Armenian Civil Society after Twenty Years of Transition: Still Post-Communist?

Yevgenya Jenny Paturyan

Valentina Gevorgyan

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Authors:
Yevgenya Jenny Paturyan
Valentina Gevorgyan

Contributing team:
Tatevik Badalyan
Bella Baghdasaryan
Anna Drnoyan
Arman Gasparyan
Angela Hassassian
Nelly Minasyan

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List of Abbreviations

CB	Caucasus Barometer
CF	Civilitas Foundation
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CSI	Civil Society Index
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
NA	National Assembly
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
EaP	Eastern Partnership
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
EU	European Union
EVS	European Values Studies
LiT	Life in Transition
TCPA	Turpanjian Center for Policy Analysis
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WVS	World Values Survey

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Introduction

Although civil society (non-profit, voluntary, third, NGO sector) is not a new phenomenon, the late 20th and early 21st centuries have witnessed massive worldwide growth in this sphere of social activity in terms of numbers of organisations and the people and money involved in them. Some researchers have even gone so far as to call this phenomenon a "global associational revolution" and to suggest that it might prove to be as significant a development as the rise of nation-states in the 19th century (Salamon, Sokolowski and List 2003).

In the 1970s, the concept of civil society was rediscovered by Eastern European dissidents; it played a particularly prominent role in the ideology of Polish opposition to communist rule (Cohen and Arato 1994) and gradually gained popularity in democratisation discourse. In the late 1980s, Eastern Europe experienced unprecedented levels of social mobilisation, which, according to some authors (Bernhard 1993; Geremek 1996), greatly contributed to the collapse of the Soviet system. Since then, civil society has become, and remains, the focus of numerous studies of democratisation in various parts of the world.

This book seeks to contribute to this growing and diverse field of knowledge, focusing particularly on post-communist civil society, using Armenia as an example. Post-communist civil society has been repeatedly described since the mid-1990s as weak and underperforming in a number of countries for different time periods. There have been several studies about Armenian civil society, but they have not related the observed patterns and problems to the broader framework of the legacy of communism. Most of the studies have had narrow time horizons, focusing mostly on describing and analysing Armenian civil society (or its elements) at the time of the research conducted. To the best of our knowledge, there have been no studies of Armenian civil society encompassing the two decades of its development. The purpose of our work is to close this gap, at least to some extent.

In our research, we used Mark Howard's (2002) study of post-communist civil society as the main theoretical framework, and we compared his findings and predictions to the current Armenian reality. Our research went beyond Howard's framework by adding a few new elements, such as a greater focus on volunteering, the inclusion of an organisational survey and the exploration of perspectives of civil society organisations (CSOs) regarding problems of civic participation and trust.

The research project, which resulted in the production of this manuscript, consisted of three major components. We collected and analysed all relevant and available public opinion survey datasets to understand the levels of public involvement in civil society activities and public attitude towards these activities starting from 1997 and drawing comparisons where possible. In addition, we performed our own organisational survey of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Armenia to obtain information about the functioning and activities of the formal entities within Armenian civil society. We then went into even greater detail through a qualitative study of NGO leaders and rank and file volunteer members of civil society to examine the achievements and challenges of Armenian civil society through the eyes of these participants. Each of the three major components of the study is described in a corresponding

chapter; these chapters, however, are preceded by chapters that set the stage for our research. Thus, the first chapter constructs the theoretical framework of our study and discusses the concept of civil society, the impact of communism on it and the relevance of generational changes in this regard. The second chapter provides an overview of Armenian civil society, its recent history and some of the challenges it currently faces. The third chapter details the methodology of this study. Chapters IV, V and VI present the results of the secondary data analysis, the organisational survey and the qualitative study, respectively. The conclusion summarises the results, drawing parallels among the three components and highlighting the most interesting findings of the research project.

It is our hope that many interested readers, both inside and outside Armenia, will find this book useful. We certainly hope our findings will help Armenians not only understand Armenian civil society better but also engage with it in a more efficient manner. Additionally, while our focus is on Armenia, we believe that the story that unfolds there is more common than unique and that people in other parts of the world could benefit from the knowledge gained through comparison. We also hope that scholars of civil society will find our research useful, imperfect as it is, and will build on our work to further our collective inquiry into this fascinating and important topic of civil society and civic engagement.

Chapter I: Theoretical Framework

If ideas could be compared to living beings, and if the use of these ideas in scholarly debates could be compared to biographies, the concept of civil society would have a dramatic life story worth telling on a winter night by a fireplace. It would be a story of a long, gradual development, a period of oblivion, and a sudden return to the spotlight as a champion of anti-authoritarian resistance. Once victorious, civil society would be hailed in our story as a bringer of hope and renewal and then blamed for being a fake hero, as the hopes fell short of reality. There would be no happy ending to this story. In fact, there is no ending as of yet, either happy or unhappy, to the story of civil society because it still enjoys both popularity and harsh criticism, and it is facing many battles worldwide.

The "biography" of the concept spans more than 2,000 years. Some authors trace the first appearance of the idea of civil society to the works of ancient Greek and Roman philosophers (Cohen and Arato 1994; Ellis 2000; Seligman 1995). A more recognisable modern concept of civil society was formulated by Adam Smith and the intellectuals of the 18th century Scottish Enlightenment (Cohen and Arato 1994; Seligman 1995; Trentmann 2000). It was further developed in the works of Hegel, Marx and Gramsci, but it was almost forgotten in the 20th century until it made a dramatic comeback in the 1970s. Eastern European dissidents re-discovered the idea of civil society in their struggle against the communist regimes of their countries. Since then, the concept of civil society has been a mainstay in the discourse on democratisation.

Today, the concept of civil society is widely used (and sometimes abused) by scholars, politicians, development experts, policy-makers, practitioners, and activists around the world. The idea of civil society evokes a broad spectrum of meanings and expectations. It is generally understood as a "good thing" by democrats and as a "dangerous thing" by autocrats, resulting in concrete steps to support or curtail its activities. Despite its popularity, its undeniable practical relevance, and the impressive amount of research about it, the concept of civil society remains one of the least clear constructs in the social sciences (Blaney and Pasha 1993; Kumar 1993).

While we may never have a common definition of civil society to which everybody would subscribe, it is important to specify our understanding of the concept that has guided this work and how we see the link between civil society and other important concepts, such as political regimes and political culture. This chapter outlines the theoretical framework of the study of Armenian civil society. It describes our understanding of the term "civil society", both as a theoretical concept and as an empirically measurable entity. It also discusses the interplay among civil society, democracy, the communist legacy and the political culture of the newly formed civil societies of Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in general, followed by a more specific focus on Armenia.

1.1. Defining Civil Society

Civil society is generally understood as a sphere of social activities and organisations outside of the state, the market and the private sphere, based on principles of voluntarism, pluralism and tolerance (Anheier 2004; Diamond 1999; Salamon, Sokolowski, and List 2003; Salamon 1990). A discussion of the definitions of civil society could constitute a book in itself and is beyond the scope of this work. For an overview of the history of the concept's development, one can refer to the works of Cohen and Arato (1994), Ellis (2000), Seligman (1995) and Trentmann (2000). The varieties of the current use of the term and the typologies of various definitions are thoroughly discussed in a number of scholarly publications (see, for example, Anheier [2004]; Cohen and Arato [1994]; Edwards [2009]; Heinrich [2005]; Keane [1988]; Linz and Stepan [1997]; Salamon, Sokolowski, and List [2003]).

This study examines civil society as a sphere or domain (Fowler 2012) of somewhat organised social activity that excludes the state, the market, public communications and the private sphere. While each of these delineations is debatable,[1] we felt the need to restrict our definition for the purposes outlined by Alexander (1999), who criticised all-inclusive definitions for their lack of clarity and reduced potential to provide useful insights. Additionally, because the goal of this study is to empirically assess Armenian civil society, we must adopt a definition that submits itself to reasonable empirical analysis. The somewhat lengthy, but comprehensive, definition of civil society by Diamond (1999) is used as the main conceptual definition in this research:

> *Civil society is the realm of organized social life that is open, voluntary, self-generating, at least partially self-supporting, autonomous from the state, and bound by a legal order or set of shared rules.* It is distinct from "society" in general in that *it involves citizens acting collectively in a public sphere* to express their interests, passions, preferences, and ideas, to exchange information, to achieve collective goals, to make demands on the state, to improve the structure and functioning of the state, and to hold state officials accountable (Diamond 1999, 221).

Using Sartori's (1970) terminology, this definition of civil society is located fairly high on the ladder of abstraction. To be able to study the concept empirically, we must develop an operational definition that includes verifiable and measurable elements with some unavoidable loss of conceptual richness (Sartori 1970). This process will be undertaken in section 1.4.

An important aspect of the definitional debate around the concept of civil society must be addressed right at the outset of our work: the issue of the *normative* content of the term. To what extent is it desirable or even possible to have a normatively neutral concept at the core of our study? The wording of the concept of civil society almost inevitably evokes associations with "civility," as well as normative judgements of what is civil or, in contrast, uncivil. In reality, the scope of collectively advanced interests and methods used by public actors is diverse, including radical and illegal methods such as violent demonstrations, hate propaganda and so on (Malena

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[1] Some definitions of civil society include the market sphere, the media, spontaneous protest activities, loosely structured social movements and new social media.

and Heinrich 2007). Technically speaking, organisations such as the Mafia, the Ku Klux Klan or Al Qaeda would correspond to Diamond's definition quoted above and, according to proponents of "norm-free social science," should be subsumed under the definition of civil society. We find such an approach questionable at best because it stretches the definition of civil society to the point that it becomes meaningless.[2]

Explicitly addressing the normative aspect of the concept of civil society, some scholars have argued that, to belong to civil society, actors must be democratic or oriented towards the public good and civil manners (Hall 2000; Trentmann 2000). Thus, organisations such as the Mafia or the Ku Klux Klan are subsumed under "uncivil" society. Most authors distinguish between civil and uncivil society on the basis of the use of violence. Others base the distinction on the ideas of the organisations, i.e., organisations with non-democratic or extremist ideas would belong to uncivil rather civil society (Kopecký 2003). This distinction is what Trentmann (2000) called the paradox of civil society: while striving for tolerance, diversity and inclusion, it must nevertheless "draw a line" at some point and distinguish itself from the uncivil sphere.

In this book, we side with scholars who consider civil society to be an inherently normative concept. While adopting Diamond's definition quoted above, we modify it by adding a clause that *civil society is guided by principles of non-violence, tolerance and inclusiveness*, following the suggestions of Hall (2000) and Trentmann (2000).

1.2. Relevance of Civil Society

Civil society is believed to be an important arena of modern social life for a variety of reasons, spanning an impressive spectrum from individual to global levels and from psychological needs to welfare creation. This section focuses on the role of civil society in strengthening democracy, placing our research into the broader context of post-communist democratisation.

A vibrant civil society is often considered by scholars of democratisation as one of the key elements that facilitates the transition to democracy (Beissinger 2005; Bernhard 1993; Geremek 1996; Karatnycky and Ackerman 2005; Shin 2006), strengthens democratic consolidation (Carroll and Carroll 2004; Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti 1994; Tusalem 2007) and improves various qualities of established democracies (Dekker, Koopmans, and van den Broek 1997; Moyser and Parry 1997; Warren 2001). It seems intuitively plausible that an active civil society, in which people take an interest in and assume responsibility for matters of public concern, fits very well with the essence of democracy and should contribute to the quality of democratic governance. As Linz and Stepan (1996) put it,

> A robust civil society, with the capacity to generate political alternatives and to monitor government and state can help transitions to get started, help resist reversals, help push transitions to their completion, help consolidate, and help deepen democracy. At all

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[2] Replacing the concept with a more neutral term does not seem to provide a solution either. Some authors (Taylor 2010) have argued that even a seemingly neutral 'third sector' term is normatively loaded, reflecting Anglo-Saxon understandings of individual rights, market economies and liberal pluralism as a 'civilised' model of social organisation.

stages of the democratization process, therefore, a lively and independent civil society is invaluable. (Linz and Stepan 1996, 9)

The functions of civil society in a democratic (or at least quasi-democratic) state can be divided into external effects, which describe the impact of civil society organisations on the polity in which they operate, and internal effects, which refer to the impact of civil society on its members (Henderson 2002; Howard 2003; Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti 1994, 90). Researchers interested in the external effects of civil society on democracy have focussed mostly on organisations in civil society and their direct influences on political and economic developments. This approach is closer to the institutionalist tradition of political science. The second approach is often related to the field of political culture. Researchers interested in the internal impacts of civil society have argued that participation in civil society has positive effects on individual people, in turn leading to the strengthening of democratic culture.

The list of functions civil society can perform to strengthen democratic consolidation is impressive. Civil society monitors and restrains the exercise of power by the state, stimulates political participation and creates channels for the aggregation, articulation and representation of interests (Diamond 1999). CSOs engage in public deliberation, thereby contributing to the creation of more informed and balanced public opinion (Cohen and Arato 1994; Habermas 1996; Warren 2001). These organisations expand the knowledge, strengthen the skills and modify the attitudes of their members, making them better citizens (Dekker and van den Broek 2005; Moyser and Parry 1997; Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti 1994; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). A relatively recent development is the involvement of CSOs in direct governance by engaging in policy making and policy implementation (Fung 2003). Education for democracy is an explicit project of some CSOs: it includes training and teaching materials for democratic participation, citizenship, rights and responsibilities, representation and so on (Diamond 1999). In newly established democracies in particular, civil society organisations often play an important role in strengthening democracy: CSOs monitor elections, monitor human rights abuses, mobilise citizens and serve as arenas for the recruitment of new leaders (Diamond 1999).

While the question of whether civil society causes democratisation or whether democracy boosts civil society has been debated in the scholarly literature (Bradley 2005; Fung 2003; Kumar 1993; Mettler 2002; Salamon 1990; Skocpol 1999), it is at least clear that the two are strongly interrelated and that they influence each other. It has been empirically demonstrated that both the level of democracy (measured by Freedom House scores of political rights and civil liberties in a given country) and the age of the democracy are related to participation in civil society organisations: in more democratic countries, and particularly in countries where democracy has a longer history, people are more involved in civil society organisations (Halman 2003). There is also empirical evidence suggesting that civil society strengthens the micro-foundations of democracy by creating a pro-democratic and participatory political culture (Paturyan 2011).

This section has demonstrated that civil society is expected to perform pro-democratic functions and to help new democracies consolidate. Some of these expectations find empirical

support in various countries; however, most of them constitute rather a "wish list" or a map of civil society potential. The extent to which this potential is realised is influenced by the context in which civil society operates as well as a number of exogenous factors. One of these factors, proven to be of great importance, is the legacy of the previous political regime. More specifically, the legacy of Communist rule created a lasting negative impact on the civil societies of East Europe and the CIS countries. The next section discusses the impact of communism and post-communism on civil society's structures and on public attitudes towards CSOs, volunteering and civic engagement in general.

1.3. Communism and Post-Communism

In the Soviet Union and other countries of the Soviet-led socialist block, civil society was severely curtailed. The domain among the market, the state and private life was almost non-existent because of the nature of the regime: the state controlled most social life and even made inroads into private life. The state also assumed the responsibility for welfare provision, thus filling one of the niches often occupied by civil society organisations under other types of political regimes.

It would be wrong to say that civil society did not exist under communism at all. There were some underground groups and movements that existed and even had some influence on society, both in the Soviet Union and in other socialist countries. The most notable cases were civic movements in Poland, Hungary, East Germany and Czechoslovakia, with the Polish *Solidarity* movement the most renowned. The *Solidarity* movement began in the mid-1970s and was an example of civil society existing under an authoritarian regime (Bernhard 1993). Its influence on Polish associational life was quite significant in itself and because it led to the emergence of several other movements, such as the women's movement and several environmental and alternative civic protest movements (Bernhard 1993; Misztal 1992).

However, the cases of civic organisational life under communist rule described above are exceptions to the general rule. During the socialist period, genuine elements of civil society, such as mutually supportive citizen networks or underground organisations, engaged little with state institutions, and they led their existences outside the main power relationships. They lacked arenas in which to air their criticisms, and they kept their activities private, remaining unable to publicly criticise either socialist institutions or state policies. Agarin (2011) argued that, although these units were autonomous and self-reliant, their impact on the socialist political regime remained negligible, prompting generations of citizens across the former communist states to regard civic engagement as useless.

In stark contrast to these informal and/or underground elements of civil society, a plethora of officially controlled and organised "pseudo-civil society" organisations existed in the Soviet Union and the countries of the Eastern Bloc. People were encouraged and at times even forced into those organisations. Any club or cultural activity would be sponsored and co-organised by the state. Not joining the *Pioneers* and *Komsomol* mass youth organisations and a trade union as an employee later in one's life was not an option in the Soviet Union.

Communism as an ideology, on the one hand, and Soviet-type communist rule, on the other hand, influenced the development of civil society in the region. Interestingly, these two factors, the ideology and the regime, could be at odds regarding how they influenced some aspects of civil society, such as the perception and the practice of volunteering. As Juknevičius and Savicka (2003) indicated, communist ideology assigned great social value to volunteerism and social participation, which helped boost membership in associations and improved the positive image of the volunteer. At the same time, because such participation was controlled and directed from above, a somewhat paradoxical phenomenon of "compulsory volunteering" developed under Soviet rule. Forcing people to "volunteer" "...compromised the meaning of volunteerism and fostered an attitude of reticence toward volunteering" (Voicu and Voicu 2003, 155). Naturally, this attitude resulted in a backlash after the collapse of the Soviet-led socialist block: membership in associations decreased dramatically, and volunteering (largely associated with being a "subotnik"[3]) was regarded with suspicion and, at times, even with disdain.

In the late 1980s, the gradual opening of the Soviet Union and the disintegration of the communist bloc created new opportunities for formal associational activities outside of state control, and NGOs started to appear. In the early 1990s, the process quickened to the point of being referred to as a "mushrooming of NGOs" or an organisational boom (Voicu and Voicu 2003).

After the breakup of the Soviet Union, there was great enthusiasm for democratic development in the post-communist region; hopes were high that burgeoning civil society (seemingly evident in mass protests, civic activism and high levels of political participation) would help cement new democratic achievements. A decade later, it became clear that the post-communist countries were on diverging paths in terms of democratisation: while Eastern European countries and the Baltic States were consolidating their democratic achievements, some of the former Soviet republics appeared to be stuck "in transition," while others were clearly reverting to authoritarianism. Examining the post-communist decade of civil society activities and development, it was clear that civil society was not functioning as well as expected.

Ironically, despite the concept of civil society being revitalised, due mostly to late 20th century developments in the post-communist region, it was precisely that region in which the civil society of the early 21st century was diagnosed as distinctively weak in terms of organisational membership, levels of trust towards CSOs and continuous reliance on bonding (Putnam 2000) types of social capital, such as networks of friends and relatives (Bernhard and Karakoç 2007; Howard 2002; Howard 2003). Although it was initially forecasted that we would see a flourishing civil society and a weak state, the countries of the post-communist region seem to depict the opposite picture: the state has, in some countries, undergone radical reforms, but it has remained by and large a fairly strong and stable institution, while civil society has failed to build on its initial momentum and to develop into a well-organised arena. As Ost noted, during

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[3] Supposedly voluntary, but largely compulsory, work on Saturday often focused on neighbourhood clean-up or free labour at one's workplace.

earlier stages of transition, post-Soviet social groups did not have a clear sense of what was in their interest and what was not (Ost 1993), and this lack of clarity did not seem to improve much after a decade of development.

An important author in this regard is Marc Howard, whose book *The Weakness of Civil Society in Post-Communist Europe* (2003) served as the starting point and the main framework for the research presented in this book. Howard provided an extensive analysis of civil society in post-communist European countries. Based on broad empirical data analysis, the author demonstrated that levels of membership in civil society organisations were systematically low throughout the countries of the region at the end of the 20th century. Prior communist experience emerged as the most important factor explaining the levels of membership (see Chapter IV), supporting the idea of the distinctiveness and, in a sense, the uniqueness of the post-communist region. The communist past has had a negative impact on civil society in at least two ways. Mistrust in communist organisations has made people less active in voluntary organisations and is by far the most powerful explanatory factor (Howard 2003, 112). Additionally, people whose friendship networks have persisted in the post-communist period are less likely to join organisations. Howard wrote, "…the weakness of civil society is a distinctive element of post-communist democracy, a pattern that may well persist throughout the region for at least several decades" (Howard 2003, 150).

Our research project aims to put Howard's prediction to the test. Twenty years after the transition, and ten years after Howard's study, is post-communist civil society still weak? What about Armenian civil society? Does it fit Howard's diagnosis of low trust and civic disengagement? Has it registered any development over the twenty years of Armenia's existence as an independent state? If so, what kind of development? These are the questions that have guided our research. However, to be able to answer these questions convincingly, the concept of civil society must be operationalised, i.e., it must be translated into something empirically measurable. This "translation" unavoidably leads to a narrowing down of the concept in one way or another. The next section of this chapter explains our rationale behind our choice of focus in our study of Armenian civil society.

1.4. Narrowing Down the Concept of Civil Society

Despite being extensively used in social science research (or perhaps because of its extensive and sometimes indiscriminate use), civil society is a broad term whose definitions are numerous and often vague (Blaney and Pasha 1993; Kumar 1993). Creating reliable empirical measurements of civil society is a challenging task (Edwards and Foley 1998; Malena and Heinrich 2007). Some studies have utilised generic measurements of civil society, i.e., measurements aimed at capturing the civil society of a given country as a whole through a combination of indices or through expert assessment (Anheier and Stares 2002; Fioramonti and Heinrich 2007; Karatnycky and Ackerman 2005; Malena and Heinrich 2007; Paturyan 2011). Another widely used approach has been to focus on specific aspects of civil society that reflect some of its core activities and that are relatively straightforward to operationalise and measure. This study is largely based on the second approach of using proxy measurements of civil society, although some generic

assessments of civil society (such as Freedom House civil society scores and Bertelsmann Transformation Index scores) are used for the general background discussion as well.

To assess current Armenian civil society and to compare it both with its earlier stage of development and with the civil societies of other countries, we must narrow down the general concept of civil society to empirically measurable elements that would also be amenable to cross-country and cross-time comparisons. Because Howard's assessment of post-communist civil society was the starting point of our research project, it is not only logical but, in fact, also necessary to adopt his methodological approach as well. Howard used membership in associations and trust towards them as two proxy measurements of the civil societies of various countries. These individual level measurements are also easily aggregated to produce country level averages. Thus, following Howard's framework, we adopt two levels of measuring civil society through public attitudes and engagement: the micro-level of individual trust and membership and the macro-level of country average levels of trust and membership in associations. [4] However, there is also an intermediate level: the meso-level of analysis of organisations as units of civil society. We include this level of analysis in our study as well, as will be explained in greater detail in the methodology chapter. As a result, we examine individual attitudes towards, and engagement with, civil society, and we analyse civil society organisations themselves, narrowing down the concept of civil society to: a) NGOs as the most typical "species" of civil society operating in Armenia; and b) public attitudes towards NGOs and engagement in NGO activities through membership and volunteering. The following sections elaborate on these choices of proxy measurements.

1.4.1. Focus on NGOs as Typical Representatives of Civil Society Organisations

NGOs are often seen as constituting the core of the civil society of a given country. At the same time, they are tangible entities that can be studied empirically. Thus, they are often used as "representatives" of or proxies for measuring civil society. Howard (2003, 50) stated, "The most common approach used in empirical studies of civil society focuses on the organisations and associations themselves." Lewis (2001) noted that, for some policy-makers and activists, voluntary organisations appeared to act as shorthand for civil society itself.

Interest in NGOs or voluntary associations as promoters of democracy can be traced back to Alexis de Tocqueville's (2000 [1864]) ideas about the importance of associational life for American democracy during his time. Impressed by the scope of self-organised social activities he had observed during his visit to the United States, Tocqueville hypothesised that associations are "schools of democracy", where people meet and decide on matters of common interest, thus developing habits of cooperation and public-spiritedness. Approximately one hundred years later, Almond and Verba (1963) empirically tested Tocqueville's hypothesis about the link between membership in associations and personal pro-democratic qualities. They explored the link between voluntary associations and political culture in what became a path-breaking work in this field. The authors demonstrated that voluntary associations were among the social

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[4] These measurements are discussed in greater detail in the Methodology chapter and in the corresponding sections of the secondary data analysis results.

institutions that shaped participants' political and civic skills and attitudes. Since then, there have been numerous studies dedicated to the various roles that associations play in democratic (Fung 2003; Skocpol 1999; Warren 2001) and not so democratic (Antlöv, Brinkerhoff, and Rapp 2010; Beissinger 2005; Diamond 1999; Geremek 1996; Hashemi 1996) societies.

The range of various pro-democratic functions of NGOs or voluntary associations is very broad. Fung (2003) identified six "paths" through which associations have been said to contribute to democracy: (1) the intrinsic good of associations and the freedom to associate; (2) civic socialisation and political education; (3) resistance and checking power; (4) interest representation; (5) public deliberation and the public sphere; and (6) direct governance.

> Freedom of association has been viewed as an intrinsic component of democracy. At the psychological and individual level, associations school citizens by inculcating civic dispositions and teaching them skills necessary for political action. Especially in political contexts of tyranny or deep injustice, the central contributions of associations have been to check illegitimate political power, to offer resistance, and to check official power. Where democratic circumstances are more firmly in place, associations can improve the quality of representation by allowing individuals – especially those who lack resources – to express their views in political arenas. Associations form a principal part of the structure of civil society in which individuals deliberate with one another to form public opinions and criticisms of officials, policies and state actions. Finally, some kinds of associations also create avenues for direct participation in the regulation or production of public goods such as education, public safety, and the provision of social welfare… (Fung 2003, 516)

It has been empirically demonstrated that involvement in voluntary organisations contributes to the development of civic skills (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995) and is linked to higher levels of political activism and to higher generalised social trust (Dekker and van den Broek 2005; Howard and Gilbert 2008).

However, some authors have challenged this argument of voluntary associations as "schools of democracy", with the US as the "classic" example. Eliasoph (2003) argues that American voluntary associations have ceased to play the important pro-democracy role that has been hailed by previous scholars and researchers in the Tocquevillean tradition. Based on her ethnographic participatory research, the author showed that most of the activities undertaken by volunteers today are solitary, curtailing the potential for cooperative relationships. Moreover, group activity is almost exclusively dedicated to specific task-oriented discussions; broader social problems and potentially controversial issues are cautiously avoided.

It would be naïve to expect NGOs to be automatically good for democracy and to foster democratic political culture in their members and in the society at large. This is particularly true for post-communist countries, where NGOs often operate as alternative employment opportunities for professionals and resemble small service-providing businesses rather than voluntary associations of the classic Western type. To make matters worse, NGOs are not always what they seem to be. Alan Fowler (2013, 32) compiled a list of acronyms used around the world to describe "pretender NGOs":

- BRINGO (briefcase NGO): an NGO that is no more than a briefcase carrying a well-written proposal;
- CONGO (commercial NGO): an NGO set up by businesses to participate in bids, help win contracts and reduce taxation;
- GRINGO (government-run and government-initiated NGO): a variation of a QUANGO (see below) but with the function of countering the actions of real NGOs; common in Africa;
- MANGO (mafia NGO): a criminal NGO providing services of the money laundering, enforcement, and protection variety; prevalent in Eastern Europe;
- MONGO (my own NGO): an NGO that is the personal property of an individual, often dominated by his or her ego.
- PANGO (party NGO): an aspiring, defeated, or banned political party or politician disguised as an NGO; species of Central Asia and Indo-China; and
- QUANGO (quasi-NGO): a parastatal body created by a government, often to enable better conditions of service or to create political distance.

To distinguish NGOs from "pretenders", a number of characteristics, as derived from Salamon's (2010) structural operational definition of the non-profit sector, can be indicated. These characteristics are also useful in distinguishing NGOs from other civil society entities, such as spontaneous groups and movements. In our study, we understand NGOs as:

1. Organisations, i.e., having some structure and regularity to their operations, regardless of whether they are formally constituted or legally registered;
2. Private, implying they are institutionally separate from the state, although they might receive support from governmental sources;
3. Not profit-distributing, i.e., they are not primarily commercial in purpose and do not distribute any profits they might generate to their owners, members, or stockholders;
4. Self-governing, meaning they have their own mechanisms for internal governance, are able to cease operations on their own authority, and are fundamentally in control of their own affairs; and
5. Non-compulsory, i.e., membership or participation in them is contingent on an individual's choice or consent rather than being legally required or otherwise compulsory (Salamon 2010).

This section has described NGOs or voluntary associations as important elements of civil society (often considered the core and the most typical representatives of civil society) and has outlined the main arguments of why they are expected to be important for democracy, although there is also evidence that these pro-democratic effects cannot be taken for granted. It has also stated the criteria by which NGOs are distinguished from other types of entities. As discussed above, in addition to NGOs as organisations, our study examines public attitudes towards and public involvement in civil society that are not necessarily restricted to the NGO sector.

1.4.2. Focus on Individual Attitudes and Behaviours: Trust, Membership and Volunteering

Although NGOs occupy a prominent place in the landscape of civil society, limiting the discussion of the civil society of a given country only to NGOs would risk overly narrowing the

research focus. Not all the activities of civil society are channelled through formal institutions. Important developments occur outside of established organisational frameworks; thus, a vibrant civil society based mostly on semi-institutionalised and spontaneous participation is a plausible model. To access the less formal aspects of civil society, this study includes volunteering as a personal activity that contributes to the strength of the civil society of a given country. It also examines individual attitudes towards civil society, expressed in trust towards NGOs. Membership in various types of associations and organisations constitutes an important element of the study because it allows us to compare our results with the original work by Howard (Howard 2003) and with many other studies using individual membership as an important proxy measurement of the health of the civil society of a given country.

The issues of trust and membership were already addressed in previous sections of this chapter, in which we indicted that one of the problems of post-communist civil society is low levels of trust towards its institutions and low membership in associations. Additionally, these two aspects are relatively straightforward, with little conceptual debate about what trust towards civil society organisations or membership in such organisations means and how these feelings should be measured. Volunteering, in contrast, is a more complex concept that can be viewed from various perspectives. This section focuses extensively on the concept of volunteering, the various motivations behind it and empirical findings related to it from various parts of the world in order to anchor our research results, presented in Chapters IV and VI, within a relevant theoretical framework.

Volunteering, either formal or informal, is a vital activity that helps sustain a civil society. There is a growing wealth of literature on volunteering, demonstrating its importance worldwide (Leigh et al. 2011) and its impact on personal well-being (O'Brien, Townsend, and Ebden 2010; Konrath et al. 2012).

A volunteer is an "individual who, out of free will, acts for the benefit of others without receiving remuneration for that action" (Butcher 2003, 111). Wilson (2000, 215) defined volunteering as "...any activity in which time is given freely to benefit another person, group or organisation." Volunteering means conducting work for no pay; however, it is acceptable for volunteers to be compensated for some expenses, such as travel and meals paid, when they are engaged in volunteering. The second important characteristic is that individuals give their time freely, i.e., they are not required to participate. Third, volunteers provide benefits to others rather than to themselves or to their immediate family members or relatives (Hodgkinson 2003).

Theoretical frameworks aimed at explaining the motivations to volunteer focus on human capital (in which income, education and health have specific importance as decisive factors to volunteer), social capital (need for social interaction, density of social networks) and cultural capital (values and beliefs). Attempting to explain the motivations behind volunteering, research has often focussed on the individual level, with the two most frequently identified elements being social capital and the personal value systems of volunteers (Salamon and Sokolowski 2003). These two key elements are closely related to socio-demographic factors, such as education, age and gender (Wilson 2000). Alternatively, cross-country comparative analyses of

volunteering have often focussed on the social and political structures and the institutions that affect levels of volunteering (Salamon and Sokolowski 2003).

Volunteering is often discussed from a utilitarian perspective, as something people do to improve their skills or career opportunities. Based on a survey implemented in the US, Wilson and Musick (1997) argued that people with a high level of education and higher socio-economic status are involved in volunteering to improve their verbal and communicational skills. According to Wilson (2000), volunteerism takes different forms based on values, which can be regarded both as sacrifice and self-improvement. The author's arguments about volunteerism from the motivational perspective are explained through behaviourism and rational choice theory, indicating that volunteerism is based on certain cost-benefit analyses: for example, the volunteer experience can give a person a prestigious character as well as improve various skills and raise awareness. Interestingly, the author argued that women are more altruistic and more eager to help others, while men are more inclined to volunteer if there is the possibility of improving education or other resources.

Based on a random sample of 1,500 adults in Israel, Shye (2010) insisted that, apart from motivation, there are certain demographic antecedents in terms of one's personal capacities to volunteer and circumstances that are required for volunteering. The belief and confidence of being part of a community and gaining friends are considered important aspects of one's motivation to volunteer.

A study by Inglehart (2003) used World Values Survey (WVS) data to show, using factor analysis, that there are three types of volunteering that correspond to different types of associations included in the study: (1) ecological awareness, peace, welfare, health, the developing world, and human rights; (2) political parties, local issues, women, and labour unions; and (3) religion, youth issues, sports, professional, and culture. Societies with high self-expression values (i.e., societies that prioritise individual liberties and diversity over security and respect towards authority) rank higher on all three types of volunteering. In general, the data suggest increasing levels of volunteering worldwide (Inglehart 2003). However, if one considers Western Europe specifically, not much has changed, although some countries have experienced increases or decreases in volunteering (Halman 2003). A cross-country comparison of WVS and the European Values Study (EVS) data showed that volunteers are more likely to be engaged in civic affairs and politics (discussing politics, signing or being willing to sign a petition) than non-volunteers (Hodgkinson 2003).

Using data from the Johns Hopkins Comparative Non-profit Sector Project, Salamon and Sokolowski (2003) demonstrated that volunteering is strengthened by formal organisational bases (e.g., formal organisations that provide possibilities to volunteer) and that it benefits from state support. Volunteering, civic participation and the self-organisation of individuals in pursuit of common goals are much less spontaneous than often argued in the literature; rather, they are the "… instruments and outcomes of social policies that are highly dependent on each country's institutional path of development" (Salamon and Sokolowski 2003, 72).

Empirical evidence from a number of studies has suggested that volunteering is a less frequent activity in post-communist societies than in Western Europe. Using EVS survey data, it was demonstrated that, as of 1999, there was an obvious difference between Western and Eastern European countries: levels of volunteering were much higher in Western Europe (Juknevičius and Savicka 2003; Voicu and Voicu 2003). There were, however, exceptions to this rule: the same EVS data for 1999 showed fairly high levels of volunteering in Slovakia (with more than 50% of the respondents indicating that they had performed voluntary work for at least one organisation included in the survey, placing Slovakia among the highest results, comparable with Sweden) and low levels of volunteering in Portugal (Halman 2003).

The Johns Hopkins Comparative Non-profit Sector Project includes 24 countries, four of which are post-communist: the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. In 1995, levels of volunteering in these were fairly low, similar to those in Latin America (Salamon and Sokolowski 2003, 74). Perhaps an interesting parallel to Latin America can be drawn. Butcher (2003) argued that in Mexico, a culture of volunteerism was hampered by historical developments: the strong role of the Catholic Church and state provision of social welfare led to a weak culture of volunteering, which is often informal, occurs on the communal level as acts of mutual help and remains unrecognised, not having become part of the formal culture in the Tocquevillean tradition.

1.5. Generational Change and Young People

Another line of argumentation pursued in our research examines the post-communist legacy as a changing phenomenon. It is logical to assume that the communist legacy of mistrust and disengagement should be gradually weakening, as Armenia accumulates more years of independence. There is now a new generation of young people who grew up in the new independent state of Armenia. They have not had the socialising experience of Soviet institutions. Thus, it can be hypothesised that value changes, in terms of trust towards civil society and willingness to engage in its activities, should be visible among the Armenian public and particularly pronounced in the younger generation because they are the bearers of societal value change (Inglehart and Welzel 2005). It is plausible to assume that the young should have more positive attitudes towards civil society because they did not experience the Soviet practice of being forced into pseudo-voluntary organisations or the events leading to post-communist mistrust and disengagement (Howard 2003).

Generational change has been a focus of many studies of associational life and volunteering. While there seems to be no universal pattern, some trends can be observed according to geographic regions and/or the levels of socio-economic development of the countries in question.

In the West, many authors (Inglehart 2003; Wollebæk and Selle 2003) have indicated that youths are less likely to become formal members of civil society organisations and associations. With some (fairly logical) exceptions, such as youth and sports associations, young people in well-off countries are less likely to join associations. This trend is often placed within a broader context of changing values and patterns of political participation in the affluent Western

societies: "classic" forms of associational life, such as political parties and trade unions, are on the decline, and people are more interested in environmental issues, emancipation and personal interests (Inglehart and Welzel 2005), which are often addressed in a less organised fashion by new social movements. Young people are those most affected by the value change under way in the Western societies. While they are not necessarily less socially active, their activities are less often channelled through civil society organisations.

In developing societies, however, the picture is reversed. There is evidence that young people are more likely to be members of associations, with the exception of voluntary welfare associations (Inglehart 2003). Voicu and Voicu (2003) demonstrated that in Romania, young people are more likely to volunteer, although, as mentioned above, overall levels of volunteering in Romania are low compared with other European countries.

Old and young generations also differ in their approaches to and frequency of volunteering. Wollebæk and Selle (2003) demonstrated that in Norway, levels of volunteering are high and stable across age groups, but the younger generation is more likely to engage in less-formalised, spontaneous volunteering, inspired more by their interests and lifestyles and less by their commitment to specific membership-based organisations.

Thus, we can see the differences between younger and older age cohorts regarding how they engage in civil society activities in different parts of the world. The purpose of the research reported in this book is to measure these differences in the Armenian context as well.

This chapter outlined the theoretical framework of our study, discussing the concept of civil society and its implications for the post-communist region and the changes that are currently under way in this region. The next chapter focuses on Armenia and its civil society, providing important contextual details that help the reader better understand the recent history of Armenian civil society and the current setting in which the research occurred.

Chapter II: Armenian Civil Society

In the previous chapter, we argued that the civil societies of the post-communist countries have suffered from a distinct weakness, manifested in low membership in civil society organisations and associations, low levels of trust towards those organisations, low levels of volunteering (both formal and informal) and negative attitudes towards volunteering. This chapter discusses Armenian civil society both in terms of its most recent history and in terms of its current characteristics and the impact of the post-communist legacy. We argue that Armenia, as one of the post-communist countries, initially inherited the typical legacy of mistrust and disengagement. The extent to which this legacy is weakening is the overarching research theme of this book, addressed empirically over the course of subsequent chapters.

Armenia's recent history has had an impact on the development of the civil society in general and of the NGO sector in particular. The communist legacy, the manner of transition to independence and a range of challenges faced by the young Third Republic have influenced the burgeoning Armenian civil society.

2.1. Soviet Armenian Civil Society

The impact of the Soviet system of governance on civil society organisations and activities, discussed in the previous chapter, is fully applicable to the Armenian case. Under the Soviet system, grass-roots activities were organised and controlled from above. If we were to apply modern terminology, we could describe the space between the individual and the state as populated by a plethora of state-run organisations, which would currently be described as GONGOs: governmentally organised NGOs (OSCE/ODIHR 2000).

Similarly to the case of the Socialist Bloc at large, it would be wrong to say that no independently organised social activity occurred in the space between the state and the private sphere in communist Armenia. There is historical evidence of underground organisations and movements, mostly inspired by nationalist ideologies, discontented over the silencing of the tragic events of 1915, when more than one million Armenians perished in the Ottoman Empire[5], and with aspirations for independence. There have also been examples of spontaneous social mobilisation.

In 1965, some 100,000 people gathered at the Opera Square in Yerevan to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. This gathering eventually evolved into a 24-hour demonstration rally: the first social initiative of that type and scale to occur in the entire Soviet Union (Karlsson 2007). In April 1977, a small group of Armenian dissidents founded the Armenian Helsinki Watch (Dudwick 1995).

With "glasnost" and "perestroika" declared in the Soviet Union, new opportunities for associational life were created and exploited. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the first NGOs,

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[5] on the territory of what is now the Republic of Turkey

called "public organisations" in Armenian,[6] were established in Armenia. Environmental protection is usually mentioned among the first issues that more or less organised citizen groups would advocate in the early stages of civil society development in Armenia. The year 1988 saw mass demonstrations in Yerevan in support of the Nagorno-Karabakh[7]–Armenia unification. As a response to a devastating earthquake in 1988 that claimed the lives of approximately 45,000 and left 500,000 homeless, voluntary groups and organisations for humanitarian assistance and relief were formed.

Thus, civil society under Soviet rule initially consisted mostly of underground groups and spontaneous outbreaks of mobilisation. In the final years of Soviet rule, organisations were allowed. The process of establishing these organisations began while social movements became not only highly visible but also very important elements, shaping the country's political course and involving great numbers of people.

2.2. Post-Soviet Development: Rise of NGOs

With the breakup of the Soviet Union, life in Armenia changed dramatically. Civil society found itself in an entirely new, rapidly shifting and fairly unpredictable environment. War in Nagorno-Karabakh[8], inflow of refugees and severe economic crises added to the scope of tasks that were being undertaken by newly formed NGOs. This period can be considered the next phase of civil society development in Armenia, which saw local grassroots responses to the earthquake, the influx of refugees and growing poverty. These responses were stimulated by examples of foreign benevolent organisations that were providing humanitarian assistance to the country. International NGOs began to work in Armenia in 1990 and also served as exemplary organisations (Blue, Payton, and Kharatyan 2001).

By the mid-1990s, a visible NGO sector had been created in Armenia. Social movements, in contrast, receded: people withdrew from "street politics" under the heavy burden of daily survival, and they were driven away by the disillusionment of failed promises of democratisation.

Despite hundreds of NGOs mushrooming in Armenia after independence, their ability to represent the public interest, their impact on public decision-making and their sustainability were questionable. One Western author described Armenian NGOs of the mid-1990s as follows.

> ...Most of them are short-lived and diffuse, led by one or two members of the political or economic elite (or their wives), with a small and fluid membership. At best, they are clusters of friends and acquaintances interested in pursuing a common goal… The groups frequently split over competition between leaders or changes in their mission. Similar

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[6] "Non-governmental organization" is «Հասարակական կազմակերպություն» (public organization) in Armenian.

[7] Nagorno-Karabakh was an autonomous region of Azerbaijan, with an overwhelmingly ethnic Armenian population. In 1987, its local self-governing body applied to the Soviet authorities with a request to be transferred from Azerbaijani to Armenian jurisdiction.

[8] An armed conflict that started as a series of ethnic clashes between the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh and the Azerbaijanis in late 1980 and that deteriorated into a full-scale, undeclared war between Armenia and Azerbaijan, ending in a ceasefire in May 1994.

organisations tend to compete for resources … rather than collaborate or share resources (Dudwick 1997, 98).

Civil society organisations in Armenia, in their initial stages, were created by members of the social and political elites, with financial support from Western funding and charitable organisations (Dudwick 1995). Their influence on government policies in the 1990s was quite limited. Some NGOs had advocated the passing of specific laws and legislative initiatives, but they had not been very active or successful in lobbying efforts. Most Armenian NGOs remained small and heavily controlled by their founders, who were often strongly charismatic personalities who set the agenda and lead fundraising efforts. The attitude of the government towards NGOs was rather indifferent (Danielyan 2001). Difficult economic situations have constituted a serious challenge for NGOs' activities: organisations have had few resources, and membership fees were nominal or non-existent. Organisations were often unable to inform the public about their existence, purposes and activities because they could not afford advertisements or campaigns on radio or in newspapers (Dudwick 1997).

The modest performance of the Armenian NGO sector, as well as its isolation from the broader public, has had an impact on public perceptions, or, in this case, rather, the lack of thereof. A series of public opinion surveys (International Foundation for Electoral Systems 2004) have provided some information on the level of public awareness of NGOs and attitudes towards them in Armenia from 2001 to 2004. The results of surveys conducted in 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004 showed that the majority of Armenians could not name any working NGO in Armenia. Approximately one-quarter of the respondents were able to name an NGO; approximately one-fifth of the respondents did not even know what an NGO was.

2.3. Current Overall Assessment of Armenian Civil Society

The overall assessment of Armenian civil society by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) CSO Sustainability Index (USAID 2012a) depicts Armenian civil society as partially developed, with no major upward or downward trends for the past 15 years. The CIVICUS Civil Society Index (Hakobyan et al. 2010) assesses Armenian civil society as "moderately developed", with a relatively strong level of organisation but with weak impact and low civic engagement. As discussed in greater detail in the previous sections of this chapter, the Armenian NGO sector is described as donor driven (Blue and Ghazaryan 2004) to the extent of becoming artificial (Ishkanian 2008). In contrast, there have been studies highlighting positive aspects of Armenian civil society, such as high levels of trust in small rural communities (Babajanian 2008) and great potential for informal volunteering (Hakobyan and Tadevosyan 2010). There is also new evidence of increased spontaneous civic activism, mostly involving young people mobilising around specific environmental and policy issues (Ishkanian et al. 2013; Bertelsmann Stiftung 2014). This section describes the current state of Armenian civil society in general, focusing on its broad characteristics and main challenges.

The legislative basis for NGO activities in Armenia is provided by the Armenian Constitution. According to article 28 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, everyone has the right to form associations with other persons (*Constitution of the Republic of Armenia*

1995). The legislative framework regulating the Armenian non-governmental sector is fairly developed. According to Green (2002), Armenia has had a legislature favourable to the non-profit sector since 1996; in this regard, Armenia was even ahead of most CIS countries at that time. The procedure for establishing an NGO in Armenia requires registration with the Ministry of Justice as well as with tax authorities and with the State Social Fund (National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia 1998).[9]

The Bertelsmann Transformation Index Armenia Country Report describes civil society's influence as constrained by "…the state's failure to engage it in constructive dialogue or to grant it a role in public debate or the formulation of policy" (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2014, 24). The state excludes civil society from participation in political processes.

In addition to being shunned both by the state and by the majority of the population, another serious problem Armenian civil society faces is systemic corruption, which undermines its potential to function efficiently: "In Armenia... political apathy and systemic corruption have harmed the development of a civil society after the end of Soviet rule…The corrupt system has arguably buried the formal channels of interest representation" (Stefes 2006, 122).

According to Freedom House (2014) Nations in Transit reports, Armenian civil society has remained more or less at the same stage of being partially developed since 1996, receiving scores of 3.5 (from 1996 to 2008) and 3.75 (from 2009 to 2014) on a scale from one (indicating a fully developed democratic civil society) to seven. To place Armenia in its regional context, Figure 1 below presents the scores from 1996 to 2014 for Armenia and the two other South Caucasus republics. Scores for Estonia and Uzbekistan are added as illustrations of cases of the success and failure of civil society development in the post-communist region.

Figure 1. Freedom House Nations in Transit civil society scores for selected countries on a scale from 1 (fully developed civil society) to 7
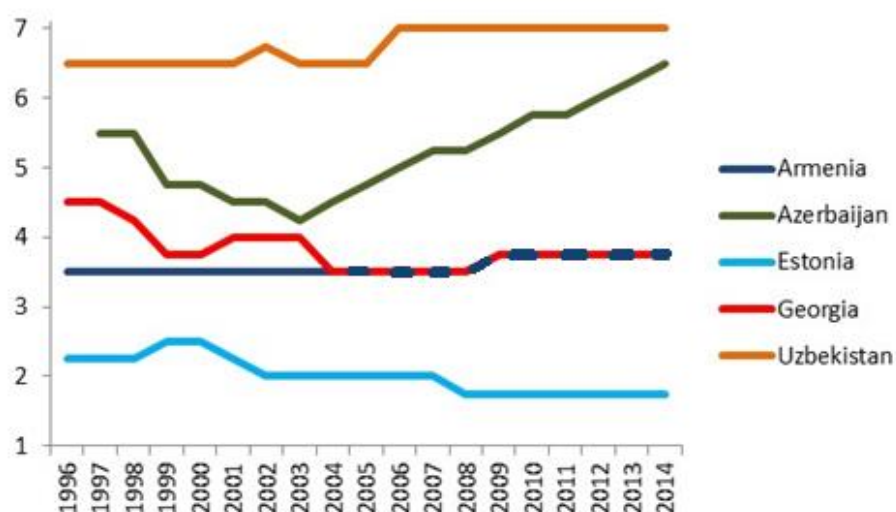
Source: Freedom House Nations in Transit, http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit

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[9] The Law of the Republic of Armenia on NGOs does not, however, require consecutive re-registration or notification in cases of the termination of activities.

Thus, two decades of civil society development in Armenia hardly qualify as a success story. There is a fairly large NGO sector, although, as discussed in detail in section 2.5, examining the numbers of formally registered NGOs can be misleading. The state prefers to ignore, rather than control or suppress, NGOs, thus providing them with a certain level of freedom but limiting their impact. Their connections to their constituencies and to the general public are weak, while their organisational sustainability is questionable. Many reasons for such underperformance can be cited. Some factors, such as poverty, corruption and democratic deficits, affect the country as a whole and civil society as a part of that whole. Other factors are specific to civil society. The remainder of this chapter discusses these specific factors that negatively impact the development of Armenian civil society, considering them from two different perspectives: the communist legacy as a psychological aspect of popular perceptions of NGOs and the institutional constraints that resulted from the peculiarities of post-Soviet NGO sector development.

2.4. Specific Challenges of Civil Society

Problems that are specific to civil society, rather than being problems of the society at large, can be discussed both from a cultural perspective and from an institutional perspective. From the political culture point of view, civil society must operate under conditions that change slowly and that bear the marks of the previous knowledge, experience, norms and beliefs that people hold. From the institutional point of view, organisational forms and structures existing in civil society have important impacts on what it does. In the Armenian context, we can similarly distinguish the cultural element of the communist legacy and can identify institutional constraints as limiting factors for civil society.

2.4.1 Communist Legacy: Mistrust and Disengagement

In section 1.3 of the previous chapter, we referred to studies that demonstrated low levels of associational membership in post-communist countries compared with Western Europe. In its early post-Soviet years, Armenia was no exception. The World Values Survey in 1997 showed very low membership in voluntary associations. 8% of the respondents reported being active members of an art, music or educational organisation; for other types of organisations, the membership was even lower. Some 14% of the population consisted of active members of at least one organisation (compared with 36% in Western and Northern Europe) (The European Values Study Foundation and World Values Survey Association 2009). Despite the NGO sector in the country growing rapidly, the new types of associations that replaced the old Soviet ones did not seem to be able to connect with the public at large: "When the Soviet Union collapsed, the political space between state and individual citizens was largely unfilled and the lack of interpersonal trust prevented the rapid development of a vibrant civil society" (Stefes 2006, 121). Stefes argued that, instead of civil society, corrupt elements, such as clientelist networks, occupied the vacuum between the state and the society.

One of the problems faced by the emerging Armenian civil society was the Soviet legacy, much as in the remainder of the post-Soviet space, as described by Howard (2002). The impact

of the Soviet legacy on Armenian civil society has been discussed by several authors. Aslanyan et al. (2007) noted that the underlying reason for the underperformance of the formal part of civil society, i.e., the NGO sector, is the Soviet legacy. Because current NGOs are referred to using the same Armenian term "public organisations", as in the Soviet era, these authors argued that social-psychological heritage, as connoted by the term "public organisation", contributes to the low levels of public trust and support for such organisations.

An additional leftover from the Soviet era is that citizens still largely believe that the state is responsible for the overall well-being of society. Therefore, many people are reluctant to take initiative, or they fail to see it as legitimate that an association, rather than a state body, should do something to alleviate social ills (Aslanyan et.al, 2007).

2.4.2. Institutional Constraints: International Donors' Impact on Civil Society

The international donor community played an important role in the development of Armenian civil society. NGO sector development was largely based on extensive international financial aid, which was both an advantage and a shortcoming, as discussed in this section.

International donor organisations have been operating in the republic since the early 1990s. In 1994, the US-funded NGO Training and Resource Centre was established. It increased NGO sector development through a number of activities, such as collecting, systematising and sharing information pertaining to the existing "public organisations" in Armenia, organising a series of capacity-building training sessions for NGOs, providing templates on how to create an NGO and how to seek funding from donors, and so on (Ishkanian 2008). The US Government has been the largest donor focusing on civil society development in Armenia (USAID 2012a). Table 1 below lists the amounts of the US assistance to Armenian civil society in the most recent years. USAID also ordered and sponsored two large studies of the sector in 2001 (Blue, Payton, and Kharatyan 2001) and 2004 (Blue and Ghazaryan 2004), which are often referred to in this study because these studies are among the few generally comprehensive assessments of the Armenian NGO sector.

Table 1. US government assistance to the civil society sector in Armenia

Year	Amount ($ M)
2006	8.3
2007	11.0
2008	12.2
2009	6.6
2010	5.8
2011	4.0
2012	5.1
2013	3.4

Source: The Foreign Assistance Dashboard, http://www.foreignassistance.gov/DataView.aspx#DataSetAnchor

The European approach to the promotion of civil society has differed from that of the US in that European Union (EU) donors initially interacted with Armenian civil society organisations though third-party actors, mainly the government, but also foreign organisations, funds, and the like. EU interaction with Armenia has generally focused on building strong relationships with state and elite actors at the expense of engagement with non-state actors (Blue,

Payton, and Kharatyan 2001). Nevertheless, when the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and, particularly, the Eastern Partnership (EaP) programs were launched, the multi-level contacts between the EU as an individual actor, the EU member-states and Armenian civil society were enhanced. These contacts were promoted mostly through the civil society forum, a platform including EaP states and the EU, aiming to promote contacts among civil society organisations and to facilitate dialogue with public authorities.

Some authors have been sceptical of the overall impact of Western donors on the development of Armenian civil society. Ishkhanian (2008) argued that "NGOization" has led to the de-politicisation and taming of the emancipatory potential of civil society. The proliferation of Western-type NGOs crowded out endogenous forms of civic participation and association, thus, in fact, undermining genuine civil society development because many NGOs exist purely to pursue and acquire international funding. In her earlier work, Ishkanian (2003) provided a detailed case study of donors' significant influence on NGOs' choices of problems and solutions. The author convincingly demonstrated that the issue of domestic violence was avoided by NGOs in the 1990s but became popular as soon as international donors earmarked some funding for it. Moreover, the solutions proposed and implemented by NGOs, were copied from the US experience, with little discussion or consideration of local conditions or possible alternative solutions, rendering the programs largely ineffective (Ishkanian 2003).

Thus, while international donor support has provided much-needed funds to increase civil society activities in Armenia, it has also created a set of problems, such as dependency and detachment from the community. These problems have repercussions for how the NGO sector is perceived by the public. Because they are donor-driven rather than community-driven, NGOs are often dubbed at best "grant-makers" or at worst "grant-eaters", which engage in superficial activities and are adept at producing false reports while money is being wasted or embezzled.

2.5. Number of NGOs Existing in Armenia: An Open Question

Since independence, Armenia has witnessed rapid growth of its NGO sector, but the exact numbers of truly functioning organisations have remained elusive and volatile. In 1995, the number of registered organisations was estimated to be approximately 900 (Dudwick 1997). In 1999, re-registration was required by state authorities; as a result, the number of officially registered NGOs shrank dramatically, from 2,300 to approximately 500. Blue, Payton and Kharatyan (2001) estimated that some 200 additional NGOs were operating without registration, so the number of active NGOs at the beginning of the 21st century was estimated to be roughly 700.[10]

Starting in 2002, systematic data on officially registered numbers of NGOs in Armenia became available from Armenian National Statistical Service reports. As of January 2002, the number was again far greater than 2,000, and it has continued to increase steadily except for one year, which is discussed in greater detail below. At the outset of our research, there were 3,552

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[10] This number is close to (or even lower than) the estimate for the mid-1990s mentioned above.

officially registered NGOs in the republic of Armenia.[11] Table 2 presents the official number of registered NGOs in Armenia from 2002 to 2013, obtained from reports of the National Statistical Service of Armenia (2014).

Table 2. Number of registered NGOs in Armenia (2002-2014)

Month, Year	Number	Increase/decrease by %
Jan 2002	2,756	–
Jan 2003	3,211	+ 16.5
Jan 2004	3,660	+ 13.9
Dec 2005	2,202	- 39.9
Dec 2006	2,548	+ 15.7
Dec 2007	2,776	+ 8.9
Dec 2008	2,997	+ 7.9
Nov 2009	3,196	+ 6.6
Nov 2010	3,447	+ 7.8
Sep 2011	3,690	+ 7.0
Mar 2012	3,838	+ 4.0
Jun 2014	3,981[12]	+ 3.7

Source: National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia Yearbooks, http://armstat.am/en

Table 2 shows an increase in the number of registered NGOs from 2002 to 2014, except for 2005, when the number decreases from 3,660 to 2,202. Two factors may have caused the decline in the number of registered NGOs in the country. In 2004, an addendum to the law on NGOs in Armenia was passed stating that organisations having property exceeding 25 million Armenian drams[13] should provide documentation of the composition, size and sources of their property to the state registration body, with the information thereafter to be transferred to the Central Bank of Armenia. This addendum to the law could be a reason for many NGOs not declaring their properties and thus not being officially re-registered. Another possible cause of the decreasing number of NGOs in the period from 2004 to 2005 was the termination of the World Learning Program, a USAID-funded project aimed at supporting the establishment of NGOs in the republic. The program ceased its operations in 2004. Because this programme was a major source of funding for the NGO sector, with its closure, NGOs faced a more difficult financial environment. As a result, many NGOs could have stopped operating.

Thus, over the two decades of NGO sector development, the numbers of officially registered NGOs in Armenia have steadily increased over the years, with the exceptions of those years when re-registration was required. Those years witnessed a dramatic decrease in numbers, followed by a fairly rapid increase.

The official number of registered NGOs can serve as a positive indicator of civil society

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[11] The data obtained in February 2013 from the Ministry of Justice are treated as the main source of information on civil society organizations for the purpose of this research project, as will be discussed in the Methodology chapter.
[12] Number of registered NGOs in Armenia as of June 23, 2014 (State Register Agency of Legal Entities of Armenia).
[13] App. $71,000 (according to the currency exchange rate at the time).

development, particularly for a young post-Soviet country. However, the mere existence of many NGOs cannot speak to their quality or proper operation (Blue, Payton, and Kharatyan 2001). Today, there are 3552[14] registered NGOs in post-Soviet Armenia. However, many of these NGOs are short-lived, financially over-dependent on external donors and often non-operative, existing on paper only. Their contributions to the development of civil society in the country are questionable.

To put the number of currently existing NGOs in Armenia into a comparative perspective, we can examine other similar countries. For example, Lithuania is also a small post-communist country with a population of approximately three million people. Juknevičius and Savicka (2003) reported that in 2000, there were more than 5,000 voluntary organisations in Lithuania, which is more than in Armenia: "It has been estimated, however, that about one fifth of the registered organisations were inactive" (Juknevičius and Savicka 2003, 138). Thus, a large number of officially registered NGOs in a small post-communist country is not a surprising fact in itself, but one should consider the numbers with caution, bearing in mind that a significant proportion of those organisations exist on paper only.

The expansion (and contraction, on some occasions) of the official numbers of registered NGOs in Armenia tells a revealing story of the sector's volatility and questionable institutionalisation, an issue that is empirically addressed in Chapter II of this book.

This chapter has discussed the recent history of the Armenian civil society, dwelling in particular on its questionable level of institutionalisation, which is visible in the volatility of their number and in many NGOs existing on paper only. It has discussed two factors that have the greatest impact on the current state of civil society: the communist legacy and the influence of foreign donors. We have argued that Armenian civil society is a fairly typical case of a "post-communist" civil society, with two sets of problems that are specific to civil society rather than to Armenian society and the state as such. The first set of challenges faced by civil society consists of individual attitudes and the behaviour of citizens: disdain towards volunteering, distrust towards associations, and low membership in associations. These factors are mostly legacies of communism, under which people were forced to join organisations and to "volunteer" on a regular basis. The second category of problems of post-communist civil society has to do with the rapid donor-driven development of NGOs after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Multiple challenges of regime transition, accompanied by an economic collapse and a war with a neighbouring country, created the demand for social action, while generous international donor support increased the supply. These factors led to the mushrooming of NGOs heavily dependent on external donors. While this phenomenon helped establish a seemingly vibrant NGO sector, it created a set of constraints with which NGOs currently struggle. The organisational sustainability of most NGOs, in the case of the withdrawal of international developmental aid, is questionable. More importantly, the legitimate ability of NGOs to represent local voices is often disputed on the grounds that most of them are funded from abroad.

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[14] Data were requested from the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia in February 2013.

Two decades ago, Armenia began as a typical post-communist country, and it has yet to register a major breakthrough in the field of civil society. However, there has been evidence of some development, particularly in the field of organisational institutionalisation (Hakobyan and Tadevosyan 2010; Hakobyan et al. 2010; Ishkanian et al. 2013; Blue and Ghazaryan 2004). Additionally, the sheer number of years that have passed since the collapse of the Soviet regime and the changing global environment raise the question of what has changed. The remainder of this book empirically assesses the extent to which Armenian civil society continues to exhibit post-communist features of detachment from the larger society and weak organisational capacity.

Chapter III: Methodology of the Study

This book is the result of a two-year research project that employed a number of methods to assess Armenian civil society, to place it in a broader context of the post-communist region, and to measure the changes that are currently under way. The overall study design consists of three levels of analysis (macro, meso and micro) and three components (secondary data analysis, organisational survey and semi-structured qualitative interviews). The details are elaborated in the corresponding sections that follow.

3.1. Three Levels of Analysis

The study first examines Armenian civil society as a country-level phenomenon and compares it to that of other countries in the post-communist region and the wider world. This **macro-level** of analysis is mostly inspired by Howard's study of post-communist civil societies in the late 1990s. Our aim is to replicate Howard's work ten years after his study (and 20 years after the collapse of the Soviet Union) to determine whether Armenia continues to suffer from the post-communist "weakness" of civil society, as described by Howard. Howard's framework is modified by adding the component of volunteering to the analysis, for the reasons elaborated in Chapter I, section 1.4.2. After placing Armenia within a broad "post-communist vs. the rest of the world" context, our study also narrows its focus to the South Caucasus and discusses Armenia in its narrow regional context by comparing and contrasting Armenian civil society with that of Azerbaijan and Georgia.

We also study Armenian civil society at the **meso-level** by examining civil society organisations, exploring their "life stories," strategies, outreach and fundraising activities, cooperation with various actors, engagement of volunteers, successes, challenges and so on. This part of the analysis combines data from an organisational survey with semi-structured interviews with NGO leaders and volunteers.

The **micro-level** of analysis of the communist legacy or changes in Armenian civil society focuses on the individual. We use data from a number of surveys to measure membership in civil society organisations, trust towards NGOs and volunteering, both formal (i.e., occurring through involvement in organisations) and informal (i.e., spontaneous, non-structured, occurring outside of any institutional framework). We combine the existing (fairly limited) secondary quantitative data on motivations for volunteering or abstaining from voluntary activities with our own primary qualitative data generated during the implementation of this research. We use qualitative interviews with volunteers as additional insights into the individual attitudes and values that shape some of the aspects of current Armenian civil society.

3.2. Methods Used in the Analysis of Armenian Civil Society

In addition to reviewing the relevant literature and documents, this study employs three primary methods of data collection and analysis: statistical analysis of secondary data, an organisational survey and semi-structured interviews. Table 3 below explains the interplay between the three levels of analysis described in the previous section and the three methods employed in this study.

The table also maps the main concepts discussed at each level through the corresponding method.

Table 3. Methods used by level of analysis

	Secondary data	*Organisational survey*	*Semi-structured interviews*
Macro-level (country)	Trust, membership, volunteering	–	–
Meso-level (organisation)	–	Trust, volunteering, organisational structures	Trust, organisational structures
Micro-level (individual)	Trust, membership, volunteering	–	Volunteering

3.2.1. Secondary Data Analysis

The secondary data analysis makes use of the data from the following surveys: the World Values Survey (third wave 1995-1998 and sixth wave 2010-2014); the Caucasus Barometer (2008-2013); Life in Transition; and the CIVICUS Civil Society Index survey (2009 and 2014). All these surveys were based on nationwide representative samples of adult (18+ years old) residents of the Republic of Armenia. Trust towards NGOs, membership in NGOs and other associations and self-reported volunteering are the three main variables assessed through secondary data. Each dataset is discussed in greater detail below.

World Values Survey

The World Values Survey (WVS) is a global research project that includes a broad range of socio-cultural and political topics. The WVS started in 1981 as a part of the European Values Study and has since expanded to the rest of the world. The survey is conducted periodically by local survey organisations or scholarly teams in close cooperation with and under the supervision of the WVS Association.[15]

The study presented in this book is based on data from the third (1995-1998) and the sixth (2010-2014) waves of WVS because these are the only two waves that included Armenia. The specific dates of the WVS in Armenia were 1997 for the third wave and 2011 for the sixth wave. WVS data on membership in voluntary associations were used in the analysis and are reported in Chapter IV (section 4.1.1.) of this book.[16] WVS data allow for the placing of Armenia within the world context. The data are also unique in that they provide us with the opportunity to measure Armenian political culture as early as 1997, only a few years after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the establishment of the independent Republic of Armenia. WVS data are used for both the individual and macro levels of analysis, aggregating the data to country-level measurements and making cross-country comparisons.

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[15] More information about the WVS is available online: http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs.jsp

[16] Poland was excluded from the analysis of the third wave because only questions regarding membership in political parties and labour unions were asked. Qatar was included in the sixth wave analysis, although the question on political party membership was not asked there (but because all the other membership questions were asked, it was decided to include Qatar in the analysis).

Caucasus Barometer

The Caucasus Barometer (CB) is an annual nationwide representative survey that has been conducted in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia by the Caucasus Research Resources Centres since 2008.[17] Data on trust towards NGOs and on volunteering are used in this study. CB data are used to compare Armenia to its two South Caucasus neighbours and to observe more recent trends in public opinion towards civil society organisations. The data are mostly used for the individual level of analysis, although some macro-level cross-country comparisons are also performed.

Life in Transition Survey

The Life in Transition (LiT) Survey was conducted jointly by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the World Bank in 34 countries, including Armenia, in 2006 and 2010. The surveys cover the regions of Central and Eastern Europe, South-Eastern Europe, the Baltic States, the CIS and Mongolia.[18] Although the question wording is not directly comparable with that of the CB, LiT data are important to consider because the 2006 survey offered the first countrywide representative public opinion data on levels of trust towards NGOs.

CIVICUS Civil Society Index Population Survey

The CIVICUS Civil Society Index (CSI) is a participatory action-research project assessing the state of civil society in countries around the world. The CSI is initiated and implemented by local partner organisations, in partnership with the CIVICUS World Alliance for Citizen Participation.[19] The CSI consists of a number of assessment tools, including a nationwide representative population survey, which was conducted in Armenia twice: in 2009 and 2014. Counterpart International Armenia was the local implementing partner of the survey in both years. Both databases were requested directly from Counterpart.[20]

The questions asked in the surveys described above were not always identical or comparable. Taken together, however, the four databases allow us to gain a fairly broad understanding of public perceptions and involvement in civil society. The table below maps the use of the data for our three main variables – trust, membership and volunteering – for each available year. Data from the same source are directly comparable.

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[17] More information about CRRC and the CB is available online at http://www.crrccenters.org

[18] More information is available at the EBRD Web site:
http://www.ebrd.com/pages/research/publications/special/transitionII.shtml

[19] More information is available online at http://civicus.org/index.php/en/

[20] Counterpart International Armenia is currently in the process of phasing out its operation in Armenia. By the time of the publication of this research, the databases might no longer be available from Counterpart directly. They can be requested from the Turpanjian Center for Policy Analysis at the American University of Armenia because they are considered to be in the public domain and the authors of this research have the official permission of Counterpart to further disseminate the databases.

Table 4. Survey data used by variable and year

	1997	*2006*	*2008*	*2009*	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*	*2013*	*2014*
Trust towards NGOs/CSOs		LiT	CB	CB	CB, LiT	CB	CB	CB	
Membership	WVS			CSI		WVS			CSI
Volunteering				CSI		CB	CB	CB	CSI

3.2.2. The Organisational Survey

The second method employed in this study is an online organisational survey of the Armenian NGO sector. A total of 188 responses to a questionnaire, which consisted of approximately 30 questions, were obtained.[21] The process of constructing the sampling frame and the survey fieldwork are discussed in detail below.

Originally, it was planned to obtain an official list of NGOs registered in Armenia that would serve as the principal sampling frame for the study. A decision was made to focus on NGOs and to exclude foundations because, according to Armenian legislation, foundations are judicial entities of a different type. An official letter was sent to the State Registry requesting a list of NGOs with corresponding contact information, such as the name of the organisation, the address and contact numbers. However, the request was denied by the institution because a corresponding law on accessing such detailed data requires a fee to be paid for each organisation's information details (National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia 1997). Considering that there are more than 3,000 organisations registered in the republic, the costs of paying the official fees for each NGO's contact information were prohibitive. Instead, a full nominal list of the registered NGOs was provided free of charge by the Armenian Ministry of Justice. This list includes 3,552 organisations and is considered the primary sampling frame for the study.

To obtain the NGOs' contact information, we decided to rely on the Internet, more specifically Google as the main search engine and "Googling" as a strategy. This decision has a major drawback in that our survey would not be representative of the entire NGO sector as it *formally* exists, and we would exclude all organisations that do not maintain an Internet presence for a variety of reasons. In contrast, we do know that the formal list of registered NGOs is not an accurate reflection of reality (see Chapter II, section 2.5). Most of the organisations on that list do not exist, while there could be a number of active organisations that opt to remain unregistered. In our research, we are interested in at least somewhat functioning organisations (taking priority over the representativeness of the study); thus, we adopted Internet visibility as an indication of NGO activity. The Internet is an important communication platform[22] that NGOs, striving to keep up with modern developments, use to make themselves and their activities known. Conversely, if NGOs are active, they are likely to be mentioned on the Internet (by journalists, donors, bloggers, etc.).[23]

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[21] See Appendix 1 for the questionnaire.

[22] According to CRRC data, 40% of the Armenian population had Internet access from the home in 2012.

[23] One of the slogans of the 21st century is "if it is not online, it does not exist." Our use of Googling as an assessment technique was, to some extent, inspired by this slogan.

In addition to providing the research team with the contact information required to initiate the organisational survey, Googling was an interesting experiment in itself in that it served as an overall mapping of the online visibility of the formally existing Armenian NGO sector as well as of the completeness and accuracy of the information. It could serve as an additional tool for estimating how many NGOs actually exist and function in Armenia.

Googling was performed through a sequence of steps. A Microsoft Excel database was created for the full nominal list of registered NGOs. A team consisting of six students was trained and tasked to conduct an online search for the organisations on the list using the Google search engine. The students were instructed to search for the Armenian name of an organisation first and to record the main results. In cases in which the application did not generate any results, English transliteration of the Armenian name and/or an English translation of the name (if such a translation seemed logical to the searcher) was Googled to broaden the search. Googling was conducted in June 2013.

Based on the results of the search, the online visibility of each of the 3,552 NGOs was coded as "not available" (NA), "no contacts" (NC) or "information available" (YES). The NA code indicates organisations for which no mention whatsoever was found on the Internet. The NC code indicates NGOs that are at least somewhat visible online: for example, Googling shows that they are mentioned in the media or by other Web sources, including social networks[24], but no specific contacts (such as telephone number, e-mail address, postal address or organisational Web site) could be obtained. The YES code indicates organisations for which specific contact information (telephone number, e-mail address or postal address) was obtained through the Internet search.

The Googling technique generated the following results: of the 3,552 registered NGOs, there are 1,812 in the NA category (with no online presence), 973 in the NC category (with some online visibility) and 767 in the YES category. The contact information classification of the 767 NGOs available online is as follows: 445 e-mail addresses, 702 phone numbers (including mobile and landline) and 248 postal addresses. Thus, Googling as a method revealed the following online visibility of the Armenian NGO sector: 51% of organisations do not exist on the Internet, 27% have partial visibility, and 21% have their contact information available on the Internet. Thus, only approximately one-fifth of Armenian NGOs currently use the Internet as a means of making themselves available to potentially interested partners or beneficiaries. Table 5 below summarises the results.

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[24] For example, 18 NGOs were found to have Facebook pages.

Table 5. **Results generated by the Googling technique**

	Categories	*Number of NGOs*	*%*
NA	No online visibility	1812	51
NC	Limited online visibility	973	27
YES	Visibility online	767	22
Total		3552	100

After completing the Internet search of the names of 3,552 organisations officially registered in Armenia, we compared the results with the outcome of another effort of mapping the Armenian NGO sector. An activity with a similar task of providing a realistic picture of existing and functioning Armenian NGOs was undertaken by the Civilitas Foundation[25] (CF) in 2009 with the aim of developing a guide to civil society activities in Armenia. CF had the same starting point (the list of all officially registered NGOs in the country at the time) but relied on the telephone as the main method for accessing the organisations. Each organisation on the list was contacted by CF staff. A database of operating NGOs, consisting of 456 entries, was created based on this effort. Unlike our list, the CF list includes both local and international organisations operating in Armenia.[26] Each NGO on the list in the CF database was compared with our Googling outcomes in terms of names and contact information. A total of 26 NGOs were identified in the CF database that were not originally identified through Googling. The comparison showed that the application of different primary techniques, namely, our online mapping through Googling and phone call mapping by CF, generated roughly corresponding results. Thus, we can say that our use of the Internet to obtain contact information generated reasonably reliable information, although, as already mentioned above, the list of "Internet-visible" NGOs is by no means representative of the Armenian NGO sector at large. It does, however, serve as a fairly good pool of contact information for those NGOs that are likely to be active.[27]

The survey questionnaire was prepared in English, followed by translation into Armenian because the target audience consisted of Armenian nationals (representatives of local NGOs). The Armenian online questionnaire was created and pretested by sending it to three NGOs and soliciting detailed feedback over the telephone upon completion. Certain adjustments were made to the Armenian version of the questionnaire based on the feedback generated from the pre-tests. The final Armenian version of the tool was subsequently back-translated into English (See Appendix 1).

The questionnaire consists of a total of 29 closed- and open-ended questions addressing the following issues related to NGOs: structure, leadership changes, sectors of operation, activities, trust toward NGOs, volunteering, use of online tools, relationship with the local/national government and funding-related issues.

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[25] http://www.civilitasfoundation.org/cf/

[26] The CF list of organizations can be accessed here:
http://civil.am/index.php?option=com_comprofiler&task=userslist&listid=5&Itemid=61

[27] For a more detailed discussion of our 'Googling' experiment, see Paturyan, Gevorgyan and Matevosyan (2014).

As the survey implementation started, the questionnaire allowed us to gain additional insights and to improve our estimations of online NGO visibility obtained through Googling. An online survey questionnaire was sent to the 445 e-mail addresses that were available. Mail delivery systems returned 100 e-mails. Thus, 22% of the email addresses of NGOs found online were non-existent and/or incorrect.

Because there were a substantial number of NGOs for which phone numbers but no e-mail addresses (or, as we learned, wrong addresses) were obtained through Googling, and because reliance on e-mail addresses yielded very low response rates only (52 NGOs completed the survey after a participation-soliciting e-mail and a reminder), the next step in the study was to make telephone calls to all the NGOs we could not reach by e-mail. Three team members were assigned the task of making telephone calls, involving quick elaboration on the purpose of the study conducted, a verification of the e-mail address obtained from the Internet, or a request to provide a correct/working e-mail address, followed by a request to an authorised person at a given organisation to complete the questionnaire that would be sent to him or her the same day. The calls were conducted on weekdays. Two or three follow-up calls were made to non-responsive phone numbers, varying the time of the day to ensure maximum coverage. Of the 705 available phone numbers called, 211 (30%) received no answer (no one picked up the phone, or the number was temporary unavailable), 113 (16%) were wrong phone numbers (not an NGO number, or the person who picked up the phone did not know anything about the NGO), 85 (12%) refused to participate in the survey, 49 (7%) reported having no e-mail address, and 28 (4%) reported being closed. In 219 (31%) of cases, the person who answered the phone provided an e-mail address and promised to complete the questionnaire that was sent to them the same or the next day. Reminder phone calls were made to NGOs that promised to complete the survey but did not do so. During the final stage of surveying, the researchers called the NGOs to remind them once again and offered to conduct a phone interview at that time to avoid delaying the response any further. A total of 55 survey questionnaires were completed by phone interviews in this manner.

One of the concerns of the study is that there could be functional NGOs in Armenia that are not included on the official list of registered organisations. In an attempt to find such organisations, the survey questionnaire sent to NGOs included a snowballing question asking the respondent to name three other NGOs working in their field. The answers obtained were compared with the original sampling frame. A total of 15 new names of NGOs were obtained through snowballing.

Thus, although Googling was the primary technique for obtaining NGO contact information, it was combined with a number of additional approaches in an attempt to contact as many NGOs as possible. In addition to sending the link to the online survey to those e-mail addresses that were found on the Internet, telephone calls, snowballing and even attempts at contacting NGOs through their Facebook pages were undertaken. While phone calls helped increase the response rate, it should be noted that snowballing and the use of Facebook yielded only marginal results.

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, a total of 188 responses were obtained online and by telephone, or 5% of the total number of registered NGOs in the country (N=3,552), and 24.5% of those who had full information available online (N=767). The time frame of the survey was July to November, 2013.

Upon collecting the responses through the Google Form application, the final online database was downloaded in the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet format, re-coded as necessary and transferred to SPSS software. The SPSS database underwent further clearing for the purpose of quantitative data analysis.[28]

3.2.3. Semi-structured Interviews with NGO Leaders and Volunteers

The third component of our research was qualitative: 20 semi-structured interviews with NGO leaders and ten semi-structured interviews with volunteers at NGOs were conducted by an experienced member of the research team in October, November and December 2013. The selection of interviewees was made with the aim of creating maximum diversity, in terms of age, NGO sector of operation[29], length of NGO existence and organisational size (small vs. large NGOs). The gender balance was maintained for the NGO leaders (ten female and ten male interviewees) but was skewed in favour of women in the case of volunteers: seven female and three male volunteers were interviewed. Interviews were conducted both in the capital city of Yerevan and in the regions of Armenia: eight NGO leaders and three volunteers were from Yerevan, while the remainder of the interviewees were engaged with NGOs operating in regional towns.

The questions for the NGO leaders covered the following aspects: the history of establishment of the organisation; its mission, aims, main activities, challenges and achievements; difficulties, success stories and opportunities; the personal story of the leader; leadership changes in the organisation; beneficiaries and target groups; trust towards their NGO and toward the civil society sector; negative vs. positive stereotypes related to the civil society sector; youth-related issues; the involvement of volunteers in organisational activities, volunteers' recruitment procedures, and their motivations and activities in the organisation; existing local and international cooperative frameworks; relationships with policy-making bodies and involvement in the political arena; issues related to the broader country landscape; and whether existing policies help or hinder the work of civil society organisations. The leaders of older NGOs were asked to reflect on their experience and how things have changed over the 20 years of Armenia's independence, both in the society at large and in their organisations. Recommendations for increasing civic engagement were also solicited from the interviewees. The interview guide is available in Appendix 2.

The interview guide for volunteers covered questions related to their personal stories as volunteers, reasons for volunteering, impact of volunteering on their lives, nature of responsibilities and tasks performed as volunteers, their contributions to the organisation,

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[28] Both the Microsoft Excel and SPSS databases are available from TCPA upon request. It is envisioned that the SPSS database will be uploaded onto the TCPA Web site, in parallel with the publication of this manuscript.

[29] See Appendix 5 for the list of types of organisations represented by the interviewees.

participation in the decision making processes, relationships with staff members, and trust towards their organisation and the civil society sector in a broader context. Volunteers with longer periods of involvement were asked whether their experiences have changed over time. Volunteers also shared their thoughts on how civic engagement in Armenia could be increased. See Appendix 3 for the semi-structured interview guide.

All the interviews were conducted in Armenian and lasted between one and two hours. The interviews were audio-recorded with the permission of the interviewees. Full Armenian transcriptions were prepared by junior research team members. The texts were imported into MAXQDA qualitative analysis software. An indexing system was created, considering both the categories derived from the research questions and the themes that emerged from the data. See Appendix 4 for the indexing scheme. The indices were applied using MAXQDA software, which was also used to further enhance the data analysis.

In the remaining chapters of the book, the results obtained from these three methods – the secondary data analysis, the organisational survey and the semi-structured interviews with NGO leaders and volunteers – are presented in corresponding order. The conclusion combines the main findings of the three components of the study.

Chapter IV: Secondary Data Analysis

Note: The decimal points in most of the tables and graphs are rounded for ease of use and visual representation; .5 decimals are rounded up (i.e., 3.5 is rounded up to 4), explaining why, in some of the tables, the reported percentages do not seem to total 100.

4.1. Membership in SCOs: Post-communist "Weakness" Then and Now

A decade ago, the civil societies of the post-communist region were described as "weak" in terms of low membership in associations and low levels of trust towards civil society organisations (Howard 2003). The aim of this chapter is to explore the extent to which this "weakness" persists today. As the first step, Howard's study is replicated using the WVS data originally used by Howard and adding the analysis of the most recent sixth wave of the WVS.

4.1.1. World Values Survey, 1995-1998

In his book, Howard (2003) used World Values Survey data from 1995 to 1998 to demonstrate a distinctive weakness of post-communist civil society in terms of membership in voluntary associations. Howard examined self-reported active and passive membership in all types of organisations included in that WVS wave: (1) church and religious organisations; (2) sports and recreation groups; (3) art, music and educational groups; (4) labour unions; (5) political parties; (6) environmental organisations; (7) professional organisations; (8) charitable/humanitarian organisations; and (9) any other organisation (a total of nine types of organisations).[30]

If we were to replicate Howard's study exactly, we would have had to combine active and passive membership in those organisations. However, passive membership in Armenia for 1997 looked unrealistically high, with 94% inactive members in church and religious organisations, 95% inactive members in sports or recreation organisations and so on. Therefore, in our study, we focus on active membership only. Based on the WVS data,[31] we create two country-level variables to enable cross-country comparison and analysis on the macro level, described as follows.

Average membership in formal associations, 1995-1998

We created dummy variables for active membership in each type of organisation and then totalled these variables to obtain the maximum number of organisations of which each person is an active member. In Armenia, 83% of the population were not active members of any organisation, 12% reported being an active member of one organisation, and another 3% reported being a member of two organisations, while one person reported being an active member of five organisations, as presented in Table 6 below.

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[30] Conceptually, it is disputable whether political parties should be included in civil society. However, we would like to keep our analysis as close to Howard's original study as possible, so we decided to include parties as well.

[31] The exact wording of the question is "Now I am going to read off a list of voluntary organizations. For each organization, could you tell me whether you are an active member, an inactive member or not a member of that type of organization?"

Table 6. Armenia WVS 1995-1998 active member in organisations (totalled)

No. of organisations of which the person is an active member	N	%	Cumulative %
0	1666	83	83
1	245	12	96
2	68	3.4	99
3	16	0.8	99.8
4	4	0.2	99.95
5	1	0.1	100
Total	2000	100	

For the purpose of cross-country comparison, we examine an average number of organisations of which a person is a member, for each country under analysis (a total of 54 countries from different parts of the world). The results are presented in Table 7 below. With a few exceptions, post-communist countries (highlighted) cluster at the lower end of the table, showing lover average active membership in voluntary associations. The t-test [32] shows a statistically significant difference between the post-communist countries and all the other countries in this measurement. The average number of organisations in which a person is active is much lower in post-communist countries, at 0.3 compared with 1 in the remainder of the world.

Active members of at least one organisation

In addition to the measurements used by Howard, we also examine the percentage of people in a country that report being an active member of at least one organisation (also included in Table 7 below). The pattern is fairly similar: most post-communist countries tend to cluster towards the lower end of the spectrum, although some countries (such as East Germany and the Serbian Republic of Bosnia) have very high percentages of people being an active member of at least one organisation. Similarly, the t-test shows a statistically significant difference[33] between the post-communist countries and the other countries for this variable as well: in post-communist countries, approximately 23% of people are members of at least one organisation compared with 51% in the rest of the world.

Table 7. Active membership in organisations, country level measurements, WVS 1995-1998

Country/Territory	Average number of organisations a person is an active member of	% of respondents active in at least one organisation
US	2.03	78
Nigeria	1.77	84
Puerto Rico	1.72	78
Australia	1.58	73
South Africa	1.54	77
Mexico	1.5	67
Dominican Republic	1.49	72
New Zealand	1.44	70

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[32] $t(52) = -5.951$, $p < 0.001$
[33] $t(52) = -6.243$, $p < 0.001$

Country/Territory	Average number of organisations a person is an active member of	% of respondents active in at least one organisation
Serbian Republic of Bosnia	1.17	56
Brazil	1.11	54
Switzerland	1.1	60
Bangladesh	1.04	51
West Germany	1.01	60
Norway	0.99	58
Sweden	0.96	59
Chile	0.91	52
El Salvador	0.84	55
Venezuela	0.84	44
Peru	0.81	46
India	0.76	35
Colombia	0.72	45
East Germany	0.68	46
South Korea	0.64	39
Bosnian Federation	0.6	36
Uruguay	0.6	36
Croatia	0.59	39
Spain	0.58	35
Argentina	0.56	34
Philippines	0.56	32
Finland	0.53	36
Romania	0.47	32
Hungary	0.45	32
Slovenia	0.43	31
Taiwan	0.42	27
Japan	0.41	30
Czech Republic	0.39	30
China[34]	0.38	23
Macedonia	0.38	25
Albania	0.35	28
Slovakia	0.35	28
Moldova	0.33	25
Turkey	0.27	18
Montenegro	0.25	18
Latvia	0.23	17
Armenia	0.22	17

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[34] China is not considered a post-communist country in this analysis because it still officially upholds a communist ideology and is different from the post-communist region under analysis in many respects.

Country/Territory	Average number of organisations a person is an active member of	% of respondents active in at least one organisation
Serbia	0.21	15
Estonia	0.19	15
Russian Federation	0.19	15
Lithuania	0.14	12
Bulgaria	0.13	10
Azerbaijan	0.11	9
Ukraine	0.11	9
Belarus	0.1	9
Georgia	0.1	8
World average (N = 54)	**0.69**	**38.6**
Post-communist average (N = 23)	**0.34**	**23.3**
Non-post-communist average	**0.97**	**50.9**

Thus, in the early years of post-communism, membership in voluntary organisations and associations was very low in the respective countries, and Armenia was no exception. These data were used by Howard (2003), who demonstrated that post-communist civil society was distinctly weak in terms of membership. A decade has passed since the publication of his work. The extent to which the situation changed or remained similar to what Howard described in his analysis of the first decade of post-communist development of civil society must be determined. The next section of this chapter examines the most recent WVS data to determine whether low membership in associations remains a characteristic of the post-communist region and how Armenia has fared in that respect.

4.1.2. World Values Survey 2010-2014: Current State of Associational Membership

The most recent WVS survey repeated the membership question with the same wording, but it expanded the list of types of organisations, adding consumer organisation and self-help/mutual help groups, for a total of 11 types[35]. We use the same two country-level variables (average number of organisations of which a person is an active member and percentage of people who are members of at least one organisation) to explore the extent of the post-communist legacy of "weakness" described by Howard.

The sixth wave of the WVS was conducted in Armenia in 2011. The data show that the post-communist syndrome of low membership in formal associations remains very much the case in Armenia today. In fact, the overall membership levels, already very low in 1997, have decreased further since then: 93% of WVS respondents reported not being members of any association in 2011, compared with 83% in 1997, as Table 8 below demonstrates.

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[35] Because the old version of the question included the "other" type of organisation, this modification does not hinder the overall comparison; it simply makes the recent data more detailed in terms of the specific types of organisations people join.

Table 8. Armenia WVS 1997 and 2011 active membership in organisations (summed up)

No of organisations of which the person is an active member	*% 1997*	*% 2011*
0	83	93
1	12	5.1
2	3.4	0.9
3	0.8	0.5
4	0.2	0.3
5	0.1	0.1
6	0	0.1
Total	100 (N=2000)	100 (N=1100)

The pool of countries included in the 2010-2014 WVS wave was somewhat different from that in the 1995-1998 wave. This section of the chapter examines all the data from the WVS sixth wave, while the next section focuses only on the countries that were included in both the third and sixth waves.[36]

Membership data for both variables (average number of organisations of which a person is an active member and percentage of respondents that are members of at least one organisation) are presented in Table 9 below. One can see that, although some of the post-communist countries remain at the lower end, there is less clustering compared with the 1995-1998 data. It is also interesting to note that membership in civil society organisations has somewhat declined overall, with both variables showing a lower world average in 2010-2014 than in 1995-1998; however, this decrease could be due to differences between the sets of countries included in the two waves.

Statistical analysis shows that post-communist countries remain distinct in terms of low membership.[37] The average number of organisations in which a person is active equals 0.35 for post-communist countries, compared with 0.7 for the rest of the world, and the average percentage of the population active in at least one organisation is 12 for post-communist countries, compared with 24 for the rest of the world. Thus, the WVS data suggest that the communist legacy of low membership in civil society organisations remains detectable. Armenia is no exception: it has dismal membership rates, which have decreased over the past decade.

Table 9. Active membership in organisations, country level measurements, WVS 2010-2014

Country/Territory	*Average number of organisations of which a person is an active member*	*% of respondents active in at least one organisation*
Nigeria	1.80	87
New Zealand	1.65	71
Ghana	1.54	80
Zimbabwe	1.46	81.5
Philippines	1.41	54
Rwanda	1.38	66.5

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[36] Because Armenia was not included in the fourth and the fifth WVS waves, the data from those two waves were not analysed in this study.

[37] t-test for average number of organisations: t(50) = 2.742, p < 0.05; t-test for per cent of members of at least one organisation: t(50) = 2.587, p < 0.05

Country/Territory	Average number of organisations of which a person is an active member	% of respondents active in at least one organisation
US	1.38	65
Mexico	1.31	57
Australia	1.29	65.5
Colombia	1.29	67
Taiwan	1.23	51
Trinidad and Tobago	1.05	55
Sweden	1.02	59
Kyrgyzstan	0.82	37
West Germany	0.80	50
Lebanon	0.77	38
Netherlands	0.77	53
Chile	0.71	47
Slovenia	0.70	47
Peru	0.69	41
Singapore	0.69	39
Cyprus	0.67	36
South Korea	0.65	41
Libya	0.57	24
Qatar	0.57	26
East Germany	0.54	38
Malaysia	0.54	25
Ecuador	0.48	24
Poland	0.48	29
Japan	0.44	28
Uruguay	0.44	28
Palestine	0.40	23
Estonia	0.37	24
Romania	0.35	21
Spain	0.30	21
Pakistan	0.27	17.5
Kazakhstan	0.26	13
Belarus	0.25	17
Iraq	0.24	16
Yemen	0.23	13
Algeria	0.21	12
Morocco	0.21	13.5
Uzbekistan	0.21	13.5
Ukraine	0.18	13
Azerbaijan	0.17	12

Country/Territory	Average number of organisations of which a person is an active member	% of respondents active in at least one organisation
Jordan	0.16	13
Turkey	0.14	8.5
Russian Federation	0.13	9
Armenia	0.11	7
China	0.10	6
Tunisia	0.07	5
Egypt	0.02	1
World average (N 52)	**0.65**	**34.4**
Post-communist average (N 13)	**0.35**	**21.3**
Non post-communist average	**0.75**	**39**

4.1.3. Comparing the Third and Sixth World Values Survey Waves

To make the comparison between the years more precise, we can narrow the pool of countries to those that were included in both waves of the WVS analysed in this chapter. There are 27 such countries, nine of which are post-communist. While the number is too small for a meaningful statistical analysis, it provides some insights into how membership in civil society organisations has changed over time. The picture is mixed, with nearly equal numbers of countries showing increases or decreases in membership. Thirteen countries (five of which are post-communist) show increased membership according to the first variable (average number of organisations of which a person is an active member), while 14 countries experienced a decrease in membership to various extents. [38] Eleven countries (5 of which are post-communist) show increased membership according to the second variable (percentage of people active in at least one organisation), while 16 countries experienced a decrease in membership. Table 10 below shows the numbers and marks the cases of increased membership with the "↑" symbol.

Table 10. Membership in organisations compared across two WVS waves

Country/Territory	Average number of organisations of which a person is an active member 1995-1998	Average number of organisations of which a person is an active member 2010-2014	% of respondents active in at least one organisation 1995-1998	% of respondents active in at least one organisation 2010-2014
Nigeria	1.77	1.80 ↑	84	87 ↑
New Zeeland	1.44	1.65 ↑	70	71 ↑
Philippines	0.56	1.41 ↑	32	54 ↑
US	2.03	1.38	78	65

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[38] WVS wave 6 included more types of organisations of which a person could be a member: 11 compared with nine in WVS wave 3. Technically, this change could lead to a larger average number of organisations of which a person could report being a member. Theoretically, a person could be a member of three types of "other" organisations in 1997, while in 2010, the same person could mention a consumer organisation, a self-help group and one "other" organisation. The data show that, in practice, there are very few such cases, and they do not impact the overall picture. We do not observe a shift toward higher average membership; on the contrary, we see that, in at least half of the countries, the average membership decreased.

Mexico	1.5	1.31	67	57
Australia	1.58	1.29	73	65.5
Colombia	0.72	1.29↑	45	67 ↑
Taiwan	0.42	1.23 ↑	27	52 ↑
Sweden	0.96	1.02 ↑	59	59
West Germany	1.01	0.80	60	50
Chile	0.91	0.71	52	47
Slovenia	0.43	0.70 ↑	31	42 ↑
Peru	0.81	0.69	46	41
South Korea	0.64	0.65 ↑	39	41 ↑
East Germany	0.68	0.54	46	39
Japan	0.41	0.44 ↑	30	28
Uruguay	0.6	0.44	36	28
Estonia	0.19	0.37 ↑	15	24↑
Romania	0.47	0.35	32	23
Spain	0.58	0.30	35	21
Belarus	0.1	0.25 ↑	9	17 ↑
Ukraine	0.11	0.18 ↑	9	13 ↑
Azerbaijan	0.11	0.17 ↑	9	12 ↑
Turkey	0.27	0.14	18	8.5
Russian Federation	0.19	0.13	15	9
Armenia	0.22	0.11	17	7
China	0.38	0.10	23	6

Based on statistical analysis of the WVS data, we can state that Howard's argument remains relevant: post-communist countries differ from the rest of the world in that they have lower membership in voluntary associations, although some countries perform better than others. In terms of overall trends, the post-communist region, similarly to the rest of the world, presents a mixed picture: in some countries, active membership in associations increases, while other countries experience a decrease in membership.

4.2. Trust towards NGOs and Volunteering in Armenia and the South Caucasus

The previous section took a broad look at the entire post-communist region and how it compares to the rest of the world in terms of membership in civil society organisations and other voluntary organisations. This section narrows its focus to the geographical region of the South Caucasus where Armenia is situated, and it compares Armenia to its two neighbours – Azerbaijan and Georgia – while exploring the issue of trust towards civil society organisations and patterns of volunteering.

Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia are the three republics of the South Caucasus. Although these countries share a common past of being under Soviet rule, they currently differ significantly in their political and socio-economic settings. After gaining independence, Armenia and Azerbaijan entered into a military conflict over the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh that

remains unresolved today. Georgia witnessed its share of military strife over two breakaway regions — South Ossetia (1988-1992) and Abkhazia (1993-1993) — a civil war (1993) and a war with Russia in 2008. Armenia is a land-locked country with poor economic indicators, and it is economically outperformed by its neighbour Georgia and, particularly, by oil-rich Azerbaijan (The World Bank 2014). Corruption is a problem that used to plague all three countries. However, Georgia has had remarkable success in curbing corruption under President Saakashvili (2004-2013), while Armenia and Azerbaijan have so far failed to curb it (Transparency International 2013). In terms of political regimes, Georgia has achieved the highest levels of democratisation, although its development has been uneven and turbulent at times. Azerbaijan now exhibits clear signs of being an authoritarian regime, while Armenia is somewhere in between: falling short of the repression levels evident in Azerbaijan but repeatedly failing to meet basic democratic standards, such as free and fair elections.

Armenian civil society was discussed in detail in the second chapter of this book. A thorough analysis of Azerbaijani and Georgian civil societies is outside the scope of this work, but a few sentences describing the overall conditions are due here and will help add some context to the comparison.

Georgian civil society has had changing conditions and a few ups and downs over the past 20 years. These ups and downs can be observed in Figure 1 in Chapter II, which depicts the Freedom House Nations in Transit civil society scores for Georgia and Azerbaijan along with the scores for Armenia and two other former Soviet republics – Estonia and Uzbekistan – for the sake of overall comparison. More recently, the new political environment of thriving competition has seemed to provide Georgian civil society organisations with more opportunities to engage in national discourse (USAID 2012). However, civic engagement in terms of CSO volunteering activities has been noticeably low on a formal level (CIVICUS Civil Society Index 2010). According to a Chatham House briefing, civil society in Georgia remains weak because citizens have little capacity to influence political developments (Lutsevych 2013). Nevertheless, the resources to create a better civil society exist in the country because of its social and political contexts (Sumbadze 2013).

The case of Azerbaijan is different from those of the two other South Caucasus republics in that the state is fairly hostile to civil society. The same Figure 1, on page 28, shows that, although civil society was initially making some progress, since 2003 there has been consistent worsening of the situation (Habdank-Kolaczkowska, Machalek, and Walker 2012). A recent Human Rights Watch report indicated the existence of serious crackdowns on civil society in Azerbaijan (Human Rights Watch 2013). Nevertheless, civil society members have been invited to participate in several councils established by state agencies (Transparency Azerbaijan 2012).

Although the collapse of the post-communist bloc initially seemed to signal democratisation and the rapid development of civil society in the South Caucasus region, the reality fell short of many expectations. Today, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia exhibit differences in terms of democratisation and similarities in terms of civil society (under)development.

To place Armenia in its regional context, this section of the chapter uses CB data from 2008-2013 to discuss trust towards NGOs and patterns of volunteering in the three South Caucasus republics. Self-reported volunteering data are available only for 2011-2013 because the question was not asked in earlier surveys.

4.2.1. Trust towards NGOs

Caucasus Barometer 2008-2013 included a question on trust towards NGOs.[39] The data show that (given some changes from year to year) in Armenia, approximately 20% of the respondents expressed trust towards NGOs. In Azerbaijan, trust towards NGOs was somewhat higher, varying between 21% and 34%. In Georgia, it was between 23% and 30%. As Figure 2 demonstrates, according to CB, levels of trust towards NGOs in Armenia are lower compared with its two South Caucasus neighbours. However, the percentage of people who express trust towards NGOs is also more stable in Armenia compared with Georgia and Azerbaijan because the discrepancy between highest (24% in 2008) and lowest (18% in 2013) percentages in the "trust" category for Armenia is only six percentage points; in Azerbaijan, it was a difference of 13 percentage points between 2009 and 2013; and in Georgia, a difference of 11 percentage points was observed between 2008 and 2011. It is also interesting to note that in all three countries, the percentage of respondents who did not answer the question was fairly high.

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[39] The question wording was: 'I will read out a list of social institutions and political unions. Please assess your level of trust toward each of them on a 5-point scale, where "1" means "Fully distrust", and "5" means "Fully trust". First, please tell me how much you trust or distrust /country's/ … NGOs.'

Figure 2. Trust towards NGOs in the South Caucasus, CB, %

Armenia

Year	Distrust	Neither trust nor distrust	Trust	Don't know/refuse
2013	36	34	18	13
2012	29	31	21	20
2011	25	30	23	22
2010	22	33	21	23
2009	24	34	24	18
2008	28	24	22	27

Azerbaijan

Year	Distrust	Neither trust nor distrust	Trust	Don't know/refuse
2013	13	36	21	29
2012	16	32	23	28
2011	19	27	27	27
2010	15	34	29	21
2009	17	29	34	19
2008	18	25	29	28

Georgia

Year	Distrust	Neither trust nor distrust	Trust	Don't know/refuse
2013	16	41	23	21
2012	9	33	26	31
2011	15	29	22	34
2010	11	30	30	27
2009	14	34	28	24
2008	15	24	33	28

Legend: ■ Distrust ■ Neither trust nor distrust ■ Trust ■ Don't know/refuse

If we obtain a simple measurement of the levels of trust towards NGOs as reflected in the mean value (on a scale from one, indicating "fully distrust", to five, indicating "fully trust," and excluding all the "don't know" answers) for each year of the CB survey (see Figure 3), then Armenia emerges as the country with the lowest (and decreasing) levels of trust, while in both Azerbaijan and Georgia, the levels of trust are higher but also more volatile, particularly in Georgia.

Figure 3. Average levels of trust towards NGOs in the South Caucasus, CB, mean on a scale from 1 to 5 ("fully trust")
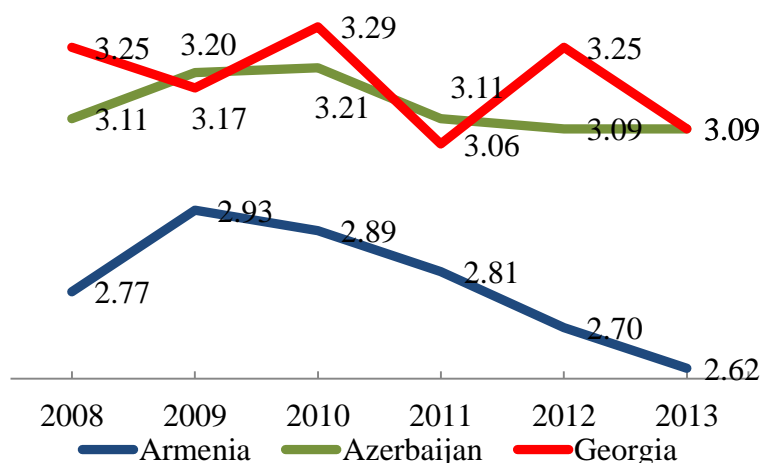
How do the levels of trust towards NGOs in the South Caucasus compare to those of other countries? To place these numbers into a comparative context, some of the results of Eurobarometer 2005 are presented in Table 11. The question measures the levels of trust towards "charitable or voluntary organisations", with the answer options being "tend to trust," "tend to not trust" and "don't know" (European Commission 2013).[40] Although these data are not entirely current, it is possible to compare the levels of trust towards NGOs in Europe with those of the South Caucasus in 2008, as presented in Table 12. Countries with the largest (top five) and smallest (bottom five) percentages of people who expressed trust towards civil society organisations are listed in Table 11.

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[40] The answer options for the CB and Eurobarometer questions were worded somewhat differently. Thus, comparisons should be made with caution. However, because no other data are available, examining both datasets allows us to gain at least a general understanding of how the South Caucasus might relate to other regions.

Table 11. Trust towards CSOs in Europe in 2005, top five and bottom five countries, %

Country	Tend to trust charitable or voluntary organisations
Malta	88
Netherlands	77
France	74
UK	74
Belgium	72
Slovakia	54
Lithuania	52
Romania	46
Slovenia	44
Bulgaria	32

Interestingly, post-communist countries showed lower levels of trust in Europe in 2005, in agreement with the analysis of the post-communist legacy presented in the first part of this chapter. As is evident from Table 11, the five countries with the lowest levels of public trust towards civil society organisations are post-communist. It seems, not only in terms of membership but also in terms of trust, that civil society in post-communist countries continues to struggle to overcome the communist legacy of negative public perceptions. However, even the percentages that were the lowest for Europe were overall higher than the corresponding numbers of people who reported trusting NGOs in the South Caucasus (Azerbaijan and Georgia are close to Bulgaria, which is the least trustful country of those surveyed in Europe). Thus, 20 years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the levels of trust towards NGOs in the South Caucasus, and particularly in Armenia, still seem fairly low, even compared with other post-communist countries of a slightly earlier time period. In terms of mistrust towards associations, South Caucasus civil society continues to exhibit the typical "weakness", to use Howard's term.

Using CB data and comparing it to Eurobarometer data, we have demonstrated that trust towards NGOs is low in the South Caucasus, even compared with other post-communist European countries, and Armenia is the least trustful country of the three. To confirm that this difference is not only a descriptive feature of the data that could occur due to random error, we conducted statistical tests (one-way ANOVA) for all six years for which we have CB data. Armenia stands out as the least trustful country, and the difference is statistically significant for each year under analysis (see Table 12 for details of the statistical analysis).[41]

Table 12. Trust towards NGOs in the South Caucasus, one-way ANOVA

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
F	67.709	28.906	59.336	33.054	136.329	121.631
df	(2, 4282)	(2, 4449)	(2, 4463)	(2, 4282)	(2, 4823)	(2, 4672)
Sig.	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Armenia mean (N)	2.77 (1528)	2.93 (1546)	2.89 (1459)	2.81 (1830)	2.70 (1844)	2.62 (1552)
Azerbaijan mean (N)	3.11 (1456)	3.20 (1454)	3.21 (1565)	3.11 (1051)	3.09 (1326)	3.09 (1470)
Georgia mean (N)	3.25 (1301)	3.17 (1452)	3.29 (1442)	3.06 (1404)	3.25 (1656)	3.09 (1653)

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[41] The differences between Azerbaijan and Georgia are significant only for 2008 and 2012.

4.2.2. Volunteering

The question on volunteering was asked in 2011-2013 CB.[42] The overall percentage of people who report volunteering is presented in Figure 4. The levels of volunteering are highest in Armenia (with a sharp increase from 22% to 31% in 2013) and lowest in Georgia for all three years. Chi-square tests for three years show that these differences in the levels of self-reported volunteering in the three South Caucasus countries are statistically significant.[43]

Figure 4. Self-reported volunteering in the South Caucasus, CB, 5 of "yes"
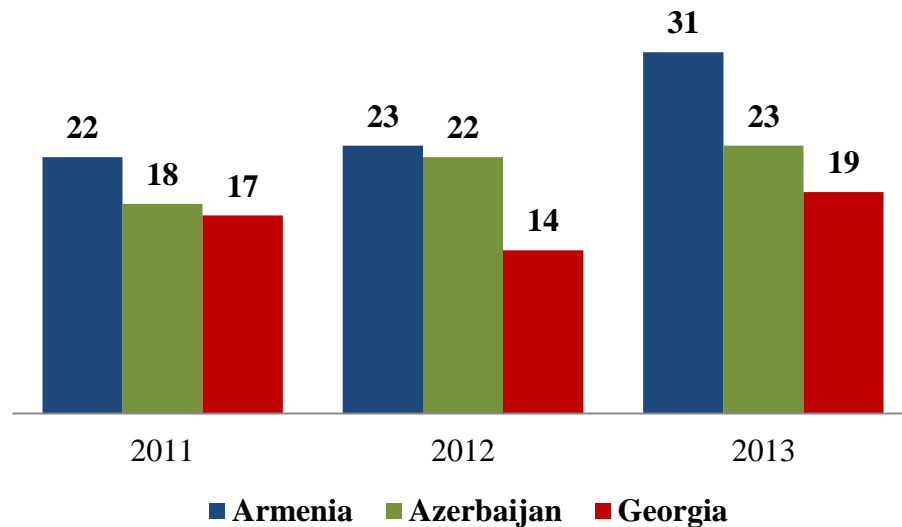
Overall, Armenia has the lowest levels of trust towards civil society organisations in the region, combined with the highest levels of volunteering. Azerbaijan appears to be "in the middle," both in terms of trust and in terms of volunteer involvement. In Georgia, trust towards NGOs is relatively high, but its levels are also noticeably more volatile than those of the two other countries. Georgia has the lowest levels of volunteering in the region. While comparative analysis of the three South Caucasus countries is beyond the scope of our study, the comparison undertaken in this section and the previous section of the book has revealed an interesting pattern. Compared with its two neighbours, Armenia has distinctly lower and decreasing levels of trust towards NGOs; at the same time, volunteering in Armenia is higher and seems to be on the rise. This is an empirical puzzle worth pursuing in further research. The remainder of this chapter will focus on Armenia, discussing existing secondary data that are specific for Armenia.

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[42] The question wording was: 'Could you please tell me which of these activities have you been involved in during the past 6 months? Did volunteer work without expecting compensation.'

[43] $X^2 = 28.436$, df = 2, p < 0.001 (for 2011); $X^2 = 84.622$, df = 2, p < 0.001 (for 2012); $X^2 = 40.771$, df = 2, p < 0.001 (for 2013)

4.3. Narrowing the Focus to Armenia

This subchapter examines public attitudes towards NGOs and patterns of membership and volunteering in Armenia by exploring secondary data that are specific to Armenia. In particular, we examine the Life in Transition and CIVICUS SCI survey data.

4.3.1. Membership in Associations

As already discussed in the first part of this chapter, membership in voluntary associations and organisations is very low in Armenia. The CIVICUS CSI survey asks a membership question similar to that of the WVS, although the CSI 2014 survey data are not exactly comparable with those of the WVS. On the CSI survey in 2014, the respondents were provided with a list of organisations and simply asked to state whether they were members or not for each of the organisations listed. On the WVS and on the CSI in 2008, the respondents had a choice among "active member," "passive member" and "not a member" for each of the organisations listed. Nevertheless, we present the data from two WVS and two CSI surveys in Table 13 below. For the WVS and CSI 2009, we examine active membership only because it matches our overall strategy, as described in section 4.1.1 above.

Table 13. Membership in Organisations in Armenia, %

	WVS 1997 (active member)	CSI 2009 (active member)	WVS 2011 (active member)	CSI 2014 (member)
Political party	1.15	4.6	2.1	8.8
Art, music or educational organisation	8.15	4.4	1.5	4.8
Church or religious organisation	1.5	5.5	1.3	5.8
Professional association	2.35	1.6	1.3	1.7
Sports or recreational organisation	5	3.5	1.1	2.2
Humanitarian or charitable organisation	1.6	2.0	0.8	2.2
Other organisation	0.35	0.3	0.7	0.1
Labour union	1.25	1.4	0.6	1.1
Environmental organisation	1.15	1.2	0.4	4.1
Consumer organisation	*	0.2	0.4	0.4
Community groups	*	*	*	2.7
Informal civic group/movement	*	*	*	2.4

* Not asked in the survey

The added value of the CSI survey is that it asks a number of follow-up questions to the membership question. One such important follow-up question allows us to explore the motivations behind joining organisations or avoiding them.

In the 2014 survey, members of organisations were asked why they became members of the corresponding organisation/group. The interviewers had a list of possible answers, but they did not read them to the respondents; rather, they either ticked the corresponding option voiced by the interviewee or recorded the original answer if it did not correspond to any option on their list. This procedure was followed to minimise the researchers' impact on the respondents' self-perceived motivations for volunteering and to allow for a broader spectrum of expressed reasons. Multiple responses were permitted. As a result, a total of 570 answers were recorded. We added

further re-grouping of the categories to reduce the number of options, presented in Table 14 below. The most common reason for becoming a member of a voluntary association or a group is a general expectation of improved career possibilities, followed by a feeling of self-fulfilment and self-esteem. Having friends or family members already involved with the group is the third most important motivating factor.

Table 14. Reasons for joining organisations, CSI 2014

	Count	*% of responses*	*% of cases*
Expectation of improved career possibilities in general	95	16.7	24.2
Self-fulfilment/self-esteem	88	15.4	22.4
Friends/family members are members	77	13.5	19.6
Feeling of belonging/desire to have such a feeling	52	9.1	13.2
Spending free time	50	8.8	12.7
Philanthropy	48	8.4	12.2
Expectation of becoming employed by organisation/group in the future	38	6.7	9.7
Non-monetary benefits, expectation of non-monetary benefits	37	6.5	9.4
Learning/acquiring new skills, expectation of learning/acquiring new skills	36	6.3	9.2
Reciprocity	34	6.0	8.7
Other	15	2.6	3.8
Total	570	100	145

The self-reported motivations for joining organisations differ depending on the type of group (see Table 15 below). The table below lists the three most commonly mentioned reasons for joining each organisation.[44] Colour coding is used to distinguish between different types of motivations. Some motivations (highlighted in grey) have a rather utilitarian or instrumental character, indicating that the individual anticipates some personal gain (job opportunities, career improvement, new skills, etc.), while others are more related to an individual's feelings and need for social belonging (highlighted in blue). The availability of free time and friends' or family's roles in joining associations are highlighted in green because they seem to be rather neutral explanations.

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[44] Consumer organisations are omitted from this analysis. Only six respondents mentioned being members, and four reported performing unpaid, voluntary work. Because the responses of these people regarding why they joined and/or volunteered are very few and diverse, it is impossible to establish a hierarchy of importance.

Table 15. Main types of membership motivators by types of organisation, CSI 2014

	Reason 1	*Reason 2*	*Reason 3*
Church or religious organisation	Self-fulfilment/self-esteem	Feeling of belonging	Philanthropy
Sport or recreational organisation	Improved career	Expectation of employment	Free time
Art, music or educational organisation	Improved career	Learn new skills	Self-fulfilment/self-esteem
Labour union	Expectation of employment	Improved career	Non-monetary benefits
Political party	Improved career	Friends/family	Self-fulfilment/self-esteem
Environmental organisation	Friends/family	Philanthropy	Feeling of belonging
Professional association	Learn new skills	Self-fulfilment/self-esteem	Improved career
Humanitarian or charitable organisation	Philanthropy	Self-fulfilment/self-esteem	-
Community group	Free time	Friends/family	Improved career
Informal civic group/movement	Reciprocity	Self-fulfilment/self-esteem	Free time

The colour coding of the table above shows the differences among organisations in terms of what motivates people to join. Labour unions are clearly more appealing to those with instrumental motivations, who join with expectations of benefits. Church or religious organisations are at the other end of the spectrum, mostly attracting people who are motivated by their feelings and the desire to contribute rather than to benefit. Members of political parties report an interesting mix of motivations.

In addition to providing insights into the motivations of joiners, the CSI 2014 survey contains some interesting information regarding the non-joiners. Respondents who are not members of any organisations or groups were asked why they did not join any organisations. The reasons are presented in Table 16 below. The most commonly mentioned reason is lack of time, followed by a lack of motivation and interest. Lack of trust does not seem to be a major impediment, although it is mentioned by 6% of the respondents.

Table 16. Reasons for not joining organisations, CSI 2014

Reason	N	%
Too busy/No time	535	45
Do not want to/not interested	254	21
Health problems/too old	128	11
Do not trust	74	6
There are no such organisations/groups in the community	57	5
Not informed	29	2
Has not been offered	20	1.7
Not profitable	8	0.7
Never thought of it	5	0.4
I am not an active person	1	0.1
No answer/don't know	74	6
Total	1185	100

4.3.2. Trust towards Civil Society and NGOs

The previous section of this chapter has already presented the CB data on trust towards NGOs in Armenia. The richness of the data was, however, somewhat reduced by collapsing the original five response categories into three for ease of data presentation and a cross-country comparison of the six datasets. In this section, we focus on Armenia and add an additional data source (LiT 2006 and 2010[45]) to obtain a more nuanced picture, as presented in Table 17 below.

Table 17. Trust towards NGOs in Armenia, %

	LiT 2006	CB 2008	CB 2009	LiT 2010	CB 2010	CB 2011	CB 2012	CB 2013
Fully distrust	20	16	12	25	12	14	17	21
Somewhat distrust	7	11	12	13	10	11	12	15
Neither trust nor distrust	26	24	34	19	33	30	31	34
Somewhat trust	25	18	18	13	15	18	17	15
Fully trust	9	5	6	7	6	5	4	3
Don't know/refuse to answer	13	27	18	23	23	22	20	13
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

In the previous section of this chapter, we saw that approximately one-fifth of Armenians trust NGOs and that this percentage is decreasing. Examining the data in greater detail, we can also see that the distrust is not only fairly widespread but is also quite deep. The percentage of respondents who "fully distrust" NGOs is always larger than the percentage of those who "distrust" them, except in 2009, when the two groups are equal. This finding is unusual; it is more common to see fewer people on the extremes and more people taking a milder position in survey data.

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[45] The wording of the question in LiT is identical to that of the CB, but the answer options are worded slightly differently: "fully" in CB = "complete" in LiT; "somewhat" in CB = "some" in LiT. These differences, however, are insufficient to explain the differences in outcomes, which are particularly striking for 2010, when data for both surveys were available.

Another important observation to make at this point is that the data for LiT and CB are visibly different for 2010. Because the question wording is identical, with slight variations in the response options,[46] the only explanation for this difference we can think of is the imperfection of the survey as an instrument to measure public opinion. This is a good reminder to treat the data with caution, but because we have no better data, and both surveys were conducted by credible institutions, we rely on these data in our assessment of Armenian civil society nonetheless.

As discussed, Armenians are not particularly trustful of NGOs. Perhaps this attitude is a result of being distrustful towards various organisations and institutions in general. In other words, if a society has low levels of trust in general, this will negatively influence trust towards NGOs as well. To assess this possibility, we examine levels of trust towards NGOs compared with trust towards a number of other social organisations and institutions in Armenia. A simple measurement of the average level of trust (on a scale from 1, "fully distrust", to 5, "fully trust") shows that NGOs in Armenia do not perform particularly well. As Figure 5 below demonstrates, NGOs are less trusted than many institutions. For example, they are less trusted than the police and the media but more trusted than most political institutions, such as the presidency and the parliament.

Figure 5. Average levels of trust towards institutions, CB 2013, mean on a scale from 1 to 5 (fully trust)

Institution	Value
Religious institutions	4.05
Army	3.56
Educational system	3.19
Banks	3.12
Healthcare system	3.04
Ombudsman	3.00
UN	2.88
EU	2.88
Local government	2.83
Media	2.81
Police	2.72
NGOs	2.62
Court system	2.32
President	2.23
Political parties	2.09
Executive government	2.07
Parliament	1.99
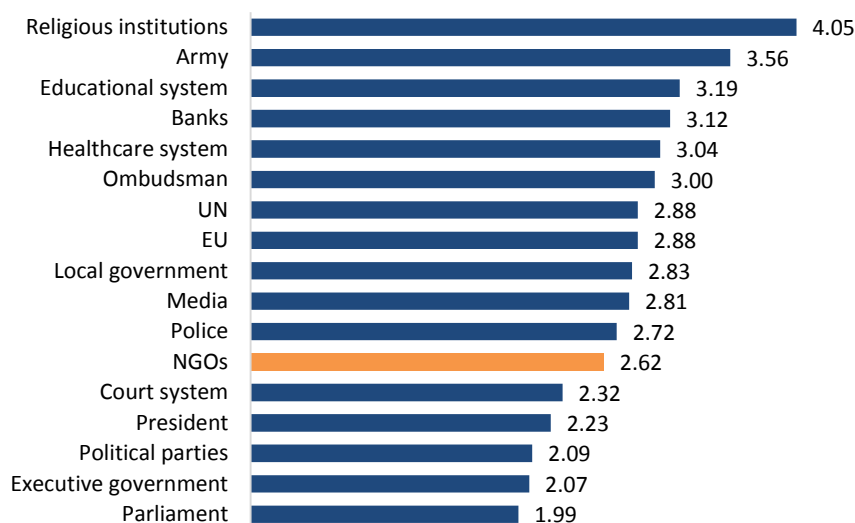
While the existing survey data do not provide us with clearly stated reasons for such low levels of trust, some food for thought can be obtained from them nonetheless. For instance, we have evidence suggesting that civil society is not perceived as active and influential in the country, an attitude that is unlikely to boost its public image. According to the CSI 2014 survey, most people in Armenia are sceptical about the abilities of civil society to address problems. The majority (54%) are of the opinion that civil society as a whole has either limited or no impact in addressing social issues in Armenia. People are even more sceptical about civil society's impact

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[46] At least the English versions of the wording are identical. Unfortunately, we were unable to obtain the Armenian version of the LiT questionnaire to determine how well the question was translated into Armenian.

on policy making: 58% believe that civil society as a whole has limited or no impact on policy making, as Figure 6 below demonstrates. For both questions, the number of respondents who gave no answer is quite high: 16% and 15%, respectively. This outcome is a sign of great ambiguity in people's understanding of what civil society does or can do. If civil society is not seen as an active player and if many people are unsure of how much it can accomplish, why should it be trusted?

Figure 6. In general, what kind of impact do you think that civil society as a whole has..? CSI 2014, %
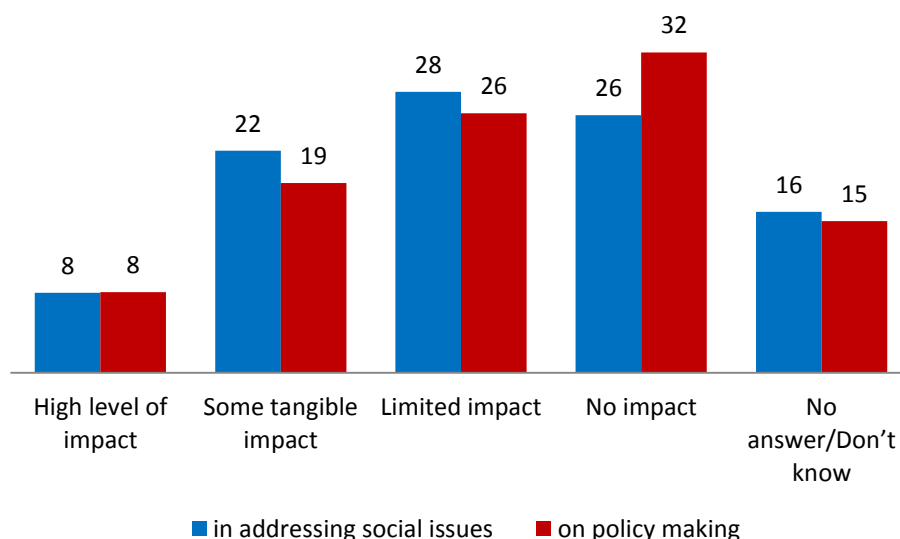
Who does and does not trust NGOs in Armenia? While the impact of age on levels of trust is discussed in a separate section below, we can briefly outline here the impact of other socio-demographic variables that have been discussed in the literature on trust towards NGOs. We use CB data to take our analysis beyond the descriptive level.[47]

In this section, we consider four socio-demographic variables in our analysis of the individual patterns of trust towards NGOs: income, level of education, gender, and whether the respondent lives in the capital, another town or a village. The emerging picture is rather mixed. Respondents' income (measured as "personal monetary income last month after all taxes are paid") is the only variable included in the analysis that consistently shows no relationship[48] with trust towards NGOs in any of the years from 2008 to 2013. Respondents' education shows a negative correlation with trust for 2008 and 2010 (see Table 19 for details on statistics). For these two years, respondents with higher education tend to express lower levels of trust in NGOs. However, for 2009, 2011, 2012 and 2013, no significant correlations are observed, regardless of

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[47] The data from the Life in Transition survey are not included in the statistical analysis because of the structure of the datasets. There are two respondents per survey (household head and another randomly selected respondent). The way in which the datasets are labelled makes it difficult to be absolutely certain that we would use the correct age variable for the analysis.

[48] Pearson's and Spearman's correlations.

using parametric (Pearson's) or non-parametric (Spearman's) tests. The respondent's gender did not affect their levels of trust towards NGOs in 2008-2010 or 2013. Interestingly, in 2011 and 2012, a statistically significant difference is observed between male and female respondents. The t-test for both years shows that women tend to trust NGOs more than men do.

Levels of trust towards NGOs vary depending on the settlement type. The ANOVA shows statistically significant differences for all six years for which CB data are available. However, even in the case of respondent settlement type, the pattern is not entirely coherent. With the exception of 2012, trust towards NGOs is the highest in rural settlements and lowest in Yerevan, with other urban settlements in the middle. In 2012, urban areas, excluding Yerevan, showed higher levels of trust than rural areas. See Table 18 for the mean values.

Table 18. Trust towards NGOs in Armenian settlements, Caucasus Barometer, mean value of trust on a scale from 1 (fully distrust) to 5 (fully trust)

	2008	*2009*	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*	*2013*
Rural	3.06	3.15	3.20	3.03	2.71	2.72
Urban	2.81	2.90	2.84	2.87	**2.76**	2.68
Capital	2.47	2.63	2.60	2.65	2.59	2.44

Note: Tukey's post-hoc test shows statistically significant differences among the groups for 2008-2009. For 2011, only the difference between rural and capital settlements is significant. For 2012, only the difference between urban settlements and the capital is significant. For 2013, the difference between the capital and the other two settlements is significant.

Table 19. Trust towards NGOs and other socio-demographic variables, analysis and statistics

	2008	*2009*	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*	*2013*
Gender (t-test)						
t	–	–	–	-2.905	-2.353	–
df	–	–	–	1828	1842	–
Sig. (2-tailed)	–	–	–	0.004	0.019	–
Settlement (ANOVA)						
F	33.153	28.071	39.770	17.252	3.454	8.839
df	(2, 1525)	(2, 1543)	(2, 1456)	(2, 1827)	(2, 1841)	(2, 1549)
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.032	0.000
Education (Pearson and Spearman correlations)						
N	1503	–	1457	–	–	–
Pearson correlation	-0.081	–	-0.102	–	–	–
Spearman's rho	-0.081	–	-0.099	–	–	–
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.002	–	0.000	–	–	–

As seen from the analysis of the socio-demographic variables, there is no unified pattern of trust. We cannot "paint a demographic portrait" of a "typical NGO truster", but we can say that trust is not related to income, that it is not very strongly correlated with education, although there is some evidence that educated people are more sceptical, and that there is some evidence to suggest that men are more sceptical than women. The capital city of Yerevan repeatedly stands out as the place with the smallest reservoir of trust, while rural residents are more inclined to trust NGOs.

4.3.3. Volunteering

Previous studies on volunteering conducted in Armenia have shown that there can be a great discrepancy between formal and informal volunteering. Depending on how the question is phrased and what is included in the understanding of the definition, a study could report that as much as 80% or as little as 8% of the population engaged in voluntary work in Armenia (Hakobyan et al. 2010, 22). In this section, we combine the CB data on volunteering (already reported in section 4.2.2 above) with the CSI data to explore the gap between formal and informal volunteering.

As discussed in section 4.2.2, self-reported volunteering in Armenia increased from 22% in 2011 to 31% in 2013, including all types of volunteer work, without expected compensation in the past six months. One would expect these numbers to decrease if the respondents were asked specifically about formal volunteering, i.e., volunteering for a group or organisation, which is indeed the case, as according to the CSI 2014, 14% of the population reports performing unpaid, voluntary work for at least one organisation on the list provided by interviewer. Organisation-specific data for both years of the CSI are presented in Table 20 below. Unlike informal volunteering, formal volunteering did not seem to increase during the years under study.

Table 20. Respondents who perform unpaid voluntary work for organisations, CSI, %

Type of organisation	*2009*	*2014*
Church or religious organisation	3.7	4.3
Environmental organisation	2.5	3.1
Art, music or educational organisation	2.9	2.8
Political party	3.9	2.8
Community group	-	2.2
Humanitarian or charitable organisation	3.6	2.0
Informal civic group/movement	-	1.6
Sport or recreational organisation	2.6	1.5
Professional association	1.7	1.1
Labour union	1.2	0.6
Consumer organisation	0.7	0.3
Other organisation	0.4	0

The reasons for performing voluntary work were recorded in the CSI 2014 survey, similar to the reasons for membership discussed in section 4.3.1. The results are presented in Table 21 below. Philanthropy is the most important motivator for volunteering; expectations of improved career possibilities and feelings of self-fulfilment are the next two important motivators.

Table 21. Reason for performing voluntary work for organisations/groups, CSI 2014

	Number	% of responses	% of cases
Philanthropy	66	19	30
Expectation of improved career possibilities in general	56	16	26
Self-fulfilment/self-esteem	50	14	22
Friends/family are members	44	13	20
Feeling of belonging/desire to have such a feeling	30	9	14
Expectation of becoming employed by organisation/group in the future	28	8	13
Spending free time	21	6	10
Learning/acquiring new skills, expectation of learning/acquiring new skills	21	6	10
Reciprocity	19	5	9
Non-monetary benefits, expectation of non-monetary benefits	10	3	5
Other	7	2	3
Total	352	100	162

People who did not perform any voluntary work for any organisation were asked for their reasons as well. Lack of time was the most reported reason for abstaining from volunteering, followed by a lack of motivation and the inability to be involved due to health or old age. See Table 22 for the details.

Table 22. Reasons for not volunteering for an organisation/group, CSI 2014

Reason	N	%
Too busy/no time	596	44
Do not want to/not interested/see no sense	222	16
Health problems/too old	117	9
Cannot afford	80	6
Has not been offered/no opportunity	80	6
No such organisations/groups in the community	32	2.3
Have problems/need help myself	29	2.1
Do not trust	12	0.9
I have a paid job	11	0.8
Not informed	10	0.7
I am not an active person	4	0.3
No one does that for me	2	0.1
Was not present in the community	2	0.1
My house is far away	1	0.1
I don't want to do anything for this country	1	0.1
Low level of activism in our society	1	0.1
No answer/don't know	162	12
Total	1362	100

Combining the insights from the CB and CSI, we can say that roughly one-third of the Armenian population is engaged in volunteering, and approximately half of that volunteering occurs outside of organisations. The main motivations for volunteering are philanthropy,

expectations of career advancement and the need for self-fulfilment. The main self-reported reasons for abstaining from volunteering are a lack of time and interest.

Similarly to the case of trust, we are interested in a socio-demographic portrait of a "typical volunteer" in terms of income, education, gender and settlement type, while the question of the relationship between age and the likelihood of volunteering is discussed in a separate section in this chapter dedicated to the issue of generational changes. We use CB 2011-2013 because the question on volunteering was not asked in earlier surveys.

There is a statistically significant difference between men's and women's self-reported volunteering in Armenia for all three years: men report volunteering more often. The corresponding percentages are presented in Figure 7 below. In section 4.2.2, we indicated that levels of volunteering increased in Armenia in 2013. Disaggregating the data by gender, we can see that while the percentage of females volunteering has increased as well, the real increase in the levels of self-reported volunteering is among men.

Figure 7. Volunteering in Armenia by gender, CB, % of "yes"
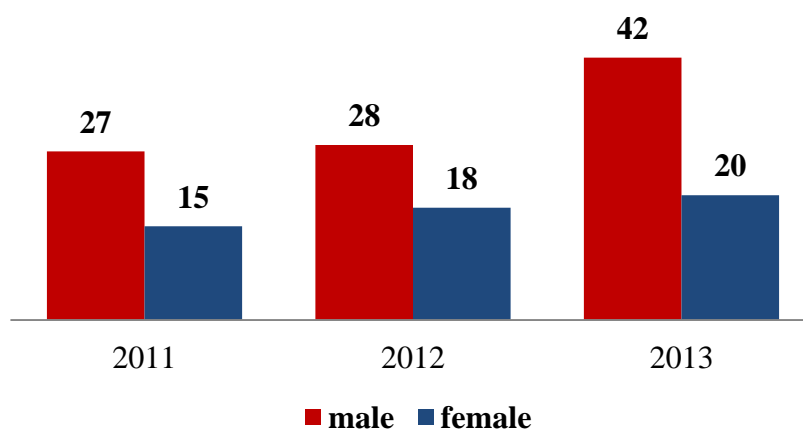
Education shows a statistically significant relationship with volunteering for 2012 and 2013: respondents with more education are more likely to report volunteering. Income is related to volunteering, showing statistically significant t-test results for all three years of the analysis: respondents with higher income are more likely to report volunteering activities. Settlement type has no impact on volunteering. See Table 23 for details on these statistics.

Thus, unlike the case of membership, the pattern emerging from the analysis of data on volunteering is more coherent. A "typical Armenian volunteer" is more likely to be an educated man who is relatively well-off and is as likely to live in the capital as in other parts of the country.

Table 23. Volunteering and socio-demographic variable analysis statistics

	2011	*2012*	*2013*
Gender (chi-square)			
Pearson (chi-square)	44.646	36.791	103.296
df	1	1	1
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000
Education (t-test)			
t	–	-5.685	-5.159
df	–	2363	1824
Sig. (2-tailed)	–	0.000	0.000
Income (t-test)			
t	–	3.955	7.174
df	–	2238	1773
Sig. (2-tailed)	–	0.000	0.000

4.3.4. The Generational Change in Armenia.

When discussing the theoretical framework guiding our analysis of Armenian civil society, we hypothesised that the communist legacy would gradually weaken and that the younger generation would be the least affected by it. Hence, we formulate the following hypothesis:

> H_1: Young people (post-communist generation) in Armenia are more supportive of civil society.

Because we consider public attitudes towards and relationships with civil society in terms of trust towards NGOs, membership in organisations and volunteering (both formal and informal), we can specify a hypothesis for each of the variables under consideration in the following manner.

> $H_{1.1}$: Young people (post-communist generation) in Armenia are more likely to be members of NGOs and other voluntary associations.

> $H_{1.2}$: Young people (post-communist generation) in Armenia are more trusting of NGOs.

> $H_{1.3}$: Young people (post-communist generation) in Armenia are more likely to report volunteering.

Membership in associations

To test the first hypothesis, we use the CSI 2009, WVS 2011 and CSI 2014 data. To continue with our earlier logic of analysis, we examine active membership only. The analysis of each dataset is presented below in chronological order, starting with CSI 2009, then WVS 2011, then CSI 2014, to trace the post-communist generation as it grows older and moves through subsequent generational cohorts.

For all three datasets, the respondents were grouped into two categories: those who are active members (referred to as "members" below) of at least one organisation and those who are not (referred to as "non-members"). The respondents were also grouped into age groups to

enable a more detailed analysis of generational differences. A strict definition of the post-communist cohort would include all people born in 1991 or later. This definition, however, restricts our analysis to very few cases in the CSI 2009 database because there are only nine respondents of those ages included in the survey. In addition to our "strict" definition of the post-communist generation, we also use a more "relaxed" definition, which includes people who were up to six years old at the time of the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Because these people did not attend Soviet schools (which started at the age of seven), we can assume that they received little exposure to Soviet institutions. Hence, our more "relaxed" definition of the post-communist generation would include all those people born in 1985 and later.

The CSI 2009 data show that there are statistically significant differences between members and non-members in terms of their ages.[49] Members of organisations are, on average, younger than non-members, with 42 years old compared with 46 years old as the average age for non-members.

While this simple comparison does show that younger people are more likely to be members, it does not tell us anything about our hypothesised post-communist young generation. A closer look at the age cohorts is necessary. For 2009, we cannot consider the "strict" post-communist cohort because there are too few people born in 1991 and later, but those between 18 and 24 years old correspond to our "relaxed" definition of the post-communist generation.

A closer look at the membership data, split into age cohorts, does indeed show that the young generation is more active: 25% were members of at least one organisation in 2009, compared with an average of 17% among the other age cohorts, and this difference is statistically significant.[50] Figure 8 below presents the details.

Figure 8. Active members of at least one organisation per age cohort, CSI 2009, %

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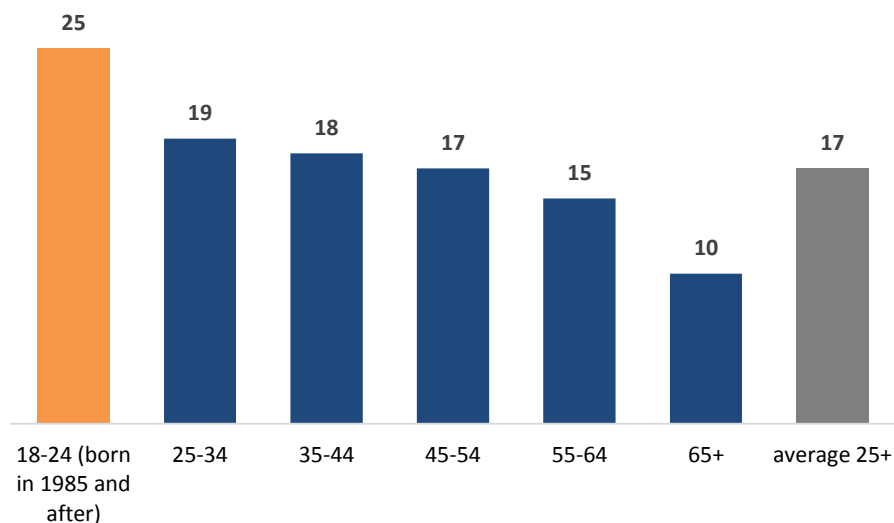
[49] T (1615) = 4.050, p < 0.001
[50] X^2 = 6.869, df = 1, p < 0.005

The WVS 2011 data also demonstrate that there is a statistically significant difference[51] between those who are members of at least one organisation and those who are not; members are younger, with an average age of 42 years old, compared with 47 years old for non-members.

The WVS data provide the possibility of analysing the "strict" post-communist cohort: the study included 60 people born in 1991 and later (they were between 18 and 20 years old during the study). There were also 121 respondents born between 1985 and 1991 (between 21 and 26 years old) who would also qualify as the post-communist generation according to our "relaxed" definition. Therefore, we modified the younger age cohorts to make a distinction between these two groups, while keeping the older cohorts the same, for ease of comparison.

As noted above, the WVS data show lower membership in associations compared with the CSI. It also shows a different generational pattern, as evident from Figure 9 below. The post-communist cohort does not have the highest membership.[52] When comparing those who are 26 years old and younger with those who are 27 years and older, the chi-square test shows no statistically significant differences in their levels of membership. Thus, the WVS data do not support our hypothesis that the post-communist generation is more likely to join organisations.

Figure 9. Active members of at least one organisation by age cohort, WVS 2011, % of yes
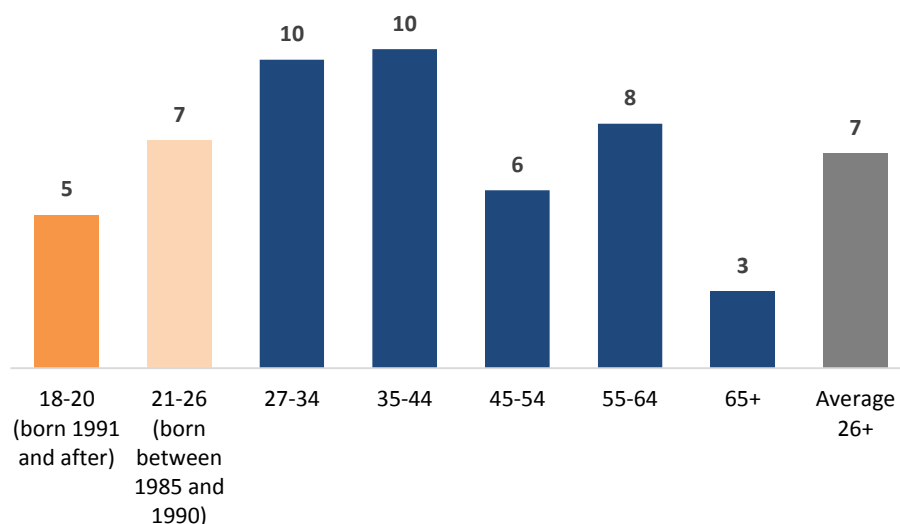
The third dataset we analysed, CSI 2014, also shows that respondents who are members of at least one organisation are younger than non-members, and this difference is statistically significant.[53] The mean age of members is 43 years old compared with 47 years old for non-members.

As with the previous two datasets, we examine generational cohorts more closely, singling out those born in 1991 and after (who were 18-23 years old during the survey) and those

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[51] T (1098) = 2.216, p < 0.05

[52] One should consider the percentages with caution, however, because N is sometimes very low. For example, there are only 3 people in the 18-20-year age cohort who are members of at least one organization.

[53] T (1568) = 5.320, p < 0.001

born between 1985 and 1990 (who were 24-29 years old during the survey). There are 118 respondents in the first group and 151 in the second.

A closer look at generational cohorts shows that the youngest cohort is not very different from the average. Those between 24 and 29 years old have the highest membership rates, as Figure 10 below demonstrates. Some of these findings can be explained by those between 18 and 24 years old in 2009 having now moved to the second age cohort and apparently having remained active. Nevertheless, these data contradict our hypothesis that the youngest generation should be the least affected by the communist legacy and the most likely to join associations. The cohort that that corresponds to our "strong" definition of the post-communist generation is not the most active. Rather, the most active cohort is that born between 1985 and 1990. The two post-communist cohorts taken together are significantly more likely to join associations compared with the remainder of the population.[54]

Figure 10. Membership in at least one organisation by age cohort, CSI 2014, %
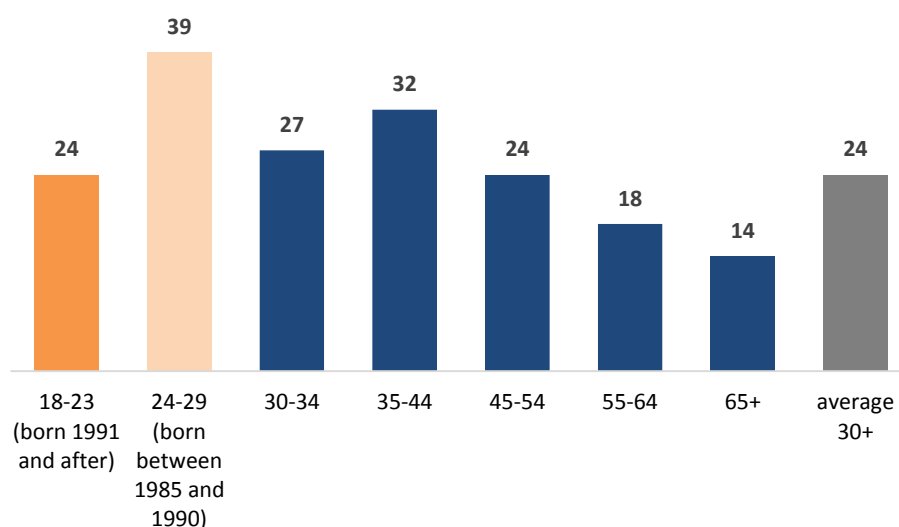
Thus, the CSI 2009 and 2014 data provide some support for our hypothesis that younger generations are more likely to join organisations, although the youngest cohort, born in 1991 and later, is not the most, but the second most, active cohort. The WVS data, however, show a different pattern and no statistically significant differences between the post-communist and older-age cohorts. It should be noted here that the WVS data show much lower levels of membership overall. The small number of respondents could have distorted the analysis. However, we cannot accept our hypothesis with confidence because the evidence seems to be mixed.

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[54] $X^2 = 9.783$, df = 1, $p < 0.005$

Trust towards NGOs

To test the hypothesis regarding different levels of trust towards NGOs among younger vs. older people, correlation analysis (Pearson's and Spearman's) was performed for all the CB datasets.[55] For all six years, both tests show statistically significant negative correlations between the age of the respondent and his/her level of trust towards NGOs: the younger the respondent, the more likely he/she is to express higher levels of trust towards NGOs (see Table 24).

Table 24. Trust towards NGOs and age correlation analysis and statistics, CB

	2008	*2009*	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*	*2013*
N	1503	1546	1459	1830	1844	1552
Pearson's correlation	-0.077	-0.074	-0.063	-0.053	-0.079	-0.095
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.003	0.003	0.016	0.024	0.001	0.000
Spearman's rho	-0.089	-0.074	-0.066	-0.062	-0.080	-0.087
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	0.004	0.12	0.008	0.001	0.001

Based on this analysis, we can state that young people in Armenia are more trustful of NGOs. Figure 11 below shows data for 2013, with ages grouped into cohorts[56] and attitudes towards NGOs collapsed into larger categories of trust and mistrust.

Figure 11. Trust towards NGOs in Armenia by age, CB 2013, %
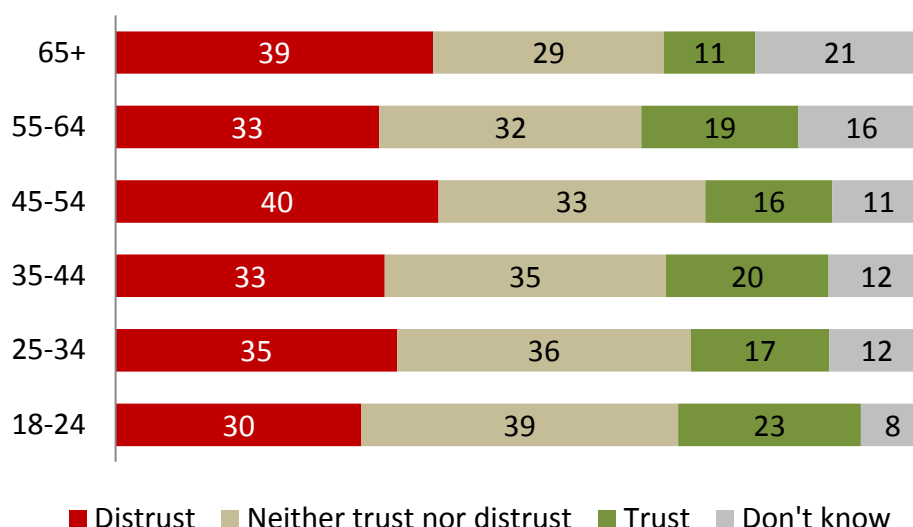
It can be seen that mistrust and the "neither-nor" attitudes are fairly similar across age groups. The differences are in the percentages of people who express trust (with those between 18 and 24 years old being particularly trustful) and in the percentages of people who find it difficult to express a position on this question. Those who "don't know" among the oldest age

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[55] The data from the Life in Transition survey are not included in the statistical analysis because of the structure of the datasets. There are two respondents per survey (household head and randomly selected respondent). The manner in which the datasets are labelled makes it difficult to be absolutely certain that we would use the correct age variable for the analysis.

[56] For the sake of simplicity, from this point forward, we use standard age cohorts because we work with six CB data sets for six consecutive years. Regrouping age cohorts for each year to trace only people born in 1991 and afterwards creates more confusion than clarity. We treat the age 18 to 24 group as the "post-communist" generation.

group number twice as many as those among the youngest group: 21% of those older than 65 years old compared with 8% of those between 18 and 24 years old.

Based on the CB data, our H_1 is confirmed: younger people, particularly those between 18 and 24 years old, are more trustful of NGOs than other generational cohorts. That the younger generation is more trustful might signal a generational value change and the weakening of the Soviet legacy in the development of Armenian civil society.

Volunteering

Younger people are more likely to volunteer, and this difference is significant for all three years. Table 25 below presents the details of the statistical tests comparing the average ages of volunteers vs. non-volunteers.

Table 25. Age difference between volunteers and non-volunteers, t-test results

	CB 2011	*CB 2012*	*CB 2013*
Age (t-test)			
t	5.629	6.305	6.332
df	2341	2371	1830
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000

However, if we split the data into age cohorts, it becomes apparent that this difference in levels of self-reported volunteering is not caused by a young post-Soviet generation. It is rather due to low levels of volunteering among those who are 55 years old and older. Figure 12 below presents the data for 2013.

Figure 12. Volunteering by age cohort, CB 2013, % of yes
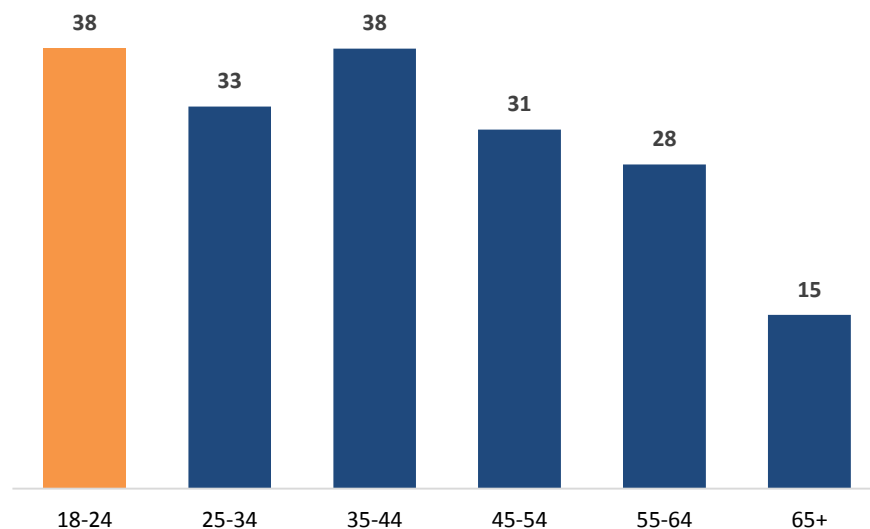
Thus, our hypothesis regarding volunteering is not supported by the available data. Although there is a statistically significant relationship between age and self-reported volunteering, it is not the young cohort of the post-communist generation that volunteers more. The relationship exists because older people volunteer less in Armenia.

Overall, our analysis of the age cohorts demonstrates that the younger generation is more trusting in civil society organisations, but it is not more likely to volunteer; the evidence for membership is inconclusive.

Twenty years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Armenian civil society continues to exhibit some signs of the post-communist legacy. There remains a fairly low level of trust towards civil society organisations. Additionally, almost one-quarter of the Armenian population finds it difficult to express their opinions towards NGOs, probably a sign that NGOs are not well known to the public.

Trust towards NGOs and individual volunteering activities are influenced by a number of socio-demographic variables, although the pattern is often mixed. Age impacts both trust towards NGOs and the likelihood of volunteering: younger people, particularly those between 18 and 24 years old, are more trustful of NGOs, while older people, particularly those older than 55, are less likely to volunteer. Men tend to volunteer more; however, women express higher levels of trust towards NGOs in 2011 and 2012. NGOs are less trusted in Yerevan (the capital) compared with the rest of the country. Respondents with more education tend to trust NGOs less but to volunteer more; however, the relationship is significant for some years but not across all the years included in the analysis. The more education he/she has, the more likely the respondent is to volunteer, confirming the existing scholarship (Verba et al., 1995). Table 26 below summarises the results of the statistical analysis.

Table 26. Statistical analysis results summary

	Trust towards NGOs	*Volunteering*
Age	Younger people are more trustful	Older people volunteer less
Gender	Inconclusive evidence, women might be more trustful	Men volunteer more
Settlement type	Less trust in the capital	No impact
Education	Inconclusive evidence, more educated respondents tend to trust less	More educated people tend to volunteer more
Income	No impact	Respondents with higher income volunteer more

In terms of the hypothesised changes in attitudes towards civil society organisations and civil society activities resulting from generational changes, it can be stated that the younger generation that was born in the final years of the Soviet Union and that grew up in independent Armenia is indeed more trustful towards NGOs, but it is not more likely to volunteer. The evidence regarding membership in organisations is mixed.

Chapter V: Organisational Survey of Armenian NGOs

If NGOs are to perform their functions as civil society elements and contribute to the consolidation of democracy in Armenia, it is important for them to function as more or less financially sustainable, independent and institutionalised organisations. As discussed in Chapter II, the institutionalisation of the Armenian NGO sector is far from certain. Numbers of existing NGOs are volatile, and there is a concern that they are too donor-dependent and would not survive should international donors withdraw their support. The "one-man show" leadership style of many organisations that are run by their founding leaders has been indicated in previous studies (Blue and Ghazaryan 2004) as an additional potential obstacle to the further functioning of an organisation, should the founding leader depart. Thus, the level of institutionalisation overall, as well as financial viability and leadership patterns, is important to consider in assessing the overall health of the Armenian NGO sector.

The decision-making structures of Armenian NGOs are important to consider, not only from the institutional sustainability point of view but also from the point of view of the overall theory of the relationship between civil society and democracy discussed in Chapter I. If NGOs are not internally democratic, their status as components of democratic civil society becomes questionable, at best. Thus, it is interesting to determine whether NGOs have basic democratic leadership structures, such as the members' assembly (required by Armenian law) and elected leadership.

As described in Chapter III, a total of 188 responses to an organisational survey were provided by NGO representatives. This chapter presents the descriptive statistics of the answers obtained, and it provides some analysis of the data with the aim of understanding the current situation and the extent of the changes occurring in the NGO sector. The questions of the organisational survey are grouped into the following five main categories: a) basic facts and organisational structure; b) financial sustainability of NGOs; c) interaction with the government; d) trust towards NGOs; and d) continuity and change in the NGO sector.

5.1 Basic Facts and Organisational Structure

Of the 188 NGOs, 124 (66%) report being located in Yerevan, 56 (30%) are located in towns, and eight are in the villages of Armenia.

The oldest organisation reported in the database was established in 1985 and the youngest in 2013. Table 27 below presents the ages of the organisations grouped into three broad categories. The mean (and median) year of establishment of an organisation is 2003.

Table 27. Organisations' years of establishment

Years	%
1985-2000	27
2001-2007	45
2008-2013	28
Total	100
N	*188*

Sector-wise, the most popular organisations are dedicated to human rights (50%), education/employment (47%) and community development (43%); see Table 28.

Table 28. The sectors, in which organisations have been active during the last year (multiple responses)

Sector	*% of organisations mentioning the sector*
Human rights	50
Education/employment	47
Community development	43
Sports/youth issues	30
Environmental issues	28.5
Culture	28
Health issues	23
Charity/welfare	25
Gender issues	24.5
Economic development	19
Poverty	19
Childcare	18
Humanitarian aid	17
Business relations	13
Pensioner/elderly issues	8.5
Consumer interests	8.5
Democracy promotion, peace, international relations	8
Veteran/victim/refugee issues	7
Ethnic issues	5
Religious activities	3
Other	10
N	*188*

When asked to specify which of the mentioned sectors is the most important for the organisation, most NGOs name human rights, followed by an NGO-specific array of answers grouped under the "Other" category. Education and employment-related activities constitute the third most popular sector of NGO operations.

Table 29. Most important sector of operation

	N	*%*
Human rights	40	21
Other	33	18
Education/employment issues	20	11
Community development issues	15	8
Sports/youth issues	14	7
Environmental issues	13	7
Health issues	9	4.8
Economic development	9	4.8
Childcare	7	3.7
Gender issues	6	3.2
Culture	6	3.2
Business relations	5	2.7
Charity/welfare	4	2.1
Consumer interests	3	1.6
Poverty	2	1.1
Religious activities	1	0.5
Humanitarian aid	1	0.5

When respondents were asked about their organisation's primary activity, with multiple answers permitted, education, training, information dissemination and awareness raising activities are mentioned by most NGOs, as presented in Table 30[57]. However, when asked to choose only one main activity, advocacy is mentioned most often, as Table 31 demonstrates.

Table 30. Primary activities of organisations

Activity	*%*
Education/training	65
Information dissemination/awareness raising	65
Advocacy	46
Service delivery	45
Research	42
Other activities	7
N	*188*

Table 31. Main activities of organisations (if more than one)

Activity	*%*
Advocacy	23
Information dissemination/awareness raising	21
Education/training	20
Research	13
Service delivery	11.5
Other activities	11.5
Total	100
N	*188*

Most organisations prefer to work with young people (up to 35 years old): 59% of organisations claim to have young members as a majority. Similarly, 54% of NGOs report having more than

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[57] These were also options at the top of the list in the questionnaire.

50% female members (either as paid staff, members or volunteers). One-fifth of NGOs have more than 90% female membership, as seen in Table 32.

Table 32. Percentage of young people and women at NGOs (members, staff, volunteers)

	N young people up to 35 years old	*% young people up to 35 years old*	*N female*	*% female*
None	9	4.8	9	4.8
Less than 10%	13	7	14	7
Less than 50%	28	15	21	11
Approximately 50%	27	14	42	22
More than 50%	55	29	63	33.5
More than 90%	56	30	39	21
Total	188	100	9	100

5.1.1. Leadership and Leadership Changes

In terms of decision-making structures, almost all NGOs have presidents, and more than two-thirds have boards and general assemblies. While having an additional leadership position, such as executive director, is not very common, one-third of NGOs report having such a position.

Table 33. "Does your organisation have…" Yes answers

	N	*%*
President	182	97
Board	146	78
General assembly	137	73
Accountant/financial manager/cashier	129	69
Working groups	114	61
Secretary	82	44
Executive director	68	36

Most of the NGOs surveyed (59%) are led by a male president, 38% have a female president, and 3% report having no president at all. The gender of the executive director is almost evenly split, while the secretary and accountant positions are mostly occupied by women (see Table 34).

Table 34. Gender roles at NGOs

		N	*%*
President	Male	109	59
	Female	71	38
	Non-existent	6	3.2
Executive director	Male	36	19
	Female	34	18
	Non-existent	118	63
Secretary	Male	15	8
	Female	68	36
	Non-existent	105	56
Accountant/financial manager/cashier	Male	35	20
	Female	93	52
	Non-existent	51	28.5

The majority of NGO leaders are between 36 and 45 years old (29%) or older than 56 (25%). Most executive directors are in the 36- to 45-year-old category as well, while secretaries

are usually younger. The financial positions are almost evenly spread between the 26- and 55-year-old age groups.

Table 35. Ages of holders of various positions at NGOs

		N	*%*
President	18-25	9	4.9
	26-35	35	19
	36-45	53	29
	46-55	36	20
	Older than 56	46	25
	Non-existent	6	3.2
Executive director	18-25	6	3.7
	26-35	15	9
	36-45	19	12
	46-55	16	10
	Older than 56	12	7
	Non-existent	94	58
Secretary	18-25	21	12
	26-35	27	16
	36-45	22	13
	46-55	11	6.5
	Older than 56	3	1.8
	Non-existent	86	51
Accountant/financial manager/cashier	18-25	12	7
	26-35	39	22
	36-45	36	20
	46-55	30	17
	Older than 56	13	7
	Non-existent	47	27

The average time for a president to hold his/her office is seven years (mean = 7.48, median = 7), and roughly one-third of organisations have presidents with track records of four years or less.

Table 36. NGO presidents' years in office

	N	*%*	*Cumulative %*
0-5 years	81	43	43
6-15 years	96	51	94
16 or more years	11	6	100
Total	188	100	

Most of the organisations have experienced leadership changes, with only 25.5% of organisations reporting their current president being the only president the organisation has ever had. This finding shows that the NGO sector has, by and large, overcome the "one-person show" problem, previously mentioned as one of the main obstacles to the development of a sustainable third party sector.

Table 37. How many presidents has your organisation had in the past?

	N	*%*	*Cumulative %*
0	48	26	26
1	98	52	78
2	20	11	88
3	16	8.5	97
4	3	1.6	98.4
5	1	0.5	98.9
7	1	0.5	99.5
11	1	0.5	100
Total	188	100	

5.1.2. Organisational Capacity: Staff and Volunteers

This study focuses on organisational capacity in terms of personnel involved with the organisation. We use two measurements – number of paid staff and number of volunteers – to assess the organisational personnel resources of the NGOs.

Some 37% of organisations report having no paid staff, 26% report having one to five paid staff members, and 22% have six to 20 paid staff members. There are few large organisations, with only 9% reporting having 30 and more staff members; three organisations reported having more than 100 paid staff. The mean number of paid staff is 11, but the median is 3; see Table 38 below.

Table 38. Number of paid staff in organisations

Category	*%*
0	37
1-5	26
6-20	22
21-30	6
31-245	9
Total	100
N	*188*
Mean	11
Median	3

Most organisations report working with volunteers: 90% have at least one volunteer. Although the distribution ranges from one to 4,000, the mean is 58, and the median is 8 (see Table 39). In addition, 88% of NGOs report working with volunteers at least once during the past year as a type of activity.

Table 39. Number of volunteers in organisations

Category	%
0	10
1-5	29
6-10	18
11-30	23
31-100	11
101-4000	9
Total	100
N	188
Mean	58
Median	8

5.1.3. Outreach and Social Media

Most organisations hold sustained efforts to remain visible and connected to the broader society. They hold outreach events (87% during the last year), cooperate with other NGOs (87%) and international organisations (79%), are engaged in fundraising (70%), and communicate with government officials (68%).

Table 40. Activities implemented by organisations

Type of activity	N	%
Fundraising	Last month: 41 Last six months: 48 Last year: 42 Not implemented: 57	Last month: 22 Last six months: 26 Last year: 23 Not implemented: 30
Outreach event	Last month: 72 Last six months: 50 Last year: 42 Not implemented: 24	Last month: 38 Last six months: 27 Last year: 22 Not implemented: 13
Work with international organisations	Last month: 60 Last six months: 40 Last year: 43 Not implemented: 39	Last month: 35 Last six months: 21 Last year: 23 Not implemented: 21
Cooperation with other NGOs	Last month: 85 Last six months: 32 Last year: 47 Not implemented: 24	Last month: 45 Last six months: 17 Last year: 25 Not implemented: 13
Work with volunteers	Last month: 84 Last six months: 41 Last year: 40 Not implemented: 23	Last month: 45 Last six months: 22 Last year: 21 Not implemented: 12
Communication with government officials	Last month: 46 Last six months: 33 Last year: 48 Not implemented: 61	Last month: 24.5 Last six months: 18 Last year: 25.5 Not implemented: 32
General meeting of organisation's members	Last month: 37 Last six months: 42 Last year: 63 Not implemented: 42	Last month: 20 Last six months: 22 Last year: 33.5 Not implemented: 22

In addition to responding to the closed-ended questions regarding their activities, NGOs were also prompted about other types of activities via an optional open-ended question. The emergent answers were categorised as presented in the table below.

Table 41. Types of other activities implemented by organisations over the last year

Type of activity	No. of times mentioned	% of the total
Thematic projects, for example, *environmental* (clean-up, recycling), *cultural* (exhibition, theatrical festival), *music* (concert)	15	21
Seminars, workshops, press/video conferences	13	18
Training	13	18
Political events/initiatives, such as lobbying, election observation, public hearings	9	13
Charity work and support activities, such as free hotline services, consultancy	8	11
Mass events, such as advocacy campaigns, memorial events (candle lighting), flash mobs	7	10
Research and teaching	4	6
Leaflet preparation and distribution, broadcasting of videos of social importance	3	4
Total:	72	101

Most NGOs that were included in the study have Web sites (72%) and Facebook pages (65%), which is not surprising given the sampling strategy. At least one-quarter of NGOs also

use other social media, such as YouTube and blogs. Table 42 summarises the usage of communication tools among the respondents.

Table 42. Types of communication tools organisations use to promote their activities

	N	*%*
Web site	136	72
Facebook	122	65
E-mail list	67	36
YouTube	47	25
Blog	40	21
Google+	24	13
Twitter	21	11
LinkedIn	19	10
Odnoklassniki	15	8
Vkontakte	7	3.7
Other	2	1.1

5.2. Financial Sustainability of NGOs

Some 55% of organisations report receiving a grant over the past year. Most organisations report receiving one (15%) or two (17%) grants. The mean is 1.6, and the median is 1. Three organisations report receiving as many as 10, 11 and 12 grants, respectively. International and foreign organisations constitute the main sources of grants for Armenian NGOs. Regarding the question related to the total amount of grants received over the past year, the majority of NGOs either refused to answer the question (21%) or claimed to have received more than $50,000.

Table 43. Sources from which grants are received (multiple choice)

	N	*%*
International and foreign organisations	82	44
Armenian government	18	9.6
Personal donations	16	8.5
Armenian non-profit organisations	11	5.9
Armenian business organisations	4	2.1

Table 44. Amounts of grants received by NGOs

		N	*%*	*Valid %*	*Cumulative %*
Valid	Less than $1,000	6	3.2	5.8	5.8
	$1,001 - $3,000	10	5.3	9.7	16
	$,3001 - $10,000	17	9	17	32
	$10,001 - $30,000	15	8	15	47
	$30,001 - $50,000	11	5.9	11	57
	More than $50,000	22	12	21	79
	Don't know/refuse to answer	22	12	21	100
	Total	103	55	100	
Missing	System	85	45		
Total		188	100		

The remaining 45% of NGOs report receiving no grants in the past year; nevertheless, they do maintain a certain level of activity, and our research team was able to find and contact them. This fact, in addition to leadership change, is another sign of higher institutionalisation

compared with previous studies of the Armenian NGO sector that demonstrated that NGO functionality was directly related to grant-making ability.

Apart from grants, the main sources of funding for Armenian NGOs are social enterprises (30%) and financial donations (29%), while another 29% does not have any other sources of funding.

Table 45. Other sources of funding (apart from grants)

	N	*%*
Membership fees	60	32
Social enterprises	57	30
Financial donations	55	29
Commodity donations	37	20
No other sources	55	29
Other sources	10	5.3

5.3 Interaction with Government

When asked how they interact with the national government, 38% of organisations report no interaction of any kind. Among those that do interact with the national government, the most popular types of activities are consultancy/expert involvement (40%), naming and shaming/providing recommendations (30%) and coordinating events/activities (21%).

Table 46. Interaction with the national government

	%
Consultancy/expert involvement	40
Doesn't interact with government in any way	38
Naming and shaming/providing recommendations	30
Coordinating events/activities	21
Watchdog activities/developing alternatives	21
Formal lobbying	18
Informal lobbying	16
Protesting/criticising	14
Working for the government on a contractual basis	10
Receiving funding/subsidies	8.5
Other	8
N	*188*

The same question regarding the local government yielded similar results. No interaction with the government in any manner was the most popular type of response (35%), followed by naming and shaming/providing recommendations (30%) and coordinating events/activities (24.5%).

Table 47. Interaction with the local government

	%
Doesn't interact with the government in any way	35
Naming and shaming/providing recommendations	30
Coordinating events/activities	24.5
Consultancy/expert involvement	23
Watchdog activities/developing alternatives	22
Protesting/criticising	13
Informal lobbying	10
Receiving funding/subsidies	6
Working for the government on a contractual basis	5
Formal lobbying	5
Other	4
N	*188*

The majority of respondents believe that working with the government helps/would help the organisation reach their goals (61%). At the same time, most of the respondents believe that working with the government does not/would not affect the image of their organisation (46%), although some NGOs are concerned that working with the government damages/would damage the image of their organisation in the eyes of those who know about their organisation (12%).

Table 48. Working with the government helps or hinders in reaching the goals of organisations

	%
It helps/would help reaching our goals	61
It hinders/would hinder reaching our goals	5.5
It doesn't/wouldn't affect goal achievement	34
Total	100
N	*188*

Table 49. Working with the government improves or damages the image of the NGO

	N	%	Cumulative %
Improves/would improve the image of our organisation	79	42	42
Damages/would damage the image of our organisation	23	12	54
Doesn't/wouldn't affect the image of our organisation	86	46	100
Total	188	100	

5.4 Trust toward NGOs

The survey posed two questions about NGOs' perceptions of public trust towards them. Interestingly, the respondents are neutral when speaking about public trust toward NGOs. According to the members of Armenian NGOs, the organisations per se are mostly "somewhat trusted" (43%), while the percentage of those who claim that the sector is not trusted is quite low (16% overall), as evident from Table 50. When the question was reformulated to ask the respondents' opinions about public trust towards their own organisations, the NGOs' assessments seems to be more positive. The most popular responses are "fully trusted" (45%) and "somewhat trusted" (43%); see Table 51. It is interesting to note that none of the respondents believe their NGO is not trusted by the people who know about them.

Table 50. Public trust toward NGOs

	N	%	Cumulative %
Fully distrust	3	1.6	1.6
Somewhat distrust	27	14	16
Neither trust nor distrust	46	25	40
Somewhat trust	81	43	84
Fully trust	9	4.8	88
Don't know/can't say	22	12	100
Total	188	100	

Table 51. Public trust towards your NGO

	N	%	Cumulative Percentage
Neither trust nor distrust	13	6.9	6.9
Somewhat trust	81	43	50
Fully trust	85	45	95
Don't know/can't say	9	4.8	100
Total	188	100	

When comparing these numbers with the actual public opinion data discussed in previous chapters, it is obvious that NGOs over-estimate public trust. Figure 13 below clearly demonstrates that pattern.

Figure 13. Trust towards NGOs: NGOs' estimate vs. public opinion
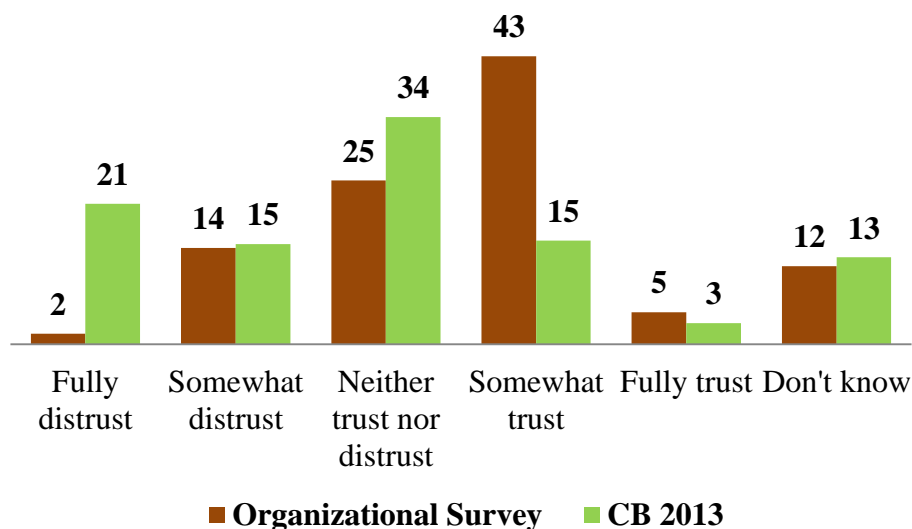
5.5. Continuity and Change in the NGO Sector

Older NGOs have more time to accumulate experience and institutionalise themselves. Younger NGOs, in contrast, might have advantages of greater flexibility and the ability to utilise new developments (such as the rise of new social media). We expected to see differences between newer and older NGOs in terms of organisational structures, fundraising activities, areas of involvement and use of communication tools. We also expected to see differences between those organisations that underwent leadership changes and those organisations that were still run by the founding leaders, expecting the latter to be less flexible and adaptable to new developments

but to have stronger organisational capacity due to the experience of the founding leader. Thus, the following hypotheses were formulated.

H_{02}: There are no differences between older and younger NGOs in organisational capacity, ability to attract funding and use of social media.
$H_{2.1}$: Younger organisations have lower organisational capacity.
$H_{2.2}$: Younger organisations are less successful in attracting funding.
$H_{2.3}$: Younger organisations use social media more to promote their activities.

H_{03}: There are no differences between organisations that have and have not undergone leadership change in terms of organisational capacity, ability to attract funding and use of social media.
$H_{3.1}$: Organisations still led by their founding leaders have higher organisational capacity
$H_{3.2}$: Organisations still led by their founding leaders are more successful in attracting funding.
$H_{3.3}$: Organisations still led by their founding leaders use social media less to promote their activities.

To test our hypothesis that relatively recently established organisations are likely to be different from older organisations, we performed a number of statistical tests with the year of establishment of the organisation as one of the test variables (Pearson's correlation and t-test analysis, performed using SPSS software). We indeed find a number of organisational age-related patterns and differences.

The correlation test found a statistically significant negative relationship between the year of establishment and the number of presidents an organisation has had. [58] The older the organisation is, the more leadership change it has experienced, which is intuitively logical but important to confirm in light of the already mentioned concern of the previous "one-man show" problem of the Armenian NGO sector. The older organisations are also likely to have more paid staff.[59] There is no statistically significant correlation between organisational age and number of volunteers. Older organisations are also more successful in attracting grant funding: they report more grants received during the past year than younger organisations,[60] although there is no statistically significant difference between older and younger organisations in having received at least one grant during the past year. These three findings taken together (more leadership changes, more paid staff, and more grants per year received by older organisations) seem to suggest that the older organisations that were included in the study are relatively more institutionalised than younger organisations. See Table 52 for the details of the correlation analysis.

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[58] $r = -0.306$, $N = 188$, $p < 0.01$ (2-tailed)
[59] $r = -0.344$, $N = 188$, $p < 0.01$ (2-tailed)
[60] ($r = -0.157$, $N = 188$, $p<0.01$, (2-tailed)

Table 52. Pearson's correlations for organisational age, personnel and fundraising

		Year of establishment	No. of paid staff	No. of volunteers	No. of presidents before
Year of establishment	Pearson's r (N)	1	-0.344 (188)		-0.306 (188)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000		0.000
No. of paid staff	Pearson's r (N)	-0.344 (188)	1	0.274 (188)	0.209 (188)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		0.000	0.004
No. of volunteers	Pearson's r (N)		0.274 (188)	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000		
No. of presidents before	Pearson's r (N)	-0.306 (188)	0.209 (188)		1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.004		
No. of grants last year	Pearson's r (N)	-0.157 (182)	0.426 (182)		0.158 (182)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.035	0.000		0.033

Note: only statistically significant correlations are reported in the table.

However, younger organisations differ from older organisations in their use of the Internet and social media. The t-test shows a statistically significant difference between NGOs that report having a Web site and those having no Web site: older organisations are less likely to have a Web page, whereas newer NGOs are more likely to have one.[61] The same pattern is true for the use of Facebook.[62] In terms of using e-mail lists as a communication means, the t-test showed no significant difference.

There is no difference between older and younger NGOs in terms of their involvement in advocacy activity. Although advocacy seems to be a relatively new type of activity for Armenian NGOs, the older NGOs (that were originally more focused on service provision) have, by now, included advocacy in their repertoire of activities, and they do not differ from younger NGOs in that regard. The similarity between old and new organisations also holds true for all other types of activities measured by the survey (information dissemination, awareness raising, etc.).

In our study, we also hypothesise that those organisations that are relatively older but have experienced a leadership change are different from the organisations that are older and are still run by their founding presidents. In our database, there are 30 organisations established before 2005 and run by their first presidents and 88 organisations established before 2005 that have experienced a change in president. We compared these two sets of organisations. These two groups do not differ in terms of numbers of paid staff or volunteers. They also do not differ regarding whether they have received a grant during the past year. They do, however, differ in the numbers of grants received during the past year: the organisations that have experienced a leadership change receive, on average, two grants, while those who are still run by their original presidents receive, on average, one grant. The t-test shows this difference to be significant.[63] The chi-square test shows no statistically significant differences between these two groups of NGOs in terms of their use of modern communication tools (Web sites, Facebook and e-mail lists).

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[61] t (186) = - 2.047, p < 0.05
[62] t (186) = 2.394, p < 0.05
[63] t (114) = 2.076, p < 0.05

There is also no difference in terms of involvement in advocacy or in any other types of activities that organisations report.

Overall, we find some support for our hypothesis in terms of differences between old and new NGOs. Old NGOs seem to have more organisational resources, while younger organisations are more prone to utilising websites and social media for their outreach purposes. We find almost no support for our assumption that old NGOs run by their establishing presidents are different from old NGOs that have undergone leadership changes. From the variables tested, the only difference was that NGOs that have experienced leadership changes are able to attract more grants per year.

Based on the survey data from 188 NGOs, we can conclude that the third sector has achieved a higher level of institutionalisation compared with 2004, when the last comprehensive study of active NGOs was conducted in Armenia. In particular, most organisations have undergone leadership changes, which is a new development compared with previous studies, in which "one-person show" was listed among the top problems of the NGO sector and that many NGOs would stop functioning should the founding leader depart.

When comparing older and younger NGOs, we do observe statistically significant differences in the directions hypothesised by the H_2 set of hypotheses: all three hypotheses are accepted. Younger organisations have lower organisational capacity in terms of less paid staff and fewer volunteers ($H_{2.1}$); younger organisations are less successful in attracting funding ($H_{3.2}$); and younger organisations use social media more to promote their activities ($H_{2.3}$).

When comparing organisations that have undergone leadership changes with those that continue to be run by their founding members, we find a difference only regarding the ability to attract funding, and the difference is not in the direction we have hypothesised. Organisations still led by their founding leaders receive fewer, not more, grants than those that have experienced leadership changes, while there is no difference in terms of organisational capacity and social media use. Thus, our H_3 set of hypotheses is refuted.

Chapter VI: Qualitative Analysis of NGO Leaders' and Volunteers' Perspectives

This chapter provides an analysis of the primary data collected through interviews with volunteers and leaders of Armenian NGOs. The semi-structured interviews examine more closely the personal practices and attitudes of individuals representing civil society organisations. Participants were asked to share their stories of personal experiences, attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours, as well as to evaluate the current state of Armenian civil society.

6.1. NGO Story and Organisational Structure

NGO Leaders' Personal Stories

This section examines how and in what ways leaders of NGOs became involved in the civil society sector of their countries. Participants were asked to share their personal stories and the reasons and motives behind their decisions to join the NGO sector.

The story of becoming an NGO leader for most of the interviewees goes all the way back to their professional fields and their interests prior to joining the NGO sector. Professional knowledge and the experience of working in the field would often combine with concerns, dissatisfaction, and a desire to change things or to address a burning issue, and this combination of professionalism and concern would inspire a person to either join or establish an NGO. Thus, someone with a PhD in urban planning establishes an NGO aimed at the preservation of buildings of historical and cultural value. A person working in a clinic for people infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV/AIDS) quits his or her job and establishes an NGO to work with people infected with the virus, convinced that creating a space for these people to come and talk to others is as important as their treatment in the clinic.

Some respondents became NGO leaders through a different pattern that was less related to their professional interests and concerns and more to their Soviet-type occupations and the overall historical transformations of Armenian society in the early 1990s. These leaders witnessed the breakup of the Soviet Union and experienced all the hardship and confusion of the early years of Armenian independence. For these people, their previously held Soviet occupations became the starting points for involvement in civil society. Leaders of older NGOs recalled the difficult social and economic situations of the country, which made them believe that involvement in civil society was essential back then. By recognising the necessity to be active, these people became part of the civil society initiatives of the past, and they have naturally developed into leaders of organisations established both before and after independence. For these people, their previously held Soviet occupations became the starting points for involvement in civil society. For example, one of the leaders was a member of the youth division of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (*Komsomol)*; currently, the NGO addresses youth issues. Another leader of an NGO working on youth affairs has work experience in the public sector, serving as deputy minister of youth affairs in the past.

The third type of life story of becoming an NGO leader includes interviewees who sought opportunities to receive financial contributions and grants that would help with implementing projects in areas of personal concern. The implementation of projects through foreign grants is identified as a motive for establishing an organisation. NGOs are seen by participants as a necessary legal entity to implement projects defined as means to reach their goals.

Dispositional reasons should not be underestimated when establishing an NGO. Some participants emphasise that personal aspirations have led them to become involved in social life and to help people by establishing the organisations. These participants highlight the importance of psychological factors, which are related to the natural human desire to be recognised and to address social issues. Interestingly, those emphasising the importance of human aspects at the same time are also professionals in respective fields. In other words, the dispositional factor serves as an additional account, adding to the abilities and experience gained as a result of their specialisation. The desire to be involved in the civil society sector only strengthens the engagement, while the existence of a background in a given field is of crucial importance in the course of organising NGO activities.

In summary, the main factors that have led participants to become involved in civil society are personal interests, professions, unique historical experiences of living at a time of rapid change and the painful transformation of the social fabric, as well as seeking an opportunity to receive grants to implement projects in fields of personal concern. It is also important to mention the existence of dispositional factors, such as ambition and the desire to be active and involved in social life.

Leadership Change

More than half of the interviewed leaders report no leadership changes in their NGOs. It seems to be a common practice that the founding member becomes the head of the organisation. Change is considered unnecessary and of no value. Although a change or rotation of leadership is prescribed by some NGO statutes, none of the leaders included in our qualitative study has experienced it in practice. Leaders of organisations are basically being repeatedly re-elected. The explicit accounts by participants indicate no necessity for leadership changes simply for the sake of the change or compliance with the statue that provides such a directive. The main justification is that an organisation operates best with its current leader, who is usually one of the founders. As one 41-year-old male founder and head of a town-based NGO indicated, *"According to our statute, the head should change every three years, but why do it if everything works fine?"* Some participants see leadership stability as a positive development, linking it to trust. For example, in the words of a 38-year-old female leader: *"Every two years, I am re-elected as the head of the organisation, and I am thankful because I think that this is a matter of trust. We don't have any limitations on leadership changes in our statutes"* (NGO founder and head, Yerevan).

The founders of organisations up to the present have remained as the heads of NGOs. Board and founding members' meetings are held within organisations, but there are no initiatives on behalf of the boards of founding members to select new heads of organisations. No leadership

changes are advocated or seen as positive developments for the better, healthier operation of organisations.

More than half of the participants are founding members of their organisations and heads of NGOs since their establishment. Legal regulations are respected by NGOs, and according to them, the necessary bodies, such as the board, executive director, and director, exist in organisations. Moreover, there still exists the tendency to personify organisations, i.e., an organisation is popular and recognised because of its leader. Although unanimously admitting that people's knowledge about organisations is often conditioned by their knowledge of its leader, some of the leaders are sceptical about such conditions. Says one 47-year-old male leader of a town-based NGO, *"There has to be no personification. I could pass away or have a heart attack, become disabled, etc. I would be ashamed if my organisation 'died' with a person, meaning its leader."*

In the framework of leadership changes, participants reflect on decision-making processes. An overwhelming majority recognise the importance of decision-making by a larger number of people involved, such as board and organisational members. More people should participate in decision-making processes to guarantee quality. It is impossible for one person to possess the amount of information required to make a decision. Decision-making is considered a collective undertaking. Thus, an inconsistency is observed with the majority of NGO leaders being against the procedure of leadership changes (they are simply re-elected every time); however, they advocate the importance of collective decisions as a democratic practice for healthy NGO operations.

Goals and Missions

The participants were selected to represent various fields of NGO operations in Armenia[64]. Each of the leaders is said to have felt the urgent need to develop an NGO aimed at addressing problems in a specific field of concern. It should be stated, however, that an overwhelming majority of NGOs are working in the field of human rights, including the protection of the rights of specific groups (for example, children, women, pensioners, the disabled) and the provision of free legal assistance.

The goals and missions of organisations differ according to the sphere of organisational operation. The missions of organisations are mainly interlinked and overlapping in terms of the way leaders formulate the goals set forth by their organisations. The main goals are grouped into the following five broader categories: cooperation for social advancement; awareness raising and protection of human rights; development of peace building dialogue; legal support; and benevolence.

Most of the time the categories overlap, and it is a rare practice for an NGO to have only one or two goals. The majority of NGOs indicate several general goals. Cooperation for social advancement and sustainable development include cooperation[65] with like-minded NGOs fighting for common causes. Raising awareness, the protection of human rights and legal support

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[64] See Appendix 5 for a list of the types of organizations represented by the interviewees.
[65] Cooperation of NGOs is discussed in detail later in the subchapter.

are the most commonly overlapping categories mentioned by participants. These are the goals of the majority of organisations working in various fields. They include the protection of basic human rights, gender-related issues, environmental concerns, work with disabled people and the initiating of processes aimed at correcting wrongdoings in different spheres. Some particular issues include raising awareness about people's education regarding their rights and freedom of speech.

The development of peace-building dialogue is a popular category among NGOs' broader goals. This category includes concerns about the current situation of Armenia with regard to the vital foreign policy issue of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict as well as Armenia's relations with Turkey. NGOs working on such issues emphasise the importance of international dialogue formation between the citizens represented in the conflict. The role of civil society is seen as vital for success in this field. Other directions for the peaceful resolution of the conflict include human rights issues in military forces and the protection of the rights of conflict victims. Legal support and benevolent activities are common and overlapping goals for the Armenian NGO sector. The particular objectives of this category range from community-specific basic support, such as the provision of food and clothing, to the provision of legal assistance and shelter for people in need.

The broader goal uniting the participants is to contribute to the development of democracy in Armenia. But what are the means and methods for these organisations to build roads towards reaching their goals and fulfilling specific points in their missions? To understand exactly how NGOs contribute to the democracy of a post-Soviet country, it is important to observe organisational activities in practice.

Activities and Target Groups

According to common practice for NGOs, the types of activities conducted usually overlap because to fulfil a specific objective, various actions are necessary. For an NGO to be successful, it is important for it to master various activity-specific fields. There are also stand-alone activities, such as legal assistance, that do not require any additional efforts and that are solely productive. In such cases, however, participants emphasise the importance of follow-up.

When asked for specific examples of activities, a very broad spectrum of activities emerge that can be grouped into technical assistance, material support, psychological support, on-site activities, and government-related activities. Technical assistance refers to the provision of legal support, analysis of information related to fields of concern, library maintenance and online tasks such as maintaining Web pages with regularly updated information for public use. Activities related to material and psychological support include the provision of shelter, food and clothes to groups of people in need. Disadvantaged groups and LGBT people are provided with spaces where they can spend time and socialise. On-site activities refer to the organisation of events such as press conferences, trainings, youth camps, and flash mobs, as well as tree planting and cleaning work. The last category of activities NGOs implement refers to interaction with national government institutions. Such tasks include participation in the development of laws, regulations and government decisions (for example, by participating in specific standing

committees at the National Assembly[66] [NA] or in government ministries of Armenia) and Armenian parliament lobbying activities (aimed, for example, to include discussions over certain laws into the NA agenda).

Attempting to specify NGOs' target groups, more than half of the participants indicate that each organisational undertaking has its specific target. Target groups are formulated according to the subject of the project implemented or because of existing problems within a certain group of people; the solutions are developed accordingly. In the words of leader of a human rights NGO, *"The target group is directly related to the project that is going to be implemented. There is no initiative that has no addressee. Each project has its own target"* (male, 55, town). A leader of an environmental NGO, refusing to indicate a specific target, explained as follows: *"Whenever a group of people unite for a common cause, they become our target group at once"* (female, 50, Yerevan).

Thus, NGOs are not characterised by one target-specific behaviour unless defined or titled otherwise. For example, there are NGOs that are established specifically to address defined groups of people. These organisations usually mention these groups in their NGO titles. Examples include: *"Young women's club" NGO*, "*Village women" NGO, "Youth human rights defenders" NGO, "For the needs of children and the elderly" NGO*[67].

The immediate communities where NGOs operate are defined as the main targets. This convention is mostly true about organisations located in towns. NGOs operating in the capital are said to have more general target groups. Thus, the main target groups for NGOs are defined as the result of project-specific mapping unless the organisation is established specifically for the purpose of working with a certain group.

Cooperation

Cooperation is characterised by participants as very important for NGOs. The civil society sector is flexible in terms of cooperation. NGOs are able to cooperate with citizens, groups and institutions. Views on flexibility in cooperation are shared by the majority of participants. Moreover, NGOs are considered to serve as bridges among the public, community and representatives of the government. The explanatory logic of cooperation, however, differs among participants. Each has his or her own understanding of the subject. Some of the participants define cooperation as dialogue with other groups working for the same purpose. Others see cooperation with other institutions as opportunities to develop their own abilities and skills. In either case, cooperation is supportive of organisations' goals, and it positively influences their outcomes. The majority of leaders emphasise the importance of cooperation with like-minded NGOs, at the same time recognising the existing competition among local organisations[68].

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[66] The Armenian parliament.

[67] The names of NGOs are randomly selected from the nominal list of registered NGOs in Armenia and do not represent the participants in this study. The Armenian versions of the names, respectively, are *Երիտասարդ կանանց ակումբ ՀԿ*, *Գյուղի կին ՀԿ*, *Երիտասարդների իրավապաշտպաններ ՀԿ*, and *Երեխաների և ծերերի կարիքների համար ՀԿ.*

[68] Participants refer to the competition occurring between NGOs when it comes to the distribution of donors' financial resources.

NGOs in towns are distinguished by their networking potential and activities. Most of them are aware of similar organisations located in other towns of the same marz[69] or in nearby regions. Joining various cooperative frameworks and networks is a common practice for participants. This type of united cooperation exists at both the local and regional levels.

As with target groups, the target of cooperation also varies based on the project implemented. Thus, the cooperative targets of NGOs differ according to necessity. The bodies with which NGOs cooperate range from individuals, such as businessmen and charitable individuals, to international organisations and the private sector. Cooperation with the public sector is characterised as both preferable and restrained. Participants ranking cooperation with the government as high are either parts of NGO networks adjacent to government ministries or NA standing committees, or they choose to cooperate because of a lack of alternatives.

There are NGOs that cooperate with and are supported by the government. This condition, however, is fraught with undesirable consequences. NGOs receiving assistance from the government automatically become dependent and restricted in their speech and actions. Participants emphasise that it is impossible to receive any type of support from the government and alienate its policies at the same time. It becomes impossible to protest, even regarding a completely different issue advocated by the government. It is either full dependence or no support at all. Thus, the government is not seen as the most favourable institution with which to cooperate, but discourse with it is still considered possible.

NGOs and Politics

It is important to distinguish between cooperation with the government and the involvement of organisations in the politics of the country in general. Participants unanimously confirm that no NGO involvement should be allowed in politics. Public organisations should not engage in politics; to do so contradicts the very idea of establishing a civil society organisation. Whether it is support for any political party or lobbying for certain political interests, once this boundary is crossed, an organisation is close to collapse. Participants reject the possibility of government involvement, referring to officially established regulations and their personal understanding of the phenomenon. The constitution, laws and regulations clearly establish methods for how the relationship between the government and the non-profit sector should proceed. Formal regulations already suggest possible directions for mutual engagement between the government and the civil society sector. One young NGO leader, rejecting the possibility of cooperation with political institutions, asked, *"Why should I seek additional ways of cooperation or establishing some sort of relations with governmental bodies? There is a specifically defined, legal framework that regulates all kinds of relationships."* He concluded, *"There is absolutely no cooperation with any political party, any political institution. We might share their ideology. But there is no cooperation. This is a matter of principle"* (Male, 32, town).

The involvement of NGOs in politics is limited by participation in roundtable discussions and meetings organised by government ministries, standing committees and other public bodies.

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[69] A Marz (մարզ) is an administrative division/province (Armenia is divided into 11 marzes).

This type of participation is considered necessary, considering the importance of dialogue and cooperation. An implicit evaluation suggests that, overall, the word "politics" has a negative connotation among leaders of NGOs. When asked about the government, including support from it and possible ways of cooperating with it, one NGO leader said, *"The best support on behalf of the government to the non-profit sector would be its* [government's] *absence"* (male, 47, town).

All the possible kinds of involvement with the government are unanimously rejected by the participants, except for cases of involvement as an adjacent agency to the legislature or to a ministry. Although quite sceptical about political involvement, the participants recognise the importance of activeness in social matters of the country's life, most apparently hindering the complete avoidance of politics. Pressures on behalf of the government, widespread corruption and consistent promotion of personal interests are factors emphasised when speaking about politics and the civil society sector's involvement in it.

Challenges and Success Stories

There is no lack of difficulties encountered by organisations throughout their existence. There remain and have constantly been obstacles in the ways NGOs become established and recognised institutions. No path has been smooth or easy for either the older or newly established NGOs.

The current social and political situation of the country is considered rather sad by more than half of the participants. High levels of corruption, government control and a lack of financial resources are the main challenges for the civil society sector, as emphasised throughout the interviews.

Corruption is the most frequently mentioned subject by participants when speaking of the general situation of the country and the population at large. According to the participants, corruption exists in the public, private and civil society sectors. In the words of a leader of an NGO working on issues related to mass media and freedom of speech, *"Armenian civil society is, of course, gradually becoming powerful, but the corrupt regime is becoming powerful at a faster pace"* (male, 46, town).

It is believed that one of the reasons for the current corrupt system is the highly centralised government. Power is centralised in the hands of one ruling administration, while changes and reforms occur to the extent that they do not interfere with the longevity of the current system of power.

The majority of participants emphasise ongoing pressures by the government in establishing mechanisms of control. The enlargement of such mechanisms is manifested in a variety of legal and discretionary policy documents the number of which is continuously increasing. An example of an oversight mechanism is the establishment of a public council as a consultation body by the president of the republic. This mechanism is considered a way to keep the civil society sector "in the loop"[70]. Stemming from the existing country-wide problems on a larger scale, such as corruption and constant oversight, the centralisation problem is also mentioned to be a factor hindering the balanced development of civil society in the country.

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[70] The Web site of the Public Council of Armenia is available at: http://www.publiccouncil.am/en/

NGOs are established, and they operate in the regions of Armenia; the majority, however, exist and operate in the capital of the republic.

The lack of financial stability is mentioned to be the main problem among organisations that are constantly dependent on grants. They face the perpetual problem of being financially unsustainable. The existence of grant programs is seen as positive. These grants, however, are not constant, while organisations must maintain space, resources and people to operate. As one NGO leader said, *"If we do not have a grant, it means we do not have a salary"* (male, 57, town). Constant financial instability is a lasting organisational problem in post-Soviet Armenia.

Examples of explicit success stories and achievements vary to a great extent. The achievements are defined differently by participants. For many, the success of an organisation is the result of certain undertakings. As one human rights NGO leader explained, *"Success is a manifestation of outputs into outcomes, when one sees the fruits of his/her work and when the objectives are realised"* (male, 47, town).

Successes are understood by participants in quite different forms: from material outputs to abstract features. These range from the launch of a newsletter, the establishment of school governance online platforms, international networking and the advancement of social institutional ties to NGO recognition and popularity, the development of public trust over time and the educational achievements of children (such as university admission) who were supported by NGOs. An example of a successful achievement story is saving of the forest by an environmental NGO. To counter a government decision to obtain lumber from one of the forests, a protesting campaign was organised by the NGO in cooperation with civic activists and like-minded organisations, requiring the government to withdraw its decision, which it eventually did.

The success of organisations is also synonymous with opportunities. Participants perceive success as progressive opportunities that help advance organisational activities. Developing more and better opportunities leads to a better NGO involvement in various fields. This progression is perceived as a success-breeding process. Leaders of older NGOs define success in terms of time. They emphasise the importance of organisations' long-term existence as a success in itself.

NGOs' Recommendations

The study participants made a number of recommendations they believed would help strengthen Armenian civil society and alleviate some of its greatest challenges. Some of these recommendations, deemed reasonable by the researchers, are summarised below.

The article on the principles of organisational activities from the law of Armenia on NGOs provides that organisations may engage in entrepreneurial activities only by creating a commercial organisation or by participating in one (National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia 2001). The overwhelming majority of leaders emphasise a problem related to this policy prohibiting NGOs from initiating or engaging with entrepreneurial activities. This regulation places NGOs in a disadvantaged position, particularly NGOs with permanent financial difficulties. Financial instability is the main reason organisations largely depend on foreign

grants and volunteers' contributions. Changing this policy would generate a better operating environment for the NGO community.

The lack of financial resources and the difficulties in sustaining NGOs are mentioned among the most vital challenges for the NGO community. Recommendations regarding financial support to NGOs refer to the two main players, namely, the national government and major foreign donors. Participants use the examples of European countries having specific funds allocated for the civil society sector. They emphasise a preferable possibility for the Armenian government to replicate some of these good practices worldwide and apply them to the Armenian reality of today. The provision of large and more specified funds would ease NGOs' operations and contribute to a better financial environment. The question of who the main donor interested in promoting the civil society sector should be is mainly answered in favour of the EU as a global player in the region. The EU is also a target of consideration, particularly considering the recent political developments around the issue of Armenia joining the Russia-led Custom's Union. With such circumstances having developed, the EU's role could be crucial in supporting civil society.

6.2. Volunteering and Youth

Volunteering at NGOs

All NGO leaders participating in this study indicate that, at a certain point in time, they had volunteers at their organisations. The numbers, tendency and scale of volunteers' involvement differ depending on the sector and the scope of organisational activities. The participants, however, are characterised by a single uniting factor: they all currently have and have had volunteers at their organisations. In most cases, the volunteers are students and youths. Their ages usually range from 18 to 30 years old. The leaders of older NGOs indicate that volunteering is a newly developed phenomenon. In the early 1990s, there were very few volunteers; the concept of volunteering was not "in demand" as it is today.

The draft law on voluntary work was developed by the Armenian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in 2010 (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of Armenia 2014). Since then, it has been debated and has encountered the disapproval of NGOs over various points, such as removing the notion of volunteer work contracts to avoid causing further complications in the process or specifying mechanisms within the law that would clearly differentiate between volunteerism and paid work. The draft law on voluntary work generated heated discussions and has been debated in the legislature several times since 2010. There are opposing views related to policy changes on volunteering among participants. There are NGO leaders who recognise the importance of legally regulating the activities of volunteers at their organisations; the majority, however, claim that there is absolutely no need for any legal framework that would regulate the volunteer work.

Referring to the ways in which people become involved in volunteering activities, volunteers were asked to share their stories about decisive processes preceding their actual experiences. The volunteering experiences of participants are characterised by the existence of

an intervening factor that led them to volunteer. These factors are usually events, such as workshops and seminars, from which the participants learned about the opportunity to volunteer, further leading them to voluntary involvement. Another factor is a recommendation from a friend or fellow volunteer or the involvement of a family member (usually a brother/sister or a cousin) in the volunteering activities of organisations, leading participants to engage in volunteering as well.

There are two types or methods of volunteer recruitment and involvement in NGOs: those initiated by organisations or by volunteers themselves. The first case is when an organisation announces the recruitment of volunteers; the second is usually initiated by volunteers: they visit organisations, introduce themselves and ask whether any volunteers are needed. Leaders describe such volunteers as initiative-taking and active. Maintaining a database of volunteers is a usual practice for NGOs. Databases usually consist of information about volunteers' interests and hobbies, which is crucial in the process of organising events. Depending on the activities organised, volunteers are selected and encouraged to participate based on their interests and concerns.

The tasks performed emphasised by volunteer participants themselves are mainly organisational and administrative. Volunteers provide support to the process of organising events, being responsible for the paperwork related to the preparation of documents such as invitations or announcements, performing the translation of documents and offering administrative help, such as making telephone calls. At times, activities include serving as a librarian or a public relations manager responsible for sharing information on organised activities. According to the participants, such techniques mainly include work with social media. The activities of volunteers, however, vary according to the type of NGO. For example, the duties and responsibilities of volunteers at a relief NGO may consist of helping children with limited abilities.

Motivations to Volunteer

People volunteer for different reasons. Motivations play an important role in volunteers' decisions to volunteer. The motivations to volunteer represent an interplay of different factors. Both leaders of organisations and volunteers were asked to share their opinions about the motivations to volunteer. According to the heads of organisations, volunteers are guided by three possible reasons: personal growth and development; interest and curiosity; and résumé emphasis and the obtaining of recommendation letters. The majority of leaders believe that the main motive behind volunteering is personal growth and development, which becomes possible by acquiring the knowledge, skills and abilities volunteers gain throughout their experience. Learning new things stands as the primary motivational factor. Some of the heads indicate their volunteers' interest and curiosity. According to these heads, there is a group that volunteers due to simple curiosity. These volunteers do not know much about the organisation or its activities, but they have heard that this is a good thing to do, and they become involved to find out what is happening inside the organisation. This group of volunteers is defined as "curious". Some heads of organisations mention cases in which people visited organisations and honestly stated that

they would need a paper signed at the end of the volunteering term, which was the reason for their applying. Additional lines in one's résumé are also a frequently mentioned reason for volunteering.

According to volunteers at NGOs, motivational factors can be distinguished among the following aspects: personal pleasure; a wish to help others; manifestations of curiosity (to determine whether the knowledge already gained can be applied in a corresponding setting); working experience; self-education; networking and making new friends; better information; and a pure change in life brought about by volunteering.

Regardless of overlapping answers about motivational factors, each volunteer has his/her own understanding and way of defining the phenomenon. The generally positive image of volunteering is that of opening doors to new opportunities, crossing barriers of communication, enlarging one's scope and undergoing a paradigm shift. These factors in aggregate contribute mainly to the volunteer's personal development. Some volunteers characterise volunteering as a means to reach one's goals: self-education, better experience and new acquaintances contribute to this process. Among the values gained as a result of volunteering, participants emphasise mentee experience and types of knowledge mostly in the spheres of human rights and social and gender issues. The skills acquired as a result of volunteering generate less shyness and the development of more assertive and confident behaviour in interaction with other members of organisations and with the public at large. The majority of participants indicate volunteering to be important because it compensates for a lack of work experience. It provides experience and closes the gap by providing both skills and a line in one's résumé to find a job. Those respondents volunteering for NGOs that address disabled children emphasise personal and psychological factors that play crucial roles in developing a desire to help people by becoming a part of a volunteering team.

Nearly one-third of NGO leaders believe it is the responsibility of the organisation to create the motivation for young people to work. Although creating an atmosphere of motivation for volunteers is an organisation's responsibility, volunteers nevertheless must have certain abilities as well. Being motivated and willing is not sufficient. As one 50-year-old head of a town NGO explains, *"Volunteers' motivations are important, very important, but they are not sufficient for us. Abilities are needed apart from motivation, for instance, if they are committed but cannot do anything."*

When asked about the role and impact volunteering has in their lives, the majority of volunteers emphasise qualities of personal growth. These qualities include acquiring knowledge, developing skills, becoming more active, and being an initiative-taker and a better participant in the civic life of their communities. In the words of an 18-year-old male volunteer, *"I have opened the doors to civil society for myself through volunteering. This was the greatest impact."*

Mutual Contributions

Volunteers were asked to share their opinions about the two-way contributions of the volunteer-organisation relationship. Participants emphasise that organisations contribute to their work by providing opportunities to participate in the decision-making processes of NGOs. More than half

of the volunteers indicate having regularly organised meetings with staff to share ideas collectively about ongoing developments and initiatives pioneered by all members. Volunteers define their own usefulness to organisations in terms of material gains. These gains include not paying salaries to volunteers that would otherwise be paid to staff members and supporting the work of staff in terms of time saving and meeting deadlines.

Leaders rank their roles high in the development and maintenance of volunteers' motivations. They see their contributions as very important to the development and strengthening of volunteers' abilities. According to leaders, NGOs are said to be the guarantors of volunteers' involvement in projects inside and outside Armenia.

Volunteers of NGOs located in smaller towns are mostly characterised by not participating in any initiative before their volunteering experience. A similar view on the difficulty in finding places and activities besides school for students in towns is also indicated by the majority of NGO leaders operating in towns. Thus, the phenomenon of organisations providing volunteering opportunities, specifically for youth in towns, is seen as a positive contribution and a mutually beneficial process.

Youth

Today, public awareness of civil society, volunteering, civic initiatives and movements have grown. According to the majority of NGO leaders, one of the main reasons for the development of these concepts in practice is the existence of active youth. As previously observed, volunteers consist mainly of people younger than 30 years. Youths, however, are not only active in volunteering but also in the civic lives of their communities at large. More than half of NGO leaders rank the role of youth high in the modern civic life of Armenia. According to leaders, the prevailing civic initiatives are affected by the extensive involvement of young people. Today, young people are initiative-taking, innovative and self-reliant. They are more open and interested in ongoing social, political and economic issues compared with the older generation. According to leaders of NGOs, this tendency towards change in young people's behaviour is overwhelmingly conditioned by the presence and development of information technologies. One 53-year-old male leader of a town-based NGO explains, *"The most active and the 'leading' group in the population is the youth."* The important role of the Internet and social media is also recognised in supporting youth in the development of active civic groups.

Change is also observed regarding gender. The tendencies in the behaviour of young women are said to have changed. Some NGO leaders emphasise that in the past, only young men would come and participate in discussions, whereas today the role of women is strongly apparent. Now, women are able and willing to be present, raise issues and provide input. This transformation in the behaviour of young women is mostly true about NGOs located in more remote regions of Armenia.

It is, however, important to differentiate between the opportunities provided for and the behaviour of youth in the capital and in the more remote regions of the country. As previously mentioned, the places for young people to socialise are limited in these regions. The leaders confirm that there is a negative emphasis on the condition of young people having no aims and

pursuing no goals. When speaking about youths in more remote regions, one female leader, representing an NGO based in a bordering marz, observed that young people have no ideas about their future, and there is still much work that must be undertaken with them. Her argument is supported by the lack of facilities and opportunities for young people, which are the main obstacles in the way of their integration into active social life. In her words, *"Their vision is 'dark', and it is hard to break that wall. There is no vision and no aspiration."* This argument, however, holds true only for the youth in certain distant regions of the country, whereas when asked about the youth of the country in general, the majority of leaders recognise their important role in certain visible developments in the country. One of the major achievements, when speaking about today's youth, is that they have become more initiative-taking.

It was a usual practice in the past for organisations to spread information about events and to be responsible for inviting young people to different activities of interest organised by NGOs. According to leaders, this practice has shifted today. Young people apply with initiatives and proposals of their own. They no longer wait for invitations. The youth are developed to an extent that allows them to be active and to search for the criteria needed.

The most frequently mentioned answer, when asked about the possible reasons for such a development, is the way in which the current generation was raised. Because the current young generation was raised in a different time than that of the Soviet generations, they are bearers of different values. Today, young people are said to have become initiative-taking and executing. Young representatives of the previous generation were executers only. Today, this mentality and practice have reversed.

6.3. Trust towards the Civil Society Sector

Why Our NGO Is Trusted

Participants were asked to share their opinions on public trust towards their own NGOs. Leaders of NGOs were asked whether they believe that their NGO is trusted by the public at large. All the participants thought that their organisation is trusted. No leader expressed any hesitation about it. When answering that question, the majority of participants indicated specific groups of people or institutions by whom their organisations are specifically trusted. Usually, these groups included direct beneficiaries, youth, local NGOs, the business sector, separate groups of public sector workers, the legislature and government ministries. Some NGOs confidently state that they are trusted in specific regions of the country while at the same time abstaining from speaking about general trust towards their organisation.

A logically valid and interesting approach related to the issue of trust is represented by an understanding that obvious indicators are not always reliable. A leader of a town-based human rights NGO elaborates, *"We estimate trust toward our organisation based on the number of people applying to us. But people apply to us as their last resort after they have 'probed' all of the possible ways to find a solution beforehand. So it might be that it is not their trust towards us but rather their last hope. The issue of trust should not be confused with applying to one's last resort"* (male, 47, town).

The explanation of another NGO leader, emphasising the independence of the organisation as an important source of trust, shows that under the current governmental system, the independence of a civil society organisation breeds trust: *"Armenian ministries have councils of NGOs supporting their operations. Our NGO has been invited to become a part of such councils, but we have always refused this kind of cooperation, as the NGO has to have its absolute freedom. If an organisation becomes a part of a certain council, then it loses its independence. Our independence is one of the reasons why we are trusted by the public"* (male, 55, Yerevan).

There are also leaders who do not know whether their NGOs are trusted, showing a lack of interest and citing no available data on trust. One NGO leader indicates, *"We haven't conducted any research on trust as we have never been interested in this subject"* (male, 28, Yerevan).

The interviewed volunteers were no different in answering the question about trust towards their NGOs. All of the volunteers believe their organisations are trusted by representatives of the immediate community and by the public at large. Specifically, they are trusted by the people who are aware of the existence of their NGO. According to volunteers of benevolent NGOs, their organisations are popular and trusted solely because of their reputations in their communities, which is one of help and assistance to those in need. People's awareness that an NGO is designed to provide support to the public causes an organisation to be automatically trusted.

It is interesting to observe how participants measure trust towards their organisations. The indicators of trust differ greatly, but they are all interesting in terms of people's perceptions and understanding of the phenomenon. The indicators of trust are divided into quantitative and qualitative terms. Quantitative indicators of trust include the number of people regularly visiting the NGO, the number of calls and inquiries made to the organisation, the constant increase in number of applications asking for help and support received by the NGO, and statistical information about inquiries into an organisation received from the Armenian Yellow Pages[71]. Qualitative types of indicators include cooperation and funding received by international organisations and long-term coordination of local NGOs (referring to being trusted by the NGO community).

Leaders of older NGOs indicate their organisations are trusted because they were established long ago and have gained confidence over time. The majority of people in communities know about their operations, which generates trust. In other words, the existence of an organisation for years is linked to trust, with the argument that, if it were not trusted, it would not have continued to operate to the present. Thus, the main indicators of trust towards their NGOs, according to volunteers, are the number of people visiting NGOs, the increased participation in their organisations' activities, the existence of a number of beneficiaries and the level of popularity of their NGO, coupled with a positive reputation gained over time.

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[71] The Armenian Yellow Pages information system is available at: http://www.spyur.am/en/home

Why NGOs Are Not Trusted

The opinions of participants related to the general public trust towards the civil society sector are not unequivocal. The participants believe that the sector is both trusted and not trusted, offering various reasons for each opinion. The negative answers on distrust, however, prevail. Distrust is also divided into two types. Some indicate the sector is somewhat not trusted, while others say it is not trusted at all.

The government and its policies are the main reasons for the majority of NGO leaders believing that the civil society sector is not trusted in the country. Government works hard to apply pressure to and spread a negative image of civil society organisations. The notion of NGOs being "grant-eaters" is largely supported and spread within the public by the government. Such a policy on disseminating distrust among the public aims to reduce opportunities and the possible impact of civil society organisations working together and for the same cause. Lowering the image of NGOs by inspiring distrust towards them is the main policy, emphasised by more than half of participants, to degrade the civil society sector in the eyes of the population at large. Another justification for this argument is the existence of GONGOs, which similarly downgrades the image of the sector.

Interestingly, one founder and leader of an older NGO shows that things have become reversed today, speaking of financial considerations for the third party sector and the issue of trust: *"There was trust towards NGOs back then, but there was no financial support. Today, there is support but no trust anymore"* (female, 55, town).

The problem of personified[72] NGOs is also emphasised as a factor affecting the image of organisations. Participants consider the tendency of organisations to become known because of their popular leaders to be a positive development from a leadership point of view, but it would be better to see this tendency lessen.

According to volunteers, distrust towards the non-profit sector is conditioned by the states of mind of certain groups in the population. Whether the civil society sector is trusted depends on the manner in which people think and is in no way dependent on the activities and reputation of organisations. The groups of people who are distrustful of the non-profit sector, according to volunteers, can be classified into three groups. The first group is characterised by a mentality that relates distrust to the amount of grants received by organisations. Receipt of grants generates disbelief because of the existing competition among a number of NGOs. The second group in the population has a similar mentality to some extent. This group tends to be suspicious and to seek benefits in any type of initiative, whether organised by the public, private or the non-profit sector. People with this attitude are said to be distrustful because they imagine financial benefits for those people establishing NGOs. Thus, the organisation becomes automatically distrusted because this group sees its creation as undertaken for the sake of a financial benefit only. The third group of distrustful people are those who are disappointed with their lives and have lost their belief in general. Regardless of the achievements of an NGO, it is nearly impossible to generate trust and to change the way these people think.

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[72] This subject was also discussed in the section on leadership changes.

Overall, and speaking positively, the sector is trusted, notwithstanding the existing challenges. The civil society sector develops due to better information and the involvement of young people and activists. The role of the younger generation cannot be overestimated, and young people are considered the primary reason for the possibility of the sector to maintain the trust of the public. Trust towards the sector is developing due to the large involvement of activists and youth. Differentiating between the old and new generations with reference to the issue of trust, the leader of an NGO working to promote cross-border cooperation and to address issues of Armenian foreign policy explains, *"Our NGO is trusted by the youth, who are much more open and interested in certain issues, compared to the older generation. Parents and relatives of these young people, however, do not trust our organisation."* (Male, 32, town)

Participants indicate as examples the latest achievements by activists in the country. Whenever there is a certain issue that must be resolved, NGOs work on that issue with activists. Together, they are capable of changing things. This is when the public trust increases, that is, when the public realises that there is an opportunity to make a change. The cooperation of NGOs and civic activists is considered a manner of confronting undesirable governmental policies. Solutions to inconsistencies in governmental policies require extensive involvement of activists and youth to defend their rights. Such examples in the recent history of the country speak for themselves[73]. As one 28-year-old NGO leader from Yerevan explains, *"Activists have changed the civic map."*

Thus, the main findings on trust suggest that the civil society sector is both trusted and distrusted in Armenia. The main reason for public distrust includes the existing artificial and inherent negative stereotypes spread by the government and certain qualities of the public mentality, which are difficult to overcome in the process of establishing trust, whereas the main reason for public trust towards the civil society sector is the involvement of activists and youth.

6.4. Armenian Civil Society after 20 Years of Transition

2014 marks the 23th anniversary of Armenia's independence. In analysing the history of a post-Soviet country, it is important to address people's perceptions about the changes that have occurred (if any) after nearly one-quarter of a century as an independent republic. The opinions of the participants related to the changes as a result of the transition period of 20 years vary and fall into the following emergent categories: psychological change; behavioural change; institutional environment change; and technological development.

The Armenian population has undergone psychological changes during the establishment of an independent state after nearly 70 years of being under Soviet rule. The change in people's mentality is emphasised as a vital transformation from long-term Soviet domination. The public mentality has transformed, with changes manifested in people's willingness and ability to know more about their rights and freedoms. In the words of a 55-year-old male founder and head of an older NGO from Yerevan, *"The society has developed in that it has moved closer to an understanding of its rights. There is a huge difference in what we have in this regard today and*

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[73] The 'Save Teghut', 'Mashtotsi purak', and 'Not paying 150 drams' civic initiatives.

what we had in the early 1990s." This tendency towards increased public awareness is said to be one of the main changes that has occurred as a result of the 20 years of development, as emphasised by the majority of participants.

Arising from the transformation in mind-sets, public behaviour has also seen people begin to act differently. Today, society shows interest in and follows the social, political and economic developments in the country. There is growing interest among the public, and mainly the youth, in the reforms implemented and in developments on the broader country-level landscape. Speaking of behaviour, the participants emphasise the increasing level of volunteering among young people. According to the majority of participants, there are more volunteers in organisations today than in earlier times in the history of the republic. Some ten to fifteen years ago, the culture of volunteering was not developed at the level it is today, and there were few organisations employing volunteers. Many NGOs have volunteers in their organisations, and this change in people's behaviour is manifested in greater willingness to volunteer, to offer support to their communities and to benefit themselves.

The external changes are considered to be the institutional environment and technological advancements. The change in the institutional environment refers to the existence of multilevel NGOs. During the earliest years of independence, there were mainly benevolent and social NGOs. Currently, NGOs work in multiple sectors and are incomparably more prepared in their operations. These changes are considered positive in terms of NGO development; however, the existence of many organisations is manifested in greater competition and more obstacles to obtaining funds. Leaders of older NGOs emphasise that it was much easier to find financing in the past. It is difficult to become financed today due to existing competition among NGOs and the increased number of NGOs working in various fields.

Technological advancement is yet another indicator of change having an immediate impact on organisations' activities. Sources of information and opportunities to spread a word are multiplied today, which is an aspect that helps organisations increase their work productivity. The increase in the productivity of NGO activities is considered to be the result of better opportunities due to technological advancement.

To summarise, the following main points are introduced with the changes as a result of 20 years of transition: changes in mentality; increased interest in social matters on behalf of the public at large, and mainly youth, coupled with increased levels of volunteering at NGOs; multilevel NGOs; difficulties in becoming financed; and increased organisational productivity due to technological advancement. Figure 14 summarises the results of this chapter visually.

Figure 14. Changes as a result of the transition period
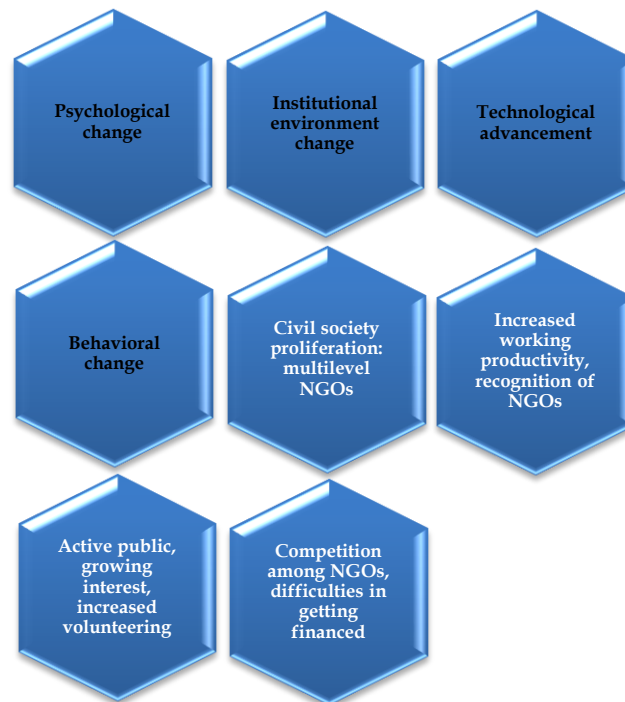
6.5. Summary and Discussion

NGO Story

There are multiple NGOs working in various sectors and involved in a broad range of activities throughout the country. No practice of leadership changes has been observed among the interviewed NGOs; the practice of collective decision-making, however, is recognised as important. The leaders of older organisations are characterised by having participated in the Soviet system, with some of the old practices having shaped their current involvement. The majority of participants, however, were motivated by individual choices and concerns in becoming a part of the NGO sector.

There is no good news in terms of the civil society-public sector relationship. NGOs rank high the opportunity to be fully independent of the government, which most of the time is an obstacle in itself. There are prospects requiring cooperation with the government, but with a negative effect on an organisation's independence. Any political interference in NGO life is unanimously considered a negative development that contradicts the very idea of a civil society organisation. Leaders of NGOs are strong in their opinions on this topic. However, the extent to which they are able to maintain this distance differs from case to case.

Pressures on behalf of the government and widespread corruption are the most frequently mentioned factors when discussing politics and the civil society sector's involvement in it. Why does the word "politics" have a negative connotation among civil society representatives? The

answer lies in constant dissatisfaction, complaints and a plethora of negative practices existing in the public sector-civil society sector relationship. The current social and political situation is considered one of the most common challenges standing in the way of civil society development and its healthy operation. Lack of financial resources is yet another challenge hindering the progress of civil society.

Despite multiple challenges and the existing difficulties in the civil society sector today, positive signs are also observable, namely, the recent rise of civic activism. NGOs recognise the importance of cooperation with civic activists in the course of achieving their aims. The role of activists is recognised to be an important sign of positive development.

Volunteering and Youth

Volunteering is not a new phenomenon in Armenia, but it is characterised as evolving in a new manner. There is an increasing tendency towards volunteering today, mainly among young people. All of the participants emphasise the existence of volunteers at their organisations. There are two ways in which volunteers are involved in NGOs: either through an organisation's announcements or by their own initiative. Their tasks as volunteers differ based on the organisational setting. Most of the time, however, these tasks are limited to small-scale administrative duties.

The reasons for volunteering differ among participants and range from self-oriented motives to altruistic behaviour. One factor that unites them all, however, is the positive image of volunteering. Regardless of the sector, activities or location of their organisations, all the volunteers rank high the opportunity to be involved in volunteer work, and they consider it to be of great value. Volunteering helps participants understand their role and shows them better ways of pursuing their goals in life. Volunteering changes lives. It contributes to personal development and opens doors to engagement in various opportunities, both locally and internationally.

Government control, corruption and a lack of financial resources are the conditions describing the current situation of the civil society sector. Overall, the social and political situation of the country is not seen as favourable for the sector's development. Notwithstanding multiple and varied difficulties, there is nevertheless progress and hope for improvement. One of the vital and visible indicators of this perceived progress is the existence of civic activists, mainly among young people. The majority of participants share belief in the growing potential and development among youth, becoming more informed and involved in social and political issues of the country.

Trust

The study reveals an interesting tendency among NGO representatives regarding their attitudes about trust towards civil society organisations. All the participants speak positively when asked about public trust towards their own NGOs. Participants rely on quantitative and qualitative indicators to measure trust towards their own organisations, such as the number of visitors or established cooperation with other parties. When participants speak about the general public's trust towards the civil society sector in Armenia, their opinions are quite negative. The overall

picture is one of no trust towards the sector, although with certain separate organisations being trusted.

The majority of NGO leaders blame the government and its policies for the public distrust of civil society. The majority of volunteers, however, emphasise certain individual and psychological factors among the population that, in their opinion, create distrust. Interestingly, young volunteers emphasise the public mentality as the main cause of low or no trust towards civil society.

Notwithstanding an extensive wave of negative opinions regarding the issue of trust, there are positive opinions as well. While many reasons are stated that demonstrate the existing distrust towards the civil society sector, the main reason the sector continues to be trusted is the existence of activists and youth.

Armenian Civil Society in Transition

The Armenian republic has undergone major changes as a result of almost one-quarter of a century of independence. Many participants share the belief that people have experienced a shift in mentality, which is visible in behavioural changes. People's behaviour has changed, inspiring growing interest in social and political matters.

It is interesting to observe the mentality argument in the framework of our study. Some NGO leaders mentioned that the Soviet mentality still exists in the minds of older people. The overwhelming majority, however, recognised the importance of change, specifically in the mind-sets of people as a result of the years of transition. Psychological change has been instrumental in reorienting public behaviour. Today, public interest and the practice of civic initiatives have grown. These are the changes that have caused the majority of disappointment with the current social and political situation, with respondents believing that positive change remains possible.

The civil society sector has also undergone visible changes manifested by the proliferation of multilevel NGOs and increased competition and working productivity. These changes have been influenced by external factors, such as the institutional environment and technological advancement. The arguments regarding institutional changes are two-sided: while it is good to have multiple NGOs working on various issues, competition among these organisations also arises, making it difficult to find financing. In contrast, technological advancement has brought about two important changes to the lives of NGOs: an increase in work productivity and the recognition of organisations by the public at large.

6.6. Conclusion

The qualitative component of this study examined civil society from the NGOs' point of view, providing an understanding of the patterns of public behaviour, thinking, involvement in and attitudes towards the civil society sector. The study discussed individual practices of civil society representatives and the levels of trust towards the civil society sector and volunteering.

The following main findings are formulated as a result of the qualitative analysis.

- **There is a tendency towards increased cooperation between NGOs and civic activists**. There is an evolving tendency towards cooperation between NGOs and civic

activists, which is considered a new type of cooperation, based on the sharing of interests, common beliefs and goal-oriented strategies, which are said to be enhanced when actors are united.

- **There is a tendency towards increased volunteering at NGOs**. Volunteering is developing in a new way in Armenia. It is a usual practice for NGOs to have volunteers as parts of their teams. One of the main reasons for this practice is the existence of active youth. As observed, volunteers are mainly people younger than 30 years old. Young people, however, are not only active in volunteering but also in the civic life of their communities. More than half of NGO leaders rank high the role of youth in the modern civic life of Armenia. There is an increasing tendency towards volunteering in Armenia, which can be considered a positive development for a post-Soviet country.

- **NGO representatives believe the Armenian public is characterised by low levels of trust towards the civil society sector due to the social and political conditions of the country, not the Soviet experience.** Howard (2003) argued that the legacy of the communist experience has left negative effects on the people of the post-Soviet countries, developing an aversion towards any type of voluntary participation and low levels of trust. While our interviewees also indicated low levels of trust, the Soviet legacy was practically absent from their explanations of why they believe that is the case. Instead, they point to current social and political realities, including governmental policies, GONGOs, corruption and so on.

- **There is no lasting communist legacy in terms of values: the new generation was raised on different values that are far from Soviet practices.** The impact of the Soviet experience is felt to some extent by the leaders of older NGOs who inherited their current occupations due to the Soviet past. Armenian society, however, has changed, according to the majority of participants. A new generation has been raised far from the Soviet experiences, having great potential to act and change. This generation, namely, those younger than 30, is mentioned as the only source still able to generate trust towards the civil society sector, notwithstanding the multiple challenges in the governmental structure of today.

- **There is a communist legacy in terms of governmental policies reminiscent of the Soviet regime.** It was discussed in the literature review that, during the Soviet period, civil society was severely curtailed, with the regime controlling most of the social and private lives of people. Although in a different manner and not to the same extent, the findings of the qualitative component suggest that the same tendency is often felt by NGOs today: they report governmental control and pressure on the civil society sector with various instruments and policies regularly put in practice. The regime has changed, but it turns out that certain practices of the past continue to exist in the making of government policy oriented towards civil society organisations for better control.

The qualitative component of our study provides some support to our hypothesis regarding generational changes: the interviewees seem to share the belief that value changes are visible among the new generation in terms of public engagement in the social and political activities of the country in general.

Over the past two decades, Armenia has undergone changes in terms of public mentality, behaviour and the institutional environment. Nevertheless, there remain multiple challenges, such as government pressures, corruption, low levels of trust towards the civil society sector and a lack of financial resources, most of the time hindering NGOs' operations. Despite a myriad of negative aspects and attitudes of participants towards the general situation, civil society still has potential for development. Today, this development becomes possible through the existence of, and NGOs' cooperation with, civic activists and young people.

Overall, the practice of volunteering and civic initiatives has grown. The main reason for these changes in the life of Armenian civil society is young people. Their behaviours and values have changed, hopefully signalling a new generation of initiative-takers.

Conclusion

This book is the outcome of a research project that was conducted in Armenia in 2012-2014. The overarching goal of the project was to assess current Armenian civil society: to determine what has changed or remained constant over two decades of post-communist development. We started with the assumption that a communist legacy of distrust and disengagement, documented in previous studies conducted in other post-communist countries, continues to plague Armenian civil society today, although it should affect the younger generation less. We have arrived at the conclusion 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.

Our broader look at civil society organisations worldwide demonstrates that membership in post-communist countries remains distinctly low. Howard (2003, 150) was correct in his prediction that the weakness of civil society would likely persist in the region for at least several decades. This prediction is true for the region in general and for Armenia in particular, where membership in civil society organisations has not only remained very low but has actually decreased since 1997. Trust towards NGOs in Armenia is also low compared with other European (even post-communist European) countries and compared with its two South Caucasus neighbours: only approximately one-fifth of the Armenian population trusts NGOs. Worse still, trust is on the decline.

Not all the news derived from public opinion surveys is bad, however: Armenia has the highest, and increasing, levels of volunteering in the region. Roughly one-third of the Armenian population is engaged in volunteering, and approximately half of that volunteering occurs outside of organisations. The recent increase in the levels of volunteering has been due mostly to increased informal volunteering, particularly among men. This quantitative finding is corroborated by our qualitative research, the participants in which repeatedly state that volunteering is a fairly new and increasingly important component of the functioning of their NGOs in particular and of Armenian civil society in general.

People become involved in civil society organisations and activities mostly out of career expectations, which is a finding supported both by secondary data analysis and by qualitative interviews with NGO leaders and volunteers. Non-joiners say they are too busy or not interested in such activities. Although mistrust towards NGOs is widespread among the population, it does not seem to be an explicit factor keeping people from participating.

While age does influence membership in associations (members are, on average, younger than non-members), quantitative data analysis does not provide sufficient evidence to accept the hypothesis regarding the distinctiveness of the post-communist generations, except for young people being more trustful of NGOs. The participants in the qualitative interviews, however, often referred to the younger generation as having a different, more proactive approach, being more involved, taking initiative, and, in general, possessing a different mind-set. If that is indeed the case, this new tendency has yet to spread and acquire a nationwide character rather than be confined to the narrow circles of youths engaged with NGOs.

Based on our analysis of the organisational survey data, we can suggest that the Armenian NGO sector has overcome some of its initial problems and has achieved a new level of institutionalisation. Many organisations have overcome the "one-person show" problem related to the dominance of their founding leaders, although our qualitative study shows that, for some of the organisations, this remains an issue. Two-thirds of the organisations that participated in our study have experienced leadership changes and have obviously survived. Moreover, they seem to be doing slightly better than those run by their old founding presidents because they tend to attract more grants per year.

Most surveyed NGOs exhibit fairly well-developed organisational structures: they have staff, volunteers and basic decision-making bodies in place. NGOs are mostly run by male presidents in their 50s; many women are involved as rank and file and support staff (secretaries, accountants). Older NGOs seem to have more organisational resources, while younger NGOs are more Internet savvy.

In the organisational survey, two-thirds of the organisations report communicating with government officials, with approximately 60% believing that working with government helps (or would help) in reaching their goals, but more than half of NGOs are worried that it would (or does) damage the image of their organisation. This concern about being perceived as being too close to the government was strongly echoed by our qualitative study participants, who have overwhelmingly negative perceptions of the government and of politics in general.

NGOs overestimate public trust towards their sector. While some of them are aware that NGOs are mistrusted by the Armenian public, our qualitative data show that NGO leaders tend to blame the government for that mistrust, either because the government, in the opinion of our interviewees, intentionally spreads discrediting information about NGOs or because the government runs its own "pretender" NGOs, also known as GONGOs, which undermine the genuine NGOs' credibility in the eyes of the public. Unlike NGO leaders, volunteers are more inclined to see public perceptions, life conditions, mentalities and the overall political culture of the society as root causes of mistrust. Qualitative study participants do not seem to reflect on the possible reasons for mistrust originating in the performance of the NGOs themselves, and they almost unanimously hold the opinion that their own NGOs are trusted by the people with whom they work.

Overall, our study depicts Armenian civil society in flux. It has gone a long way in terms of organisational structures and capacities, but it has so far failed to connect to the broader public. Low membership and mistrust – the signature weaknesses of post-communist civil society – continue to characterise modern Armenian civil society. However, it is also important to indicate that today one does not need to invoke the communist legacy to explain public disengagement: there are current factors that could explain it equally well. Poverty, corruption, disillusionment with stagnant democratisation, restricted political and civic liberties – the list could go on. These and a number of other factors can easily be drawn upon to depict the current unfavourable environment in which Armenian civil society finds itself. The communist legacy of a passive and suspicious subject, rather than an active citizen, is important to bear in mind

inasmuch as it is a grim reminder of why it would be difficult to address all the problems faced by civil society. Thinking of an average Armenian, civil society has precious few resources to draw upon in terms of public support and mobilisation.

This assertion does not mean, however, that civil society has no resources to draw upon whatsoever. The silver lining of our research is the active and more trustful youth who are repeatedly cited as the new generation bringing new hope. Spearheaded by young activists, often acting outside of the formal NGO format, Armenian civil society has recently registered several victories in overriding unfavourable governmental decisions and in voicing mounting public concerns. These examples are sources of inspiration and optimism for those working in the sector. The challenge now is to learn and multiply these positive experiences, while being more self-reflective and thoughtful in attracting citizens, in addition to attracting grants.

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Appendix 1. Organisational Survey

NGOs in Armenia: Questionnaire

1. Location of the organisation:
   - Yerevan
   - Other city
   - Village

2. Year of foundation of your organisation _____

3. Current number of paid staff your organisation has (both part-time and full-time) _____

4. Current number of volunteers your organisation has _____

5. Among the members of your organisation (including paid staff, formal members, periodically included volunteers and all of those you consider to be active members), the percentage that constitutes:

	0	Less than 10%	Less than 50%	About 50%	More than 50%	More than 90%
Young people (up to 35 years old)	o	o	o	o	o	o
Women	o	o	o	o	o	o

6. Does your organisation have? *(Please tick the box.)*

	Yes	No
President		
Executive Director/Chief Executive		
Secretary		
Board		
Accountant/Financier/Cashier		
Working groups		
General assembly		

7. Please, mention the gender of the above-mentioned occupants of these positions.
   (If the position is occupied by more than one person, please skip the box.)

	Male	Female	None
President			
Executive Director/Chief Executive			
Secretary			
Accountant/Financier/Cashier			

8. Please provide the ages of the above-mentioned occupants of these positions.
   (If the position is occupied by more than one person, please skip the box.)

	18-25	*26-35*	*36-45*	*46-55*	*56 and older*	*None*
President						
Executive Director/Chief Executive						
Secretary						
Accountant/Financier/Cashier						

9. How many YEARS has the current president (head of organisation) been in his/her position?
   (If the head of your organisation has occupied his/her position for less than a year, please indicate "less than a year".) _____

10. How many presidents (heads of organisation) has your NGO had in the past? _____

11. Please, indicate the sector(s) in which your organisation has been active during the past year.
    (Please check all that apply.)
    - Human rights
    - Gender issues
    - Environmental issues
    - Health issues
    - Child care
    - Charity/welfare
    - Pensioners/elderly
    - Veterans/victims
    - Religious activities
    - Education/employment
    - Poverty
    - Ethnic issues
    - Sports/youth issues
    - Culture/music
    - Economic development
    - Humanitarian aid
    - Community development
    - Business relations
    - Consumer interests
    - Other _____

12. If you have specified more than one option, which sector is the most important? *(Please choose from the list.)*

- Human rights
- Gender issues
- Environmental issues
- Health issues
- Child care
- Charity/welfare
- Pensioners/elderly
- Veterans/victims
- Religious activities
- Education/employment
- Poverty
- Ethnic issues
- Sports/youth issues
- Culture/music
- Economic development
- Humanitarian aid
- Community development
- Business relations
- Consumer interests
- Other _____

13. What is your organisation's primary activity? *(Please check all that apply.)*
- Information dissemination/awareness raising
- Education/training
- Research
- Free service delivery
- Advocacy
- Other _____

14. If you have mentioned more than one option, which activity is the most important? *(Please choose from the list.)*
- Information dissemination/awareness raising
- Education/training
- Research
- Free service delivery
- Advocacy
- Other _____

15. Which of the following types of modern communication tools does your organisation use to promote itself and its activities and to share information about output, etc.? (***Please check all that apply.***)
    - Web site
    - E-mail list
    - Blog
    - Facebook
    - Google+
    - Twitter
    - YouTube
    - LinkedIn
    - VKontakte
    - Odnoklassniki
    - Other _____

16. Has your organisation conducted any of these activities within the past one month, six months, or one year?

	Past month	*Past six months*	*Past year*	*Never*
Fundraising				
Public event organisation (e.g., public meeting/discussion/conference/seminar)				
Communication/work with international organisation(s)				
Cooperation with other NGOs				
Work with volunteers				
Communication with or contacting government official(s)				
General assembly with members of the organisation				

16.1 What other activities has your organisation conducted during the past year?
 (***Please indicate.***)_____

17. In your opinion, what is the level of public trust towards NGOs?
    - Fully distrust
    - Somewhat distrust
    - Neither trust nor distrust
    - Somewhat trust
    - Fully trust
    - No answer

18. In your opinion, what is the level of trust of those people who know (about) your organisation towards your organisation?
    - Fully distrust
    - Somewhat distrust
    - Neither trust nor distrust
    - Somewhat trust
    - Fully trust
    - No answer

19. How do you interact with the national government? *(Please check all that apply.)*
   - Receiving funding/subsidies
   - Working with the government on a contractual basis
   - Coordinating events/activities
   - Consulting/Involving experts
   - Formal lobbying
   - Informal lobbying
   - Protesting/criticising
   - Watchdog activities/Developing alternatives
   - Naming and shaming/Providing recommendations
   - No interaction with the national government in any way
   - Other _____

20. How do you interact with the local government? *(Please check all that apply.)*
   - Receiving funding/subsidies
   - Working with the government on a contractual basis
   - Coordinating events/activities
   - Consulting/Involving experts
   - Formal lobbying
   - Informal lobbying
   - Protesting/criticising
   - Watchdog activities/Developing alternatives
   - Naming and shaming/Providing recommendations
   - No interaction with the local government in any way
   - Other _____

21. Do you think that working with the government (either national or local) helps or hinders (would help or hinder) you to reach the goals set by your organisation? *(Please assess the current situation. If you do not work with the government [either national or local], please assess the possible situation if you were working.)*
   - It helps/would help in reaching our goals.
   - It hinders/would hinder in reaching our goals.
   - It does not affect/would not affect in any way our goal achievement.

22. Do you think that working with the government (either national or local) improves or damages (would improve or damage) the image of your organisation in the eyes of those people who know about your organisation? *(Please assess the current situation. If you do not work with the government [either national or local], please assess the possible situation if you were working.)*
   - It improves/would improve the image of our organisation.
   - It damages/would damage the image of our organisation.
   - It does not affect/would not affect in any way the image of our organisation.

23. Has your organisation received a grant(s) during the past year?
   - Yes
   - No

24. How many grants has your organisation received during the past year? _____

25. From which sources has your organisation received grants during the past year? *(**Please check all that apply.**)*
    - International or foreign organisation
    - Armenian non-profit organisation
    - Armenian business organisation
    - Armenian government
    - Individual donation
    - Other, please specify _____

26. What is the total amount received by your organisation in the form of grant(s) during the past year?
    - $1,000 or less
    - $1,001 - $3,000
    - $3,001 - $ 10,000
    - $ 10,001 - $30,000
    - $30,001 - $50,000
    - More than $50,000
    - Don't know/refuse to answer

27. Apart from grants, what other source(s) of funding does your organisation have?
    - Financial donations
    - Commodity donations
    - Membership fees
    - Social enterprise
    - Does not have other sources
    - Other _____

28. Please indicate the name of your NGO _____

29. Please indicate the names of *three* NGOs working in your sector in Armenia with which you have collaborated and/or of which you are aware:
    - _____
    - _____
    - _____

Thank you for your cooperation.

Appendix 2. Interview Guide for NGO Leaders

Name, Surname_____ Position _____

Gender □F □ M Age ___

Level of education   □ Elementary   □ Secondary   □ Vocational   □ Higher

NGO year of establishment _____ Location: □ Yerevan   □ town   □ village

NGO main sector of operation _____

1. <u>About the organisation</u>: mission, main activities, scope. *Icebreaker: simply let them talk about the organisation.*
2. <u>History of the organisation:</u> ups and downs, difficulties, success stories, critical junctions
3. Your personal story as the organisation leader. How did you become involved *(if this is not the first NGO involved, how did they become involved with civil society)?* How did you become the leader? What do you think will happen if you go? How do leadership changes occur in the organisation?
4. <u>Change</u>: Based on your personal experience with this NGO, what has changed in the NGO or in the NGO environment? What has become easier/more difficult? Are there new opportunities or new challenges?
5. <u>How does the NGO work with the public</u>? [explore what their understanding is of "the public", what the relevant "public" is for them, what the groups are – stakeholders, beneficiaries, individuals – that might potentially become involved and help the neighbourhood, community, etc. To whom do they attempt to reach out?] What are the problems or success stories? Examples?
6. <u>Trust towards NGOs:</u> Is your NGO trusted? Who trusts you? Who doesn't? Do you think NGOs in Armenia are trusted in general? Why? Why not? [Tell them about the Howard argument, ask them to comment; show them CB statistics on trust, ask them to comment]. *(Ask about positive and negative stereotypes about NGOs they have encounters and how those stereotypes influence their work*
7. <u>Involvement of volunteers in the organisational activities:</u> What they do, how they are recruited, and how are they motivated to stay? Why do you think they volunteer? Do you need more?
8. <u>Youth:</u> Are young people *(up to 24 years old, "post-communist" generation)* active in your organisation? In what way? Do you think they are different? How?
9. <u>Any recommendations:</u> How can you strengthen civic engagement?
10. <u>Relations among NGOs</u>: Does your NGO cooperate with other NGOs? How? Is there platform easing cooperation? If not, what could be done to improve inter-NGO cooperation? What about regional cooperation? [South Caucasus] Are there any other entities with which you cooperate in the region? Are there any prospects?
11. What about any relations with policy/decision makers? Does your NGO have access to the political arena?
12. Policies question: Is there any policy helping NGOs or obstructing their work (at the local and/or national level)?

Thank you for your cooperation.

Transcribed: □ Yes   □ No
Date: _____

Appendix 3. Interview Guide for Volunteers at NGOs

Name, Surname_____ Gender □ F □ M   Age ____

Level of education   □ Elementary   □ Secondary   □ Vocational   □ Higher

NGO Location: □ Yerevan   □ town   □ village

1. How did you start volunteering in general? Please provide a personal story.

2. Why do you volunteer?

3. What do you do as a volunteer?

4. How do you contribute to/have impact on this organisation?

5. Do you participate in the organisation's decision-making process? If so, how do you feel about it?

   Do you think your ideas/opinions are heard?

6. How would you describe your relationship with the staff?

7. If you think of your volunteering experience over the years, did it change? If so, how? (Probe: How did you feel about volunteering? How did people feel about you volunteering? What has changed?) *[for those who have more than three years of volunteering experience]*

8. Do you think volunteering has an impact on your life? In what way?

9. Do you think that the organisation you volunteer for is trusted? Who trusts this organisation, and who doesn't? Do you think NGOs in Armenia are trusted in general? Why? Why not?
   (Perhaps ask about positive and negative stereotypes about NGOs they have encountered and how those stereotypes influence their work.)

10. Do you have any recommendations of how to strengthen civic engagement?

    Thank you for your cooperation.

Transcribed: □ Yes   □ No
Date: _____

Appendix 4. Interview Indexing Scheme

1. Personal details and NGO leader story
1.1 Age
1.2 Gender
1.3 Profession/specialisation
1.4 Background story/impact

2. NGO story
2.1 Year established
2.2 Location (Yerevan/town)
2.3 Leadership changes
2.4 Sector of operation
2.5 Goals/aims/mission
2.6 Activities
2.7 Achievements/success stories
2.8 Challenges/difficulties encountered

3. Cooperation and involvement in politics
3.1 Target groups (who they are)
3.2 Cooperation with target
3.3 Local and regional cooperation frameworks; IO membership
3.4 Cooperation with government/local government
3.5 Involvement in politics

4. Trust
4.1 Trust towards [their] NGO
4.2 Indicators of trust towards their NGO
4.3 Trust towards non-profit sector
4.4 Indicators of trust towards non-profit sector

5. Volunteers
5.1 Volunteers at NGO
5.2 Involvement/recruitment/motivations
5.3 Activities
5.4 Need for more volunteers

6. Youth
6.1 Views about youth
6.2 Involvement of youth in NGO

7. Civil society
7.1 Changes: now and then (NGO environment, operations, resources)
7.2 General views on non-profit sector (NGOs, methods of operation, conditions)
7.3 Views on M. Howard's argument vs. reality (communist legacy: distrust, low participation)

8. Policy change
8.1 Policy to change (why)
8.2 Policy not to change (why)
8.3 Recommendations

9. Broader picture
9.1 Politics
9.2 General social situation

10. Other
10.1 Good quotes
10.2 Interesting material

Appendix 5. Sectors of Activities of NGOs Included in the Qualitative Study

- Armenian foreign policy
- Benevolence
- Children and youth issues
- Community development
- Cultural heritage preservation
- Education
- Environment
- Freedom of speech
- HIV/AIDS issues
- Human rights
- Media development
- Military education and support
- Peace building and cross-border initiatives
- People with limited abilities issues
- Research and teaching
- Tourism
- Women's issues