

American University of Armenia

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISM IN ARMENIA

**A MASTER ESSAY SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE SCHOOL OF
POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

**By
Nina Kankanyan**

**Supervisor
Dr. Yevgenya Paturyan**

Yerevan

May 2015

Abstract

This capstone investigates environmental movements in Armenia. It studies whether environmental movements and civic initiatives have influence on policy-making. Influence is defined by categories of change, modification and delay of policies. To determine the applicability of these categories to different cases twelve environmental movements and civic initiatives from 2007 to 2014 are studied by systematically compiling and analyzing information from a number of online sources, such as news websites, social media websites and websites specialized on civic activism and environmental issues. Two of the twelve cases are analyzed in-depth. The interplay between online and offline activism is also included into the study. It was found that in eight cases out of twelve there was some form of influence (either change, modification or delay). Physical 24/7 presence of activists on site was shown to be one of the factors that help create impact. Mining industry shows the greatest immunity to civic activism. In addition, three models of relations between online and offline activists were identified and applied to the in-depth case studies.

Acknowledgements

First of all I would like to thank my supervisor for her kind support and wise guidance. Dr. Paturyan has always dedicated time to answer all the numerous questions I asked during the last eleven months. I highly appreciate the knowledge Dr. Paturyan has shared with me.

Also, I would like to thank Papazian Library of AUA for providing all the articles and books necessary for this study. I would like to particularly thank Hasmik Galstyan, for she provided the requested material as soon as possible and even suggested more articles and books on the issue studied.

Finally I highly appreciate support of my friends. I would like to thank my friend and classmate Mariam Galstyan for going through the hard times together and supporting each other. Also, I would like to thank Anna Hakobyan for her dedication, support and care.

Table of Contents

Introduction	5
Chapter 1: Literature Review	6
1.1 The Importance of Civil Society in Post-Communist Countries and the Debate on its Weakness.....	6
1.2 Environmental Activism and Its Impact on Policy-Making	9
1.3 Online and Offline Activism: the Current Developments in the Field.....	11
1. 4 Hypothesis and Research Questions.....	14
Chapter 2: Methodology	15
Chapter 3: Overall Analysis of Environmental Activism since 2007	18
3.1 Table of Civic Initiatives.....	18
3.2 Analysis of the Table.....	27
3.3 Online VS Offline Activism in the Eyes of Interviewees	32
Chapter 4: Case Studies	37
4.1 Save Teghut Civic Initiative Case Study	37
4.2 SOS Trchkan Case Study	44
4.3 Comparative Analysis of Teghut and Trchkan	49
Chapter 5: Analysis of Interviews with Government Representatives	51
Conclusion	54
REFERENCES	56

List of Figures

TABLE 1: DESCRIPTION OF CIVIC INITIATIVES' TABLE	16
TABLE 2: CIVIC INITIATIVES FROM 2007 TO 2014	18
TABLE 3: BRIEF OVERVIEW OF INFLUENCE OF CIVIC INITIATIVES.....	28
MODEL 1: ONLINE AND OFFLINE ACTIVISM	33
MODEL 2: ONLINE AND OFFLINE ACTIVISM	34
MODEL 3: ONLINE AND OFFLINE ACTIVISM	34
TABLE 4: GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES' DESCRIPTION OF POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE SIDES OF ACTIVISM	53

Introduction

At the end of 1980s the Soviet Union was being shaken by numerous civic movements all around its territory. Some of these movements were environmental – such as the Nayirit movement in Armenia. Having started as a movement concerned with environment-particularly the security of the factory of Nayirit; this movement gradually transformed into nationalistic movement touching upon the issue of Nagorno Karabakh; and finally it became a movement for independence. Ultimately it led to the independence of Armenia from the Soviet Union.

After becoming independent Armenia faced multiple crises: there was a war in Nagorno Karabakh and economy was in decline. Given these conditions it is no surprise that people were not concerned about anything but their daily bread. Thus, the first decade after the independence were “silent” in terms of any kind of civic activism.

Gradually, with both economic and political situation stabilizing, civil society started to “re-emerge” and the so-called civic initiatives came into being. Civic initiatives are specific issue-oriented movements with a very concrete goal. They mainly involve civilian activists, although some NGOs also take part in activities. A considerable part of civic initiatives have been environmental.

If generalized it can be stated that both prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union as well as afterwards there has been a concern with environment among citizens of Armenia. This concern was expressed through movements and civic initiatives that called for different policy changes. The present study investigates this phenomenon in an attempt to estimate whether environmental activism has an impact on policy-making in Armenia.

To do so twelve major environmental movements and civic initiatives are studied. The time period is from 2007 until 2014 included. These cases are systematized into a table that shows the key stakeholders, main activities organized and final outcomes. Since the Internet has become an indispensable part of life, all of the cases studied had in one way or another used it. Because of that online activism is also studied in relation to offline activism.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

1.1 The Importance of Civil Society in Post-Communist Countries and the Debate on its Weakness.

In the academic world, post-communist civil societies are largely described as weak and structurally deficient (Howard 2003; Pietrzyk-Reeves 2008; Letki 2004; Tusalem 2007; Ost 1993) Thus, the authors are more focused on investigation of what causes this weakness. Howard (2003) is one of the major scholars in this field. He correlates organizational activity with five variables: GDP per capita; political institutions; civilization; prior regime type; and years of experience with democracy. The strongest correlation he found was between organizational activity and prior regime type. He goes a step further to determine what exactly is the soviet legacy and why it resulted in weak civil society. After conducting a number of interviews with citizens from Russia and Eastern Germany it was found that soviet legacy is “mistrust of communist organizations (1); persistence of friendship networks (2); and feeling of disappointment (3)” (Howard 2003, 109). The case-studies in Russia and Eastern Germany show that the main cause of weak organizational activity in these post-communist countries is distrust towards any formal organization (Howard 2003, 112).

Partially replicating Howard’s (2003) methodology a study was conducted by Paturyan and Gevorgyan (2014) aiming to assess whether the framework and conclusions presented by Howard are applicable to Armenia after twenty-three years of independence. By conducting an extensive study of Armenian civil society both before and after independence the authors conclude that “there is no lasting communist legacy in terms of values: the new generation was raised on different values that are far from Soviet practices” (Paturyan and Gevorgyan 2014, 110). However, the data and findings do not allow to state that Howard’s (2003) assertion of weak post-communist civil society is inapplicable to Armenia. Overall, the authors state that “mistrust and disengagement are indeed noticeable, but there are reasons to believe they are conditioned by current social and political problems as much as they are an echo of the past” (Paturyan and Gevorgyan 2014, 112).

Pietrzyk-Reeves (2008) also starts from the thesis of weakness of civil society in post-communist countries. The focus of her study is on Eastern and Central Europe; and the theoretical perspective from which she investigates civil society in that region is the theory of democracy and democratic consolidation (Pietrzyk-Reeves 2008, 74). She argues that the countries studied have reached a considerable level of democracy based on Freedom House

scores, but still there are low levels of civic participation. Thus, although formally democratic institutions were established in these countries, a deeper change is yet to come, and having a “consolidated” or “consolidating” democracy is not a guarantee of high levels of participation (Pietrzyk-Reeves 2008, 85).

Natalia Letki (2004) links civil society with political involvement. In her view, strong civil society leads to higher political participation which in its turn leads to consolidation of democracy. To test her hypothesis she analyzes the results of a survey conducted in the period of 1993-1994 in several East and Central European post-communist countries (Letki 2004, 665). It was found that the communist legacy is strongly manifested in the low level of social capital which resulted in weak civil society (low levels of membership). Altogether, the aforementioned factors hindered high political involvement and thus had negative impact on consolidation of democracy (Letki 2004, 673–674).

Tusalem (2007) also views civil society as an important aspect of democracy-building, and focuses his study on post-communist and post-authoritarian countries to see how the development of civil society in these countries influenced the development of democratic institutions (Tusalem 2007, 362). The analysis the author carries out to test his vision involved data collected in the period between 1974 and 2001 from sixty-five countries that experienced transition from communist or authoritarian regime to democracy. The analysis includes “deepening of freedoms” and “institutional performance” as dependent variables; and “pre-transitional strength of civil society” as the independent variable (Tusalem 2007, 368). Each of the variables is defined and operationalized by a number of specific categories. Based on the results of his analysis, the author finds that “a strong civil society is not only likely to deepen the degree of freedoms gained by citizens in post-transition, but also to lessen state corruption, promote the rule of law, and establish greater governmental effectiveness because it counterbalances, challenges, devolves, and decentralizes state power to make it more accountable in the eyes of the public and responsive to citizen demands” (Tusalem 2007, 379).

David Ost (1993) provides quite an interesting interpretation of why civil society is weak in post-communist countries, arguing that “because the interests that exist in post-communist society emerge from a state socialist framework that repressed the development of autonomous classes and made all groups dependent on the state, the organization of interests in post-communist society, even though the statist principles of the old regime have been discredited, is necessarily very weak” (Ost 1993, 456). In other words, his argument is that there are no major interests that can unify the society the way it was unified prior to the

collapse of the Soviet Union, for instance. The liberal economy created an environment, which almost excludes the existence of any “space” for large common interests; rather, it created a situation in which individualist approach towards issues is predominant.

This view of post-communist civil societies is in tune with Weigle’s and Butterfield’s (1992) logic. The authors categorize the emergence and development of still communist civil societies. They argue that high mobilization levels are due to a common interest of citizens: “to protect their autonomy from party and state penetration and, when afforded opportunity, to express their interest or press their claims in an expanded public sphere” (Weigle and Butterfield 1992, 1). Thus, Ost’s (1993) argument of one strong interest unifying people and resulting in high level of activism and engagement during the pre-independence period can be granted a certain extent of validity.

Despite the abundance of literature talking about the general weakness of civil society in post-communist countries, there is a fraction of scholars who argue the contrary (Ekiert and Foa 2011; Green 2002). These scholars challenge the consensus view of weak civil society in post-communist states and find empirical evidence in support of their arguments.

Ekiert and Foa (2011) argue that “differences in civil society condition and strength within the region are as vast as differences across regions, despite the shared communist legacy” (Ekiert and Foa 2011, 8). To verify this statement, the authors use World Values Survey data and analyzed three periods “that shaped the currently existing civil societies: communist, transition and post-communist” (Ekiert and Foa 2011, 9). The major finding of their study is as follows: narrowing the diverse experiences of post-communist countries down to one postulate of overall weakness of civil society distorts the real picture by simplifying it. Hence, the generalized vision of weak post-communist civil societies is not applicable to all relevant countries.

Green (2002) created his own index for measuring civil society in post-communist countries with the ultimate purpose of comparing it with other countries and testing the “weakness” hypothesis. His index is composed of four parts: organizational diversity; registration procedures; favorable tax treatment and political advocacy (Green 2002, 457). It is important to stress that the author measures civil society only in terms of NGOs. However, his index is valuable for making comparisons among blocs of countries. These blocs are: CIS countries and non-CIS countries. The index clearly demonstrates that taken as a bloc, CIS countries lag far behind the non-CIS bloc. However, Armenia stands out among the CIS countries on all of the aforementioned indicators as one with strong and developed civil society.

The diversity of findings and the evidence of exceptional cases among post-communist countries (notably Armenia) clearly indicate that civil society in post-communist countries is an issue that still needs to be investigated and researched. There is empirically demonstrated heterogeneity of post-communist states, rendering generalizations about overall weakness of civil society questionable.

The literature discussed above largely dealt with broad concepts and general ideas. It serves to provide an insight into the existing debate about the assumed weakness of post-communist civil societies. However, civil society is an extremely broad concept, which has numerous definitions and includes a variety of aspects. Since the current study is interested in one particular aspect of civil society-the environmental activism, the next section of the literature review provides an insight into a more specific literature on this aspect of civil society. Environmental activism is discussed from the point of the impact it has on policy-making.

1.2 Environmental Activism and Its Impact on Policy-Making

Environmental activism is of particular importance in post-Soviet countries, since many union republics started their journey towards independence by organizing the first mass demonstrations in the Soviet Union that called for the protection of environment (Khazanov 1995; Suny 1993; Geukjian 2013; Ishkanian 2008; Paturyan and Gevorgyan 2014). In many Soviet republics, notably in Armenia, Ukraine and Moldova, concern over environment mobilized people and provoked the re-emergence of civil society. Later, these movements transformed into revolts demanding independence from the Soviet Union.

Although the term “environmental activism” seems to convey a very clear message, nevertheless it is apt to provide a definition that will be used throughout the present work. Among the variety of definitions the one suggested by Marquart-Pyatt (2012) stands out by its scope which includes policy implications. It sounds as follows: “environmental activism may be defined as organized participation in environmental issues, comprising an example of environmentally friendly behavior rooted in the political realm” (Marquart-Pyatt 2012, 687). The definition is relevant and important since it presents certain components of activism-such as “organized participation” and “environmentally friendly behavior”; and this activism is linked with “political realm”. This definition shows that environmental activism is a political issue and can be analyzed from the point of its impact on policy making. The literature presented in this section is devoted exactly to this issue: how environmental activism is manifested and what impact it has on policy-making in different countries.

Discussion of environmental activism from this perspective gains more and more importance with every year, since environmental issues have come “on stage” in international security studies (Mathews 1989; Levy 1995; Falkner 2012). As far back as in 1989 Jessica Mathews (1989, 162) argued in her article entitled as “Redefining Security” that “environmental strains that transcend national borders are already beginning to break down the sacred boundaries of national sovereignty, previously rendered porous by the information and communication revolutions and the instantaneous global movement of financial capital”. Thus, according to this author, environment has become a security issue. Continuing this logic, Levy (1995) provides “three distinct forms of connection between the environment and security” which are “existential”; “physical”; and “political” (Levy 1995, 36). He investigates to what extent these three connections pose threats to the US national security. Finally, Falkner (2012) talks about “environmentalism” as an ideology, which contains “an empirical belief that many of the planet’s ecosystems and species are under threat; and a normative belief that humans should take greater care of the environment” (Falkner 2012, 511).

Clearly, environmental issues have huge political implications, and studying to what degree a country’s civil society is capable of influencing policy-making will shed light on how the “greening of international society” (Falkner 2012, 514) changes national and international politics.

A number of authors investigate the importance of civil society, particularly NGOs, in protection of environment not only locally, in their country, but also internationally, around the globe (Raustiala 1997; Jasanoff 1997; Mencher 1999). Both Raustiala (1997) and Jasanoff (1997) agree that the most important function of civil society actors with regard to environment is providing information both to the government and to the society in general. This informative function is extended to include also policy alternatives and options generated by NGOs. Jasanoff (1997) goes even further and argues that environmental NGOs have changed their “traditional” pattern of behavior such as campaigning to a more advanced pattern of formulating and implementing policies (Jasanoff 1997, 581).

Going from generalized research to country-specific studies a large body of literature is found that investigates the impact of environmental activism on policy change (Feldman and Blokov 2009; Simpson 2013; Rootes 2012). The research carried out in Myanmar, for instance, shows that environmental activism is a component in a larger quest for democracy (Simpson 2013, 130). In Myanmar any kind of activism is suppressed, since it is an authoritarian regime. Through a case study of opposition towards building hydroelectric

power plants that will cause considerable environmental damage the author shows that “traditional authoritarian regimes such as that which has ruled Myanmar are more likely to create an ‘activist Diaspora’, a dynamic transnational community of expatriates who engage in environmental activism beyond the reach of the regime” (Simpson 2013, 144).

The research on environmental activism in Russia shows that there is almost no influence at the policy change level (Feldman and Blokov 2009, 746). The inability to influence environmental decisions there is explained by high dependence of Russian economy on natural resource exploitation (Feldman and Blokov 2009, 732).

A very recent research on environmental activism in Britain carried out by Rootes (2012) shows a completely different picture: the environmental NGOs (ENGOS) in Britain are not aiming at changing policies: they are “more concerned with practical conservation, provision of services, and management of reserves rather than with campaigning or the mobilization of the mass public” (Rootes 2012, 24). Activism there is issue-oriented and activists are mostly those people who bear some direct consequences from certain “eco-unfriendly” activities.

The discussion of literature presented above shows that environmental activism is extremely important since it has the potential capacity to influence public decisions. However, country-specific research shows that this capacity varies from country to country and success depends on number of factors, such as regime type (Simpson 2013) or economic structure (Feldman and Blokov 2009) of a country.

1.3 Online and Offline Activism: the Current Developments in the Field

A number of researchers investigating the phenomenon of online activism in relation to offline activism (Hirzalla and van Zoonen 2011; Harlow and Harp 2012; García-Galera, Del-Hoyo-Hurtado, and Fernández-Muñoz 2014; Della Porta and Mosca 2005; Oser, Hooghe, and Marien 2013; Vissers and Stolle 2014). What particularly interests these researchers is whether online activism fosters offline civic participation or on the contrary: it takes away the time people could have spend doing offline activities. Apart from that some of these researchers attempt to find whether with the coming of the Internet into existence there are more active people than before, or the Internet merely serves as a tool for those who were already active.

Finally, an underlying aspect of all the aforementioned researches is the investigation of how the Internet is used in terms of civic engagement. Subsequently, the current section of

literature review is divided into two parts: researches on the relations between online and offline activism; and researches on what kind of a tool the Internet is for civic activists.

There is a fierce debate on relations between online and offline activism. Some authors arrive at the conclusion that online activism fosters offline activism and engages more and more people (Hirzalla and van Zoonen 2011; Harlow and Harp 2012). On the other hand there are authors who arrive at an opposite conclusion; saying that online activism does not lead to offline activism and it does not attract more people (García-Galera, Del-Hoyo-Hurtado, and Fernández-Muñoz 2014; Vissers and Stolle 2014).

Although Hirzalla and van Zoonen (2011); and Harlow and Harp (2012) find that online activism fosters offline activism, it is necessary to mention that the scope of their analysis is different. Harlow and Harp (2012) investigate only political activism in the US and several Latin American countries, whereas Hirzalla and van Zoonen (2011) look generally at civic activism in Netherlands.

The analysis of the survey conducted by Harlow and Harp (2012) showed that “whether respondents considered themselves to be mostly offline or online activist, they participated equally in the offline activities” (Harlow and Harp 2012, 206). Moreover; respondents viewed the online and offline activities as highly interconnected and intertwined: “respondents from both regions generally agreed that online activism is just as important as offline activism, with the caveat that in today’s digital era, both methods for activism are required to provoke any kind of impact” (Harlow and Harp 2012, 210).

Using a quite different approach both in terms of methodology and data analysis, Hirzalla and van Zoonen (2011) also found that online activism does not affect offline activism negatively: it even fosters more offline activism. This research is interesting in terms of how the analysis was carried out: the authors made a distinction between four participation modes. These are politics, activism, consumption and sharing (Hirzalla and van Zoonen 2011, 5–6). Each of the “modes” has a separate body of characteristics. The distinction between these categories is made to test whether activities associated with each of them occur more frequently online; offline; or they converge. Analyzing the results of a survey, the authors found that “the online activities were not necessarily more popular than the offline activities within the different modes, and that the four overall most popular activities were offline” (Hirzalla and van Zoonen 2011, 14).

Another sector of relevant literature argues that online activism does not lead to offline activism. The works discussed here found that online activism leads to the so-called “clicktivism”-when the only form of expressing one’s view on an issue is clicking the “like”

or “share” buttons in social networking sites. The survey conducted by García-Galera, Del-Hoyo-Hurtado and Fernández-Muñoz (2014) showed that 44% of respondents indicate that apart from taking part in online events like sharing an issue or signing a petition they do not take their activism a step further to join offline activities such as demonstrations or round table discussions (García-Galera, Del-Hoyo-Hurtado, and Fernández-Muñoz 2014, 39). Nevertheless, the authors do not underestimate the importance of online activism, since the change the emergence of the Internet brought is a fundamental one and its effects cannot be ignored.

Vissers and Stolle (2014), who also arrived at a similar conclusion, conducted a very specific research: they looked at one aspect of online activism-the Facebook, and one aspect of offline activism-political participation. The authors find that there is a strong correlation between political activism on Facebook and political activism in real life, however they stress that “there has been little evidence of the causal arrow in this relationship” (Vissers and Stolle 2014, 24). Another important finding of this research is that “Facebook political activity is not able to draw in previously disaffected groups of the population and to inspire them to engage in different political action repertoires” (Vissers and Stolle 2014, 25).

As clearly shown by this section there is no more-or-less unified opinion on the type of relations between online and offline activism. Taking this fact into consideration a need for further research is obvious. However, it is undeniable that there exists a relation between online and offline activism and that these two are interconnected and inseparable.

Having discussed the complicated relations between online and offline activism, the current section present the literature that investigates what kind of a tool the Internet is and what role it plays in civic activism, particularly in social movements. As perfectly described by Della Porta and Mosca (2005) “the Internet represents an opportunity, combined with a challenge for social movements” (Della Porta and Mosca 2005, 165). Thus, if it is possible to identify in which ways the Internet is an opportunity and in which ways it is a challenge for the activists it will also be possible to identify mechanisms for increasing the benefits it brings.

Oser, Hooghe and Marien (2013) provide a good overview of two major theses in this regard: these are the mobilization thesis and the reinforcement thesis. Although they deal with political participation, it is possible and plausible to generalize them to a broader level of overall civic engagement. The mobilization thesis states that with the emergence of the Internet more people have an opportunity to express themselves on political issues. The reinforcement thesis argues that only those who were already engaged previously use the

Internet and opportunities it provides (Oser, Hooghe, and Marien 2013, 91). The authors found that the Internet has minimal capacity to attract new people for advocating a cause offline. However it indeed attracts a certain percentage of people, and these are the representatives of younger generation (Oser, Hooghe, and Marien 2013, 98).

Della Porta and Mosca (2005) provide a detailed overview of exact ways the Internet is used by activists. They distinguish between three functions: instrumental; direct expression; and cognitive (Della Porta and Mosca 2005, 167). The instrumental function includes organizational and logistical operations. The direct expression function permits to explicitly demonstrate discontent, dissatisfaction and protest; and finally the cognitive function includes easy, cheap and fast information exchange. The authors arrive at a conclusion that “the Internet has had, has and will continue to have a meaningful effect on collective action” (Della Porta and Mosca 2005, 185).

To sum up, despite the abundance of debates on whether online activism curtails or fosters offline activism, it is undeniable that the Internet changed how social movements are organized, how information is spread and how opinions and discontent is expressed. Not long has passed since the emergence of the Internet, but the impact it has already had is immense. Online versus offline activism is yet to be studied, since it is yet another “arena” for civil society to interact; voice its concerns; and assist each other.

1. 4 Hypothesis and Research Questions

Based on the above discussion the present study investigates environmental activism in Armenia, which is viewed as component of civil society. Consequently the hypothesis is formulated as follows:

Despite being a post-communist country Armenia has strong civic engagement in environmental issues.

The “strength” is defined here as ability to influence environmental decision-making; and influence in its turn is defined by change, delay and modification of public policies.

The research questions are as follows:

- 1) Does environmental activism have an impact on policy-making in Armenia?
- 2) How does online activism relate to environmental activism?
- 3) What factors facilitate influence on policy-making?
- 4) What factors create obstacles for influence on policy-making?

Chapter 2: Methodology

The ultimate purpose of this research is to depict a holistic picture of environmental civic activism in Armenia and its ability to influence policy making. The main argument of the paper is that in issues concerning environment Armenian civil society is strong. The “strength” is defined here as ability to influence environmental decision-making; and influence in its turn is defined by change, delay and modification of public policies. In order to measure strength two data-collection tools were employed: content analysis and interviews.

Content Analysis: Ecolur NGO was selected to be the main source of information, since it has a constant monitoring and reporting system aimed at raising public awareness on environmental issues. All the articles of the official website of Ecolur (Ecolur.org) were checked for the following key words: public concern; SOS; civic initiative; danger. Having identified those articles the next step was picking up those cases which were mentioned more than five times on this website. Finally, these cases were checked for being discussed on Facebook either in a separate group dedicated to the case or in the groups dedicated to environmental protection in Armenia generally. As a result of this selection process 12 cases were identified. To gather further information on these cases the following websites were checked: hetq.am; organize-now.am; armecofront.net; teghut.am; kanachaygi.org.

The time period is from 2007 until 2014. This timeframe is selected based on Ishkanian’s (2013) classification of environmental civic activism in Armenia. In her report “Civil Society, Development and Environmental Activism in Armenia” (2013) Ishkanian divides the history of Armenian civil society into two phases: 1986-2006; and 2007 until present (Ishkanian et al. 2013, 17–21). In her perspective the Save Teghut civic initiative (2007), being influenced by the SOS Shikahogh (2005) initiative’s success marks the transition from somewhat passive soviet-influenced methods of advocacy to more organized and issue-specific movements. That is why she draws the line between 2006 and 2007. Thus the cases analyzed in this research all pertain to the period between 2007 and 2014.

Next, a table was created that systematized all the information gathered by applying the aforementioned methodology. The table serves to the purpose of visualizing environmental activism in Armenia during the recent eight years and the probable outcomes certain activities produced, classifying the influence these activities had as change, modification or delay. It does not claim causal relationship between civic activities and policy outcomes. The structure of the table contents is presented in Table 1:

Table 1: Description of Civic Initiatives' Table

The name of the initiative/case	Date
If there is no specific name to the initiative (like Save Teghut or SOS Sevan) then the name of the place is given.	The date indicated here is approximate and is based on the information about the first concerns expressed by civil society either in an online or an offline mode.
Short Summary	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Problem: This section provides information about what activities or policies raise public concern and result in civic activism. • Key Stakeholders: This section enumerates all the representatives of the government; business sector; and the civil society sector. • Key Actions: This section lists all the activities organized by the actors representing the civil society. 	
Scope	
This section provides approximate number of people involved in both online and offline activism	
Status	
<p>-> <u>Resolved</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positively (if the demands of the activists were fully or partially met) • Negatively (if the demands of the activists were NOT met) <p>-> <u>Continuing</u> (if there is no decision yet made; or if the decision is made but activists continue to demand alternation of the decision)</p> <p>-> <u>Abandoned</u> (if the activists do not continue activities on a specific issue)</p>	
Influence	
<p>-> <u>Change</u> in the initial plan/program/policy</p> <p>-> <u>Delay</u> in the initial plan/program/policy</p> <p>-> <u>Modification</u> of the initial plan/program/policy</p>	

Two environmental activism-Save Teghut and SOS Trchkan-are selected for further in-depth analysis. Save Teghut is an example of how a civic initiative failed to bring about any influence during nine years of its existence. The case of SOS Trchkan is studied as an example of how an initiative managed to bring about a full-scale policy change in just two months. The in-depth analysis is also aimed at showing how online and offline activism interacted for each of the cases and how each type of activism contributed to the overall influence of the initiative.

Judging the influence has always been a difficult task in social sciences. The criteria for determining the success or failure of influence are somewhat arbitrary and thus are prone to be labeled as subjective. However, methodological bias can be reduced by clearly stating the logic behind each criterion that serves as an indicator of influence. As already mentioned,

the influence in this research is determined by the categories of change, delay and modification of policies. By presenting the cases in the table described above this study shows the facts-what decisions were eventually made and how these decisions were arrived at. To add validity to these approximate estimations of influence interviews with activists are conducted.

In-depth Interviews: Six activists were interviewed. These people were directly involved in one or more cases included in the table. The interviews with activists are aimed at collecting first-hand evidence of influence from those closely involved in the investigated cases. Nevertheless being personally involved in the initiatives the interviewees might be inclined to take the credit for certain positive decisions and classify them as a result of influence their activities have had. This factor was taken into account when analyzing the information and opinions they provided.

Government representatives were also interviewed. This was done in order to have the views from “both sides of the barricades”. The government representatives are Vardan Ayvazyan (the former Minister of Nature Protection from 2001 to 2007, currently a member of National Assembly-the chair of Economic Committee) and Simon Papyan (the Deputy Minister of Nature Protection since 2002). The interview with the former lasted very short-approximately fifteen minutes. Nevertheless Mr. Papyan provided important vision within the scope of the present thesis and thus his interview transcript is also analyzed.

Finally two more interviews were conducted with environmental policy experts. These people were interviewed as a mediatory between activists and government. They provided expert opinion on the cases under study as well as shared a comprehensive vision of current environment policies as well as civic activism.

Overall there were ten interviews conducted between 26th of February and 10th of March 2015. All the interviews were voice recorded and analyzed. The average duration of interviews was forty minutes, with the shortest being a recording of ten minutes and the longest a recording of one hour and fifteen minutes.

Chapter 3: Overall Analysis of Environmental Activism since 2007

3.1 Table of Civic Initiatives

Table 2 below lists all the civic initiatives from 2007 to 2014:

Table 2: Civic Initiatives from 2007 to 2014

1. Name: Save Teghut	Date: 2007 November
Short Summary	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Problem: 1491 ha. of Teghut's forest is allocated by a governmental decision to be exploited for 50 years as a copper-molybdenum mine. 82% of the territory allocated for mining is covered with forest, and 357 ha. of the forest will be cut down. • Key Stakeholders: <u>Public sector:</u> RA Government; Ministry of Nature Protection; <u>Private Sector:</u> Vallex F.M. Establishment (based in Lichtenstein); Armenian Copper Program CJSC (the daughter organization of Vallex F.M.); VTB Bank; <u>NGOs:</u> Ecoera NGO; Ecolur NGO; Institute for Democracy and Human Rights NGO; Helsinki Citizens Assembly Vanadzor NGO; <u>Civilians:</u> Teghut and Shnogh village communities; civilian activists; Save Teghut civic initiative. • Key Actions: picketing; appeal to the administrative court accusing the RA Government, Ministry of Nature Protection, Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources; appeal to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights; report to the EU representatives on the lack of transparency in the process; open letters to Prince Charles, Ambassador of the UK, US Secretary of State; petition to VTB (2009 May 15) petition to Tigran Sargsyan (2012 October 23) 	
Scope	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online Facebook: Save Teghut (group with 8,484 members); Teghut (group with 146 members); Save Teghut Forest (group with 3,651 member); Save Teghut Civic Initiative's official group (1,526 likes) • Offline January 15, 2015-March towards Teghut -app. 300 people; May 15, 2009-Petition to VTB-924 signatures; October 23, 2012-Petition to Prime Minister (Tigran Sargsyan)-2,100 signatures Core members of initiative-15 people 	
Status: <u>Continuing</u>	
The factory for working with copper already operates; copper is being subtracted and tailing damp is	

<p>created. Nevertheless, activists do not give up and continue contacting the relevant government bodies and providing them with undeniable evidence of the damage currently done to the environment and people living in the vicinity of the factory. The latest big event organized by the activists was on April 5-the so-called alter-conference “Irresponsible Mining in Armenia”</p>	
<p>Influence: NONE</p>	
<p>The demand of the activists to ban the exploitation of the mine was not met, and generally none of the demands of the activists during the nine years of struggle was met.</p>	
<p>2. Name: SOS Jermuk: Amulsar Open Gold Mine</p>	<p>Date: 2009</p>
<p>Short Summary</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Problem: On 18th of September, 2008, the Government of the RA made a decision (1064-R) that proclaims Jermuk to be a tourism center. It is planned that as a result of that in 2020 Jermuk will have 100.000 tourists per year and create additional 4,000 jobs. Just a year later-in 2009 “Lydian International” (a British company) was given a positive decision to develop the Amulsar Gold Mine. Amulsar is not far from Jermuk-only 13 kilometers. On October 17th, 2014, the Ministry of Nature Protection fully approved the plan to exploit the mine. The main concerns of ecologists are that gold exploration cannot take place without radiation-since uranium is always present in gold deposits. As a result of the exploitation of the mine Jermuk will become poisoned and radioactive, thus it cannot be a touristic center. • Key Stakeholders: <u>Public Sector:</u> Head of Jermuk Municipality-Vartan Hovhannisyan (who is against the exploitation of the mine); Ministry of Nature Protection; <u>Private Sector:</u> Lydian International; Geotim-the daughter organization of Lydian; The World Bank; <u>NGOs:</u> Ecolur NGO; Ecoright NGO; Center of Jermuk Development NGO; Bird lovers’ center NGO; Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment NGO; <u>Civilians:</u> Civilian activists; Jermuk will not become a mine civic initiative; Save Teghut civic initiative; Pan-Armenian Environmental Movement civic initiative. • Key Actions: Collecting signatures; open letters to UK Permanent Under-Secretary of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, US Secretary of State; EBRD-the International Financial Corporation; OSCE Ambassador in Armenia; Ministry of Economy; protests; demonstration in the village of Gndevaz (the community that is immediately affected by the exploitation of the mine) Alter Conference-Irresponsible Mining in Armenia 	
<p>Scope</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Online</u> Facebook: Jermuk will not become a mine (group with 2,488 members); • <u>Offline</u> 	

2012 June 9-March towards Amulsar-100-120 people	
2014 July 19-Open Letter to the Ombudsman of IFC-210 signatures	
2014 August 30-Protest in the village of Gndevaz in front of the office of Geotim-40 people	
2014 October 17-Open Letter to the Ministry of Economy-signed by 7 core activists	
Status: <u>Continuing</u>	
The decision is made to use the Amulsar Gold Mine, but the activists still carry out certain activities. The construction has not yet started. The World Bank, being involved in the process of financing the project, has been notified of the wide disapproval of the project by the community and activists in general.	
Influence: NONE	
The company's activities proceed as planned, and "Lydian" declared during a conference in Toronto (1-4 March, 2015) that the construction activities will start in 2015.	
3. Name: SOS Hrazdan	Date: 2009
Short Summary	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Problem: On October 13th, 2008, the Ministry of Nature Protection approved the project proposed by "Nagin" to exploit the iron mine near the city Hrazdan. A year after getting the permission, the company had not started any building activity, and according to the law of the Republic of Armenia on Environmental Impact Assessment (article 11 point 4) the approval loses its power and all the process has to be started anew. A Chinese company "Fortune Oil" bought the right from "Nagin" and got a new approval for the exploitation of the same mine. The mines are only 630-650 meters away from the city of Hrazdan. The key concern of the activists is the air pollution with uranium that is highly toxic and damages human health heavily. • Key Stakeholders: <u>Public Sector:</u> Ministry of Nature Protection; <u>Private Sector:</u> Nagin Company; Chinese "Fortune Oil" company; <u>NGOs:</u> Transparency International NGO; <u>Civilians:</u> Hrazdan Community; Civilian Activists. • Key Actions: signature collecting; open letters to the Ministry of Nature Protection; meeting with the Chinese Ambassador; protest in the Hrazdan central square 	
Scope	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Online</u> Facebook: Healthy Hrazdan (group with 251 members) • <u>Offline</u> No data available 	
Status: Resolved-Negatively	

The construction is going on as planned, and no further activities are organized by the activists	
Influence: NONE	
The demand of the activists to ban the exploitation of the iron mine was not met	
4. Name: SOS Sevan: part 1	Date: 2010
Short Summary	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Problem: In 2009 Geo Pro Mining Company was issued a license to build a gold-processing factory near the lake Sevan, which implies creation of a tailing damp near the lake. The damp is estimated to contain toxic chemicals that include heavy metals and cyanide. Previously the gold was transported to another factory for processing, but the company declared that the transportation is too expensive, therefore it needs to build a processing factory right near the mine. However, the law on Sevan, article 10, bans this kind of activity there. • Key Stakeholders: <u>Public Sector:</u> Ministry of Nature Protection; <u>Private Sector:</u> Geo Pro Minig; <u>Civilians:</u> Civilian activists, SOS Sevan civic initiative. • Main Actions: signature collection; protest in front of the President's Residence; open letter to the President 	
Scope	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Online</u> Facebook: SOS Sevan (group with 251 members); Save the lake Sevan (page with 114 likes) • <u>Offline</u> No data available 	
Status: Resolved-Positively	
The demands of the activists were met and the processing factory was not built. However, a breaking factory was built instead of the processing one. It is much less toxic.	
Influence: MODIFICATION	
The activities described here resulted in the modification of the initial policy to allow the building of the processing factory. Instead a breaking factory was built	
5. Name: We Are the Owners of this City: Save the Students' Park	Date: 2010 November
Short Summary	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Problem: The Yerevan Municipality approved building two cafés in the students' park. In order to build these cafés, many trees are to be cut, and the public space becomes much smaller. • Key Stakeholders: <u>Public Sector:</u> Yerevan Municipality; <u>Private sector:</u> Café owners; <u>Civilians:</u> Students 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Actions: Signed petition to the President; physical restriction of construction activities; appeal to the Constitutional Court 	
Scope	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online Facebook: We are the owners of this city (group with 8,746 member) • Offline 2010 May 14-Protest in the park that launched signature collection-100 people 2010 May 24-Open letter to the President with appendix of 20,000 signatures 	
Status: Resolved-negatively	
The demands of the activists were not met	
Influence: NONE	
The activities did not result in change; delay; or any modification of the initial policy.	
6. Name: Qajaran	Date: 2011 April
Short Summary	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Problem: On 28th of April, 2011, the Government made decision (627-N) to recognize 181.7 ha of Qajaran territory as “eminent public benefit”. Therefore, this territory was given to Zangezur Company for extraction of molybdenium and enlargement of the output of the company. The territory included the graveyard of the village, an ancient church and neighbored closely with several houses. The decision was made without any prior consultation with the villagers of Qajaran, and they were not timely notified. The head of the community closed the way with his own car and did not let the tractors that were sent to start digging the territory. This marked the beginning of the struggle for the mentioned territory. The struggle was led by the head of municipality and the villagers themselves. • Key Stakeholders: <u>Public sector:</u> RA Government; <u>Private Sector:</u> Zangezur Company (largest shareholder Cronimed CJSC); <u>NGOs:</u> Ecolur NGO; <u>Civilians:</u> Qajaran village community. • Key Actions: Physical closing of the way for the tractors; protest in front of the Government building; open letter to the President; appeal to the President, Speaker of the National Assembly, Prime Minister 	
Scope	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online Facebook: SOS Qajaran (group with 242 members) • Offline 2011 May 31- Appeal to the president-600 singatures 2011 December 16-Protest in front of the government building-10-15 people 	
Status: UNRESOLVED	

The decision was not negated, but no documents are signed that legitimize that the territory is given to the Zangezur Combinat. The process is currently frozen by the government.	
Influence: DELAY	
Although the decision (627-N) was to take force from January 1 st of 2012, it hasn't until now been implemented. The process is frozen now.	
7. Name: Save Trchkan Waterfall	Date: 2011 September
Short Summary	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Problem: The Ministry of Nature Protection gave an approval to the project of building a hydro power plant on the river Chichkhan-not far away from the Trchkan waterfall. This waterfall is included into the list of protected natural areas, which means that any economic activity is banned there. Building a hydro power plant there would reduce the amount of water in the river ultimately resulting in its drying. <p>Key Stakeholders: <u>Public sector:</u> Ministry of Nature Protection; <u>Private Sector:</u> Robshin LLC; <u>NGOs:</u> Institute for Democracy and Human Rights NGO; <u>Civilians:</u> Civilian activists; SOS Trchkan civic initiative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Actions: Protests in front of the Government; open letters to the Ministry of Nature Protection; “March of Protest” towards Trchkan; establishment of a 24-hour watch not to allow any construction activity; physical restriction of building activities. 	
Scope	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online Facebook: Save Trchkan Waterfall in Armenia (page with 144 likes); TRCHKAN Civic Initiative (group with 1,760 members); Save Trchkan Waterfall (page with 4,572 members) <p>Offline October 22, 2011-March of protest towards Trchkan-150 people; October 25, 2011-24-hour camp for two weeks-10 activists Core group-7 activists</p>	
Status: Resolved-Positively	
The main demand of the activists was banning the construction of the power plant. Their demand was fully met	
Influence: CHANGE	
As a result of protests and other activities described, the Prime Minister issued a decree stopping the building of the power plant and banning any economic activity on the river in the future.	

8. Name: Kanach Kapan		Date: 2011 February
Short Summary		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Problem: “Dino Gold Mining” Company, owned by a Canadian corporation “Dundee Precious Metals” wants to exploit the Shahumyan metal mine in an open way. Shahumyan mine is situated just a kilometer away from the town of Kapan. The mine contains deposits of different metals, among them also gold. The plan foresees open pit exploitation, which demands an estimated 50,000 trees to be cut. Additionally there is a high risk of air and water pollution with heavy metals and toxic gases. The activists and environmental experts demanded that at least the mine should be exploited not in an open-pit way. • Key Stakeholders: <u>Public Sector:</u> Ministry of Nature Protection; Government of RA; <u>Private Sector:</u> Dino Gold Mining Company; Dundee Precious Metals; <u>NGOs:</u> Sustainable Human Development NGO; <u>Civilians:</u> Kapan Community; Civilian activists. • Key Actions: Signature Collection; open letters to Dundee Precious Metals, Government of RA, Ministry of Nature Protection, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Territorial Administration, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Prime Minister of Canada; several protests 		
Scope		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Online</u> Facebook: Kanach Kapan (group with 828 member) • <u>Offline</u> No data available 		
Status: Resolved-positively		
The mine is being exploited; nevertheless the company changed its initial strategy of exploiting it in an open-pit way. Instead, the underground exploitation technique was adopted.		
Influence: Modification		
The initial policy of open-pit exploitation was eventually modified and the demands of the activists were partially met.		
9. Name: Toukhmanuk		Date: 2012
Short Summary		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Problem: “Mego Gold” Company was exploiting the Toukhmanuk gold mine near the village Melik since 2006. During the period between 2006 and 2012 it had built two tailing dams and in 2012 it appealed to the Ministry of Nature Protection to build and use the third tailing dam. The dam is situated in 1.5 km from Getik river, which will be heavily contaminated. • Key Stakeholders: <u>Public sector:</u> Ministry of Nature Protection; <u>Private Sector:</u> Mego Gold company; 		

<p><u>NGOs</u>: Ecolur NGO; Ecological Right NGO; Eco Alliance (NGOs' alliance); <u>Civilians</u>: Melik village community</p> <p>• <u>Key Actions</u>: Appeal to the General Prosecutor (Aghvan Hovsepyan); open letter to the Minister of Nature Protection; independent assessment of the level of pollution of soil, water and air near the already existing two tailing dams; report sent to the Ministry</p>	
Scope	
<p>• <u>Online</u></p> <p>Facebook: no separate web-page, but active discussions in Environmental Protection in Armenia (Facebook group with 4,656 members); and Pan Armenian Environmental Front (Facebook group with 2,994 members)</p> <p><u>Offline</u></p> <p>No data available</p>	
Status: Continuing	
Although the company was officially granted the permit to build and exploit the damp, activists continue to struggle and initiate corresponding activities (particularly raising public awareness)	
Influence: DELAY	
In 2012 the company appealed to the Ministry of Nature Protection for the permit. The activists started hard lobbying against the permit and the appeal was denied. However, the company reapplied for the permit with slight changes in the initial project, and it got approved.	
10. Name: We are the Owners of this City: Mashtots Park	Date: 2012 February
Short Summary	
<p>• <u>Main Problem</u>: In 2011 the Yerevan Municipality decided to clean the Abovyan Street from boutiques. The next mayor (Taron Margaryan) decided not to eliminate the boutiques, but to remove them to another place-Mashtots Park. This decision aroused much public resonance and discontent, because the boutiques would come to replace the public recreational space.</p> <p>• <u>Key Stakeholders</u>: <u>Public sector</u>: Yerevan Municipality; <u>Private Sector</u>: Boutique owners; <u>Civilians</u>: Civilian activists.</p> <p>• <u>Key Actions</u>:</p> <p>Demonstration in front of the city hall; seizure of the building site; establishment of a citizens' court- "independent and just court" which made a decision that all of the boutiques had to be removed/demounted; physical restriction of construction activities; 24-hour watch of the building site.</p>	
Scope	
• <u>Online</u>	

Facebook: Mashtots Park (Facebook page with 160 likes)	
<u>Offline</u>	
2012 February 11 to 21-protest in the Mashtots boulevard and 24-hour watch-27 people	
2012 March 16-29-demounting brigade-7 people	
Status: Resolved-Positively	
The demand of the activists not to build the boutiques and save the park as a public recreational space was fully met	
Influence: CHANGE	
The initial plan to build the boutiques in the space of the park was changed: President Serzh Sargissian and the Mayor Taron Margaryan arrived at the site and the President ordered to demount the boutiques.	
11. Name: Khachaghbyur	Date: 2012 May
Short Summary	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Main Problem:</u> Building of a second hydro power plant on the river Paghjur, not far away from Lastiver waterfall arouse concerns among ecologists and activists. The inquiries of the activists showed that the construction had no legal base-no public decisions or legal documents allowing the construction. Apart from that the building equipment had damaged many trees. The construction takes place in the Ijevan natural reserve and is in the area with a high risk of sliding. • <u>Key Stakeholders:</u> <u>Public sector:</u> Ministry of Nature Protection; <u>Private sector:</u> “Mega Energy” LLC; <u>Civilians:</u> Getahovit village community; civilian activists; Pan-Armenian Environmental Front civic initiative. • <u>Key Actions:</u> Protest in front of the National Assembly; Appeal to the criminal court by the Pan-Armenian Environmental Front; Open Letter to the General Prosecutor of Armenia Gevork Kostanyan 	
Scope	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Online</u> Facebook: no separate web-page, but active discussions in Environmental Protection in Armenia (Facebook group with 4,656 members); and Pan Armenian Environmental Front (Facebook group with 2,994 members) • <u>Offline</u> No data available 	
Status: Resolved-Negatively	
The main goal of the activists-banning the construction of the power plant, was not achieved. The construction got legal approval and was implemented.	

Influence: DELAY	
On August 23 rd , 2012, the Ministry of Nature Protection approved the construction of the power plant. After the protests on 26 th of October, 2012, the Ministry cancelled its previous decision. However, the company made some modifications in the plan and on 26 th of March, 2013, got a new approval and permission and the power plant currently operates.	
12. Date: SOS Sevan-Part 2	Date: 2014
Short Summary	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Problem: The Government passed two laws about Sevan which raise the concerns of the activists. These laws are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Amendment in the law on Sevan-a provision of changing the yearly takeout of water by 40 % for the upcoming five years. According to the activists this will result in mooring of the lake. 2) Artificially-grown fish to be reached the point of 50,000 tons per year. This will result in water pollution with the chemicals contained in the food given to the fish. This means that the water will no longer be drinkable. • Key Stakeholders: <u>Public Sector:</u> Government of RA; <u>NGOs:</u> Ecolur NGO; Eco Alliance NGO; <u>Civilians:</u> civilian activists. • Key Actions: Open letter to the President; signature collecting; meetings with the officials 	
Scope	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Online</u> Facebook: SOS Sevan (Facebook group with 452 members) <u>Offline</u> 2014 April 28-Protest in front of National Assembly-20 people 	
Status: Resolved-Positively	
Although not all of the demands of the activists were met, nevertheless some of them were partially fulfilled: the decision to increase the water take-out by 40% for upcoming 5 years was <u>changed to only one year</u> . But the decision of artificial fisheries in the lake is unchanged.	
Influence: MODIFICATION	
The activities described here resulted in modification of the initial policy.	

3.2 Analysis of the Table

The present paper has a goal of determining whether environmental activism influences decision-making in Armenia. Before presenting the analysis of the data shown in

the table it is necessary to emphasize that determining causality in social sciences is an extremely difficult task. Determining influence on policy making is particularly hard. It can only be done if those officials responsible for policies officially declare that their decisions were influenced by this or that specific event organized by activists. However, this should not become an obstacle for studying the phenomenon of activism and its influence, since it is possible to at least gain an overall understanding of the issue. Thus, the analysis of the table aims at presenting an overall picture of environmental activism in Armenia and its probable influence on decision-making.

To be as close to the reality as possible the table presented in a systematic way the main problem, key stakeholders, online and offline activities and final decisions or outcomes for each of the twelve cases. The influence, as mentioned earlier, is measured by the following categories: delay, modification, or change in a policy. Table 3 provides an overview of findings regarding influence:

Table 3: Brief Overview of Influence of Civic Initiatives

INFLUENCE			
NONE	DELAY	MODIFICATION	CHANGE
Teghut	Qajaran (Until present)	Kapan	Trchkan
Hrazdan	Toukhmanuk (Until present)	Sevan 1	Mashtots
Students' Park	Khachaghbyur (Solved negatively)	Sevan 2	
Amulsar			
Total: 4	Total: 3	Total: 3	Total: 2

As revealed by the table in four cases there is no influence on decision making: activities were organized, discontent was voiced, the relevant authorities were notified of the concerns the environmental activists had concerning the cases, but the decisions remained in force and the projects continued as planned. However, it is important to notice that the Save Teghut Civic Initiative has existed for already nine years and it still continues its struggle. It is a unique case in terms of its longevity. The mine which the initiative was opposed to already operates, but the initiative still continues to organize activities aimed at its closure. Thus, taking into account the unique features of the Save Teghut initiative, a separate case study is dedicated to it that provides an in-depth description and analysis of its activism.

From the four cases where there was no influence on decision-making three are mining-related: copper and molybdenum in cases of Teghut; iron in case of Hrazdan; and gold in case of Amulsar. The fourth case concerned preservation of public space. As further analysis will reveal the decisions concerning mining are the least affected by environmental activism.

Although delay is an indicator of influence, however it is not an indicator of “successful” outcome of activism. The interviewees also referred to this by stating that delay is not a good result: if after all the policy is carried out as planned and it is only postponed for a while then the activism was useless. Nevertheless, since the focus of the present research is on influence and not on successful outcome of activism the cases of delay are still important.

Of particular interest is the delay of the decision to allocate 181.7 ha of territory of Qajaran village to Zangezur Copper and Molybdenum Combine for increasing its output. This decision met so much opposition from general public and such a strong resistance from the local villagers as well as the community head that the government froze the implementation of its decision for an unspecified time period. When heavy machinery entered the mentioned territory with the purpose of starting the mining activities the community head closed the way for it with his own car. Together with the community head many villagers closed the way for the machines and did not allow them to enter the territory, which they still considered to be theirs. This case is cited by the interviewees as a “major victory”: although the decision is not abolished but frozen the activists interviewed believe that as long as the community head and villagers continue to be unified on this issue and do not step back from their territory the government will not implement its decision.

In contrast to the case of Qajaran-where the delay is qualified as success, in the cases of Khachaghbyur and Toukhmanuk the delay did not lead to any changes in the projects: they were sooner or later implemented and the only difference the activism made was postponing the implementation. In the case of Khachaghbyur hydropower plant the activists revealed incidence of crime-the hydropower plant was constructed with no official permission. After the activists revealed this to the public as well as to the relevant authorities the owners of the plant started the process of legalizing the construction and obtained permission from the Ministry of Nature Protection. A wave of demonstrations followed, which led the Ministry to cancel its permission. However, half a year after that the company made minor modifications in its plan and reapplied for permission. Its new plan was approved and it continued its activities. Thus, overall the activism did not result in any change-it only postponed the implementation phase of the project.

The same can be stated for the case of Toukhmanuk. Here the issue is the third tailing dump constructed by Mego Gold Company. In fact these two cases are the same in their description: the companies applied for permits, the activists demonstrated discontent, the permits were rejected, after a while the companies reapplied for permits and got them. In the case of Toulhmanuk as well the activism did not change or modify the final outcome.

Modification of the initial plan is a much more valid indicator of influence than delay. During the years from 2007 to 2014 there were three cases when the activists managed if not to completely change but at least to modify the plans so that they meet some of their requirements.

Interestingly enough two of the three cases of modification are related to Sevan. One case was a decision to build a gold processing factory very close to Sevan. This decision was modified and not a processing but a breaking factory was built. The difference is that a processing factory uses a number of chemicals to “process” the minerals extracted and produces a toxic waste, whereas the breaking factory only breaks the mineral extracted in a way that they can be transported to another place for being processed. Although the breaking factory is also causing pollution in the form of dust, it does not produce toxic waste. It is clear that this modification makes a difference and can clearly be qualified as influence-if the activists did not protest there would be a processing factory that would contaminate the lake Sevan.

The next case related to Sevan is quite fresh-it is a modification of an amendment in the law on Sevan of 2014 and a new law on increasing fisheries in Sevan. The amendment foresaw a 40 % increase in the annual takeover of the water from the lake for the upcoming five years. This decision was modified and the five-year period was shortened to one year. The law referring to the artificially grown fish remained unchanged. The activists qualify this modification as successful because it will provide them more opportunities to lobby in the coming year and change the legislation even further. If they failed to modify the law for the upcoming five years there would be nothing they could do for decreasing the annual takeover from the lake. These two cases of modifications connected to Sevan show that activists are attentive to whatever is decided about Sevan, since this lake is extremely important for the country. On the other hand, the activists manage to use the strategic importance attached to the lake as leverage for influencing the government.

Kanakch Kapan-the third case of modification-is unique, since it is the only case when a mining project was modified. In Kapan the issue was exploitation of Shahumyan gold mine. It is situated just one kilometer away from the city of Kapan, so the reason of activists’

discontent is obvious. Moreover the mine was planned to be exploited in an open-pit way, which is the most dangerous mode of mine exploitation in terms of toxic waste. After a big wave of discontent the initial project was modified and open-pit exploitation was replaced with closed-pit exploitation-which is in comparison less toxic. Although the activism did not result in the closure of the mine, it nevertheless modified the initial plan and reduced the amount of toxic wastes to be dispersed around Kapan. Never before was any case connected to mining modified or changed. This is so far the only case when the activists managed to influence a mining project.

Finally, there are only two cases when the activists managed to completely change the decisions. Although there are only two cases, but these cases are a clear manifestation of influence of the activism, since in these cases the government officials themselves arrived at the spot and announced to the activists that they will change their decision. In the case of Trchkan it was the Prime Minister Tigran Sargssyan; and in the case of Mashtots Boulevard it was the President Serzh Sargssyan. Thus, these are the only cases when the link between the activities organized by environmentalists and the final decision changes is undeniable. A separate section of the present research is dedicated to the case study of Trchkan.

These two cases happened close in time: Trchkan was in August 2011 and Mashtots was in February 2012. Interestingly enough there are a number of common features between these two cases, and it is apt to elaborate on the most important features separately:

1. Constant presence of activists in the field.

In the case of Trchkan a 24-hour camp was established for two weeks starting from 25th of October. In the case of Mashtots there was also a 24-hour camp for 10 days starting from 10th of February. This watch was aimed at preventing any construction activity until a final resolution was made.

2. Physical prevention of construction activities

In Mashtots a group of seven people (who called themselves “the demounting brigade”) started to demount the fundament constructed for building the boutiques that the activists opposed to. This brigade started demounting on 16th of March, 2012, and continued to prevent the construction for one week. In Trchkan several activists stopped the heavy machinery that was supposed to start the construction of the hydropower plant in 25th of October, 2012.

3. Short time period: several months

In both cases the activism gave quick results: four months for Mashtost and two months for Trchkan.

4. Direct involvement of the highest representatives of executive power

Finally, in both of these cases high-ranking officials directly intervened and announced their decisions to the activists. In Trchkan it was the Prime Minister (Tigran Sargssyan) and in Mashtots it was the President (Serzh Sargssyan). These officials arrived to the spots where the activists were protesting. This shows that the activists managed to attract huge attention with their presence at the sights. Also, this allows to state that it was the activism that resulted in a complete change of the initial decisions.

To sum up the analysis of the table findings it is important to underline that decisions related to mining are least prone to be modified, delayed or changed. In fact neither of the two cases where activists achieved full change and cancelation of the initial decisions is related to mining.

On the other hand decisions concerning Sevan can be labeled as flexible-since in two cases the activists managed to modify decisions on Sevan. They did so by using the historical attachment of the nation to the lake Sevan and its importance as a drinking water source for the whole country as leverage.

From twelve cases included into the table four are still continuing. Two of the continuing cases-Toukhmanuk and Qajaran-were so far delayed by the activists, but the projects of remaining two-Teghut and Amulsar- continue to be implemented as planned.

3.3 Online VS Offline Activism in the Eyes of Interviewees

The discourse on distinction between online and offline activism increasingly becomes an indispensable part of studies about activism. Thus, the present thesis also looks into this issue in order to depict how it is reflected in Armenia.

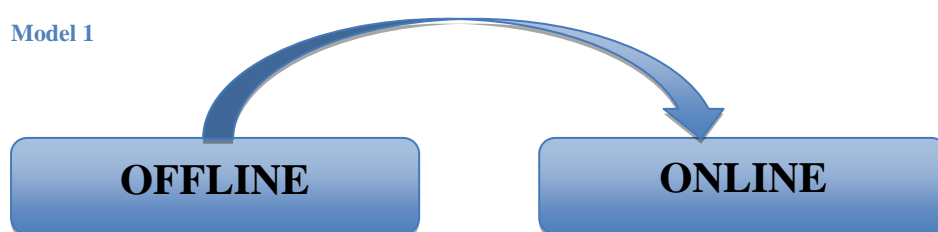
As portrayed in the relevant section of the literature review the crux of the matter lies in the debate whether online activism fosters offline activism or if online activism does not lead to offline activism instead creating the so-called “clicktivism”. In order to explore Armenian online and offline activism several questions were incorporated into interviews with activists. Apart from that the interviews attempted to obtain information on how the Internet is used as a tool in civic initiatives.

Eight interviewees out of ten were asked to discuss this issue. Seven of them were activists and members of the core group of active civilians whose involvement cuts across several cases. One interviewee was an environmental policy expert from AUA.

Not all of the six interviewees responded with great zeal to the question about online and offline activism: two people out of eight did not discuss the issue. The remaining six interviewees had very different opinions and visions of the relationship between these two types of activism. However, as far as the functions of online activism are concerned, there was almost full agreement between the interviewees. They mentioned several core functions, which will be elaborated in detail in the next section.

Based on the analysis of the interviews three models of relationship between online and offline activism were created. The present section discusses and explains each of the models. Next, it presents the functions and the role of online activism as perceived by the interviewees.

Model 1



Two of the interviewees described the mode of interaction between online and offline activism to be flowing. And what is notable in this model is that online activism is described as flowing out of offline activism. According to this argument, online activism is a specific result or outcome of offline activities-particularly information and evidence collection. The Internet serves merely as a platform where all the findings can be shared and awareness on specific environmental violations or other environmental issues raised.

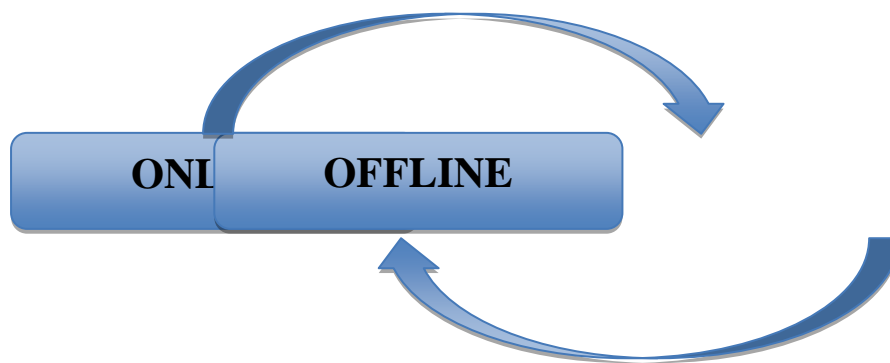
It is important to bring a specific example mentioned by one of the supporters of the above model. The interviewee is a board member of Pan-Armenian Environmental Front-a civic initiative that is currently involved in all of the cases studied in the present paper. Together with his team he created a documentary movie that describes in minute details the current situation with mining in Armenia¹. The interviewee stated that the Internet served as a platform for disseminating the movie and making as many people aware of the issues raised in the documentary as possible. However, the actual work-actual “activism” took place

¹ The movie is called “Armenia’s Breaking Backbone”. The movie is a collection of evidence that tailing dumps are not functioning properly and every minute a huge quantity of toxic waste flows into different rivers of Armenia available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eyRdxRT2v5Y>

offline-in this case through travelling to the sites and shooting the documentary. Only later did this offline activism transform into online activism.

The second interviewee who also believed that offline activism creates online activism provided an interesting comparison between journalism and environmental activism to support her argument. In journalism whatever gets published is a result of an investigation and information collection. The same is the case with activism: evidence and information are first collected, and then only posted on the Internet. This means that without offline activism there is no online activism.

Model 2



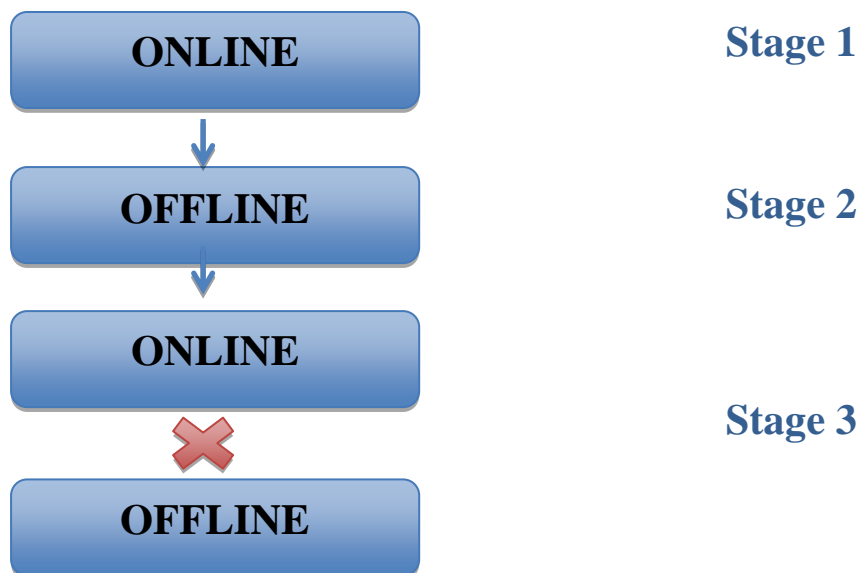
Unlike the previous model, here the relationship between online and offline activism is described as flowing in both directions. Moreover, there is no distinct borderline separating these two types of activism and there is no statement as to what comes first and what comes next. Three interviewees came up with this model: one expert of environmental policy from AUA and two activists.

The supporters of this model argue that the Internet has become an inseparable part of life and thus it is extensively used in all of the stages of organizing and carrying out a campaign. They do not draw a line that separates these two types of activism. One of the interviewees even brings a metaphor of snowball effect: the more information there is on the Internet-the more people mobilize, and the more people mobilize-the more activities and events are organized offline and more information to be shared via Internet.

All of them consider the offline activism to be a more “traditional” form of activism. It was mentioned by one of the interviewees that looking at the number of members of a Facebook page for instance will not provide accurate information about how involved or interested a public is in a particular issue. But if one looks at the topics discussed or at the number of comments addressing an issue in a Facebook group one will gain an insight into

interested the general public is in specific issues. However, if one looks at the “traditional” form of activism then one will grasp the extent to which the public is alarmed concerning a specific environmental issue.

Model 3



This model depicts three stages: stage 1-online activism transforms into offline activism; stage 2-offline activism generates more online activism; stage 3-the newly generated online activism does not transform into more offline activism and stays in the online field. This model, envisioned by one of the interviewees, is important because it depicts a relationship radically different from the previous two models. It claims that at a certain point the online activism stays online and does not transform into direct offline action. That in its turn means that there is a limit to the capacity of the Internet to generate offline activism or to mobilize people.

The supporter of this model is an activist who had been involved in several environmental initiatives, most notably the Save Teghut initiative, Save Trchkan initiative and Mashtots Boulevard initiative. She bases her model on her own experience in the aforementioned cases. As claimed by the interviewee after the third stage the only offline activism that remains is performed by a small core of activists who are involved in many other cases as well and who are determined to continue their activities. Thus, at this stage the general public remains active only by means of online discussions and sharing of information.

3.4 The Role of the Internet

Although the interviewees had quite different views on the type of relationship between the online and offline activism, their vision of what functions the Internet has as a tool used in civic initiatives was unified. Below are three core functions cited by all of the six interviewees:

- Source of information (6 interviewees)
- Means of raising awareness on a case (5 interviewees)
- Involvement of more people (3 interviewees)

No matter to which model of relationship an interviewee adhered, he/she cited at least one of the aforementioned functions that the Internet has. These three functions are in tune with those widely discussed in the relevant literature.

It is important to mention several issues raised by the interviewees regarding the function of information dissemination. Three interviewees claimed that the Internet now and the Internet in 2009 and 2010 is different. Nowadays, there is much “contamination” of this platform. One of the interviewees-who is a journalist herself, called this contamination “Kardashian news” and explained that there is an attempt to distract attention from important issues-including environmental concerns-to unimportant but “attractive” gossip-topics. Thus, she claims that the information spreading function of the Internet decreases with every day.

To conclude this section of analysis it is apt to mention that there is an agreement among the interviewees concerning the function of the Internet. The functions cited by the interviewees correspond to those found in the relevant literature. However, there is a difference in vision of the type of relationship between online and offline activism. The analysis of the interviews revealed three models, each of which have a large logical as well as factual base. In order to identify which models are more relevant to the environmental activism in Armenia each of them will be investigated via case studies of several initiatives.

Chapter 4: Case Studies

4.1 Save Teghut Civic Initiative Case Study

Started in 2007 the Save Teghut Civic Initiative has become the number one issue discussed in terms of environmental activism in Armenia. Having survived nine years of existence and consequently several waves of leadership change, this initiative is probably the most controversial yet the most “loud” case of environmental activism. Interestingly, none of the demands of the activists has ever been met during the mentioned nine-year period. Yet, it still exists, and it still carries out certain activities to influence the reality of the mine being exploited as planned. The following questions rise in this regard:

- 1) How has the initiative survived for nine years, especially after the mine was opened?
- 2) How have the aims and demands of the initiative evolved over time?

The following section aims at providing answers to the aforementioned questions by employing two data-collection tools: content analysis and in-depth interviews with activists. The content of all available articles on Teghut from Ecolur.org from 2007 until 2014 is analyzed as well as the content of articles from hetq.am that contain the key words “Save Teghut Civic Initiative”; “activism”; “public discontent”; “pressure”.

The main issue with Teghut

Teghut is a forest in Lori marz. It is very rich with flora and fauna: there are 200 species of plants, 55 mammal and 86 bird species, and ten reptile and four amphibian species. Six plant and 26 animal species out of above are included in the Red Book of Armenia. “In 2001, the Armenian Government granted the Armenian Copper Program, a Closed Joint Stock Company (CJSC), a 25-year license for exploitation of the Teghut mine. The Teghut mine is the country’s second largest copper-molybdenum mine after the Kajaran mine which is operated by the Zangezur Copper Molybdenum Combine. The territory allocated for mining in Teghut is 1,491 hectares (ha), 82% of which (1,232 ha) is covered with forest. The lands were purchased at very low prices, 38 AMD for 1 m² (around 10 cents US) (Save Teghut Civic Initiative, 2013a) and the mining project envisages clear-cutting of 357 ha of forest. If exploited, the mining will result in about 500 million tons of tailings (highly toxic wastes composed of heavy metals) and 600 million tons of other types of waste, which will

be disposed in the gorge of Duqanadzor River, resulting in 214 ha of territory contaminated with toxic waste” (Ishkanian et al. 2013, 43).

In short there are three main issues that the environmental activists are concerned with:

- Legal basis of allowing the exploitation of the mine
- The emergence of a highly toxic tailing dump that will prevent the villagers of Shnogh and Teghut from doing agricultural activities
- Destruction of the forest (approximately 1,232 ha) and subsequent alternation of ecosystem of the region.

Major Offline Activities: Chronology

It is possible to distinguish between three waves of activism in the history of Teghut:

1st wave: 2005 (when the public first learnt about the license to exploit the Teghut mine)-2007 (when the decision of allocating the territory for mining was finalized and approved)

2nd wave: 2008 (when STCI emerged and started to intensify its activities)-2011 (when the Trchkan waterfall diverted the attention from Teghut)

3rd wave: from 2012 (large march towards Teghut) until now.

- **2005-2007: Emergence and Development (1st Wave)**

Although the Save Teghut Civic Initiative emerged in 2007, there were some activities organized by several NGOs (Ekodar; Ecolur; Ecodashinq) and independent activists prior to 2007-mainly at the end of 2005 and beginning of 2006². The activities were mainly aimed at collecting information about the company and its plans regarding the exploitation of the mine, since the public was unaware of the project.

This was the time period when the first concerns were raised by the aforementioned NGOs regarding the destruction of the forest and inevitable degradation of the nearby soil. This period is marked by large involvement of Diaspora Armenians in the case. The involvement is particularly expressed by personal appeals to the then-president Robert Kocharian via his mail: approximately 2500 letters were sent by Armenians from different corners of the world.

² Although it is accepted to refer to 2007 as a beginning year for the Teghut case, this study looks as far back as 2005 because of the evidence provided by interviewees. The evidence showed that some activism started in 2005, but it was disorganized. However, since this is an in-depth case-study, it is important to incorporate the earliest signs of activism.

Despite the wide concern both inside and outside of Armenia the project moved forward without any changes. Thus, Diaspora's involvement gradually weakened and never again returned to the first high levels of 2006. However, the activities described here actually paved the way for the emergence of the civic initiative.

Witnessing that Diaspora weakened its involvement, the activists from Armenia realized that they should get more organized themselves and rely only on their own strength. In addition to that the Government of the Republic of Armenia announced mining to be a priority for economic development. This decision was shortly followed by allocation of 1,491 ha of Teghut forest for copper molybdenum mining for fifty years in November of 2007. The decision only confirmed that there was a need for activist to organize and come up with a unified strategy and action plan. It is exactly after this decision that the civic initiative of Save Teghut acquired its shape and substance.

- **2008-2011 Active Involvement (2nd Wave)**

Starting from 2008 the Save Teghut Civic Initiative adopted informing the general public on the issue as a prime strategy so that the issue of Teghut acquires a constant presence in the political and social agenda of the country. In spring of 2009 the activists picketed in front of the Ministry of Nature Protection and the Government every day for almost a month. This created an unprecedented public pressure on government representatives, resulting in two public hearings organized by the Prime Minister of Armenia.

In 2009 several NGOs appealed to the Administrative court of Armenia. The NGOs were: Transparency International; Helsinki Citizens Assembly Vanadzor and Ecodar. They accused the Government of the Republic of Armenia; the Ministry of Nature Protection; and the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources of illegal approval of the exploitation of the Teghut mine. However the Court responded with a rejection of the appeal. The justification provided for rejection was that no group of people, as well as no public organization is eligible to protect the rights of other citizens or communities and to appeal to the court. The NGOs involved in the process did not give up and appealed to the Cassation Court, which started a long chain of judicial decisions that ultimately did not result in the actual investigation of the case.

Having reached no success in domestic court, the activists started to attract international attention to the issue. In September 2009 the STCI appealed to the Aarhus Convention committee of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. The committee responded by admitting that the Government of the Republic of Armenia failed to make its citizens aware of its project as well as to involve the parties affected into the

decision-making process (Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee 2010). The activists interpreted this response as a partial success: they managed to draw international attention to the issue and the Aarhus Committee's decision favored the position of the activists.

In 2011 the attention of both the activists and the general public was diverted to the case of Trchkan waterfall-where the construction of a small hydro power plant was approved. A struggle for preserving the waterfall started, which left Teghut unattended for a while and marked a decrease in activism. Apart from that there was no result of appealing to the Armenian Courts and litigate their rejection to accept the appeals. Thus, the struggle for the preservation of the Trchkan waterfall, although successful, marks the end of the second wave of Teghut activism.

- **2012-Present: Not Giving Up (3rd Wave)**

After the Trchkan Waterfall issue was resolved, there was “euphoria” among the activists, since they managed to achieve the fulfillment of their demands. That gave them hope in success, and they embarked with double effort on influencing the policy in Teghut. Thus, the first major activity organized by the STCI was a march towards Teghut in January 2012. By approximate estimates there were 300 people taking part in the march, which is qualified by interviewees as quite a large number.

Next, the strategy of referring to the law and involving the international community and regulatory bodies was continued. There was an appeal to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on 13th of July 2012 stating that the rights of Shnogh and Teghut villagers are violated and they are exposed to enormous health risk. Apart from that a report was submitted to the EU Commission describing the situation and its possible consequences.

In 2013 a new vector of strategy emerged: alternative economic development. The major argument for the opening of the mine was economic benefit it will bring both to the country and the communities. However, the STCI activists managed to come up with an alternative eco-friendly development strategy. As an alternative to mining they suggest the honey business and natural cosmetics business-products that derive from the nature and do not damage it in comparison to mining.

To promote this vector of development the activists organized several honey fairs in Shnogh (September 7th, 2013); and in Teghut (September 10, 2014). The honey fairs include also other products-such as fruits, vegetables, nuts, homemade sweets. Apart from that some families open the doors of their houses for guests who travel from other cities to the fair. This is another source of income for the community members.

Finally, there is a perspective of developing eco-tourism in this region. Eco-tourism will create another source of income, which will be sustainable both in terms of preserving the nature as well as contributing to the economic development of the communities.

The third wave of activism is named “not giving up” because all of the activities in this time period took place parallel to the fact of the mine being exploited. There was no change in the initial plan of exploitation of the mine, but the activists did not give up and continued their struggle. It is exactly because of this fact that the third wave pursued a different vector-alternative development. The activities organized in this period were mainly serving the objective of showing both the general public as well as the communities of Shnogh and Teghut that there was a way of earning a living without the mine. The interviews with leaders and activists of Teghut confirmed this: now, since the mine is being exploited, the strategy of struggling was changed. Therefore it is apt to discuss in a more detailed way the evolution and transformation of the main demands of the initiative from 2007 until recently.

The Evolution of the Initiative’s Ultimate Objectives

From the very first days of the existence of the initiative the main and ultimate objective was closing the mine and declaring the permission to exploit the forest illegitimate. The initiative also made it clear that the declaration of the decision’s illegitimacy should entail the relevant consequences-prosecution of those who made that illegitimate decision. Despite all the activism described in the previous sections the exploitation of the mine began with the enrichment plant being opened in 2014 (December 26). It became clear that the process is going on as planned in 2012, and after that the Initiative posted a detailed enumeration of their objectives, based on the fact the exploitation is inevitable:

“The objective of the initiative group is to ensure that the Government of Armenia fully and exclusively executes its constitutional duties towards the citizens of Armenia, meaning:

- Annul the illegitimate decision on Teghut copper-molybdenum mine exploitation, and, lawfully prosecute officials responsible for the adoption of the disastrous decision.
- Create alternative environment-friendly development projects in Teghut and Shnogh villages by promoting investments, which would ensure sustainable, healthy, profitable and decent jobs for the population of the villages.
- Restore and/or compensate the immense damage caused by ACP, the mining company, to Teghut and Shnogh people, the environment and the cultural heritage.
- Reverse the mining-focused policy of the Government of Armenia, carried out with relentless exploitation of Armenia’s natural resources, thus rapidly driving Armenia into becoming a primitive raw material appendage to the so-called First world countries.” (<http://teghut.am/en/who-we-are/>)

In short although the main goal of the activism did not change throughout all the years and remains the closure of the mine, nevertheless gradually new objectives were developed. As the interviews with STCI representatives showed currently their aim is assisting the villagers of Shnogh and Teghut to create an alternative source of income: eco-friendly natural products; and attracting tourists both from inside and outside of the country.

Summing up it becomes clear that the initiative managed to survive for so long because it continues to pursue its ultimate purpose-closure of the mine. Apart from that the initiative has adapted to the reality and has shown flexibility in its objectives. It is now busy with developing an alternative future for the villagers, a future that will be sustainable both for the people living in Teghut and Shnogh and to the nature. It is apt to mention a quote by one of the initiative activists, who was explaining how the initiative survived after the mine was opened and none of its demands was ever fulfilled: “Environmental activism is the same as protecting the border: if the border is not well-protected the whole country will be conquered. If we give up all the nature will be exploited. We have no right to give up” (Female activist, journalist).

Online Activism of Save Teghut Civic Initiative

Having presented the offline activities organized by the Save Teghut Civic Initiative it is now important to present the online activities. One of the models of relations between online and offline activism developed earlier in the study will be applied to describe the present case.

The initiative has existed for already nine years and consequently there is huge amount of online activism it has created. In a nutshell these activities were aimed at:

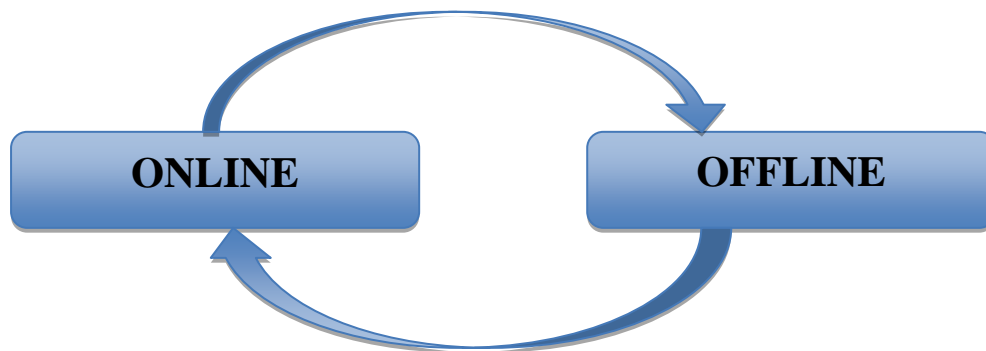
- 1) Informing the general public (particularly during the first wave of activism)
- 2) Organizing offline events (particularly during the second wave of activism)
- 3) Brainstorming for ideas

These online activities were taking place in two Facebook groups (Save Teghut and Save Teghut Forest) and in the webpage of the initiative (teghut.am). The investigation of the mentioned online platforms showed that first there was much online discussion of the issue- mainly information dissemination about the dangers of the projects and potential hazardous consequences for the villagers of Shnogh and Teghut. These active online discussions were followed by protests and demonstrations that took place in the period between 2008-2011 (2nd wave).

Then, when the attention was diverted to Trchkan in 2012 there were only online discussions and reminders of the Teghut issue. And later, with the third wave of offline activism there was a revival of discussions and information posts in the Facebook groups.

It is important to mention that these groups played a key role for organizing the march towards Teghut in 2012 that was attended by approximately 300 people. Now there are only occasional posts and discussions in the group.

The description provided above resembles a swing: activities flow from online to offline and than back to online on a continuous basis. Thus, the most appropriate model is the model No. 2:



The key determinant in this model is the absence of a distinct border between online and offline activism: they are merged. Also, it is impossible to state whether online leads to offline or vice versa. Thus, in the case of Save Teghut, online and offline activities were intertwined and flow in a cyclical manner not allowing for a borderline to be drawn between them.

Conclusion

The Save Teghut Civic Initiative survived nine years of existence. There were several waves of activism, which ranged from passive online discussions to active information dissemination as well as offline demonstrations, protests and a march towards Teghut. The initiative survived even after the mine started its full exploitation and the tailing damp was opened. This survival can be attributed to a shift in the objectives of the activists. Preserving the closure of the mine as a top priority goal the activists adapted to the reality and started to pursue alternative development strategies. They did not give up, because, as well depicted in the quote, they equate activism with protecting border: the border between insatiable human

desire to get the most out of the nature in economic terms and preservation of the nature as a value in itself.

4.2 SOS Trchkan Case Study

When asked to recall a success story of environmental activism in Armenia, all the respondents mention Trchkan either as the only success story or one of them. Indeed, as the analysis above showed, the case of Trchkan is one of the two cases when environmental activists managed to completely change the initial decisions. Moreover the activists attracted so much attention to these two cases that the representatives of executive power arrived to the areas where the activists were gathered and announced about the change in their decisions. Since the case of Trchkan is an example of a decision change that was a result of influence exerted by the activists it is of particular interest for the present study.

The duration of the case is quite brief: the initiative of Trchkan emerged in September 2011, developed during October, and finished in early November 2011. Overall it lasted only two full months and three days of November. However, despite the brevity of the case the activities organized there passed through several phases of development. The activism ultimately resulted in fulfillment of every requirement posed by the initiative. The brevity of the activism and its fruitful results raise a number of critical questions, the most important of which are as follows:

- 1) how did the activism evolve over the two-month period?
- 2) what factors led to the attainment of desired outcomes of the initiative?

The following section aims at providing answers to the aforementioned questions by employing two data-collection tools: content analysis and in-depth interviews with activists. The content of all available articles on Trchkan from Ecolur.org is analyzed as well as the content of articles from hetq.am that contain the key words “Trchkan”; “activism”; “public discontent”; “pressure”.

The main issue with Trchkan

Being situated in Lori Marz, the Trchkan waterfall flows from the river Chichkhan. The place is spectacular in its beauty and that is why the Government registered it as a protected natural area in 2008. If an area is registered as protected, no economic activity is permitted there: it should remain intact. Despite this decision in 2011 the Ministry of Nature Protection approved the application of Robshin LLC for building a small hydro power plant on the river not far away from Trchkan. This decision implies that the power plant will be

using a considerable amount of water. As a result the water flow in the river would ultimately be contracted and the river as it was before the power plant would disappear. Environmental activists with relevant expertise provided estimations that proved the aforementioned point.

The activists put forward the following main demands:

- 1) Cancel the approval provided for building the hydro power plant
- 2) Fully implement the decision of 2008 to include Trchkan into the list of natural monuments of Armenia and provide it a “passport” of natural monument.

The activities organized were aimed at attaining these two goals. The next section will present different phases of the development of activism in the Trchkan case.

How the activism evolved

Although the initiative lasted for only two months, it is possible to distinguish between several phases of development. These are:

- Information gathering and sharing with authorities (Early September) - 1st phase;
- Demonstration of discontent via marches and protests (Late September-early October) - 2nd phase;
- Physical prevention of construction activities (Late October) - 3rd phase.

1st phase-Information gathering and sharing with authorities: A writer from Shirakamut (a nearby village to Trchkan) shared through personal connections as well as through social media information about a planned construction of a hydro power plant in August 2011. Officially the information about the approval provided to Robshin was made available only in September. Several activists started to make inquiries about it in the beginning of September 2011. First a small group of activists travelled to Trchkan to see what was actually going on there in the first week of September. When they arrived they saw some building materials and equipment near the waterfall, which proved the provided information was true.

Next, these same activists went to the Ministry of Nature Protection on 8th of September to make further inquiries about what is planned in Trchkan as well as to share their discontent about what they already saw. The Minister invited them to a discussion the next day. The information he provided was discouraging for the activists: the hydro power plant was indeed approved, but since the environmentalists shared their concerns the Minister ordered to delay the construction for 20 days until more details about the impact of the power plant would be found.

Several days later the Ministry announced that the plant would eventually be constructed, but minor changes were introduced to the plan aimed at securing the preservation of the waterfall. The main change was estimating a quantity of water per second necessary to sustain the waterfall and make sure that the water used by the power plant does not decrease this amount. This decision did not please the activists and thus they moved from the phase of information gathering and sharing to the phase of demonstration of discontent via marches and protests.

2nd phase - Demonstration of discontent via marches and protests: The activists realized that the information they provided to the Ministry of Nature Protection did not lead it to cancel its permit. Thus, they organized several protests and demonstrations in late September and early October. Most importantly they organized a march of protest towards Teghut. On 22nd of October 150 people travelled to Trchkan with placards calling for the cancellation of the plan to build the hydro power plant. The activists qualify this act as a unique example of volunteer commitment to an issue: all of the people who took part in the march paid for their trip and for their food themselves and there was no external funding. However, these activities did not result in any change. Thus, the activists moved on to the next phase-physical prevention of construction activities.

3rd Phase - prevention of construction activities: After all the information sharing and demonstration of discontent the activists did not see anything changing as a result. The construction was not banned, and more building material was delivered to the site. Thus, the only way to prevent the construction was physically - by not giving way to the bulldozer for entering the site. As described by interviewees who took part in that action the idea to use physical force came spontaneously. It happened after the march of protest on 25nd of October, when a group of ten activists decided to put up tents there and organize a 24-hour watch not to allow the heavy machinery enter the territory of the waterfall. This action gave quick and very fruitful results, and on 3rd of November the Prime Minister Tigran Sargssyan arrived at the site and announced to the activists that the decision was changed: the status of the waterfall as a protected area will be restored and no hydro power plant will be built on it.

This was the first case in the 2007-2014 period when the activists managed to completely change an approved project. On top of that they managed to draw the highest attention to their case, as a result of which the Prime Minister himself arrived to the site to announce the decision. Activists were in euphoria. Especially after the inability to do anything about Teghut, this victory gave them a feeling that they should still continue their struggle for Teghut and there is a hope that they can actually influence the decisions of the government.

The demand concerning the passport of a protected natural monument for Trchkan was resolved a year later - by governmental decision 293-N of November 9, 2012.

Factors leading to success

The case of Trchkan was unprecedented since 2007: in no other case was a governmental decision concerning environmental issue altered as a result of activism. The most important factor that led to success is physical prevention of construction activities. The two previous phases - information gathering and sharing and demonstration of discontent did not have any reaction from the government: these activities went by unnoticed. But the 24-hour watch and prevention of the bulldozers from entering the vicinity of waterfall gave quick and fruitful results. The same can be stated for the second case of environmental success - the Mashtots Boulevard. Thus, the activists were quick enough to realize that other means do not bring results, and some of them found the courage to stay in tents and not allow the undesired construction.

Another factor leading to success is the unity among the activists. Different people with different backgrounds and interests were involved, who, despite their differences, united around the idea of preserving the waterfall and acted together. There were no environmental NGOs involved: the only NGO involved was the Transparency International.

Finally there was a factor of quick reaction and sober evaluation of reality. Due to that the activists understood, or even “smelled” that there were no perspectives in simply sharing information with the Government or demonstrating public discontent. They were quick enough to change their activities and strategies.

Online Activism of Trchkan Civic Initiative

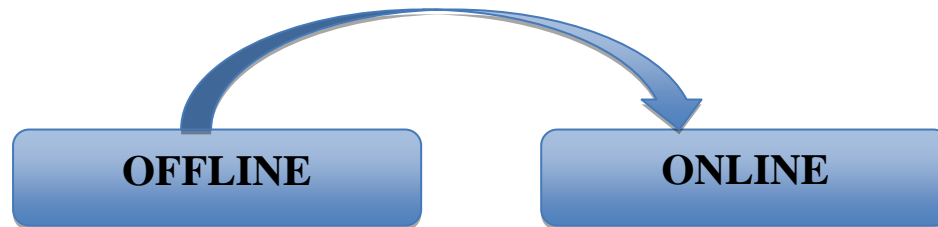
Having presented the offline activities organized by the activists in Trchkan it is now important to present the online activities. One of the models of relations between online and offline activism developed earlier in the study will be applied to describe the present case.

Since the case was developed very quickly and over a short period of time it is very easy to trace back the online activism and its development. The investigation of Facebook pages allows distinguishing between the following main goals of online activism in this particular case:

- 1) information dissemination
- 2) organization of offline activities

In the first phase of offline activism a group of activists travelled to Trchkan to see what was going on there. When they found that a small hydro power plant is planned to be

constructed in Trchkan they created the Facebook pages and started to disseminate the information they found through that platform. Thus, the first model of the online-offline relation is applicable:



Unlike the case of Teghut in this case a clear line can be drawn between what was first and what was second. If there were no prior information collection, no online activism would be possible. However, there exists a small feedback loop in a sense that after the information was gathered offline and shared online, more people were made aware of the issue. As a result there were more people participating in the march towards the waterfall. In spite of this feedback loop the overall model is one flowing from offline to online: the online platform (the Facebook pages) served only as facilitator of organizing offline activities. It can be stated that in the case of Trchkan the online activism did not play a significant role.

Conclusion

The case of Trchkan is the first case since 2007 when the activists managed to reach their goals and stop the undesired construction of a small hydro power plant. The activism developed quickly and brought results in just a two-month period. After passing through the stages of information collection and sharing as well as demonstration of discontent the activists employed a powerful tool - physical presence and prevention of construction. This tool together with unification of the activists struggling for the preservation of the waterfall made the government change its decision. On top of that the case attracted so much attention and made so much noise that the Prime Minister himself arrived to the area where activists were gathered and announced about the change in the governmental decision. The victory of Trchkan was an important step for forming a core group of activists who continued their activities in other cases when environment was under threat.

4.3 Comparative Analysis of Teghut and Trchkan

The two cases serve to illustrate how different the outcomes of environmental activism in Armenia can be. They are also aimed at finding answers to several of research questions the present study addresses: what factors facilitate successful influence and what factors create obstacle for it. This section aims at summarizing the main findings of the case studies and providing their comparative analysis.

From a very brief glance it is possible to identify at least three major differences among the cases: first and the most obvious difference is that Teghut is a failure in terms of influencing policy-making whereas Trchkan is a success story. Second difference is the type of projects: in Teghut it is a mining project and in Trchkan it was a small hydro power plant construction. Finally, third difference is the time period: Teghut is still continuing and dates as far back as 2005, whereas Trchkan lasted for only two months-from September to early November 2012.

As confirmed by findings of the table presented earlier, mining-related projects are the most resistant to influence. There was only one case when a mining-related project was modified (Kapan) and one case when it was delayed (Qajaran). Teghut seems to be the best illustration of this: despite civilian activists and several NGOs raising their concerns when the projects was in its earliest phase, the implementation proceeded as planned.

It is important to note that one of the components that potentially explains the resistance of mining to influence is finance: the amount of money invested for mining in Teghut is enormous compared to Trchkan's hydro power plant investments. Subsequently, there is a huge difference in expected gain not only to the private companies who implement the project, but also to the state budget, which receives the taxes.

Another aspect to be noted in this regard is the attitude of the nearby community/communities to the respective projects. If in case of Trchkan the hydro power plant was a threat for the nearby community because it might deplete their water resources, in case of Teghut the whole process of project implementation provides potential work places. Consequently the communities near Teghut looked favorably at the project because it is a potential workplace for them, whereas the communities near Trchkan joined the activists in their protest against the hydro power plant. This argument also refers to the financial component discussed above.

There is an important difference in terms of strategies deployed by activists in the two cases that needs to be discussed. In Trchkan a 24-hour night camp was established for two weeks and activists physically prevented the heavy machinery from entering the site whereas

in Teghut these techniques were not used. The strategy in Teghut was more oriented towards the legislative sphere-involving appeals to courts both in Armenia and outside of Armenia. Physical prevention played a key role in ensuring the success of Trchkan.

To sum up the analysis and to refer it back to the posed research questions it is important to state that the evidence shows that mining is a major obstacle for influencing policy-making. Mining requires big financial investments and assumes high profit, which makes it extremely difficult to influence these kinds of projects. There is not a single case so far when a mine was closed after being constructed and exploited. The only mining-related cases discussed above were influenced prior to the start of exploitation.

On the other hand what makes influence much more effective is physical presence at the site as well as physical prevention of project implementation. This was the case not only in Trchkan, but also in Mashtots and Qajaran, and in all of these cases this strategy brought fruitful results.

The case studies illustrate that influence exerted by environmental activism in Armenia ranges from failure to success. There are a number of variables and circumstances that contribute to the successful or unsuccessful influence, from which this study singled out mining as an obstacle and physical presence and prevention as a facilitator of influence.

Chapter 5: Analysis of Interviews with Government Representatives

“Civil society has considerable role during the recent years”

Deputy Minister of Nature Protection S. Papyan

The study of environmental activism and its influence on decision making requires consideration of at least two blocs: the civil society bloc and the decision-making or government bloc. Thus, in order to include viewpoints and attitudes from both “camps” two interviews were conducted with representatives of government: one representative of legislative branch of power (Vardan Ayvazyan) and one representative of executive branch of power (Simon Papyan). Vardan Ayvazyan has been the Minister of Nature Protection from 2001 to 2007. After that, he became a member of National Assembly and currently is the chair of Economic Committee. Simon Papyan has been the Deputy Minister of Nature Protection since 2002.

These two interviews had some common features and touched some similar issues; nevertheless they were different in structure and in overall content. Thus it is extremely important to present in minute details each of the interviews concentrating on similarities and differences between them.

Similarities: Both interviewees, when asked about relations with civil society representatives and activists, referred to the Aarhus convention as a major international document regulating relations between the aforementioned actors. Also, they both referred to Armenian legislation and specific institutions that deal with this issue, such as the public council adherent to the Minister of Nature Protection as well as the Council on Sustainable Development adhered to the Prime Minister.

Aarhus convention in the view of both interviewees is a relations-defining document. The UN Economic Commission for Europe created the Aarhus convention in 1988. The full name of the document is “Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters”. The republic of Armenia became the 16th country to ratify it on October 30th, 2001. The document has a provision that obliges the countries to involve public and civil society representatives into the decision-making process concerning the environment (article 6). Both interviewees emphasize this article as the framework under which the cooperation takes place.

Another institution frequently referred to is the Council on Sustainable Development. The council was created in 2002 and involves a number of representatives of the executive branch as well as civil society. As provided by the official government site, the main purpose of the council is “to provide for the design of sustainable development-oriented programs, as well as to foster and stimulate public participation in decision-making processes in the sphere of sustainable development.” This council was provided as an example of institution which fosters cooperation between civil society and government as well as involvement of civil society representatives in the decision-making process, by both interviewees.

Finally, both interviewees avoided providing any specific examples on cooperation or interaction with the activists or civil society representatives. Instead, they generalized their answers, never delving into any specific cases.

To sum up, the main similarity between the two interviews is frequent reference to the legislation of the Republic of Armenia as well as the Aarhus convention. These documents do not only regulate the relations between the government and civil society, but also serve as the guarantors of public involvement in the decision-making process. This reference to legislation is an important point, since the interviews with activists also have frequent to the same documents and institutions.

Differences: The two interviews differed first of all in their duration: Vardan Ayvazyan spoke for twenty-one minutes, whereas Simon Papyan spoke only seven minutes. Not only there was a difference in duration, but also in the overall structure of the speech: Mr. Ayvazyan spoke longer, but he spoke much more generally and in a broader context allowing philosophical speculations on issues such as what place a human being has in the hierarchy of nature, and how natural is the use of resources by a human being. On the other hand, Mr. Papyan answered directly to my questions and allowed no deviation from the main topic.

The main issue around which Mr. Ayvazyan built his speech and arguments is sustainable development. He explained the concept as: “we should develop the whole without endangering our future-smart exploitation of resources.” Any cooperation, in his view, should take into account this concept of sustainable development. When asked about the ideal type of activism he would like to see in Armenia, Mr. Ayvazyan stated that an ideal type of activism would be one based on the concept of sustainable development.

Mr. Papyan seemed to have prepared his speech in advance (since he was notified of the topic of my research) and was eager to provide me the information he had prepared. He made it very clear that the cooperation and interaction between the decision-makers and

activists is prescribed by the law and hence it is a part of the decision-making process. He referred to a recent law-adopted in November 2014 (1325-N). The law specifies how the general public as well as civil society can take part in public hearings and discussions of new decisions or projects. It mainly refers to the Environmental Impact Assessment on its different stages. As emphasized by Mr. Papyan, this law is a crucial part of interaction between government and activists.

Another important difference to mention is the response of the interviewees to the question about the positive and negative sides of activism. Table 4 summarizes their responses in a systematized way:

Table 4: Government Representatives' Description of Positive and Negative Sides of Activism

	Positive Sides of Activism	Negative Sides of Activism
Ayvazyan	“The positive side is the existence of such organizations and their involvement in real evaluation of current environmental problems and their possible solutions”	“The negative sides are extremism in many cases; also inadequate evaluation of situation with environment which can result in confrontation between this sector and the Government”
Papyan	“If they are objective in their problem-definition they are quite helpful. It is good to have “external eye”: we cannot work ideally-flawlessly, and if they manage to fix our flaws -that is quite constructive and helpful”	“If they have narrow materialistic (shahaditakan) purposes. For example if they are financed by somebody and they only take steps for that money that doesn't help”

To summarize this part it is important to mention several points. Firstly, having an insight into the views of government representatives is extremely important for the present work. It made clear that the government views activism as an intrinsic part of decision-making process, since it is prescribed by the law-both international and Armenian. Secondly, both interviewees see positive and negative sides of that activism-although their views differ on this issue. And finally, although both representatives talk about “presence”, “cooperation”, “involvement” and “role”, none of them ever used the word “influence”-which is key for the present study.

Conclusion

The study of environmental activism in Armenia, presented in this thesis, revealed several important findings, while answering the research questions. Each of the questions is addressed below.

- Does environmental activism have an impact on policy-making in Armenia?

The analysis shows that there is an impact in the form of delay, modification and change. Out of 12 cases of environmental activism three were delayed, three were modified and two were fully changed. In four remaining cases there was no influence. This finding corresponds to the literature review: country-specific studies showed that there are different levels of influence in each country. No generalizations are possible to make, since in each country the outcome of environmental activism varies considerably. However, literature that studies environmental activism in general shows that there is a tendency for environmental activism to become a part of policy-making cycle. As the present study shows, environmental activists in Armenia indeed are a part of policy-making cycle through their ability to influence it.

- How does online activism relate to environmental activism?

Aiming to present a holistic picture of environmental activism in Armenia, the present study looked at the relation of online activism to offline. Based on interviews three models of relations were created. These are:

1. Online activism flowing out of offline activism;
2. Online and offline activisms interconnected and intertwined with no distinct boundary;
3. Online activism resulting in offline activism, which makes a loop and returns to the online platform and remains there.

These models were applied to the case studies. Model No. 2 is applicable to the case of Teghut, since there was no clear boundary between online and offline activisms. Model No. 1 is applicable to the case of Trchkan, since there was much preliminary offline activism prior to being expressed online. These activities mainly included fact-finding and information-gathering.

Apart from that the table revealed that in all the 12 cases under study some online activism was carried out. The Internet was used as a tool for spreading information, raising awareness on a case and involving more people. These three core functions are in full agreement with those found by Della Porta and Mosca (2005).

- What factors facilitate influence on policy- making?

It was found that the two most successful cases, when the activists fully achieved a policy change, used the strategy of 24-hour presence at the sites and physical prevention of construction activities. To emphasize the effectiveness of these strategies it should be mentioned that in case of Qajaran – the only mining – related case that was delayed – the villagers also used the strategy of physical prevention of construction activities. Thus, it can be stated constant presence and physical prevention of undesirable activities facilitate influence on policy-making.

- What factors create obstacles for influence on policy-making?

From eight cases when there was some form of influence on policy-making, only two cases are mining-related: the case of Qajaran that was delayed and the case of Kanach Kapan that was modified. Moreover: from four cases with no influence three are mining-related: the cases of Teghut, Hrazdan and Amulsar. It can be concluded that mining is a major obstacle for influencing policy-making. However it should be noted that further research is likely to reveal more obstacles, for instance obstacles related to the activists or organization of initiatives.

Based on the above discussion of research questions it is now possible to discuss whether the hypothesis is approved or rejected. The hypothesis is: despite being a post-communist country Armenia has strong civic engagement in environmental issues. Since the “strength” is defined here by ability to influence policy-making the hypothesis is approved, because the table showed that from 12 cases of environmental activism from 2007 to 2014 eight were delayed, modified, or changed.

This finding corresponds to those studies that disclaim the thesis of weak civil society in post-communist countries. It particularly fits in the argument posed by Ekiert and Foa (2011); and Green (2002) that the term “post-communist” itself is inappropriate. The countries referred to through this term are different in their political, economic and social factors.

It should be noted that the study addressed only one type of civic activism. Further research is needed in other spheres of civic activism to allow claiming overall strength or weakness of civil society in Armenia.

REFERENCES

- Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee. 2010. *Decision*.
- Della Porta, Donatella, and Lorenzo Mosca. 2005. "Global-Net for Global Movements? A Network of Networks for a Movement of Movements." *Journal of Public Policy* 25 (01): 165–90.
- Diamond, Larry Jay. 1994. "Toward Democratic Consolidation." *Journal of Democracy* 5 (3): 4–17.
- Ekiert, Grzegorz, and Roberto Foa. 2011. "Civil Society Weakness in PostCommunist Europe: A Preliminary Assessment." *Carlo Alberto Notebooks*.—2011.—URL: [Www. Carloalberto. Org/working_papers](http://www.carloalberto.org/working_papers). <http://carloalberto.org/assets/working-papers/no.198.pdf>.
- Falkner, Robert. 2012. "Global Environmentalism and the Greening of International Society." *International Affairs* 88 (3): 503–22.
- Feldman, David L., and Ivan Pavlovich Blokov. 2009. "Promoting an Environmental Civil Society: Politics, Policy, and Russia's Post-1991 Experience." *Review of Policy Research* 26 (6): 729–59.
- Fukuyama, Francis. 2001. "Social Capital, Civil Society and Development." *Third World Quarterly* 22 (1): 7–20.
- García-Galera, María-Carmen, Mercedes Del-Hoyo-Hurtado, and Cristóbal Fernández-Muñoz. 2014. "Engaged Youth in the Internet. The Role of Social Networks in Social Active Participation." *Jóvenes Comprometidos En La Red: El Papel de Las Redes Sociales En La Participación Social Activa*. 22 (43): 35–43.
- Geukjian, Ohannes. 2013. *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict in the South Caucasus: Nagorno-Karabakh and the Legacy of Soviet Nationalities Policy*. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd.
- Green, Andrew T. 2002. "Comparative Development of Post-Communist Civil Societies." *Europe-Asia Studies* 54 (3): 455–71.
- Harlow, Summer, and Dustin Harp. 2012. "Collective Action on the Web: A Cross-Cultural Study of Social Networking Sites and Online and Offline Activism in the United States and Latin America." *Information, Communication & Society* 15 (2): 196–216.
- Hirzalla, Fadi, and Liesbet van Zoonen. 2011. "Beyond the Online/Offline Divide How Youth's Online and Offline Civic Activities Converge." *Social Science Computer Review* 29 (4): 481–98.
- Howard, Marc Morjé. 2003. *The Weakness of Civil Society in Post-Communist Europe*. Cambridge University Press.
- Ishkanian, Armine. 2008. *Democracy Building and Civil Society in Post-Soviet Armenia*. Routledge.
- Ishkanian, Armine, Evelina Gyulkhandanyan, Sona Manusyan, and Arpy Manusyan. 2013. "Civil Society, Development and Environmental Activism in Armenia." http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/54755/1/Ishkanian_Civil_Society_Development_Environmental_Activism_America_2013.pdf.
- Jasanoff, Sheila. 1997. "NGOs and the Environment: From Knowledge to Action." *Third World Quarterly* 18 (3): 579–94.

- Khazanov, Anatoly M. 1995. *After the USSR: Ethnicity, Nationalism and Politics in the Commonwealth of Independent States*. Cambridge Univ Press.
<http://journals.cambridge.org/production/action/cjoGetFulltext?fulltextid=6272768>.
- Letki, Natalia. 2004. "Socialization for Participation? Trust, Membership, and Democratization in East-Central Europe." *Political Research Quarterly* 57 (4): 665–79.
- Levy, Marc A. 1995. "Is the Environment a National Security Issue?" *International Security*, 35–62.
- Marquart-Pyatt, Sandra T. 2012. "Explaining Environmental Activism Across Countries." *Society & Natural Resources* 25 (7): 683–99.
- Mathews, Jessica Tuchman. 1989. "Redefining Security." *Foreign Affairs*, 162–77.
- Mencher, Joan. 1999. "NGOs: Are They a Force for Change?" *Economic and Political Weekly*, 2081–86.
- Oser, Jennifer, Marc Hooghe, and Sofie Marien. 2013. "Is Online Participation Distinct from Offline Participation? A Latent Class Analysis of Participation Types and Their Stratification." *Political Research Quarterly* 66 (1): 91–101.
- Ost, David. 1993. "The Politics of Interest in Post-Communist East Europe." *Theory and Society* 22 (4): 453–85.
- Paturyan, Yevgenya Jenny, and Valentina Gevorgyan. 2014. "Armenian Civil Society after Twenty Years of Transition: Still Post-Communist?" available at http://www.ascn.ch/dms/downloads/Research/Projects-Armenia-2011/Armenian_Civil_Society_after_Twenty_Years_of_Transition.pdf.
- Pietrzyk-Reeves, Dorota. 2008. "Weak Civic Engagement? Post-Communist Participation and Democratic Consolidation." *Polish Sociological Review*, no. 1 (161): 73–87.
- Raustiala, Kal. 1997. "States, NGOs, and International Environmental Institutions." *International Studies Quarterly* 41 (4): 719–40.
- Rootes, Christopher. 2012. "Climate Change, Environmental Activism and Community Action in Britain." *Social Alternatives* 31 (1): 24.
- Simpson, Adam. 2013. "Challenging Hydropower Development in Myanmar (Burma): Cross-Border Activism under a Regime in Transition." *The Pacific Review* 26 (2): 129–52.
- Stepan, Alfred C., and Juan José Linz. 1996. "Toward Consolidated Democracies." *Journal of Democracy* 7 (2): 14–33.
- Suny, Ronald Grigor. 1993. *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union*. Stanford University Press.
<http://works.swarthmore.edu/alum-books/1529/>.
- Tocqueville, Alexis de. [1864] 2000. *Democracy in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Tusale, Rollin F. 2007. "A Boon or a Bane? The Role of Civil Society in Third-and Fourth-Wave Democracies." *International Political Science Review* 28 (3): 361–86.
- Visser, Sara, and Dietlind Stolle. 2014. "Spill-over Effects between Facebook and On/offline Political Participation? Evidence from a Two-Wave Panel Study." *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, no. just-accepted.
<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/19331681.2014.888383>.
- Weigle, Marcia A., and Jim Butterfield. 1992. "Civil Society in Reforming Communist Regimes: The Logic of Emergence." *Comparative Politics*, 1–23.

Online Resources Used:

Ecolur.org (109 articles)

Hetq.am (40 articles)

Teghut.am (30 articles)