CONSTRUCTION OF A CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF SOCIAL POTENTIAL FOR AN ETHNOPOLITICAL CONFLICT

LYUDMILA HARUTUNYAN, MARIA ZASLAVSKAYA

The potential for the conflict in a society is a set of social contradictions in a society which can become a precondition for intensifying the conflict situation, its start (or reanimation) and the further escalation of the conflict. In this work, the structure *of social* potential for an ethnopolitical conflict is considered. The social potential for the ethnic conflict relates to public ideas and images which on the one hand can be considered as *a condition* for the start and development of conflict, and on the other hand as a source of the *process* of the development of the conflict through transformation of these public ideas. Our purpose is to consider starting conditions for transformation of public ideas and images in the group during social conflict development. We will introduce some methods for measuring the *conflict potential* through the prism of public ideas.

In particular, by using the mentioned methods it is possible to compare the structure of the conflict potentials in the Armenian society with the Azerbaijanis and Turks by analysis of size of the ethnic conflict potential for the Armenian population. Comparative analysis revealed a difference in these structures, and it is possible to compare the features of dynamics of these potentials in the context of present events.

Let us note that in the public view dominating the Armenian society, the concepts "Turk" and "Azerbaijani" were often identified. There are some reasons for this fact: for example, a similarity in customs, religions, language; the Azerbaijan language is very similar to the Turkish one (however, by their religion Azerbaijanis are basically Muslims - Shiites, Turks are basically Muslims-Sunnites). The identification of images of the Azerbaijani and the Turk was also promoted by Turkey constantly supporting Azerbaijan on the international scene, and by numerous steps of Turkish authorities protecting the Azerbaijan government points of view. Some historical analogies are the reasons to this phenomenon. Because of the Genocide of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire in 1915 numerous Armenian populations in Western Armenia disappeared; the significant part was exterminated, another part was deported to far areas of the Ottoman Empire. Many outstanding figures of the Armenian culture were lost. In collective memory "the image of the enemy" - Turk was affirmed. Similar elements in Armenian people consciousness were showed, in particular, in the events connected with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

In particular, the anti-Armenian pogroms in Sumgait and in Baku were considered in Armenia as the bloody analogue of the Genocide of 1915. The huge inflow of refugees from Azerbaijan after these pogroms considerably promoted in the collective consciousness the establishment of connection between the mentioned events and those of 1915. The new "image of the enemy" (already - the Azerbaijani) arose. The recent events connected with the possible opening of the Armenian-Turkish border and signing of the Protocols, promoted the certain transformation of the conflict potential in the Armenian society.

Let us note that it is urgent to study and measure the social potential for the "frozen" ethnopolitical conflicts when the development of the conflict depends on internal, often latent mechanisms. There were enough frequent cases when the social conflicts blow up in at first sight quite safe societies as a result of a public view transformation.

There is a set of various approaches to the analysis of similar conflicts. Terrell Northrup considers the *threat* of an ethnic identity as the basic catalyst of social and, in particular, of the ethnic conflict. Here it is important to note that threat can be both real and imaginary, but can be realized by members of the group as real. The transformation of public views in which the threat becomes important, promotes the further escalation of the conflict toward the group mobilization and the transition of the conflict in the active stage (T. Northrup, 1989).

For example, the result of the analysis of ethnic conflicts in former Yugoslavia shows a strong influence of political elites on the escalation of ethnic intensity. "I argue that violent conflict along with ethnic cleavages is provoked by elites in order to create a domestic political context where ethnicity is the only politically relevant identity", - asserts Gagnon (V.P. Gagnon, Jr., 1995). He asserts that there was no real threat to the Serbian ethnic identity. Serbs had doubtless leadership in Yugoslavia since 1987, and ethnic intensity was provoked by the representatives of political elite of Serbia as a result of stimulation of the mechanism of group dynamics for escalating ethnic intensity. "Ideas such as ethnicity, religion, culture, and class therefore play a key role as instruments of power and influence... Images alleged threats from the outside world can play a key role in this domestic political strategy", - writes Gagnon (V.P. Gagnon, Jr., 1995).

But the question is: whether we can assert that the political manipulation defines the ways of the conflict development.

The answer, obviously, is negative. Certain conditions, expressed in the *readiness* of society (or groups) to accept a certain influence by the manipulating subject are necessary for the escalation of the conflict.

Hence, the success of political manipulation depends on the degree of *readiness* of members of groups to apprehend an idea of external threat. This degree of *readiness* of group members to apprehend idea of threat depends on the public ideas and images disseminated among the members of group. For example, historical events or collective ethnic memory can contain elements of threat. Threats having historical basis frequently can become symbols of ethnic thought and can be more effective than the phenomena of reality. An example of threat, interiorized in the collective memory of people, is a memory of the Armenian genocide in 1915 in the Ottoman Empire.

The analysis of some conflicts alongside with historical experience enables to draw out the following major factors influencing the degree of readiness of the population to apprehend this or that threat (see, for example, Srbljinovic, D. etc, 2003):

- Satisfaction with the level of economic, political, social security;
- Social network of direct contacts among the representatives of different ethnic groups;
- Ethnically coloured information which can be initiated by mass-media, public meetings of ethnic leaders and politicians, hearings, etc.

According to Gurr (Gurr T. R., 1998), the high level of social and economic dissatisfaction is an important source of ethnic mobilization. This explains the fact of great vulnerability of post-totalitarian countries in the escalation of ethnic conflicts. Hard so-

cial condition and hard economic situation of the population may be a direct mechanism for conflict escalation when some preconditions are present, in particular, intolerance among different populations and a superficial democratization of politics.

The social network of direct contacts among the representatives of different ethnic groups has different influence on the conflict potential and interethnic opposition processes. On the one hand, direct contacts of the representatives of ethnic groups sometimes promote greater tolerance and friendship among them, on the other hand, according to a number of researches (see Kalin, R., 1995) the degree of intolerance of dominating group against not dominating group will increase with the increase of activity of the last, and such dependence is nonlinear. Nonlinear dependences between racial intolerance and concentration of ethnic groups are also mentioned by Bullock (Bullock, C., 1976) and Longshore (Longshore, D., 1982). These authors, investigating the ethnic intensity in the USA, came to the conclusion that animosities against the black population reach a maximum between 40 % and 60 % of its concentration among the whites, in a case, when the access to the resources of authority for two racial groups are almost identical.

Thus, the transformation of public ideas and images can be realized on the one hand, as a result of political influence, implemented by a manipulation of public opinions. On the other hand, the transformation of public ideas and images can arise also without purposeful influence, as a result of unguided changes occurring in a society.

Let us note that *threats* of ethnic identity are the clearly outlined aspect in public views. According to the grid of categories by Tejfel and Turner, cognitive mechanisms of internalization of social and, in particular, ethnic identity are connected with the processes of identifications and intergroup comparison. According to this approach, the social identification of in-group members, the social differentiation and designing of out-group are constructed on the process of categorization of concepts "we" and "they" (Tejfel 1979: 33-47).

Actually, the internalization of threats of one's ethnic identity enhances the opposition of own identity to another. It can become the precondition for the promotion of ethnic contradictions (real or imaginary on the foreground) and the rise of a conflict situation with its possible development into the ethnic conflict.

We will consider three basic components of conflict potential: *affective, cognitive and conative (behavioural).* The *affective* component is defined by a measure of emotional estimate of members of in-group towards members of out-group in a "positive - negative" scale. *The cognitive* component is a complex of knowledge and opinions of in-group members concerning the out-group members underlying the alteration of categories "we" - "they". *The conative* component is defined by concrete actions or readiness of in-group members to concrete actions towards out-group members. A correlation of these components and their influence on the development of social conflicts are ambiguous.

One of the obvious laws is the fact that the increase of conflict potential on affective level leads to the increase of the conative component of conflict potential, when individuals, realizing threats to their identity, resort to concrete actions or violence. For example, Ariel Sharon's visit to the Sacred Mountain in September, 2000, caused a strong emotional reaction of the Muslim population and further escalation of intifade (see D.B.Goetze, P.James, 2004).

However, the relations among these components sometimes are not so obvious. An increase of emotional component of conflict potential sometimes does not lead to concrete actions, and can be combined with quite tolerant behaviour. For example, there are cases when having a negative attitude toward a group as a whole, individuals, nevertheless, relate quite friendly with individual members of that group, for example, neighbours - representatives of other nations. For instance, (Dugandzhija N., 1991) Nikolay Durandzhija's research illustrates such phenomenon in Yugoslavia. This research showed that 43 % of the population had characterized ethnic attitudes in Yugoslavia as extremely bad, and only 2.7 % showed no attitudes in their concrete social network. There are also similar cases when Azerbaijanis hid their neighbour Armenians in their houses during pogroms in Baku 1989-1990.

The cognitive component of potential is more actual in conflict escalation. When the cognitive component is absent, the emotional one is not stable. Even if the emotional component is a source of certain actions, these actions in general are not stable and depend on occasional circumstances.

It is possible to consider the transformation of cognitive component in the behaviour of group members using mechanisms of the so-called "cascading" (M. Somer, 2001). According to this model, changes in behaviour of concrete individuals are in direct dependence from the information received from other individuals in the group. Mechanisms of cascading illustrate the development of ethnic conflicts in Croatia (D. Seculic et al, 2002). It had a strong influence on the process of cascading which was expressed by mass meetings in Armenia and military mobilization in Karabakh.

The design procedure of the social potential for conflict is based on the following considerations. We can define areas of inconsistence and consistency in public ideas. These areas are obtained using intervals of scales describing the three mentioned components of conflict potential; correlation between these components is considered. The area of consistency in public ideas corresponds to the significant positive correlation between the mentioned components. The area of discrepancy corresponds to the case when there is no correlation between all these components. Other cases of double correlation are shown in the table below.

Table

Typology of situations concerning the correlation between the components of the potential for conflict.

	Affective component	*Cognitive component*
Cognitive component	*Situation 1.* There are stereotypical ideas concerning relations between groups which are not expressed in visible actions.	
Conative component	*Situation 2.* Situation when there are emotional actions between the groups.	*Situation 3.* Situation when there are relations between groups based on rational intentions.

Thus, each situation is characterized by two basic characteristics: *internal consistency* and *depth of ethnic contradictions*.

Let us note that the depth of ethnic contradictions can be measured by means of average scale values on three components, varying from the extremely negative to the extremely positive.

The optimal method of measuring final scales, in our opinion, is the construction of 5-mark ordinal aggregated scales of potential component measurement where a score of 5 characterizes the lowest level of conflict potential for the given component, and a score of 1 - the maximum level of conflict potential for the given component. For example, three aggregated scales could be constructed by describing the corresponding components of conflict potential. Final scales could be presented by a 5-score system where a score of 5 characterizes the lowest level of conflict potential for the given component, and a score of 1 - the maximum level. For example, the *affective* component was finally estimated using the following scale "5 – an extremely positive attitude towards the ethnos, 4 - quite a positive attitude towards the ethnos, 3 – a neutral attitude towards the ethnos, 2 - rather a negative attitude towards the ethnos, 1 – an extremely negative attitude towards the ethnos″.

The *cognitive* component was estimated using a similar scale: "5 – the absence of opposition between one's own ethnic identity and the identity of the other ethnos, 4 - a small degree of opposition between one's own ethnic identity and the identity of the other ethnos, 3 - an average degree of opposition between one's own ethnic identity and the identity of the other ethnos, 2 - a high degree of opposition to another ethnic identity, 1 - the highest degree of opposition to another ethnic identity".

The *conative* component was estimated on the following scale: "5 - extreme readiness to cooperate with the ethnos, 4 – average readiness to cooperate with the ethnos, 3 - indifferent attitude to interact with the ethnos, 2 - average readiness to confront the ethnos, 1 - extreme readiness to conflict with the ethnos″. The research of conflicts according to the scheme implies measuring and analyzing the ratio of all the three components of the social potential for conflict.

A population survey in Armenia has been conducted to study and compare conflict potential considering the relations between two nations: the relations between Armenians and Turks, and Armenians and Azerbaijanis[1].

The research has used techniques of Likert, Terthstoun, as well as projective techniques for analyzing the affective component of the potential, and also for estimating cognitive categories "we" and "they". For the analysis of the cognitive component the "enemy image" investigation techniques have been used. Traditional technique of "social distance" estimation, as well as using indirect techniques enabled to estimate the conative component in the context of readiness of the respondents to certain behaviour. The conative component was studied using the analysis of real interactions between the representatives of ethnic groups. As a result, three aggregated scales describing the corresponding components of the potential for conflict have been constructed. Thus, a score of 5 of the conflict potential describes the lowest level of potential and the lowest score reveals the rise of conflict potential.

The analysis of ethnic conflict potential in the Armenian population, which enabled to compare the structure of collective attitudes towards Turks and Azerbaijanis, revealed a significant difference in these structures.

In "neither war, nor peace" situation, the attitude of the Armenian respondents towards Azerbaijanis is contradictory. On the one hand, the affective and cognitive components show a shift towards greater tolerance and mitigation of the "enemy image". On the other hand, a high degree of the conative component of conflict potential is observed. The affective component of the conflict potential

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[1] This survey has been conducted by YSU Sociology Department staff.

varies inside the interval from 2 to 2.5 scores. The average score of the cognitive component potential is about 2.5 . It is notable that "the enemy image of Azerbaijanis" is actual only for 4.6 % of the Armenian respondents. Thus, more than half of the respondents are characterized by a high level of the conative component of the conflict potential, and only about 10% are ready to cooperate with Azerbaijanis. The major factors determining the conative component are the age of the respondents and their employment. The highest level of the conative conflict potential component is revealed by the respondents aged 35. The lowest level of conflictness is demonstrated by businessmen, seasonal workers, militaries and farmers. It is interesting to note that women are characterized by a higher affective potential and by a lower value of cognitive component of the potential.

Special attention should be drawn to the absence of significant correlation between the components of the considered potential; this fact characterizes a situation as inconsistent.

We can explain these facts by "neither war, nor peace" situation when the active stage of conflict is already reflected in the memory of people, and public views sensitively react to the external and internal changes giving in particular ample opportunities for manipulation by public consciousness. Such inconsistent situations may be dangerous in the sense of weak opportunities to characterize further conflict development.

There is another position concerning the potential in relation to the Turks.

As to the structure of the social potential for conflict concerning the Turks, the situation is characterized, as the first situation presented in the Table above, namely: a situation, characterized by stereotypical ideas concerning the relations between groups which are not expressed in visible actions. Differently, there is a significant correlation between cognitive and affective components which do not correlate with the conative (behavioural) component. The respondents aged 65 years and over have the highest affective and cognitive potential, whereas the youth is characterized by high affective conflict potential. The depth of ethnic contradictions of the cognitive component of conflict potential in relation to Turks is higher than to Azerbaijanis. However, the affective and conative components of the conflict potential are more significant when related to Azerbaijanis. On average, conflict potential in relation to Azerbaijanis is higher than in relation to Turks.

The population groups having more patriarchal foundations, as a rule, are characterized by higher affective, cognitive and conative potential for conflict in relation to the representatives of both nations. The population groups having discrepant and not correlated characteristics in the mentioned scales are more vulnerable to the supposed escalation of conflicts. In particular, the youth of Armenia demands more attention to the actualization of ideas of tolerance and cooperation.

The bases for social support for reduction of conflict potential are groups of population in Armenia that have quite a high level of social security. The role of similar social groups is significant in the formation of the public opinion.

It is natural to consider the existence of population groups as positively estimating perspectives of good-neighbour relationships establishment, since encouraging circumstances give bases for cautious optimism. Such groups of popu-

lation and their role in the formation of the public opinion require a separate study.

Thus, the level of the conflict potential in the population has essential significance in the study of ethnic conflicts and methods of influencing them. The proposed methodological conceptual model of the analysis of the conflict potential in public ideas enables to analyze its influence on the development of ethnic conflicts. The considered model can be generalized on wider class of social conflicts. The analysis of the relation of conflict potential components enables to judge the stability of existing estimations and attitudes of population. Besides, the mentioned analysis offers an opportunity to characterize the structure of population from the standpoint of conflict potential for the allocation of major factors determining it. Such analysis can be used for the clarification of opportunities of managing conflicts, and for application to the differentiated approach to various groups of population.

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ԼՅՈՒԴՄԻԼԱ ՀԱՐՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՅԱՆ, ՄԱՐԻԱ ԶԱՍԼԱՎՍԿԱՅԱ - *Էթնքաղաքա-կան հակամարտության սոցիալական ներուժի հայեցակարգային կաղապա-րի կառուցում* - Հողվածում ուսումնասիրվում է էթնիկ կոնֆլիկտի ներուժի չափման մի մոդել, ինչպես նաև ներկայացվում է հասարակական իրավի-ճակների տիպաբանության մի տարբերակ՝ ելնելով այդ ներուժի կառուց-վածքից: Կոնֆլիկտային ներուժի բաղադրիչների համակցության վերլուծու-թյունը պատկերացում է տալիս հասարակությունում առկա կոնֆլիկտին վե-րաբերող գնահատականների, կարծիքների և դիրքորոշումների ինտենսի-վության, խորության, ինչպես նաև դրանց միջև եղած հակասությունների մա-սին: Տվյալ վերլուծությունը հնարավորություն է ընձեռում բնութագրելու բնակչության կառուցվածքը՝ ելնելով կոնֆլիկտի ներուժի վրա ազդող գոր-ծոնների համակցությունից:

ЛЮДМИЛА АРУТЮНЯН, МАРИЯ ЗАСЛАВСКАЯ – *Построение кон-цептуальной модели социального потенциала этнополитического конфликта.* – В статье рассмотрена концептуальная модель измерения потен-циала этнического конфликта в обществе и представлен вариант типологии об-щественных ситуаций с точки зрения структуры этого потенциала. Анализ соот-ношения компонентов конфликтного потенциала позволяет судить о стабильно-сти существующих оценок и установок населения, степень их интенсивности и устойчивости. Упомянутый анализ позволяет охарактеризовать структуру насе-ления с точки зрения потенциала конфликтности, выделить основные факторы, определяющие его. Такой анализ актуален с точки зрения возможностей управ-ления конфликтом, применения дифференцированного подхода к различным группам населения.