation-building. A striking similarity between these two is that both can be achieved through indigenous efforts and reflect an ongoing iterative process. However, unlike nation-building, the concept of state-building in more recent literature makes reference to interventionist strategies for building the capacity of local institutions (Van de Walle & Zoe, 2011). Though, as articulated by Fukuyama (2006), nation-building also may involve both reconstruction and development actions, but the difference is that state-building deals more with increasing the capacity of government institutions, whereas nation-building places emphasis on creating a sense of belonging through the construction of a collective national identity that embraces shared values and goals (Alesina & Reich, 2012; Bogdandy et al., 2005; Fritz & Menocal, 2007).

To define the concept, some scholars tend to limit the boundaries of nation-building to the distinct territory of a particular state (Bogdandy et al., 2005; Van de Walle & Zoe, 2011). While this may be arguably true in the case of state-building where the main actors are public institutions within a state, restricting the process to a given territory may not reflect the real picture of nation-building particularly in the case of nations with active diasporic communities. The literature does not turn a blind eye to this phenomenon viewing it as another yet important approach to nation-building and collective identity construction – an approach that underscores the role of the Diaspora in shaping shared values and constructing the envisioned future for the nation (ADB, 2012; Shain & Barth, 2003).

As Anderson (2006) posits, a nation is a socially constructed community, created by those who perceive themselves as part of a group (but not necessarily living within the same geographical boundaries). A nation, he argues, is often imagined because its members who may never know most of the other members or have met them or even heard of them. Yet in the minds of each of those who consider themselves a part of the group lives the image of their communion. It could be argued that diasporic communities that live apart shape the very communion that connects them with the nation. This commonness leads to the strength of a Diaspora and to the role its members may play in nation building and to the notion of stimulating attention to the dynamics of socially and culturally constructed processes relevant to nation building.

4. Integrating good governance in state-building

The earlier discussion of the differences between nation-building and state-building lends itself to placing more emphasis, in the case of the latter, on the performance of government institutions and issues of governance. The term governance began receiving renewed attention in development studies following the 1989 World Bank report entitled *Sub-Saharan Africa: From*

Crisis to Sustainable Development. In the post 9/11 era and the upsurge of academic interest in interventionist strategies, attention drifted away from nation-building to state-building with an added focus on governance and socio-economic development. The world development attention centered on helping developing states build the capacity of their government institutions, improve the quality of public services, embrace good governance by way of increasing transparency and accountability, at the minimum. These building blocks continue to dominate topical debates and are no different from discussions of the importance and priority of building the framework essential for both development and state-building (DFID, 2006; Rondinelli & Montgomery, 2005).

Governance is closely related to state-building as it encompasses the use of political power or authority, as well as the political system and institutions for administering state resources (DFID, 2006; Weiss, 2000). Moreover, good governance is often associated with aligning and improving a host of public management processes and procedures that would hinder state-building if not reformed. Most often, poor governance encompasses flawed institutions and, as such, it is an undeniable trigger of state failure (Ciborra & Navarra, 2005; Rotberg, 2003).

According to the World Bank (1994), good governance encompasses four fundamental elements of state administration: public management, accountability, legal framework for development, as well as transparency and access to information. In fact, many of the weak states, such as Afghanistan, Iraq, and some African countries that have captured the attention of scholars in those elements of governance (Fukuyama, 2006; Himmelstrand, Kinyanjui & Mburugu, 1994); Karimi, 2001). Thus, reform recommendations for state-building address improving elements of governance most essential for development.

Integral to good governance, corruption is regarded significant to state building, particularly affecting small and relatively weaker states. Pervasive forms of government corruption occur as bribes to government officials for permits and licenses, unnoticed passage through customs and for controlling markets by prohibiting market entry by new competitors (Shleifer & Vishny, 2018) and other privileges available to the few. Depending on frequency and extent, corruption often occurs in the form of contracts, zoning or rezoning permits, and other sales of government goods and services awarded based on personal gain. Manifestations of corruption occur in various schemes, including restricting the supply quantity and maximizing the value of bribes throughout the chain of transactions, which generally go unpunished as several levels of government share the illicit proceeds. Not only do such unlawful actions deter competition, but severely restrict state revenues and slow down economic growth.

5. The case of Armenia

Overall, an appraisal of the key indicators of economic, democratic and social transition reveals a mixed record of reforms over the past decades, with slight progress in governance, but not in poverty and migration outflows. Although Armenia has made improvements on many fronts and in several sub-sectors or units of government, there remain serious challenges to overcome. A “*key governance challenge in Armenia is corruption and the lack of genuine checks and balances*” (USAID – Armenia website)¹. The capacity of the RA civil service has improved to some extent, but often by growing its size and not necessarily improving quality and productivity (Balian, 2018). Despite efforts to reform the justice system and to reestablish the rule of law especially by the new government, enforcement continues to be challenging.

¹ <https://www.usaid.gov/armenia>, accessed in October 2017.

An analysis of the indicators of sustainable economic growth, which incorporates poverty eradication and is an important element of state-building associated with government performance, shows that it has been rather slow and uneven between urban and rural communities of Armenia. According to official data, the poverty rate in Armenia fell by only 0.4% from 2008 to 2016, almost stagnating at around 30% (National Statistical Service of RA, 2017). Multiple crises have emerged within financial markets and the banking sector, currency instability and inflation, energy security, and other economic and social issues against the persistent background of border security challenges. Armenia is constrained geopolitically in terms of its closed borders, relations to the North and South, and the strategic challenge of balancing between East and West. All three of these factors impact state development and require latitudes and strategies that minimize resultant constraints.

The Armenia Development Strategy 2014-2025² points to development issues that address many critical bands needing reform while integrating the macroeconomic, productive, and social dimensions of development. Those strategies aim at increasing the level of diversification and technological might of the national economy to create reasonable levels of employment on a sustainable basis, while promoting social equity and, to some extent, environmental protection. Among the underscored challenging strategies of state-building is the improvement of Armenia's governance, in general, with emphasis on improving the quality and effectiveness of public goods and services, sustainability of development through the transparent allotment and use of government resources, consorted collaboration among government institutions, as well as accountability to the public.

Moreover, the components included in the recent EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) (signed on 25 November 2017) duly reflect several of the challenges of state-building identified in the analysis above. These can be headlined under economic, safety and security challenges, reforms in the legal system, human capital development and human rights protection, and public participation in policy-making. CEPA promotes business competition and entrepreneurship by way of creating a business climate that facilitates business investments and improves the enforcement of rules and regulations especially pertaining to competition and transparency of decision-making related to business support. More importantly, CEPA contains a cross-cutting component of institutionalizing transparency and accountability across government.

This approach is aligned with the new government's priority strategy for establishing justice throughout the branches of government. The guiding principle, articulated consistently and coherently by the current government, is that all citizens and institutions are subject to and accountable to the law enforced fairly across all segments of the population. This is bound to have positive consequences on the general climate in the country. Embracing the rule of law and the establishment of a fair judiciary system create an environment where transparency and accountability in all spheres become feasible. Thus, despite the recent changes in the ruling party and quasi coalition government that has held in the first one hundred days of the new government, the key challenges to state-building in Armenia remain relatively unchanged.

6. Research design and methodology

The current research on the state-building challenges of Armenia begins with an analytical synthesis of the situation and public perception before the Velvet Revolution of April-May 2018, which toppled the government and brought to power the challengers. The study comprises a review of preceding articles, reports, and key documents, duly referenced,

² A new draft of the Armenia Development Strategy 2018-2030 was submitted for review in April 2018.

complemented by a qualitative explanatory analysis of the “roadmap” speech by former President Sargsyan (delivered on 12 February 2016, highlighting the state strategic focus under the revised RA Constitution) and seven (7) expert interviews conducted in the months of October and November 2017.

Considering the timing of the change in the system of government from semi-presidential to parliamentary coupled with the 2018 Velvet Revolution that altered the mosaic of parties and the executive council of government ministers, the analysis touches upon the most striking state-building components that have been visibly affected. A more thorough assessment of the events related to the Velvet Revolution and what has followed calls for further research.

Selection of the qualitative methodology and the data sources considered for the current research aim at identifying the building blocks of state-building and the key challenges viewed from diverse perspectives. The collected data have provided the opportunity to depict more implicitly the roles that public institutions play in the process of state-building, whilst bearing in mind the role of civil society and the Diaspora.

Purposive sampling was used in selecting the interviewees to include public sector officials, representatives of major Diaspora organizations and international experts. This strategy afforded the collection of data from sources that represent maximum variation. The advantage afforded by purposive sampling was the involvement of individuals from various backgrounds, different perceptions of the role of principals and agents in state-building, and levels of current engagement in politics. This approach enriched the quality of data and diversity of opinions. The interview questions were formulated from the analysis of the literature presented earlier in the article.

7. Analytical synthesis of existing challenges of state-building

7.1 *Political challenges*

Until recently, the key political challenge continued to be the absence of true checks and balances in the system compounded by a powerful executive that undermines the burgeoning institutions and agents of democratic accountability (USAID, 2017). According to the Freedom House report (2016), Armenia’s progress has been very slow over the past decade in all of the seven indicators of democracy with a current democracy score of 5.39 (on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 represents the highest level of democratic progress and 7 the lowest)³. The democracy index comprises indicators of national and local democratic governance, electoral process, civil society, independent media, judicial framework and independence, and corruption. The 2018 Freedom House report, published earlier in the year, shows the best score to be civil society at 3.75 (the scores for national democratic governance, electoral processes and local democratic governance are the worst, with 6.00 in case of the first two and 5.75 for local democratic governance). While all other indicators have remained the same in the past year, the score of corruption has leveled up by 0.25 from 2017 to the first trimester of 2018 when the Freedom House report was published. Therefore, along with true checks and balances, corruption is found to be a critical hindrance to state building in Armenia.

Despite the former government’s commitment to reform and some positive changes that have taken place in this domain in the recent past, there remain many challenges related to the pillars of democracy, mainly in growing an accountable and transparent government, as well as institutionalizing participatory policy-making. The civil service has limited capacity in terms of achieving substantially higher performance. Also, adequate checks and balances among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches need to be enforced and continually reinforced to

³ <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2018/armenia>, accessed in July 2018.

institutionalize democratic governance principles, policies and practices. Above all, however, of utmost significance for Armenia is the difficulty of finding a sensible balance in tackling national security concerns and encouraging openness considering the scarcity of resources and the lingering burden of the continuing conflict with neighboring Azerbaijan.

Citizen participation in decision-making and public debate has been low historically at both national and local levels (Babajanyan, 2008). In general terms, popular agreement with the country's reform agenda has been limited to party affiliation and individual favorable position vis-à-vis government. How then would the country move on in this domain and what are the action items to consider? Does the answer lie in the 2016 roadmap speech by former President Serzh Sargsyan and efforts by his administration or should one look deeper into the usual expressions of various other political actors, such as the current head of state, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and his rhetoric on the urgency of "*changing the way we govern?*". This is a question that merits attention, at the minimum for understanding the level of government commitment to state-building. Was the official position by the former president reflective of the state strategic agenda or were those assurances and commitments just lip service meant to shape public opinion, to possibly increase trust in his leadership and hope in the future of Armenia?

Public protests against corruption in government – perceived to be endemic – have often been organized by opposition parties and activists, which eventually reached a highpoint at the Velvet Revolution in April 2018. The criticality of getting a dominant majority of the populace to fight against corruption at all levels could not be disputed. In the first instance, however, efforts are necessary for government to increase the transparency of decisions in various units and functions (e.g. budget allocations and public expenditures, procurement decisions, and subsidies). More importantly, taking the bold step of exercising the rule of law by punishing a few grand corruption cases rather than removing them from the limelight or public scrutiny would set the tone of government commitment to the fight against corruption.

In the case of Armenia, it is also important not to put aside the historical and geographical factors that play into the process of development. Scholars have argued that development challenges often stem from history (and geography) and that is the reason why one needs to consider those in their respective political and cultural contexts (Himmelstrand, Kinyanjui & Mburugu, 1994); Karimi, 2012). The blockade with neighboring Turkey, as well as the continuing Karabakh conflict with Azerbaijan, have placed enormous strains on state resources creating barriers to growth, often shifting development priorities to first addressing security challenges.

7.2 Institutional and civic challenges

Armenia's primary challenges in this sphere rest in building institutions and state-society relations for government to deliver public goods and services that meet public needs and expectations and safeguard legitimacy. The latter largely relates to the extent to which government possesses or acquires governance capacity and technical expertise for doing so. Issues of governance related to "*reducing poverty, strengthening human rights, securing gender equality, realizing the rights of children and youth, combatting and preventing corruption, improving accountability, and greater political participation*" (GIZ, 2015: 1), must be addressed through systems and programs that improve the wellbeing of society. Good governance challenges also embrace checks and balances that would institutionalize cross-checks among the branches of government thereby improving the quality (fairness, transparency and verifiability) of decisions throughout government.

Moreover, the regulatory platform is laden with onerous regulations, deficient institutional capacity, and archaic processes that further hamper the effectiveness of the civil

service triggering rising public discontent. Further, cronyism and political patronage continue to hamper the collective capacity of government often impeding development and exacerbating the uneven and flawed enforcement of regulations and ineffective delivery of public services. While the former government was run by consensus reached among the ruling elite with limited mechanisms and opportunities for civic participation into the legislative process or policy making and monitoring of implementation (USAID, 2013-2017), the current transitional government is yet to institutionalize channels of civic participation in decision-making processes.

While acknowledging that respect for human rights has grown significantly and the work of the RA Human Rights Defender has been supporting a progressively enhanced human rights agenda, there are visibly disadvantaged segments in the population, such as women and others, who are discriminated against or fall victim to different forms of violation, including gender-based inequities; unequal access to economic and political resources; limited participation in public life; and relatively lower political representation (in spite of the quota established by the RA Constitution). A positive step in this realm was the ratification of the RA Law on Domestic Violence (passed by the RA National Assembly in December 2017), which has not yet shown signals of large-scale positive differences – differences that would stem from educating the public at large and empowering them to drive cultural and social change.

There are over 5,000 registered non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the Republic, which do not yet translate into an organizationally strong and active civil society (EU, 2014-2017), although positive signs are noticeable in the recent past. Observations of the activism in recent months lead to the preliminary assumption that opportunities to engage in policy discussions with decision-makers and legislators may be increasing, changing the culture of citizen participation in political life. However, a significant portion of the population continues to be disengaged or misinformed. Though the Freedom House report (2018) assigns the best score to civil society commending the growing pluralism of public discussions (including the media) in Armenia, ownership of the media rests primarily in the hands of people affiliated with political parties (including the opposition), which raises questions on the quality and objectivity of content.

7.3 Economic challenges

Although the economic challenges of Armenia predominantly stem from the world economic order, the slow growth cannot be solely attributed to external factors and forces. At the internal front, challenges are observed to be derived from the rates of advancement in human capital and social capital development in Armenia. Scholars argue that both human capital and social capital are reliable predictors of the rate at which a country grows its economy. Moreover, creating linkages between these two forms of capital is believed to augment human potential. *“Social capital brings to the force the social networks and values through which skill portfolios generally are built, deployed and rewarded”* (Schuller, 2000: 18). Accordingly, dominant social norms, networks, and relations among community members and social groups act as enablers for realization of the human potential (Balian & Aydinian, n.d.).

In 2017, GDP growth in Armenia outperformed expectations, recording the highest rate of growth in the past decade at 7.5% after a flat economic performance in 2016. Growth was driven mainly by a recovery in the external environment and supported by a strong rebound in domestic demand. Consumption benefited from higher incomes and a recovery in remittances, particularly due to the moderate recovery in Russia. According to the RA National Statistical Service, the absolute value of the GDP in 2016 was US \$10.5 billion, which grew up to US \$11.6 billion in 2017 recording a growth of 7.5%. This is the highest growth in the last 10 years (National Statistical Service of RA 2017). *“Growth was driven mainly by a recovery in the external environment and supported by a strong rebound in domestic demand. Consumption benefited*

from higher incomes and a recovery in remittances, particularly due to the moderate recovery in Russia” (The World Bank, 2017).

Moreover, a positive trade balance was recorded primarily attributed to the increase of exports by 21%. According to the RA Minister of Agriculture, the volume of fruits and vegetables increased by 21% in 2017, leading to an 11% increase in the volume of processed fruits and vegetables. Of special significance was the 30% increase of exports of locally-produced wine (The State Revenue of the Government of Armenia, 2017). Despite these positive developments in the recent year, Armenia is not yet on the road to sustainable growth capable of creating a strong labor market where skill supplies are better aligned with demand. The key policy challenges are measures that *“invest in education, skills and infrastructures, encourage competition and strengthen governance”* (IMF, 2017: 9).

The earlier years of economic growth have produced uneven and unequal distribution of wealth rather than real improvement in living standards for most of the population. Widening disparities in wealth and income have led to a serious socioeconomic divide on several levels, most notably between rural and urban areas. These disparities also have promoted migration and have widened the gap between the rich and the poor. In fact, statistics reveal that the ten wealthiest citizens of Armenia control more than 55 percent of the total wealth in the country (USAID, 2013). According to the World Bank, poverty reduction and income growth are likely to stagnate during 2017-2018 in Armenia (WB, 2016). Improvement of the business environment in a manner that specifically addresses the growth of small and medium enterprises appears to be a more serious challenge than originally thought. It is critically important to focus on strategies that fashion a strong middle class.

8. Data analysis and discussion

Within the framework established by the theories of state building, as discussed above, content analysis was performed of the presidential roadmap speech (delivered by the former president on 12 February 2016, soon after the constitutional referendum of December 2015), of the new government plan published on June 1, 2018, and of the transcripts of expert interviews ($n = 7$) conducted in November-December 2017. The analysis applied thematic coding of text focused on revealing and examining dominant patterns within the expressed terms and phrases relevant to the challenges of state-building.

The label ‘democracy’ and its various pillars dominate the Presidential speech as well as the government plan of 2018, and are also articulated by the interviewees in varying intensities and terms, such as freedom, equal opportunity, free and fair elections, protection of human rights and individual freedoms, freedom of political assembly, etc. While the former President places added attention on public participation in his speech, underscoring that *“even the most self-confident officials cannot reject cooperation with those who want to bring their participation to our state-building process”* (Sargsyan, 2016), the government plan of 2018 additionally places specific emphasis on, free and fair elections and depicts zero tolerance for corruption as a precondition for establishing democratic values and practices.

Overall, the rule of law, security and institutional capacity are the most dominant themes in the interviews (7/7), in the former President’s speech (Sargsyan, 2016), as well as in the 2018 government plan of the new administration, all of which place emphasis on these components as necessary preconditions for heightening the impact of government. The discourse markers used for valuing the rule of law encompass the fairness of legal decisions, harmonization of laws and associated legal provisions with the RA Constitution, as well as components of good governance, such as transparency, consistency of actions across government and accountability. Along similar lines, the former President’s speech and the government plan refer to key indicators

of justice, such as transparency and predictability of court decisions, accountability to the citizenry, and the prevalence of the rule of law across the entire populace.

Although those are pillars of democracy, the former President's reference to the rule of law was meant more than just advocating for building the Armenian modern democratic state. Particularly in the segment of the speech where he focuses on economic growth, the rule of law argument is fundamental to assuring that *"no one should be above the law"* and that *"all citizens shall have equal opportunities"* (Sargsyan, 2016). Similar expressions can be found in the very first segment of the 2018 government plan where one of the goals underscored is *"national unity and solidarity based on the rule of law and equality before the law."*

Closely associated with state-building priority challenges, most interviewees (6/7) raised at least one security concept to be the lead challenge of state-building considering Armenia's relations with its neighbors to the east, south-west and west. The constructs brought forth under the security theme encompassed diplomatic relations, national armed forces, border protection and external security (although internal security was not altogether left aside). These phrases were often used in the government plan but with intended importance attached to internal security by the former President and by the interviewees interchangeably and were meant to emphasize the importance of national security for a country in conflict, be it through soft power and strategic alliances or by way of a strong army to protect state borders and the citizenry.

Most interviewees (5/7) addressed the importance of institutional capacity of the government in the delivery of public goods and services that meet citizen needs. This, they asserted, also involves adopting the right strategic direction and implementation of projects that are integral to state-building. Moreover, interviewees spoke about the positive impact on performance of the right level of expertise and specific job-related competences in the civil service. Adoption of the merit system, some added, would increase the transparency of recruitment, promotion and retention and increase government productivity. As one interviewee articulated *"... public institutions would be more effective if civil servants were hired on the basis of merit rather than by consideration of factors that are more often not transparent and based on connections"*. Expounding the concept of adopting a meritocratic civil service system, interviewees explained that fair and transparent hiring affords equal opportunities to all interested applicants and realizes the recruitment of the most qualified.

Speaking of the pillars of state-building, the interviewees (6/7) appraised the former government's achievements in judicial reform as inadequate. Moreover, two interviewees placed emphasis on educational reform; and one specifically mentioned the importance of civil service reform. A slight discrepancy is observed between the dominant discourse in the pillars and the suggestion of most urgent reforms. In discussing the pillars, emphasis was placed on the effectiveness of public institutions and security, however in the most urgent reforms civil service reform was downgraded and reforms in the military were not at all mentioned. However, the importance given to the judiciary system is not surprising as the most recent government plan places equal emphasis on establishing justice in Armenia through independent judiciary system.

In tune with the literature review, public institutions were viewed as having a major role in state-building. All (7/7) interviewees asserted that public institutions play a crucial role in state-building, with two taking the extreme position that *"there would be no state without strong public institutions"*, placing added emphasis on the role of public institutions in relations with the public and the Diaspora. In other words, the strength of a state lies in the efficacy and capacity of its institutions in building participatory relationships with the public and the Diaspora.

The interviews also depicted a dominant pattern regarding the role of civil society in state-building. Most of the interviewees (5/7) attributed a secondary role to civil society explaining that in the case of Armenia, civil society lacks the capacity to sufficiently contribute to state-building due to the lack of or insufficient knowledge/awareness of policy options and political

maturity. Civil society was mostly seen as “*a referee to watch over government accountability and transparency*” in matters especially related to the rule of law, justice, and overall performance. Two (2/7) interviewees also spoke about important preconditions for civil society to take shape, get established and “*do its job*” in state-building, including exercising more tolerance. “*Although Armenian civil society is a proponent of inclusion and participatory policy-making, it is itself as intolerant as the government*”. Further, the understanding of democracy or its practice, for instance “*the idea of unity often referred to in Armenian political discourse seems to be outdated*”. This suggests that state-building would require better focus on developing civil society capacity and acumen, so it would become a principal actor itself. There are signals of recent positive change in this realm and further changes seem to be possible based on the most recent government plan, which places much importance on civil society and its participation in the process of strengthening the state.

As to the Diaspora and its role in state-building, the former President’s speech addresses this under the rubric of “one nation”, affirming that “*The Diaspora and Armenia represent one unity, the nation. Diaspora’s right to participation in Armenia is considered (in the state-building roadmap) and fostered*” (Sargsyan 2016). Similarly, most interviewees (6/7) posit that there is a role for the Diaspora, but one that is not associated with any specific segment, community, organization or party, but relates to all diasporans “*who can contribute to the motherland through education and expertise*”. The expressed argument that defends this notion is that anyone should be able to support the state in its development efforts and democratic reforms, without necessarily being supportive of the ruling elite or the inordinate power it exudes. This is a spot-on concern that very much relates to the current political situation in Armenia. One interviewee added that the previous administrations often influenced the participation of political parties, considering that “*Diaspora parties have expectations of political gain from the RA government*”, which often shapes their support of the ruling elite and does not necessarily contribute to state-building.

Democracy was the connecting link among the state-building notions brought forth in the interviews, in the former President’s speech, and in the 2018 government plan. A weak democracy was denoted as one with a weak media, absence of rule of law, and inadequate flow of information both vertically and horizontally. Utmost importance was attached to the prevalent weaker or politicized media that propagates negative publicity and impairs state-building (6/7). Further, the media was viewed as an important channel for increasing public awareness and access to information. Media continues to be highly politicized in the post revolution era, where dissemination of misinformation continues to be a major obstacle to effective state-citizenry relations. Oddly, only a few respondents (3/7) spoke about insecure borders as a major deterrent that “*obstructs the path to successful state-building*”. Social capital was not viewed as a contributor to state-building; rather, poverty, migration and corruption were deemed important but viewed as consequences of low state capacity and not as challenges to state-building.

As for the indicators of successful state-building, several interviewees (4/7) stressed the significant weight attached to the quality of governance, including the respective individual and collective capacity of public institutions, which shapes the understanding and practice of transparency and accountability. Governance directly affects the quality of delivered public goods and services; therefore, it influences the level of citizen satisfaction. This is the reason why it is an important pillar of state-building. This, the interviewees claim, also is linked to migration outflows, which weakens the state. As citizen satisfaction increases, migration outflows decrease. One interviewee went further, elaborating that “*successful state-building could also translate to an inflow of migrants*”. Governance is believed to also encompass “*a supportive legal framework*” as affirmed by the former President, the current government and the rule of law that delivers “*equal opportunities to all citizens*”.

Economic development was another challenge mentioned by a few interviewees (3/7) but dependent upon the success achieved in the other elements discussed earlier. In other words, the results achieved in this sphere would be rather slim, insignificant and unsustainable for achieving a stable economy absent the rule of law, security and institutional capacity. This viewpoint is also shared by the current Prime Minister and his government. Evidently, in a weaker state, economic advances would be limited to the expansion of a small number of enterprises and would not grow a middle class critical to sustained growth.

9. Interpretation and conclusion

The analytical synthesis completed in the first phase of the current research, combined with the data analysis of interviews, the former President's speech and the 2018 government plan reflect important notions that are supported by the literature on this topic. The results shed light upon the major challenges to state-building that Armenia currently faces and discuss prospects with respect to minimizing these challenges and taking the path to achieving successful state-building.

Extracting from the literature, state-building in the broadest sense refers to the strengthening of public institutions, though this is not explicitly stated in the interviews, in the former President's speech or in the 2018 government plan, but it is frequently implied. The economic, political and social challenges discussed earlier largely stem from the inadequacy of the performance of public institutions. Hence, the proposed reforms cannot be achieved but through the concerted efforts of respective institutions and commitment by all.

The literature discusses Weber's legitimacy as an important variable or a requisite for state-building. In line with this notion, an immense effort to strengthen the government's political legitimacy can be observed in the former President's speech as it frequently emphasizes the elements of democracy, such as justice, transparency, rule of law and participation of the citizenry in decision-making. All these indicators contribute to the consolidation of trust between the government and citizens, which in its turn positively influences the legitimacy of the government. Legitimacy was a recurrent concept in the interviews as well, as "*satisfaction of the citizens*" was mentioned as an important indicator (but not a requisite) for measuring successful state-building.

The frequent reference to the rule of law, accountability and participation, especially both in the former President's speech and in the 2018 government plan, shows that the main challenges to state-building in Armenia are closely attached to these constructs. Taking into consideration the literature on good governance and state-building, there is a natural overlap between the main pillars of democracy and the elements of good governance. In other words, although accountability, equal opportunity and transparency are mentioned within the context of democracy, they also contribute to successful state-building by way of increasing the quality of performance of public institutions.

Closely linked to institutional capacity, the lack of meritocracy in the civil service is seen as a pressing issue not only by the interviewees, but also in the words of the former President. Lack of meritocracy was also frequently brought up during and right after the Velvet Revolution. This suggests that continuing reforms are critically needed in this area and must go beyond simply making positive changes to the law to increasing commitment, to adopting new rules and regulations that govern the "*way government works*". Moreover, judicial reforms, as suggested by the interviewees and inferred in the former President's speech, as well as in the 2018 government plan, are as important for state-building considering that adherence to laws has direct impact on public trust and prepares ground for social, economic and political reforms initiated by the government.

The former President's speech attaches a primary role to the reciprocal roles of government and citizenry in the process of state building, placing considerable emphasis on the participation by civil society in policy-making. Importantly, the current government is making effort to create channels of communication between the government and the public to facilitate citizen participation in decision-making. Conversely, the interviewees portray civil society as incapable of constructively and effectively participating in state building, though it is now impossible to deny the power of the people that has been duly manifested in the Velvet Revolution. But, earlier arguments stretch beyond simply empowering the citizenry to creating the necessary platforms to grow awareness of and interest in public policy-making. Any analysis of such arguments advocates that civil society is an important resource for any country; in the case of Armenia the general lack of transparency, absence of communication channels (vertical and horizontal) and fixation on distrust have hindered civil society from "*doing its job*".

Moreover, the other obstacles to state-building found in the literature and discussed earlier, mainly migration and poverty, are found to be consequences rather than causes of a weak state. This may explain why state efforts directed to mitigating migration and poverty do not necessarily lead to successful state-building. Contrary to prevalent criticisms, more effort should be expended towards implementing elements of good governance, such as transparency, accountability, institutional capacity building and establishing a legal framework for development, all of which are mentioned in the 2018 government plan, rather than artificially accelerating growth. If economic growth is viewed as an indicator of successful state-building, it is mostly so when achieved through good governance and not irrespective of the capacity currently eminent in government institutions.

There is no single model of state-building that *fits all sizes*. State-building and its pillars are very much country specific. In other words, unless the model is tailored to the social, political, economic and geopolitical conditions and context of the country, being successful at state-building may be difficult to achieve.

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