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DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

MASTER'S CAPSTONE ESSAY

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE TERRITORIALISM OF NATIONAL IDENTITY

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Yerevan 2016

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Acknowledgment

INTRODUCTION

The end of the Soviet era and other global political changes have produced conditions that call for new theoretical dialogs, often challenging notions of nationalism and national identity, and even shared language and culture. The relationship between culture, (Armenian culture in the case of the current study) and nationalism requires a look at broader historical, political, and territorial contexts and forces that have wielded changes in the understanding of national identity. Further, the relationship between cultural differences and national identity is very complex and difficult to analyze for better understanding, particularly when the discussion is about cultural differences among people belonging to the same nation (or what people often refer to as ancestry). This phenomenon is often dominated by politics, including regimes of national governments and policies, including those related to minorities and the extent to which they are able to pursue cultural or religious interests.

There are a variety of arguments for or against the above mentioned constructs of national identity, which often vary congruent to time and place. In the case of the Armenians, it could be argued that the notion of national identity deserves focused attention for the mere fact that Armenia is one of the oldest countries of the world and the first to adopt Christianity. Having been through many wars in history and dispersed throughout the globe, the issue identity for Armenians everywhere is, at the minimum, a question on which to ponder.

The latter aspects serve as primary goals to study this topic. Additionally, there are political reasons that render the study more important today. Questions related to how the people of a nation feel about or view nationalism in this globalized world become more relevant than

ever before. Aside from scholars' views on nationalism, is it really an ideological movement for attaining autonomy?

The Role of Religion in National Identity

In an effort to better understand the new entities in the former Soviet Union, one must also look to the role, if any, that religion, language, and history play in the formation or strengthening national identity. Along those lines, Peter Rutland argues that (Guroian, 1994:3)

> *"Despite the fact that the Armenians have the oldest independent church in Christendom … [which] was an important vehicle for the preservation of national identity over the centuries, religion has not been a driving force in modern [Armenian] nationalism."*

In contrast, Peachey (1994) posits that *"the religious question of the people of the former Soviet Union arises primarily in Christian terms, and those people were formed as nations under Christian cultural hegemony."* In fact, the fall of the Soviet Union and the establishment of the independent states brought with it the revival of religion in many republics, including Armenia and Georgia. Peachey uses the case of Armenia to argue the relationship between national identity and religion referring to Armenians as people whose *"national identity, national ethnos, and the national ideology have been forged in the Holy Echmiadzin.*"But, this begs the question whether or not the role of the Armenian Apostolic Church has been that of a catalyzer of national identity or of its revival or neither?

Brief Review of the History

The fact that Armenians were stateless from 1375-1918 cannot be overlooked while speaking about the formation of Armenian identity. Armenians were oppressed by neighboring powers and needed to fight for preserving their religion. The Church was then an integral part of

Armenian identity (Margaryan 2008). Subsequently, the oppression and religious taboos that existed in the Soviet Union could not separate nations from their church (in the case of several republics). Thus, spiritual renewal was inevitable after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Naturally, the Armenian Church assumed the role of revitalizing ethnic nationalism and national strength in the independent state. In a similar line of argument, Guroian (1994:2) references John Lukacs' argument that the revival of nationalism after the collapse of the USSR proved that, in that era, "*the most powerful political force in the world*" was nationalism, of which religion is an essential factor.

Using the example of Armenia, it should be noted that Armenians fought for their faith over the past centuries. Notably, in the Ottoman era, Jewish and Christian minorities were unified under the leadership of their religious leaders. Even in the Soviet atheist era, the Armenian Church continued to assume a significant role closely cooperating with Soviet authorities. The Armenian Church backed the myth of Soviet brotherhood introducing itself as the ancient symbol of Armenian national unity. Viewed from different angles, this shows that religion has been instrumental in the preservation of national identity (Guroian 1994).

The Role of Language in National Identity

A language may be considered the symbol of a particular identity. People are generally categorized by the language they speak (Karna 1999). Similarly, Byram (2006) and Hobsbawn (1996) state that there is a strong connection between language and the sense of belonging — having a national identity. Similarly, Xueliang and Qingxia (2004) argue that when speaking about ethnicity and nationality language comes to mind automatically. Nationality cannot be considered apart from language, given the strong influence of language on growing national and ethnic identity. Further, in a study that uses both quantitative and qualitative research methods,

Hemat (2012: 9)argues that national identity is not only language, but a combination of history, beliefs, culture, values, language, etc. He then concludes that

> "*National identity ... is an embodiment of the all common cultural values and social practices of different ethnic groups inside the borders of any country, and this is also manifested through a common language used as the formal and official language of their country.*"

Additionally, referring to state policies on language, the author notes that those policies are represented in laws, regulations and programs that can improve and develop the sense of national identity.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theories supporting national identity are a few and not so closely interconnected, although helpful for understanding the different nuances in support of the concept. In this section of the study, three key theories are examined: nationalism, premordialism, and instrumentalism.

Nationalism

Nationalism is about the shared feeling of a nation as it relates to their ethnic identity. Nationalism can also be viewed as the events or activities that a nation carries out in order to protect identity or to preserve self-determination. Scholars have argued the concept of nationalism is not the same as patriotism; in fact, as Rothi et al. (2005) argue, in contrast with patriotism, nationalism involves individual behaviors and feelings toward nation and personal identity in relation to nation. Nationalism also has been a topic of debate among various scholars.

For example, Smith (2001:192) raises five important points:

"(a) *the process of formation, or growth, of nations; (b) the sentiment of consciousness of belonging to the nation; (c) the language and symbolism of the nation; (d) the social and political movement on behalf of the nation; and (e) the doctrine and/or ideology of the nation, both general and particular."*

To delve deeper into understanding this concept, one needs to differentiate between state and nation. Most importantly, in this study nation is understood as a community or population possessing the same cultural and ethnic background; in contrast, a state is a political entity. Despite the fact that there are states that also are nations, there also are other nations that are not associated with a sovereign state (Motyl, 2001).

Here, one must differentiate between the two perspectives of nationalism: primordialist and modernist. From a primordialist view, nationalism is rather a reflection of the ancient, the past. This perspective has its origins in Charles Darwin's evolution theory (Ibid. 2001: 272-273). This view changes when viewed from a modernist perspective whereby nationalism is a novel phenomenon considered only in modern societies and mostly associated with industrial economies, central supreme authorities, and a unified shared language.

Looking at the concept as *civic nationalism*, a nation is purely a political entity and its core identity is not ethnic or ancestry (Tamir, 1993). Civic nationalism is better understood and reconcilable with values that include tolerance, individual rights, equality and freedom (Kymlicka 1995; Tamir 1993; Miller 1995). To be a member of a civic nation and enjoy the securities of that nation one need not have much in common with others that belong to the same nation, the same national identity, per se. Moreover, in order to function more effectively collectively, democratic polities also need to be associated with a national identity (Kymlicka 1995; Miller 1995).The core idea of ethnic nationalism, therefore, is that nations are defined

according to their shared heritage. The latter also includes a shared faith, language, and ethnic ancestry. Despite the fact that shared heritage also includes a common culture it differs from the pure definition of a *nation* (Kymlicka 1995; Miller 1995).

Conversi (1995) rejects the conventional division of nationalism into theories of instrumentalism and primordialism. Rather, he proposes three options: ethno-symbolist, transaction list and homeostatic. According to the author nationalism is a process by which borders are created and maintained. The boundaries are for ensuring a separation between groups. That is why in the nationality formation processes and during ethnic conflicts state leaders give a remarkable role to boundaries. The latter is for defining each nation's community. In the case when ethnic boundaries are not strong or under threat, they are fortified using force or violence.

Different forms of displacement (e.g., exile) are not solely *postmodern* phenomena. People have moved from one place to another by their own will or by force. Examining identity, territory, nationalism, nations and refugees, Malkki (1992:37) draws analytical consequences of identity for the people called *uprooted* and *displaced*. Anderson proposes that "*nationalism has to be understood by aligning it, not with self-consciously held political ideologies, but with the large cultural systems that preceded it, out of which — as well as against which — it came into being.*" The identity of a nation is processual and mobile, partly self-constructed and categorized. The national identity is partially a status, a condition, a label, a set of memories, a tool, etc. It is an aggregate mixture of constructs.

Primordialism

According to primordialism (or perennialism) a nation is a natural and ancient phenomenon (Hayward, et al. 2003). Primordialism states that "*ethnic groups and nationalities exist because there are traditions of belief and action towards primordial objects such as … territorial location*" (Gryosby 1994:168). As primordialists argue, once ethnic identity is constructed, it remains fixed. Herder (1769) posits that *nation* is considered to be synonymous to a language group. He also argues that thought is synonymous to language, thus each community thinks differently and language is learnt within that community. Thus, it can be concluded that a community is expected to keep its unique elements unchanged over time (Bayar, 2009).

Despite the development of constructivism and instrumentalism, and severe criticism of primordialism, the latter has been "*influential in identifying the enduring strength of ethnic ties and its member's commitment to it*" (Fullerton 2003:20). For instance, some scholars consider that the Cold War had its influence on ethnic conflict and ethnicity. However, primordialism argues the opposite claiming that ethnicity (and even ethnic conflict on a different scale) existed long before the Cold War.

One of the key elements of primordialism is that a significant cause of conflict is derived from religious differences between conflicting sides. Speaking about this notion, Samuel Huntington's thesis of "Clash of Civilizations" cannot be overlooked. Despite the fact that he uses the term "civilization", Huntington posits that conflicts occur between groups or parties that have strong religious traditions. According to Huntington, religion, language, history, culture and traditions are those factors that differentiate among various civilizations (Stein 2011). In

support of the idea that religious differences cause conflict, primordialism explains that religion serves as the foundation on which individual and group identity is built. When it comes to answering the question how to deal with this conflict, primordialism is for separating groups with different culture and religion (Ibid. 2011).

Explanations of primordialism also are well grounded in theories of psychology that stress the inherent human interest in religion. According to the primordialist point of view, religion will endure for long (Kaufmann, 2012). As Allahar (1996) argues, identity and attachment to a group explained in the theory of primordialism, found particularly in the traditional/pre-modern societies, are not only natural but also biological.

Instrumentalism

The theory of instrumentalism consists of two basic understandings: firstly, that economic gain is the main driver of ethnic conflict among different groups. This is sometimes referred to as "greed and grievance". Secondly, the theory notes that ethnic conflict arises from intentional manipulations by the elite via incitement and encouragement of ethnic conflict. In line with this element of instrumentalism, Fenton (2003:75-76) argues that

> *"If behavior in terms of ethnic attachments could be seen to be serving some individual or collective political or economic ends, then the ethnic action could be interpreted as instrumental."*

Along the same line of thinking, religion is not the principal cause of conflict. All political conflicts are about "*who gets what, when, and how*" (Stein, 2011:24). So it can be argued that the primary cause of conflicts is material. Aside from this, instrumentalists do not reject the notion that religion may have a role in conflict, albeit partial. Religion is sometimes considered to be a tool used by the elite for mobilization of support — mostly as a tool to motivate people.

Secondly, conflict is considered to be more moral, when justified that it is for religious values (Ibid, 2011).

Territorialism

Shaw (1997:479) explains territorialism as "*the founding principle governing the positioning of boundaries in the case of newly emerging states.*" He goes on discussing not only territorialism but also self-determination, emphasizing the fact that particular people have the power to dictate desirable international boundaries. He also argues that existing borders will survive via change "*from internal to international lines*" (Shaw 1997: 479).

The territorial changes affect not only the international community but also the local residents of a particular territory. In the case of changing sovereignty (and territory) except general human rights, the principle of self-determination has to be considered. A newly independent state may legitimize its territory via international law or the concepts of territorialism related to the right of people to claim independence in a defined and accepted land as a result of self-determination (Shaw 1997).

THE ROLE OF HISTORY IN NATIONAL IDENTITY

Aside from history itself, history textbooks are discussed for their role in shaping national identity (through awareness of one's history). Stojanovic (2007:29) discusses how "*devising of desirable past*" and related content of history textbooks is critically important for many countries often serving as instruments of state politics. Further, Robinson (2005:179) argues that particularly for nations with a history of conflict and war, the past "*weighs heavily on the present where it remains a legacy to the nation's collective memory and identity.*"

Bacova (1998) posits that defining national identity is highly dependent on how one perceives the term *nation*. She outlines two ways of constructing a *nation*: instrumental and primordial. From the primordial perspective, nation is ethno-nation, meaning a commune of people that are united based on their shared fate, language, culture, and social traditions. The people express the primordial explanation in everyday life via the use of the same language. Explaining the concept of a nation, instrumentalists emphasize the situational and pragmatic features of a community. The instrumental approach is the opposite of primordial, according to which the unification of individuals with a community is based on the expected benefits or advantages that they can get from the commune. In this case, individuals consider the community as a tool for accomplishing their shared aims.

Naz et al. (2011) concentrate on the notion of globalization can have on psychological and socio-cultural identity. Here, cultural identity is defined as the identity of an individual or group of people, which is characterized by the common culture, religion, language, etc. of a particular geographic area. The identity that is made up of cultural and structural values, beliefs, rules and practices is a social system. Cultural identity has a straight relationship with family, gender, and religion and answers questions like "Who am I?" "What do we have in common?" People preserve their culture because they create their identities via that culture. It is already shown that globalization and cultural identity are correlated aspects. In this correlation, globalization is the trigger of modern and new ideas and incentive for human capital development. On the other hand, globalization is a menace to socio-cultural identity. The reason of this threat is that globalization strives to create a global culture, which is a mixture of different identities. Some authors argue that globalization can cause religious and cultural identity crisis,

even pluralism. Globalization may also cause changes in the structure of traditions, foster secularization, and establish complex social relations.

The importance of territory is often ignored while explaining nationalism in modern times. Penrose (2002) highlights the importance of territory in the development of nationalism arguing that *nationalism* attempts to develop two various practices of territoriality. Further, the author believes that diversification of the explanation of nationalism as a thought is reflected in territorial significance. Different comprehensions of the importance of territoriality and territory assist in determining the spectrum of nationalism. Additionally, various sociologists focus on the creation of "I". They investigate the ways of interaction in which an individual maintains his or her *sense of self*. Some pay attention not only to the individual but also to the collective, others consider identity as a form of mobilization, suggesting that identity has to be viewed from three dimensions: "I", "me", and "you" (Cerulo, 1997).

In recent times, the advance of globalization pays great importance to national borders. Many scholars state that interconnections throughout the world and time-space squeezes entail decrement of the capacities of a state and increment portability of their borders. The worldwide streams of information, capital, and people erode the capabilities of a state to make regulations in and out of its borders (Cox, 2004).

The Case of Javakhk

Margaryan (2008) uses the example of Javakhk (or Javakheti in the Republic of Georgia) to demonstrate the importance of preserving national identity making the point that existing threats of assimilation make the Armenians of Javakhk cling to preserving their national identity. According to the author, integration of the Armenian communities into Georgian society would

be possible only with reforms to the policies on the treatment of minorities by the State of Georgia. Zollinger and Bochsler (2012) argue that in most transitioning democracies such as Georgia the policies and state initiatives are not tailored to take minorities into account. This is also apparent in party membership and party politics that, in most cases, places limitations on ethnic minorities. Talking about the importance of electoral distinction and political plurality, the authors state that the interests of minorities (including the preservation of their national identity) can be protected via representative elections in ethnically homogeneous electoral districts.

Georgian nationalism was born at the end of the 19th century, along with the formation of the historical master-narrative. In 1921, Georgia came under Soviet rule. Afterwards, the master-narrative of Georgia was adopted after Marxist methodology. The situation changed after Georgia gained independence and conflicts with Abkhazia and South Ossetia resurfaced. After some time, Georgians realized the role of the sense of belonging to a nation rather than to religion, cultural or ethnic group. Despite all actions, the issue of ethnic minorities in Georgian history continues to be an essential issue (Chikovania, 2012).

Historical Background of the Cases

Javakhk or Javakheti (corresponding to the Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda municipalities in the Republic of Georgia) and Nagorno-Karabakh (an unrecognized *de facto* independent state established on the basis of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast) were part of the Soviet Union. As stated earlier, in 1921 Georgia came under Soviet control and, therefore, Javakhk along with various other ethnic territories came to be a part of the Georgian SSR (Gammer, 2004). Similarly, Nagorno-Karabakh was placed under Azerbaijan SSR as the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (Altstadt 1992).

When speaking about the Soviet era and its impact on different national identities, it is analytically helpful to differentiate among *Russification*, *Russianization*, and *Sovietization*. The process of Russification aimed to change non-Russian ethnic identities to Russian. Russianization intended to spread the Russian culture, language, and also people into non-Russian regions. And finally Sovietization was designed to induce the institutional forms. The last was established by the Communist Party (Aspaturian 1996; Andersen and Silver 1989).

After the collapse of the USSR the South Caucasus witnessed disruptive interethnic wars. One was the war between Azerbaijan and Armenia over the Nagorno-Karabakh Armenian enclave. Despite the fact that the conflict remains unresolved for over two decades, a new *language identity* is shaping in the self-declared republic of Nagorno-Karabakh — the Azerbaijani language is no longer in use (Mutha, 2014). After the establishment of the ceasefire, the Armenians of Karabakh strived hard not only to preserve their language but also their ethno-cultural traditions (Ter-Sarkisiants, 2013). Although Armenians have always represented the majority in the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh, Russian has been dominant in both official and social communication. Since then Azerbaijani culture and language can barely be found (Mutha 2014).

O'Learab et al. (2008) and Voronkovaa (2013) examine state interests, national identity, and territory (taking into consideration not only territory but also national homeland) using the conflict of Nagorno-Karabakh as a case study. According to the authors one-dimensional interpretation of the concept of *nation* and *state* is not sufficient for understanding territorial conflicts. Multi-dimensional examination is necessary for gaining a full understanding of territorial conflict. Although the article focuses on the roles of nations, states and meaning of territory, it also attributes considerable importance to the ability to compromise.

The Stalin Years of Soviet Rule

Liebowitz (1987) and Bromlei (1987) explore the effect of the Soviet Union in achieving equality among various nations and regions. According to Liebowitz, the USSR proved to the world that socialism would lift antagonism among the different ethnic nations by establishing common national relations within one international community of socialist nations. The formation of a common culture was one of the characteristics of the Soviet people. All nations of the Soviet Union were united around the shared Soviet culture.

Post Stalin Years of Soviet Rule

The last generation of Stalin's governance began to experience change. The subsequent generations still believed in Soviet heroes and the construct of socialism, but they also liked Western-style dancing and dressing, and were keen on evading Marxism-Leninism lectures, which they found to be boring (Fürst 2011). Thus, soon after the end of Stalin's era the process of de-Stalinization began under the administration of Khrushchev and, to some extent, in the early years of Brezhnev. The de-Stalinization process endorsed multicultural tolerance and understanding of the different ethnic groups in the Soviet Union (Jones 2014).

After the collapse of the USSR, post-Soviet Russia encountered problems related to nation and nation-building. As Panov (2010) states, nations are founded on nationalism. The author notes that the most essential ingredient of *Russianness* is the Russian culture. From this it is deduced that anyone who shares or believes in the values of the Russian culture could be considered a Russian. After the fall of the Soviet Union, the states located between the Black Sea and the Far East languished politically, economically, and also from civil and ethnic conflicts. These states were uncertain about their political and national priorities. They were confused about who they and their interests were. In short, these new states were created without precise

identities. For instance in Georgia, from 1989-1993, a more pragmatic concept of a nation came to replace exclusivist nationalism. There were discussions to organize the state with a federalist structure. But these ideas also failed. The events in Armenia were different from those in Georgia. The victory in the war with Azerbaijan resulted in exclusivist nationalism, self-opinionated foreign policy, and more adamant position on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

Research Questions

The research question of the study is whether or not the cultural system of a nation influences national identity. As part of that, the word culture is examined by asking the following research questions:

R_1: What is the role of religion in shaping or strengthening national identity?

R_2: What is the role of language in shaping or strengthening national identity?

R_3: What roles do history and national heroes play in shaping or strengthening national identity?

The study is conducted in Jabakhk and Nagorno-Karabakh and the same hypotheses were tested in each locale to allow comparative analysis. Thus, the hypotheses of the current study are:

H_1: Religion plays an important role in shaping the national identity of Armenians.

H_2: Knowing and speaking the national language plays an important role in shaping the national identity of Armenians.

H_3: History, special events in history, and national heroes influence the process of shaping and strengthening national identity.

Research Methodology

This study has a transformative sequential design that uses qualitative and quantitative data collection strategies. Use of multiple data sources to investigate the phenomenon of Armenian national identity helped explore differences in the interpretation and understanding of national identity between two geographically distinct Armenian communities. The quantitative phase of the study centered on explaining national identity as perceived by the people of both locales using a survey of the Armenians in Javakhk and Nagorno-Karabakh using information gathered earlier from the in-depth interviews with activists, historians, unions, current or former members of the Armenian and Georgian Parliaments, church representatives, etc.

Use of the qualitative approach in the first phase added depth to the research, which allowed better understanding the complexity of the phenomenon under study. This also allowed gaining more insight into the uniqueness and organizational structure of each of the communities selected for the study. The interviews with community leaders, legislators, and party leaders also allowed a more precise understanding of the legal and political situation of the Armenians living in the territories under investigation, especially of the Armenians in Javakhk. Those interviewed had thorough knowledge of the constructs of national identity and also were closely familiar with these communities and most aware of the activities and the politics of these regions. The interviews with activists, historians, unions, and current or former members of the Armenian and Georgian Parliaments and church representatives were necessary to complete the picture and to understand the perception and differences in awareness of national identity issues, if any, between the Armenians living in different geographical territories.

In the next phase of the study, the study used a survey by stratified sampling strategy. The survey was conducted in the months of December 2015 through March 2016 and covered the historical territory of Javakhk comprising four cities — Akhalkalaki, Akhaltsikhe, Aspindza, and Ninotsminda. Considering that the purpose of the study is to test the factors that contribute to the construction or preservation of Armenian identity, only two of those cities with the highest proportion of Armenians, namely Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda were selected for the study population (the population is around 78,000). A target of 382 people was set as being optimal for surveying in Javakhk [computed by Sample Size Calculator, with a confidence level of 95% and with a confidence interval of 5]. As the population of Akhalkalaki is not the same as in Ninotsminda, the target number of people surveyed was distributed among these two cities in proportion to their respective census data. Of the citizens of Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda, 74% live in Akhalkalaki and 26% in Ninotsminda. Accordingly, 282 people were surveyed from Akhalkalaki and 100 from Ninotsminda (Statistics Georgia 2015).

Concerning the Nagorno-Karabakh survey, the survey used the population of the regional centers of Nagorno-Karabakh at around 78,000. Of this number, 385 people were surveyed, again using the Sample Size Calculator to compute the optimum number to survey, with a confidence level of 95% and a confidence interval of 5. The number of surveyed participants was chosen by taking into consideration the following demographic distribution: Stepanakert 146 (37.5%); Askeran 46 (12.1%); Hadrut 34 (8.8%); Martakert 52 (13.6%); Martuni 62 (16.3%); Karvachar 9 (2.4%); Shushi 13 (3.4%); and Berdzor 23 (6.1%) (National Statistical Service of Nagorno-Karabakh, 2015). All survey participants were selected by simple random sampling of the strata identified in the first instance, surveying one adult (eighteen years of age and older) from every third home.

DATA ANALYSIS

In-depth Interviews

As mentioned earlier, face-to-face interviews were conducted in November 2015 to collect data on expert views of different representatives using open-ended questions that focused on the role of language, religion, culture, history and national heroes in constructing and preserving the Armenian national identity. A total of 15 individuals (activists, historians, unions, and current or former members of the Armenian and Georgian Parliaments, and church representatives) participated in the in-depth interviews. The interviewees were asked and probed about the importance and role of the Armenian language, religion, culture, history and national heroes in the preservation of Armenian national identity.

For the analysis of the data collected from in-depth interviews, four relational categories (related to the concepts of national identity): language, religion, culture, history and national heroes. The analysis focused on measuring the importance of each of those components in the construction or preservation of the Armenian national identity. Importance was measured by pitch of voice, body language, and the number of times (frequency) the interviewee discussed the concept or the descriptors identified under each, as follows:

Language: The importance of language was measured the following descriptors:

- Speaking, reading, and writing of Armenian language

- Using the Armenian language on a daily basis

- Using the Armenian language at home

Religion: The importance of religion was measured by the following descriptors:

- Church attendance

- Baptism and marriages in the Armenian Apostolic church (considering that no other denominations of Armenian churches are present in the territories examined)

Culture: The importance of culture was measured with the following descriptors:

- Protection of Armenian cultural monuments
- Participation in Armenian cultural events

History and national heroes: The importance of history and national heroes was measured with the following descriptors:

- Armenian history taught in the Armenian school curriculum
- Armenian heroes depicted in teaching Armenian history

Scoring of the intensity of importance relative to each descriptor was performed using a scale of 1 to 5, where one indicated the weakest importance and 5 the strongest. Table 1 depicts the scoring protocol used in the content analysis.

Table 1: Scoring Protocol

Score	Tonality	Body Language	Frequency
1	Speaking voice, level of emotion and concentration on the respective descriptor, and whether the words used reflect importance. *Low and plain*	Demeanor and attitude on importance exhibited through eye movements, facial expressions, head and body movements. *Indifferent*	The number of times words related to the respective descriptor were mentioned. *Number of times per page of transcript*
2	*Plain*	*Low engagement*	
3	*Somewhat poignant*	*Somewhat engaged*	
4	*Expressive*	*Immersed*	
5	*Increasing accent*	*High engagement*	

Table 2 below depicts the results of the content analysis, as explained earlier.

Table 2: Mean Values of Importance by Category

	Categories	Tonality (Mean)		Body Language (Mean)		Frequency (Mean)	
		Javakhk	*NKR*	*Javakhk*	*NKR*	*Javakhk*	*NKR*
1	Language	4.10	4.00	3.90	4.20	4.00	4.10
2	Religion	1.80	3.40	2.10	3.70	1.95	3.55
3	Culture	3.90	2.80	3.70	3.20	3.80	3.00
4	History and national heroes	3.10	4.20	4.00	3.90	3.55	4.00

Table 2 was subsequently converted to an average mean of the importance of each category (language, religion, culture, history and national heroes) weighing tonality, body language and frequency equally. This is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Overall Mean Values of Importance

	Categories	Importance (Mean)	
		Javakhk	*NKR*
1	Language	4.00	4.10
2	Religion	1.95	3.55
3	Culture	3.80	3.00
4	History and national heroes	3.55	4.03

Table 3 clearly shows that the mean numbers for both Javakhk and Nagorno-Karabakh are relatively close, except for *religion*, which is at 1.95 in the case of Javakhk (compared to 3.55 in NKR), very low compared to the means in other categories. This can be explained by the fact that the Armenians of Javakhk live in a fundamentally Christian country and are not threatened by the Georgian government vis-à-vis their religion.[1]

In both territories, *language* was deemed to be a relatively more important factor in the construct or preservation of national identity (the language mean score equals 4.0 in Javakhk and

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[1] Although the situation with the Armenian Apostolic church in Tbilisi, Georgia has been through some turbulent times in the not so recent past, the current study does not cover those issues for reasons that fall outside the topic.

4.1 in Nagorno-Karabakh. Several interviewees explain that for the Armenians of Javakhk, preserving their national identity is largely dependent on the extent to which future generations of Armenians assimilate with the Georgians, arguing that language plays an important role in that process.

With respect to the same category, the experts interviewed also state that the people of NKR place great emphasis on the importance of *language*, i.e., teaching and speaking Armenian (while also maintaining their Karabakh Armenian dialect) gradually more than what used to be Russian under Soviet rule. This reality is closely associated, they claim, with national identity and the determination to safeguard their statehood.

In the case of the two remaining categories, *culture* appears to be more important in the construct or preservation of national identity in Javakhk (mean = 3.8) than teaching Armenian *history* and about *national heroes* (mean = 3.55). The mean scores for NKR reveal a different order, where teaching Armenian history and about national heroes (mean = 4.03) is more important in the construct or preservation of national identity than *culture* (mean = 3.0 the lowest among all four categories). This is easily explained by the fact that NKR continues to be in conflict with Azerbaijan. Compared to Javakhk, in that Armenian territory national identity is better understood as the determination to defend one's homeland.[2]

The interviewees unequivocally posit that *history* and *national heroes* are very important to every nation and they play an important role in constructing a sense of identity. In the case of Nagorno-Karabakh, the government takes a responsible position in policies related to history textbook content, including depiction of national heroes. Schoolchildren study not only

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[2] In fact, if the survey were administered in April 2016, following the four-day war inflicted upon NKR, this category may have scored a full 5.0 in importance.

Armenian history, but also history of the Armenian Apostolic Church. The situation is different in Javakhk, considering that the schools have a mandate to follow the official public school curriculum established by the Georgian government. Children in Armenian schools of Javakhk do not have time allotted to classes in Armenian history. Thus, knowledge of historic events and national heroes is acquired in the family and the larger community (perhaps through cultural events).

Survey

The survey instrument was developed based on the results of the qualitative data analysis and focused on getting the views of the Armenians in Javakhk and NKR on the same national identity constructs. The demographic characteristics of the sample surveyed are presented in Table 4. Overall, 767 adults, ages 18 to 75, participated in the survey, of whom 382 from Javakhk and 385 Nagorno-Karabakh. In Javakhk male respondents were 53.7% of the sample surveyed and in Nagorno-Karabakh 57.7%. Further, as shown in Table 3, the majority of the sample surveyed had degrees in higher education in both Javakhk and NKR.

Table 4. Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents by Territory

|	*Javakhk* (*n* = 382)	*NKR* (*n* = 385)
Average Age	34	38
Gender (% of total sample surveyed and number)		
Male	53.7% (205)	57.7% (222)
Female	46.3% (177)	42.3% (163)
Education (% of total sample surveyed and number)		
Elementary School	2.1% (8)	0.3% (1)
Secondary School	23.6% (90)	40.1% (153)
High School	9.7% (37)	0% (0)
Undergraduate	47.4% (181)	48.5% (187)
Graduate	17.0% (65)	11.5% (44)
Postgraduate	0.3% (1)	0% (0)

Further, the survey in Javakhk revealed that the most important construct of national identity is *language*. A total of 95.9% of survey respondents indicated that preservation of the Armenian language is either important or very important for the preservation of their 'Armenianness' or national identity. The Javakhk survey rates the other three constructs as follows: *culture* (89.3%); *history and national heroes* (85.1%); and *religion* (74.9%). These results are well aligned with the order of importance found in the earlier analysis of in-depth interviews.

The NKR survey also revealed that *language* is the most important contributor in the construction or preservation of national identity. Thus, on a Likert scale ranging from most important to least important, 99.4% of respondents indicated that knowledge and use of the Armenian language is either important or most important. The remaining constructs of national identity rated as follows: *history and national heroes* (95.8%); *religion* (95.5%); and *culture*

(92.7%). These results also are aligned with the earlier results from the content analysis of interview transcripts.

Graph 1 depicts these findings in a manner that clearly reveal respondents' position on the constructs of national identity.

Graph 1: Survey Results in Corresponding Percentages
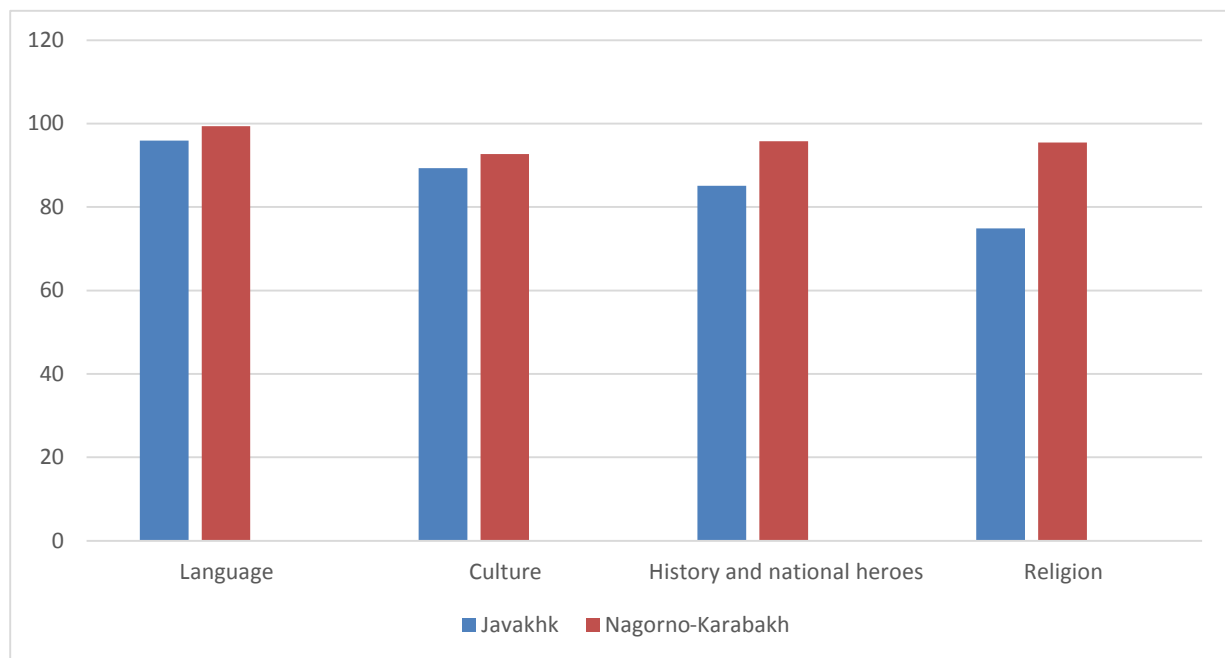
Aside from the agreement found between in-depth interviewees and survey respondents' position on the construction or preservation of national identity, bivariate correlation analysis was performed and found a statistically significant correlation of a p value of 0.555 between the ability to speak Armenian and being proud to be Armenian ($n = 385$; $r = 0.000$; $p = 0.555$) among NKR respondents. Almost the same level of correlation was found in the population of Javakhk with a p value of 0.503 ($n = 382$; $r = 0.000$). No correlation was found between the importance of being Christian and being proud of one's cultural heritage in Javakhk ($n = 382$; $r =$

0.000; $p = 0.246$); but a weaker correlation was found on these same variables in Nagorno-Karabakh ($n = 382$; $r = 0.000$; $p = 0.453$).

CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to measure the importance of religion, language, history and national heroes in the construction or preservation of the Armenian national identity in Javakhk and Nagorno-Karabakh. Both the in-depth interviews as well as the survey of local Armenians showed that both in Javakhk and in NKR the highest importance is attached to *language* for the preservation of their Armenian identity. Besides language, the analysis also showed that *religion*, *culture*, *history and national heroes* also played an important role not only in shaping but also in maintaining Armenian identify in both territories studied.

These findings are also consistent with the literature on this topic. The studies by Karna (1999), Byram (2006), and Hobsbawn (1996) had shown the importance of language in constructing and strengthening national identity. Further, the study by Hemat (2012) had posited that aside from language, other constructs of national identity included history, beliefs, culture, and values. The results of our study somewhat support the claim by Peachey (1994) on the importance of religion in the construction of the Armenian identity.

As argued by many primordialists such as Fullerton (2003: 20) national identity has been "*influential in identifying the enduring strength of ethnic ties and its member's commitment to it.*" Conversely, the arguments of some territorialists do not closely support the cases examined. Rather, the results show that national identity constructs referred to earlier play a bigger role in the preservation of national identity. As Shaw (1997) argues newly independent states territorial issues are better resolved via international law or the concepts of territorialism related to the right

of people to stay attached to their national identity and claim territory by the right to self-determination.

APPENDIX 1 — QUESTIONNAIRE USED FOR IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

1. Could you comment on the factors that, in your opinion, are the most important contributors to the preservation of the Armenian identity (considering all of the following: language, religion, culture, history, national heroes).

2. More specifically and taking into account priority roles, what role does language play in the preservation of Armenian identity?

3. What role does religion play in shaping or strengthening Armenian identity?

4. Does geography / place of residence / have any impact on the preservation of the Armenian national identity?

5. Do national heroes in the Armenian history have an impact on the construct of the Armenian identity?

6. Are globalization and patterns of emigration impacting the Armenian national identity?

7. What are the main threats to national identity in locations, such as Javakhk and Nagorno-Karabakh? How could those threats be overcome?

APPENDIX 2 — SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your age? _____

2. Please indicate your gender?

   a) Male   b) Female

3. In which city you live? _____

4. Are you a citizen of Armenia/Georgia?

   a) Yes   b) No

5. What is your highest level of education?

   a) Elementary school
   b) Secondary School
   c) High School
   d) Undergraduate
   e) Graduate
   f) Postgraduate

6. What is your marital status?

   a) Single
   b) Married
   c) Divorced
   d) Other _____

7. If you are married, is your wife/husband of Armenian nationality?

   a) Yes   b) No, other_____

8. Did you live in another country for more than one year?

   a) Yes, name of the Country: _____
   b) No

9. Did any of your parents live in another country for more than one year?

    a)   Yes, name of the Country: _____

    b)   No

10. How close (attached) do you feel to …. *Please check the column that best fits your answer.*

	Very Close	Close	Neutral	Not very close	Not close at all
Your neighborhood					
Your city/Town/Village					
Your region (Marz)					
Republic of Armenia					
Republic of Artsakh / Javakhk					
Armenians throughout the world					

11. How important are each of the following aspects for being Armenian?

	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Fairly Important	Not Important at all
To be born in Armenia					
To have Armenian Citizenship					
To have Armenian ancestors					
To be able to speak Armenian					
To be a Christian					
To have lived in Armenia for most of my life					
To contribute to Armenia's development					
To be willing to live in Armenia in spite of hardships					

12. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I am proud to be Armenian.					
The world would be a better place if people from other countries were more like Armenians.					
I feel proud when Armenia does well in international sports.					
I feel proud when I read about Armenia in foreign papers/journals.					

13. Please state which of the following makes you proud to be Armenian and to what extent.

	Very Proud	Proud	Neither / nor	Not very proud	Not proud at all
History					
Heroes					
Cultural heritage					
Political system					
Economic development					
Technological and scientific achievements					
Traditions					
Family values					
Its armed forces					
Its military achievements					

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