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Civil Society Organisations as Agents of Europeanisation in
Armenia

Student: Gayane Gevorgyan

Supervisor: Prof. Antoni Rodon Casarramona, Ph.D.

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Abstract

The accelerated expansion of democracy in the 1990s, turned the Western countries into the main democracy promoters worldwide. Existing literature identifies several dimensions or policies of democracy promotion in the post-Cold War period, as well as two distinctive agents for it: the state and the civil society.

It is widely argued that the EU became involved in the promotion of democratization and Europeanization in its Neighbourhood by providing democratic assistance to the governments of the target countries and then gradually turned towards the civil society sector. It is believed that the “bottom-up” approach of Europeanization and democratization might have opened new avenues for EU’s engagement with wider society in these countries and have subtly accelerated the process of democratization there. On the example of Armenia, the study at hand aims to verify this claim and assess the effectiveness of EU-promoted policies in the country from a new perspective, particularly by considering, first, whether EU-funded local NGOs might have contributed to the democratic transformation happened in Armenia in 2018, and, secondly, by looking into the way people change their attitudes towards the EU after interaction with these NGOs. After having conducted a survey with participants of an EU-funded project in Armenia, it became possible to identify the impacts NGO-implemented programs have on young people in terms of boosting their civic engagement and changing their perception of the EU.

Keywords: Democratization, Europeanization, EU, EU-Armenia cooperation, Civil society sector, Civic engagement, Perception of the EU

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List of Abbreviations

CEPA- EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement

CSOs- Civil Society Organizations

EAEU- Eurasian Economic Union

EaP-Eastern Partnership

EIDHR - European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights

ENP- European Neighbourhood Policy

EU- European Union

NGOs- Non-governmental organizations

U.S.-United States

USSR- Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

VLAP- Visa Liberalisation Action Plan

1. Introduction

Democracy promotion efforts of Western powers entered into a new phase at the end of the 20th century. As Carothers (2008) argues, previously notorious pro-democratic policies of the U.S. and other Western countries have undergone several changes and gained ground with the beginning of the third wave of democratization in the mid-1970s and in the following years. However, dual motivations behind democracy promotion, entailing, on the one hand, a security criterion and the interest of Western powers to increase their influence in transition countries, and, on the other hand, advocacy for democratic values and self-proclaimed responsibility to promote them abroad, have complicated this process (Sedaca and Bouchet 2014).

In comparison with the U.S. experience of democracy promotion, where both military and non-military forms can be observed, the EU is more viewed as favouring the non-military democracy promotion policies, such as peacebuilding and democracy assistance, being implemented with respect to the post-communist countries of its Neighbourhood (Magen, Risse and M. McFaul 2009; Jahn 2007).

The existing literature classifies the process of EU's engagement with its Eastern Neighbourhood into two stages: until 2009, the period, when the EU was mainly focused on collaborating with the regimes of the states emerged from the collapse of the USSR ("top-down" approach of Europeanization), and after the initiation of EaP in 2009. The latter brought a significant change as the civil society sector has become an important agent in EU's policies of spreading democratic practices in the post-Soviet countries ("bottom-up" approach of Europeanization). Nevertheless, the effectiveness of such policies is yet to be determined.

On the example of the underresearched case study, Armenia, the current research aims to investigate the effectiveness of the "bottom-up" approach of democratization and Europeanization. The latter will be done by revealing and analysing the possible impacts local CSOs have had on the country's democratization through boosting civic engagement among Armenian youth and by impacting public opinion towards the EU.

The reason for conducting a study on Armenia is that if in Central and Eastern Europe the process of democratization and Europeanization was met with enthusiasm due to the EU membership reward, the EU-Armenia relations have evolved differently (Aliyev 2015). On the one hand, the

Armenian government, given to its authoritarian nature, had few incentives to adhere to the practical implementation of the EU norms, standards and demands (Kelly 2006; Franke et al. 2010; Börzel and Risse 2012). On the other hand, the post-communist legacy of public distrust towards Western democracy promoters, including the EU, has always been present in Armenia (Galstyan 2014). Therefore, the EU started promoting domestic change in Armenia via two agents at the same time: the state and the civil society sector (CSOs/ NGOs).

By analysing the impacts of an EU-funded program implemented in Armenia, the study at hand aims to answer the following research questions:

1. Does participation in EU-funded programs on promoting civic engagement increase civic *participation among Armenia's youth?*
2. Does participation in EU-funded programs change *young people's attitude towards the EU in Armenia?*

Thus, the research aims to find out, first, whether there is a relationship between participants' engagement in the project designed to boost civic engagement among young Armenians and their participation in the Armenian Velvet Revolution of 2018. Secondly, whether the project engagement affects participants' attitude towards the EU.

The last aspect is of utmost importance since alongside governmental attitudes towards Western democracy promoters, in this case, the EU, public opinion in target countries is also important. The relevant literature identifies several cases when the Western attempts of filling a democratic vacuum resulted in more insecurity and even turned the target countries into failed states (Iraq and Afghanistan) (Sedaca and Bouchet 2014). As Burnell (2004) argues this is because often societies resist the spreading of democratic practices in their countries and ultimately fail them just because they are not prepared for the sudden expansion of democracy, as well as in the cases they do not trust Western democracy promoters. Indeed, based on the data from several opinion surveys, the Armenian society can be classified to the group of societies with the lack of trust towards the EU (Opinion Survey 2019: Armenia 2019).

Therefore, it is suggested that the internal transformations directed at the Europeanization of the country should start with the change in public attitudes towards the EU. Since, it would be

impossible to imagine the state deepening its relations with the EU and accepting what the Union promotes in case Armenians have a negative attitude towards the block.

The present research will make a twofold contribution: first, by identifying practical achievements of local CSOs in the country, it would allow to determine the effectiveness of the bottom-up democratization and Europeanization, secondly, would help to theorize and shed light on the causal mechanisms behind the “bottom-up” democratization approach and the main benefits the EU extracts by promoting this strategy. The study consists of four parts, namely theoretical framework, methodology and data, findings, and conclusion.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Democracy promotion in the aftermath of the Cold War

It is widely argued that the fall of communism, the last main alternative to “liberal democracy as the final form of human government”, and the triumph of liberalism gave rise to new waves of democracy promotion in post-Cold War era (Jahn 2007, 87). As Fukuyama (1989) argued in the late 1980s the universal realization of liberal democracy in the material world was yet to be achieved. The latter could be accomplished by engaging in democracy promotion and state-building in the regions that lacked democratic and secure states. However, as Burnell (2004) claims, democratization is not an easy task for many reasons. First, the concepts of democratization and democracy are not clear, as there are more than 550 definitions of democracy circulating in the academic literature, which make this term quite abstract and context-dependent (Collier and Levitsky 1997). Besides, there is no consensus which distinctive features a democratic state should possess to be considered as such. Even though there are several generally accepted elements of a democratic state, such as respect for the rule of law, the respect of human rights and basic civil liberties and free and fair elections, two main schools in democracy studies attach different meanings and attributes to a democratic state (Lappin 2010).

In the framework of the minimalist school of democracy, which is criticized for being procedural and mechanical, the emphasis is put on fair and competitive elections, as well as on institutional arrangements for decision making, where only those individuals, who received a popular vote, can

participate. The maximalist school, however, is broader and advocates for stronger civil society and civic engagement, political participation and activity (ibid). Thus, another question might be how far should a country be democratized? Does the international community adhere to the minimalist or the maximalist school of democracy?

Secondly, what are the instruments of democracy promotion and under what circumstances each of them should be used? According to Burnell (2004), authoritarian regimes, even though they fall into the broader category of “non-democracies,” are significantly different among themselves. In some countries of this type, the regime/the government might be allied with the society or at least with some part of it against foreign interventions and resist attempts of bringing western-style liberal democracy. Other scenarios might include countries, where the society is ready for the democratic transition and changes, but the regime opposes, or cases when both the state and the society are willing to collaborate to ensure smooth transformation (ibid).

Undoubtedly, this is not an exhaustive list of scenarios, however, even these few examples show how different and challenging each case can be.

And thirdly, why does the international community, particularly Western countries (the EU and the U.S.), try to bring democracy to certain countries and regions? In other words, are they concerned with human rights promotion and democratization in a target country or they prioritize bringing stability over democracy (Börzel, Pamuk, Stahn 2009)? The answer to this question might be crucial for defining the extent to which a country should be democratised and the appropriate means for achieving that.

Drawing upon these and many other issues, it can be argued that the attempts of the international community to theorize and practically promote democratization are complicated phenomena, and there has been no “one size fits all” solution and vision for spreading democracy and freedom since the end of the Cold War.

Indeed, according to Jahn (2007, part 2) three different dimensions or policies of democracy promotion can be identified in the post-Cold War era: democracy assistance, peacebuilding and military interventions. As the author contends, these policies should not be perceived as characteristics of the post-Cold War system of international relations since their origin goes back to modernization theories and the liberal assumptions that gave rise to policies of the Cold War

era. According to him, with the beginning of the “third wave” of democratization, the policies of democracy promotion became widely deployed by liberal states once again, but within new, the democracy transition paradigm. By analysing the U.S. experience of producing interventionist foreign policies in the aftermath of the Second World War and their outcomes, Jahn (2007, part 1, 89) warns that interventionist and state-building efforts might provoke resistance and animosity in destination countries, as it happened with “the targets of American “altruism””.

Considering the fact that the main focus of this study is the European Union’s (EU) strategy for supporting the democratic transition in the post-Soviet countries, particularly Armenia, the first policy of democracy promotion, the democratic assistance, is mainly examined. Unlike military interventions, the latter implies the use of economic and diplomatic instruments for further democratization of the target countries.

Democratic assistance is provided in different forms and to different agents within a country. It can be support for institutional reforms and capacity building, reforming electoral processes, changing existing laws, developing new policies, support for stronger civil society, media freedom, etc. (Burnell 2004). As for the agents, the process of democratization might be pushed forward via state by applying both negative and positive political conditionality instruments, such as sanctions, terminating aid, investments, membership in different organizations, etc. and via civil society, which currently lies at the heart of the democratization discourse (ibid).

Empowerment of civil society or bottom-up strategy of promoting democracy is widely implemented by state and non-state actors of the international community under a neoliberal system (Smith 2011). One of the reasons explaining this phenomenon is that it enables different interested actors to bypass enforcement of conditionalities, direct interventions in internal affairs of a state and provides an avenue for more secure and “less obviously political” cooperation (Burnell 2004, 110). Another explanation lies in the Tocquevillian tradition that considers the existence of the “vigorous civil society,” capable of controlling excesses of state power, a necessary condition for strengthening of the democratic government (Flyvbjerg 1998, Jamal 2008; Smith 2011, 386). Thus, they are viewed as a watchdog vis-a-vis the state (Jamal 2008).

But what is “civil society”? It should be noted that the relevant literature lacks a clear definition of the concept. However, what many authors agree is that “*civil society has an institutional core*

constituted by voluntary associations outside the *sphere of the state and the economy*” (Flyvbjerg 1998, 210). According to White (1994, 379), these organisations are “*separate from the state, enjoy autonomy in relation to the state and are formed voluntarily by members of society to protect or extend their interests or values.*”

As White (1994, 382) further develops his argument, the existence of civil society “*in its modern form*” is important in two aspects: first, it serves as a counterweight to authoritarian governments and, secondly, it contributes to preserving and improving democratic governance. The latter is possible since civil society organizations can mobilize pressure for political change by creating strong advocacy groups and boosting citizen involvement in public decision making (individual empowerment function of CSOs) (Diamond 1994).

However, it should be noted, that the attempts of international actors to empower local civil societies in destination countries might spark a backlash from both the regime and society, as people usually have rather a sceptical attitude towards foreign aid and hence towards the organizations that receive this aid (Galstyan 2014). As for the government, it can significantly limit the impacts of the civil society institutions on their social and political surrounding by creating unfavourable conditions and influencing structural opportunities in which these organizations function (Jamal 2008). Especially this is the case of CSOs that exist in countries with the authoritarian regimes. According to Wiktorowicz (2000, 46), “*it is important to understand the political context that shapes and limits its [civil society organization] potential as an engine of political change.*”

Therefore, often democracy promotion is taking place at two levels: at the grass-root level, that implies engagement of CSO’s with broader society and the government, and at the interstate level (Raik 2006).

2.2 EU's Strategy of Democracy Promotion and Civil Society

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the post-soviet countries in Eastern Europe (Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine) and South Caucasus (Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan) became deeply involved in trade and economic cooperation with the EU. Several initiatives, such as TACIS (Technical Assistance to Commonwealth of Independent States), European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and Eastern Partnership (EaP) have been implemented by the EU in the 1990s and the 2000s to increase government capacity, to implement market reforms and to ensure stability in the newly independent countries (Shapovalova and Youngs 2012).

The relevant literature highlights that the implementation of these initiatives should be understood in a wider context of the EU's enlargement and security enhancement vis-à-vis the countries that became neighbours due to this enlargement and within the strategy to create the "Ring of Friends" (Albioni 2005). According to Nielsen, Berg, and Roll (2009, 249), the ENP and later EaP have been largely designed in an attempt *"to bring countries close to the European 'norm' and to strengthen Europe's influence in these countries."* The latter, in its turn, would strengthen the EU's own security (ibid). The authors argue that the EU has widely adopted Nye's "soft power" approach, which implies the use of persuasive means (economic assistance and dissemination of EU norms and values) instead of coercive ones and acts as a "normative power" in its relations with its partners. Thus, the EU is able to determine what is "normal" in current international relations and to diffuse these norms and values in the partner countries (Manner 2002).

In the academic literature, this process of diffusion is called "Europeanisation", and the complete definition has been given by Radaelli in 2000. As Radaelli (2000, 3) claims, "Europeanisation" refers to *"processes of (a) construction, (b) diffusion and (c) institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policies, paradigms, styles, 'ways of doing things' and shared beliefs and norms"*.

As Nielsen, Berg, and Roll (2009) claim, the ideas of bringing democratisation and enhancing the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in these countries lie at the very heart of the EU's vision of "Neighbourhood Europeanisation." By accomplishing these objectives, the EU, first, will become surrounded by countries that share the same values and norms and, hence, will

eliminate security threats to the Union. Secondly, it will contribute to the sustainable development of the partner countries and will ultimately include them in the area of its influence (Rodt, Whitman and Wolff 2018).

As for the agents (state vs civil society), it should be noted, that at the beginning of these initiatives, the EU have attributed a limited role and importance to the empowerment and inclusion of the civil society sector in its relations with these countries (Buzogány 2018; Ishkanian 2008; Kaca and Kazmierkiewicz 2010). As Kaca and Kazmierkiewicz (2010, 7) highlight, even in the framework of the ENP, that was one step further in terms of EU cooperation with CSOs in partner countries, the role of CSOs was considered to be *“supplementary and ancillary.”*

Therefore, we can claim that initially the partnerships with governments have been prioritized by the EU over those with civil societies, and by targeting governments in the partner countries, the EU was predominantly adhering to the “top-down” approach of democratization and Europeanization in its Eastern neighbourhood (Aliyev 2015).

However, soon the situation has changed since it became obvious that the lack of EU membership prospects provides weak incentives for democratic transformation and compliance with the EU norms in many post-soviet states (ibid). To fill this gap, since the initiation of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) in 2009 a new, bottom-up, approach has been adopted by the EU (Aliyev 2015; Buzogány 2018; Nielsen, Berg, and Roll 2009; Scott and Liikanen, 2010; Shapovalova and Youngs 2012; Smith 2011; Ter-Gabrielyan 2012). The latter made “locally-driven democracy support” and going beyond state institutions the main novelty of EU’s democracy promotion strategy in its Neighbourhood (Shapovalova and Youngs 2012, 1). As Buzogány (2018) argues the Arab Spring also played an important role in this change because the Union realized that instead of further democratization and Europeanization the fact of relying on governments might stabilise autocratic regimes in these countries. Therefore, alongside the relations with the regimes, several civil society related innovations have been pushed forward (ibid). Among them, creation of Civil Society Forum (CSF) in 2009, that serves as a platform for growing cooperation among civil society organizations of EaP countries and with the EU, assistance to introduce strong cooperative mechanisms between CSOs and local governments, attempts to increase public confidence in CSOs and to improve their organizational capacity (European Commission 2008).

The abovementioned goals have been also highlighted in EU country roadmaps for engagement with civil society in partner countries. In the case of Armenia, the first priority of the EU has been defined as ‘‘enhanced open and free space to operate for civil society actors and enhanced active citizenship culture towards *democratic state building*’’ (EU Country Roadmap for Engagement with Civil Society 2014 – 2017. Armenia 2015, 20). The latter should be achieved by expanding ‘‘*number and variety of civil society interventions, actions at central and local levels and in various sectors of societal issues*’’ and by increasing ‘‘*the number of democratic and rights based high quality educational and awareness raising programmes*’’ (ibid).

However, it should be noted, that the empowerment of civil society in Armenia has not been an easy task for many reasons. First, as Smith (2011, 392) argues as a result of widespread ‘‘*NGOization of civil society*’’ (4,222 non-governmental organisations as of the end of 2018), many organizations turned themselves into ‘‘*capital darlings and service delivery NGOs*’’ (Ishkahanian 2008; Paturyan 2014). The latter means that instead of addressing society-related issues, many NGOs solely aim to acquire international funding and, hence, lack meaningful connection with beneficiaries from the wider society (EU Country Roadmap for Engagement with Civil Society 2014 – 2017. Armenia 2015; Paturyan 2014). It also means that one of the biggest assets of any CSO, a capability of changing and impacting public opinion in the country, used to be weak in Armenia. Drawing on this, the EU in its country roadmaps for engagement with the Armenian civil society from 2014 and 2018 prioritized empowerment of this sector and building public trust towards local CSOs/NGOs (EU Country Roadmap for Engagement with Civil Society 2018 – 2020. Armenia 2019). It is expected that the findings of this study will contribute to revealing the reasons why the EU has focused its efforts on the civil society sector empowerment.

After doing a thorough review of the academic literature on the role of CSOs in democratization processes, EU’s efforts of Neighbourhood Europeanization and strengthening civil society in Armenia, it was found out that there is no research conducted to identify the effectiveness of the ‘‘bottom-up’’ Europeanization. Particularly whether CSOs, that implement different projects funded by the EU, contribute to the development of the active citizenship culture in Armenia, and whether the biggest asset they are believed to possess (changing public opinion) exists in practice. Therefore, by analysing the impacts of one EU-funded project (‘‘Young Activist’’) in Armenia the current study aims to reveal whether the primary goal of the program has been achieved in the

short run (the main aim was to increase young people's capabilities in civil society campaign, lobbying, public speaking and, overall, civic activism) and, secondly, whether the program has expanded participants' knowledge about the EU, and how it influenced their perception of the Union in the long run. The second dimension is believed to be extremely important since as Jones and Subotic (2011, 543) contend *“how states choose to Europeanise, which attributes of Europe they accept and which ones they reject, are shaped by what they imagine Europe to be.”* Even though the authors, in this case, refer to countries, it can apply to wider society as well. Without knowing what the Union is about and what it does, people cannot take an objective approach to its initiatives and values that it promotes, especially considering that the Armenian society has been quite sceptical towards foreign aid beneficiaries and hence the programs implemented by them.

Therefore, the main contribution of this research will be a practical evaluation of the role of CSOs/NGOs in Armenia, their factual achievements and impacts on the wider society (the Armenian youth).

3. Methodology & Data

As seen in the previous section, significant scholarly literature discusses the importance of empowerment and involvement of CSOs in democratization processes in countries, the EU's approach to cooperation with civil society in post-Soviet countries, including Armenia, and the challenges that Armenian CSOs face in particular. However, what the literature lacks is revealing and analysing the impacts Armenian CSOs might have had on the democratization of the country and the wider society through the implementation of different programs. Therefore, by employing a case study approach and scrutinizing the impacts of an EU-funded project implemented in Armenia, the study at hand aims to fill this gap.

3.1 Case selection: Armenia

Armenia makes an interesting case since, even though it has been included in different EU initiatives, such ENP and later EaP, the previous Armenian government had few incentives to adhere to the practical implementation of the EU norms, standards and demands. Scholars bring

multiple reasons explaining this tendency, among them lack of membership prospective or absence of reward for “Europeanization,” the authoritarian nature of the government, falsified elections and widespread corruption, dependence on Russia and the membership in the Eurasian Economic Union (Kelly 2006; Franke et al. 2010; Börzel and Risse 2012).

On the other hand, the post-communist legacy of public distrust towards Western democracy promoters and the scepticism toward developing and mushrooming of Western-backed civil society organizations in Armenia also hindered the process of rapprochement between the EU and the country (Paturyan 2014). It should be noted that the currently existing positive image of the EU (62% of Armenians have a positive attitude towards the EU as of 2019) has not always been the case (Opinion Survey 2019: Armenia 2019). According to the same survey, last year only 48% of the respondents reported having a positive attitude toward the Union, while in the previous years the numbers were even less promising (ibid). From the Soviet past, the Armenian society has inherited a sceptical approach to the EU, blaming the latter for its attempts to promote Western-style liberal culture and for its support to LGBT community in the country. The latter is viewed as undermining Armenian traditions and the way of life (Galstian 2014).

Therefore, the EU while promoting so-called “non-accession Europeanization” in Armenia encountered several obstacles: the unwillingness of the government to embrace EU’s norms and templates, weak civil society sector and neutral or negative stance towards the EU among the population (Freyburg et al. 2009).

All these factors make Armenia an appropriate case for studying the effectiveness of the “bottom-up” strategy of democratization and Europeanization.

3.2 Case selection: the “**Young Activist**” project

The “Young Activist” is a two-year project implemented by Yerevan-based “Free Citizen” Civic Initiatives Support Center NGO in cooperation with Polish “SALTO Eastern Europe and Caucasus Resources Center” and Czech “People in Need” non-governmental organizations in Armenia and Georgia (Free Citizen 2018). However, this research is only focused on the program implementation in Armenia.

The logic behind this selection is rooted in the program's main objectives, its country-wide implementation and the importance attached to it by EU officials. The project took place in 2017-2018 in the form of one-day workshops in all 10 regions of Armenia and Yerevan with the financial support of the International Visegrad Fund and the Dutch Government (ibid).

Taking into account that until the 2018 Velvet Revolution in Armenia, the political regime in the country had been described as a semi-consolidated authoritarian regime, the implementation of democratic and rights-based high quality educational and awareness-raising programmes have been perceived as crucial for the country's democratization and further state-building (Freedom House 2018; EU Country Roadmap for Engagement with Civil Society 2014 – 2017. Armenia 2015, 20). Therefore, the vast majority of the programs, including the "Young Activist," had been specialized in human rights and enhancing citizenship culture among Armenians.

As it is stated in its main agenda, the program aimed to increase participants' capabilities in social campaigning, lobbying, public speaking and knowledge on European programmes (Interview with the coordinator, April 18, 2020). Thus, from the perspective of its thematic focus, the project itself does not seem to be innovative. However, it should be noted that the "Young Activist" became the first large-scale program in terms of its territorial coverage and the number of participants in the country.

As the coordinator of the program highlighted, this type of projects used to take place predominantly in the capital and the largest city of Armenia, Yerevan, and, therefore, civic engagement in Armenian regions/ marzes has always been low. Moreover, according to him, because of the regional disparities young people in Armenian territorial units are the most vulnerable ones as they do not have access to information, knowledge and opportunities that are available for those in Yerevan (Interview with the coordinator, April 18, 2020). Therefore, the priority has become empowering young people in the regions of Armenia, raising their awareness about the EU, the programs being implemented by the Union within EaP, as well as to find "*genuine civic activists that participate in civic struggle* [against the former regime] and fight for *change in the country*" (ibid).

Over the two years of its existence, 238 young people participated in the program in different regions of Armenia (Interview with the coordinator, April 18, 2020). As the program coordinator noticed, the “Young Activist” has become the first program with such a big number of participants, whereas the thematic focus remained the same during all workshops. Unfortunately, it was impossible to compare and check the number of participants in other EU-funded programs in Armenia as the provision of information on program delivery, number of participants and outcomes are subject to the discretion of NGOs, and usually, they tend not to reveal this data to anyone besides their partners.

As for the program’s agenda, during the first hours of workshops participants were provided with information about the EU, its institutions, EU’s foreign policy with respect to Armenia, about the assistance provided to the country within ENP and EaP and Visegrad-4 countries. As for the second part, presentations on democratic state-building, human rights, social campaigning, lobbying and public speaking were held (“Young Activist” workshop agenda 2017).

Moreover, besides one-day training, several other activities took place in the framework of the project. Among them the Summer School on Youth Civic Activism in the Armenian resort town of Tsaghkadzor, the regional Youth Conference on Civic Activism in July 2018 in Yerevan and an eight-day visit to the Visegrad-4 countries. The participants of these activities have been selected by project coordinators from the workshops based on their knowledge and previous experience in civic engagement. Thus, many of the participants were regarded as valuable assets for further cooperation but in different formats.

However, it should be noted that the exclusiveness of the program is not only in its territorial scope and the number of participants. During the regional Youth Conference on Civic Activism in July 2018, high-ranking officials from the Armenian government and the EU were present. Among them back then Ambassador of the Czech Republic to Armenia, Petr Mikyska, the representative from the EU delegation to Armenia, Line Urban, Secretary of Armenia’s National Security Council, Armen Grigorian, and back then Ambassador of the Netherlands to Armenia, Johannes Douma, delivered a video address to the Armenian youth (Free Citizen CISC 2018). The latter shows that the project itself was of high importance for all sides involved, and enormous financial and human resources were put in the realization of the various phases of the program.

Moreover, in one of the reports on project outcomes, the “Young Activist” is described as a very successful initiative since many participants of the project were at the frontline of the revolutionary movement in the country. Thus, a relationship is believed to exist between the program implementation and the Velvet Revolution in Armenia (Free Citizen 2018). As the project coordinator explained later, due to the program success, their European partners, specifically the International Visegrad Fund, is currently financing another program for 2019-2020, which is called “V4 for Youth Engagement in Local Self-Governance”(Interview with the coordinator, April 18, 2020). Interestingly, the structure and the thematic focus of the current workshops are quite similar to the previous ones. The only difference is done in the second part of the workshop, where instead of social campaigning, lobbying and public speaking, the emphasis is put on discussing problems in local communities (ibid). Thus, from the perspective of the project coordinators and their partners, the “Young Activist” was indeed a successful project. However, it is also important to assess the effectiveness from the perspective of the participants, what they think about the program and what kind of impacts they believe it has had on them.

3.3 Methodology

The empirical section of this research relies on qualitative and quantitative methods. Considering that the aim of the study is to assess the effectiveness of the program and its impacts from the perspective of the participants, it was considered crucial to gather data from a large number of people. The latter became possible through the use of survey research.

By carrying out a survey with the participants of the program, it became possible to collect the principal information needed to undertake the analysis in a short time and in a more convenient way. The survey was anonymous, which is expected to have reduced biased responses, and included a wide range of questions that deemed important for a general understanding of the program impacts on the participants. In addition, an interview with the program’s coordinator and a thematic analysis of its Facebook group have been undertaken. By conducting an interview, it became possible to obtain publicly inaccessible information on the program’s primary focus and priorities from the perspective of the organizers and their EU partners. It helped to understand the logic behind the program implementation and the expected results.

On the next stage, it was decided to do a thematic analysis of the program's Facebook page because it would allow identifying the content and the main topics discussed and published by the program organizers. It is assumed, that the group posts continue shaping and influencing participants' opinion on certain issues as most of the participants have remained in this group.

Out of 238 participants, 168 (70.5 %) of the total number filled out the survey. At the initial stage, the project coordinator shared it in the program's Facebook group. In this group, there are 788 members, including participants of both the "Young Activist" and the "V4 for Youth Engagement in Local Self-Governance" projects, different NGO representatives and researchers. Later, more than 400 people were contacted individually and asked to fill out the survey. Participants were asked 20 questions (Survey Questionnaire, Appendix 1).

Considering that the theory of the "bottom-up" approach of democratization and Europeanization assigns the responsibility of reaching out to the wider society to local CSOs, and the EU views the implementation of educational and awareness raising programmes as one of the means for enhancing democratic culture in Armenia, the first hypothesis of the study is:

1. *Participation in EU-funded programs on civic engagement implemented by local CSOs increases participants' knowledge in the relevant field and boosts their civic participation in Armenia.*

In this hypothesis increase in participants' knowledge and their civic participation are viewed separately since the theoretical knowledge that the beneficiaries acquired by engaging in the program might have not been applied in practice. Therefore, participants of the "Young Activist" project first have been asked whether they think the program increased their capabilities in social campaigning and public speaking, and only after whether they feel the skills and knowledge obtained during the project contributed to their engagement in the revolutionary movement in Armenia. In the framework of this study, the latter is viewed as the highest manifestation of civic participation.

The second hypothesis of the study deals with the impacts of NGOs and implemented by them programs in the long run. Particularly, as mentioned earlier, the effectiveness of the "bottom-up" democratization and Europeanization is linked to the perception of the EU among the Armenian

society. The better the image of the EU is, the fewer reluctance people will show to the latter's attempts of Europeanising the country. Thus, the second hypothesis is:

2. Participation in EU-funded programs widens participants knowledge on the EU and its values and ultimately exposes them to have a better/ positive attitude towards the Union.

To check the last hypothesis participants were asked about their knowledge on the EU and EU-Armenia cooperation, their current attitude towards the EU, whether there has been a change in their attitude since the project (in case of positive response they were asked to rate the change of their opinion on a Likert scale), etc. (ibid).

Therefore, the main explanatory/ independent variable in this study is participation in the “Young activist” project, and the dependent variables are civic engagement among participants of the project and their opinion on the EU.

To gain more details about the project, its partners, the main goals and the agenda, as well as for more clarifications about the difference in the thematic focuses and implementation of the “Young Activist” and the “V4 for Youth Engagement in Local Self-Governance” programs, the program coordinator has been interviewed (Interview Questions, Appendix 3). Before the interview, the coordinator received a clear explanation of the study, and a permission to record him was obtained. The interview was held in Armenian.

Considering that the program could have continued impacting young people even after its completion, it was decided to conduct a thematic analysis of the program's Facebook group to find out the type of information/content has been published there by the group administrator and the rest of the staff. The group is called “Երիտասարդ ակտիվիստ / Young Activist,” and in total 184 Facebook posts have been analysed. Considering that the thematic analysis of the group was of a supplementary nature, it was decided to do a broad and general analysis of its content. All the posts were in Armenian and were classified according to their content into 13 categories. After defining categories, the posts have been scrutinized for the second time and each was included in the relevant category.

The data from this research has been stored and analysed using Microsoft Excel. Several selected questions have been cross analysed, and the findings are reported in the aggregate.

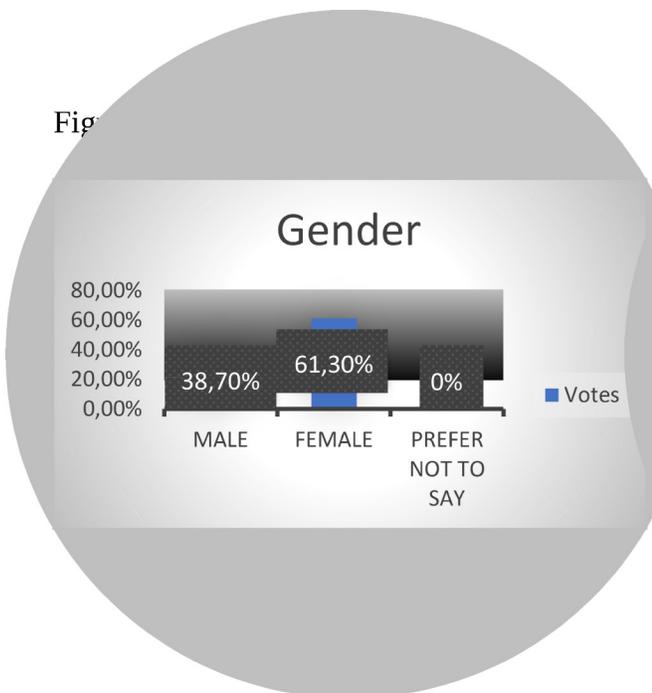
4. Findings

4.1 General information about the participants

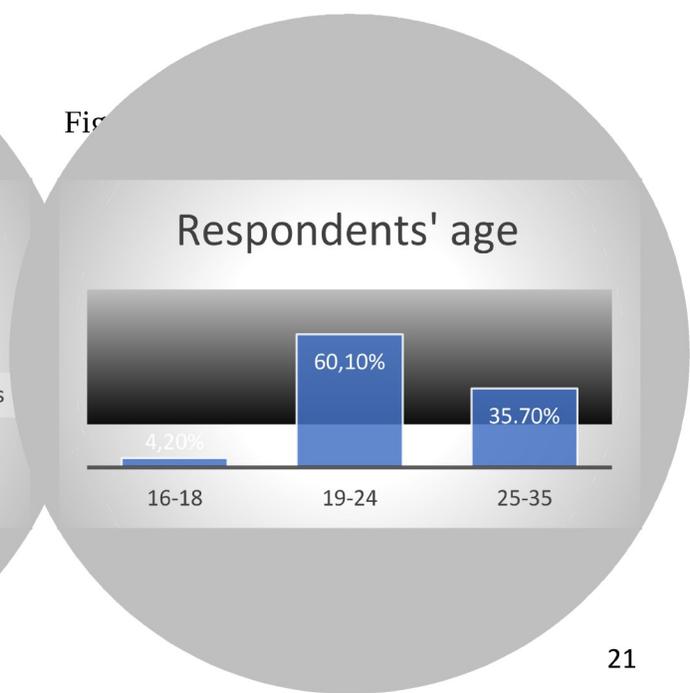
In the framework of the “Young Activist” project, which was funded by the International Visegrad Fund and the Dutch government, 238 young Armenians participated in twelve one-day workshops held in all regions of Armenia and Yerevan between 2017 and 2018. The program was designed to boost civic activism and engagement among country’s youth since the relevant academic literature, as well as many country reports, highlight the low levels of political participation of young Armenians.

With the help of the project coordinator and personal connections, it became possible to reach more than 400 possible participants of the program using the Facebook Platform, particularly the public group created to bring together civic activists of the country and in general participants of the project for information and knowledge exchange. As a result, 168 or 70.5% of the total number of participants filled out the survey and contributed to this research. Of the reported 168 respondents, 103 or 61.3% reported their gender as female and 65 or 38.7% as male (Figure 1). The prevalence of the number of female respondents over male can be explained by the fact that in the framework of the project the majority of participants (62%) were female (Interview with the coordinator, April 18, 2020). As for the respondents’ age, 101 or 60.1% of the respondents belong to 19-24, 60 or 35.7% to 25-34 and 7 or 4.2% to 16-18 age groups (Figure 2).

Fig

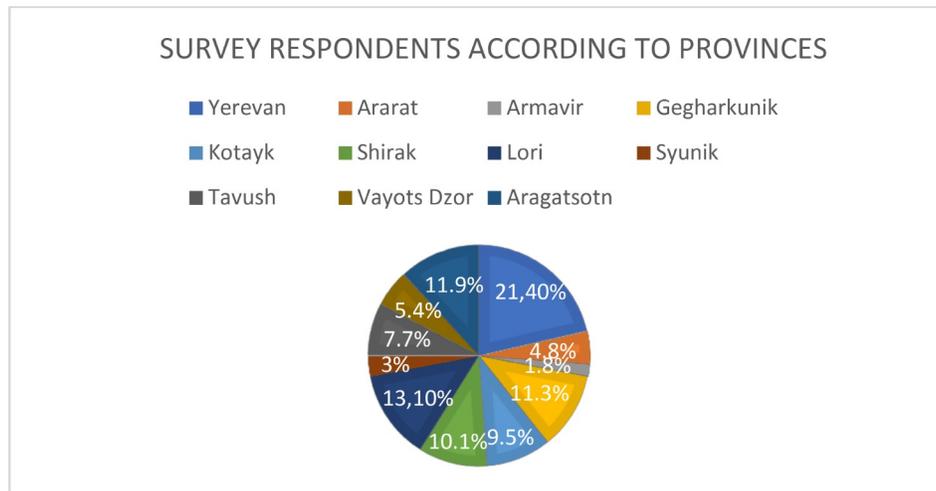


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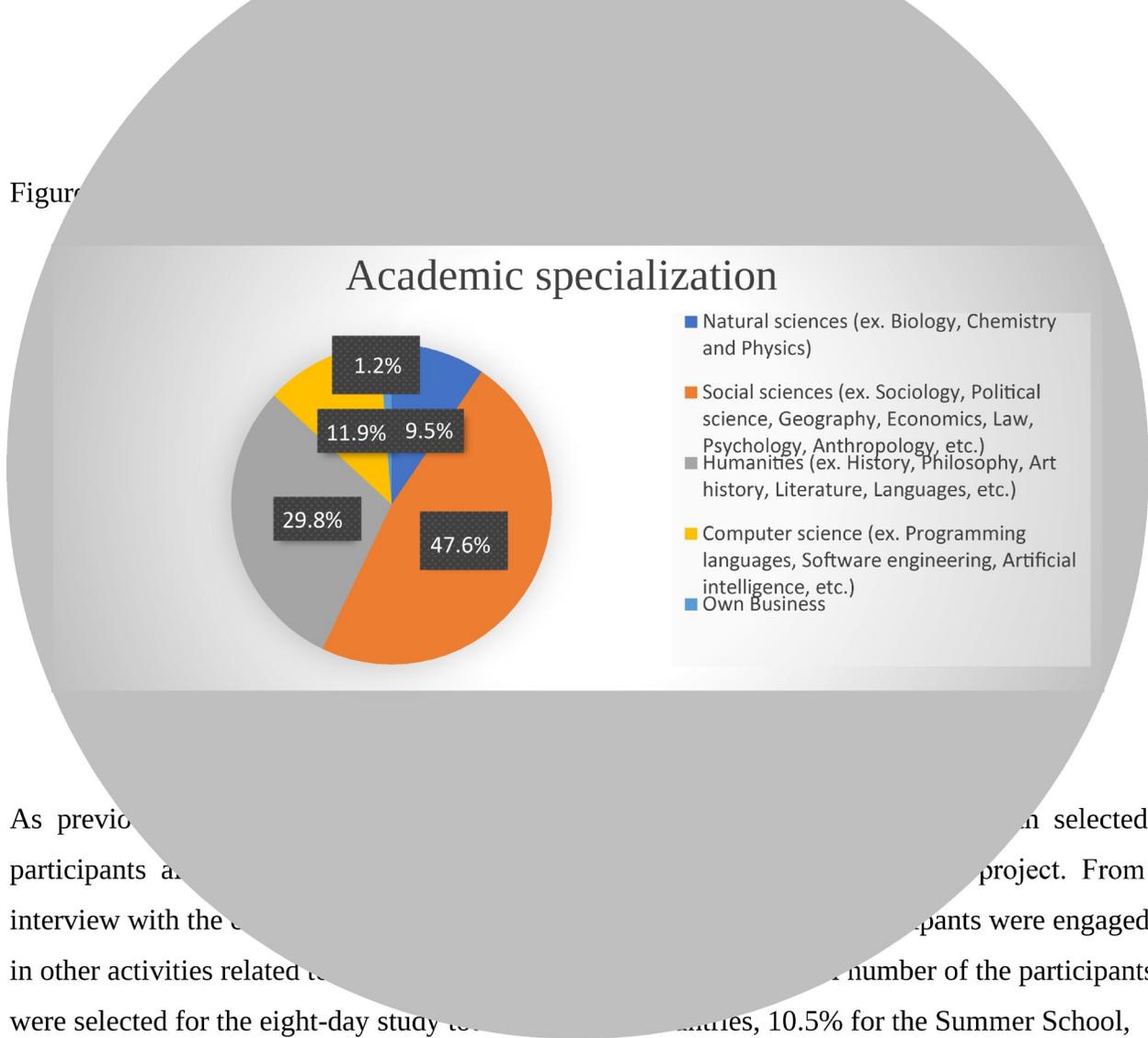
As the survey data shows, the largest share of the respondents (21.4%) come from the capital city, Yerevan, followed by Lori and Shirak provinces with 13.1% and 11.9% of respondents respectively (Figure 3). The same tendency can be observed if we look at the overall participation rate in the project for each region of Armenia. According to the coordinator of the project, the level of engagement was the highest in Yerevan, Vanadzor and Gyumri (capitals of the abovementioned provinces) together comprising around 40% of the total number of participants. Even though the main aim of the program was targeting the Armenian youth in the country’s rural areas, this data is not surprising since these cities are the largest urban settlements in Armenia with the highest concentration of young people for employment and study purposes. As for the rest of the survey respondents (53.6%), there were participants from all the provinces of Armenia. The lowest participation rate was recorded for the Armavir region (3 people or 1.8% of the respondents).

Figure 3:



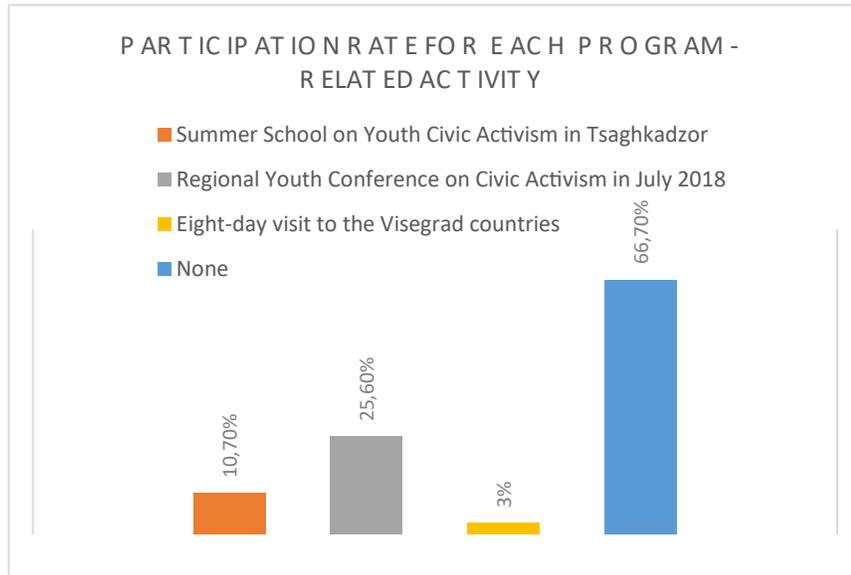
Concerning the educational background, it should be noted that 61.9% hold a bachelor’s degree and 24.4% a master’s degree. The next largest share of respondents (6.5%) reported having specialized and technical secondary education. This is followed by 4.8% of respondents with complete high school or secondary education and 2.4% with no formal education. As for their academic specialization, most of the respondents (47.6%) pursued a degree in Social Sciences, 29.8% in Humanities, 11.9% in Computer Science and 9.5 % in Natural Sciences (Figure 4).

Figure



As previously mentioned, 66.7% of the 150 selected participants also participated in other activities related to the project. From the interview with the coordinator, it was learned that 23.5% of the participants were engaged in other activities related to the project. The number of the participants were selected for the eight-day study tour in Romania, 10.5% for the Summer School, and 23.5% for the Regional Youth Conference on Civic Activism from July 2018. From Figure 5, we can see that the majority of survey respondents (66.7%) reported that they did not participate in any activity other than a workshop. As we will see later in this section, the inclusion of this question in the survey was of high importance, because as the data suggests, the participation in program-related activities may have directly affected participants' attitude toward the "Young Activist" project and even the EU.

Figure 5:



4.2. The “Young Activist” project and the 2018 Velvet Revolution in Armenia

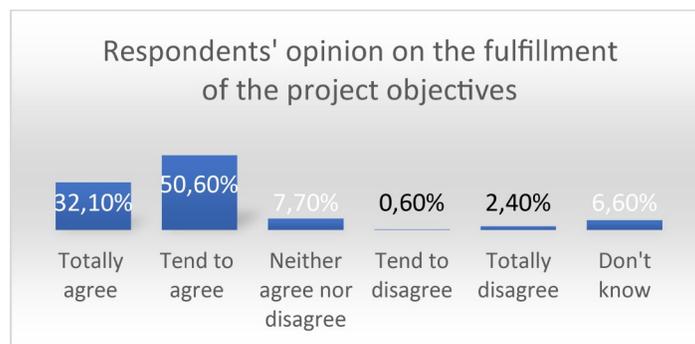
In 2018 Armenia has been chosen by the Economist as “the country of the year for 2018” (Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty 2018). Indeed, the events of that year became a turning point in the history of the third Armenian Republic, declared independent in 1991, and marked an important step in the process of the further transition of the country to a democratic form of government. As later Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan noticed, the non-violent Velvet Revolution in the country would not be carried out if there were no strong mobilization and passion from the Armenian youth (Krikorian 2019). It should be noted that the mobilization of Armenia’s youth was not a new phenomenon in 2018. Earlier, in the previous mass protests of 2015, known as Electric Yerevan and being dubbed as “foreign-led,” young people showed that they would not tolerate government’s illegal practices anymore (Grigoryan 2015). Unfortunately, in 2015 the mobilization was not widespread and soon was violently suppressed by governmental forces. The latter did not take place in 2018 since only in one day more than 100.000 people gathered in the main square of Yerevan demanding resignation of the president of Armenia, Serzh Sargsyan. Among them, there were students, civic activists and young workers. Drawing on this, Armenian

media often describe this revolution as a peaceful and youth-led mobilization against the corrupt elite and the authoritarian regime (Krikorian 2019).

Regarding the interrelation between the “Young Activist” project and the Armenian Velvet Revolution, it is noteworthy that during the Regional Youth Conference on Civic Activism from July 2018, one of the coordinators of the project stated: “*This is probably the first project ever in my entire life when I see the impact and the output level. We wanted to have a revolution in Armenia that is why we were preparing young civic activists, who have social campaigning skills, advocacy skills, lobbying [skills]. And just two months later we are reaching the impact level in Armenia, we get a revolution, and I was delighted to see many of you [participants] closing the streets and behind the barricades*” (Free Citizen CISC 2018). From this statement, we can conclude that some “graduates” of the project were indeed active participants in the revolution. However, what is not clear is whether their engagement in the Velvet Revolution is somehow linked to their participation in the project, in other words, whether a relationship can be found between these two events.

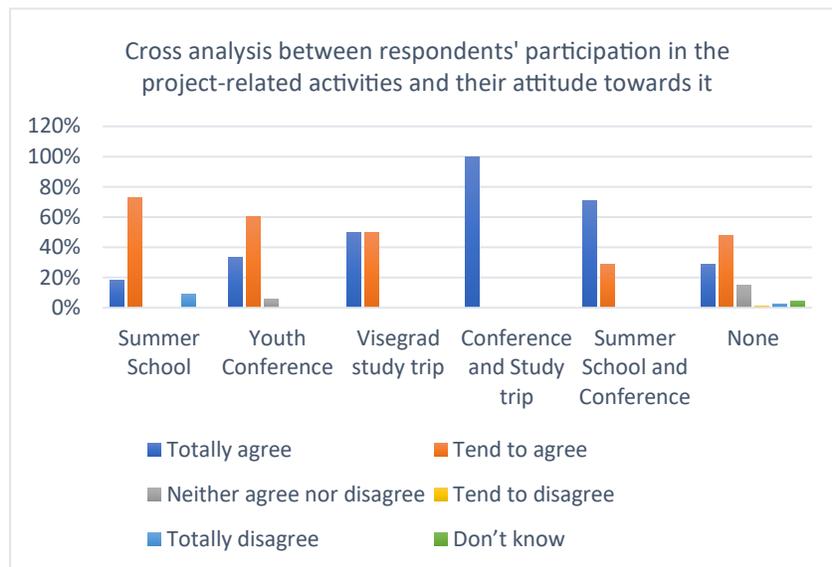
To shed light on this, the respondents were first asked whether they think the program increased their capabilities in social campaigning, public speaking and knowledge on European programmes. As figure 6 shows 82.7% of the survey participants find the “Young Activist” project quite effective. Among them, 32.1 % totally agree and more than 50% tend to agree with this statement. Only 3% of the respondents or 5 people have a negative opinion about the effectiveness of the program. As for the rest, 7.7 % neither agree nor disagree with the abovementioned idea and 6.6% do not know the exact answer.

Figure 6:



Interestingly, after doing a cross-analysis between respondents' participation in other project-related activities and their attitude towards the program, it was found out that those who are in the last three categories mostly did not participate in any of the previously mentioned activities such as the Summer School, the Youth Conference, etc. As we can see in Figure 7, indeed, the most heterogeneous responses exist among those with no additional link to the program, whereas 100% of the respondents that participated both in the Conference on civic activism and in the study trip totally agree with the positive impacts of the program. Almost 72% of the respondents who participated both in the Summer School and the Conference also totally agree and 28% tend to agree with the abovementioned statement. In short, Figure 7 shows that those who participated in more than one project-related activity overall do not doubt the effectiveness of the program (the option "totally agree" dominates in the categories "Conference and study trip" and "Summer School and Conference", whereas "tend to agree" in categories including only one activity besides a workshop).

Figure 7:

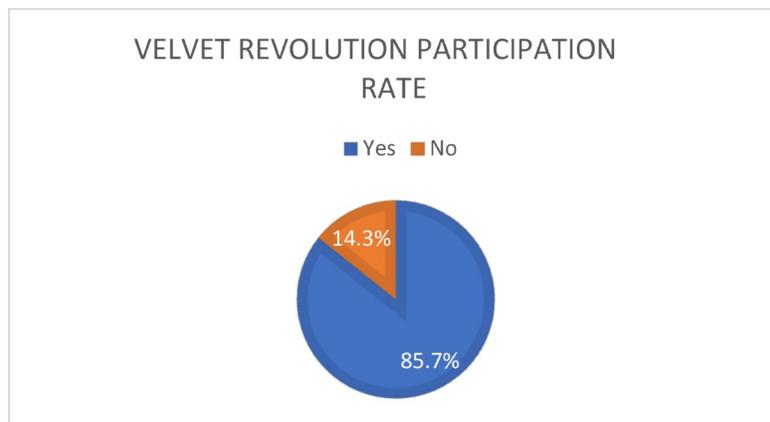


This tendency can be explained by the fact that participation in different activities ensured young people's profound engagement with the program, which in its turn might have exposed them to think more positively about the project. By participating in extra activities, they obtained more information and knowledge, interacted with experts, NGO representatives, EU officials and overall extracted more benefits than those who solely participated in a workshop. It can be considered

natural that they might have a positively biased approach towards the program. However, it should be restated that either way most of the respondents consider the program quite efficient in terms of widening their knowledge in the relevant field (Figure 6).

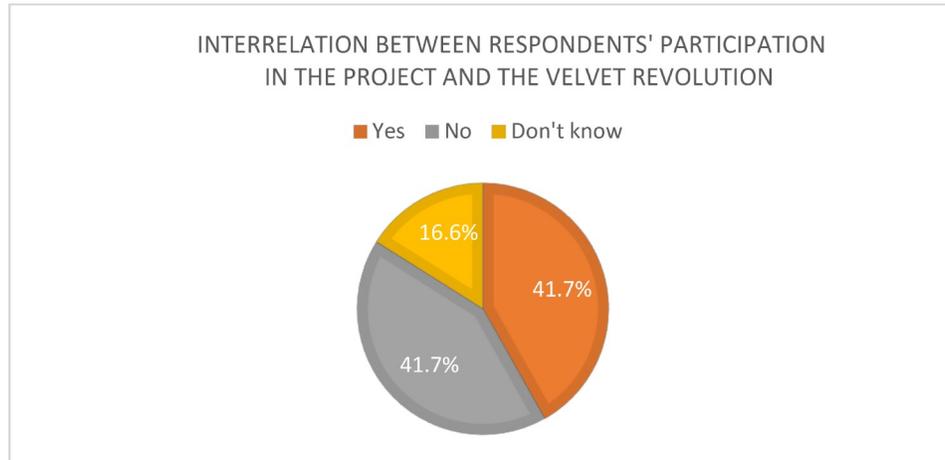
The next question was about whether the participants were engaged in the revolutionary movement in 2018. As Figure 8 shows the vast majority of the respondents (85.7%) took part in the Armenian Velvet Revolution, which goes in line with the statement of the coordinator about the successfulness of the project in terms of boosting participants' involvement in the events of 2018.

Figure 8:



However, from the perspective of the respondents, whether the knowledge and skills that they gained within the framework of the “Young Activist” program contributed to their participation in the Velvet Revolution, the views are controversial. As figure 9 shows the number of respondents agreeing and disagreeing with the abovementioned statement is equal. In this case, 60 people or 41.7% of the total number of respondents see a link between these two events, meanwhile, the exact same number of respondents disagrees with this idea. Another 16.6% or 24 people expressed their doubts by choosing the third “Don’t know” option, thus making the overall picture more interesting.

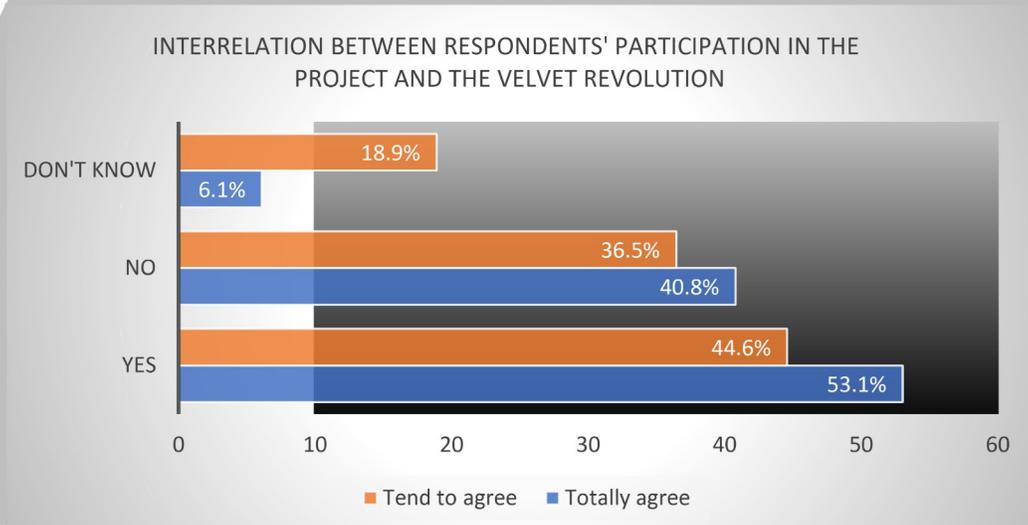
Figure 9:



To proceed further with the analysis, it was decided to find out how those who think the program increased their capabilities in social campaigning, public speaking and knowledge on European programmes responded to the question whether or not the project boosted their participation in the Velvet Revolution. It is assumed that the knowledge obtained during the project might have contributed to respondents' engagement in the revolution if respondents positively answer to both questions. In other words, in case those who accept that the project widened their knowledge in this field also acknowledge that it boosted their participation in the revolutionary movement.

After doing a cross-analysis (Figure 10) it was found out that the number of respondents, who totally agreed with the first question and at the same time chose option "yes" for the question on the program's impact on their participation in the revolution comprises 53.1%. The latter is higher than the percentage of those who totally agreed but chose option "no" and "don't know" (40.8% and 6.1% respectively) for the same questions. The same dynamics can be observed for the group of survey participants, who tended to agree with the question on the effectiveness of the program and responded "yes" (44.6%), "no" (36.5%) and "don't know" (18.9%) to the last one. Based on this data it is concluded that the knowledge and skills obtained within the program might have contributed to respondents' participation in the Velvet Revolution.

Figure 10:



Despite several limitations, the study does not reject the first hypothesis. More than half of the survey respondents agree that their knowledge on civic engagement, and more than half of them agree that their involvement in the Armenian Velvet Revolution. However, the possibility of positively biased responses should not be excluded. Given the latter, further analysis is required.

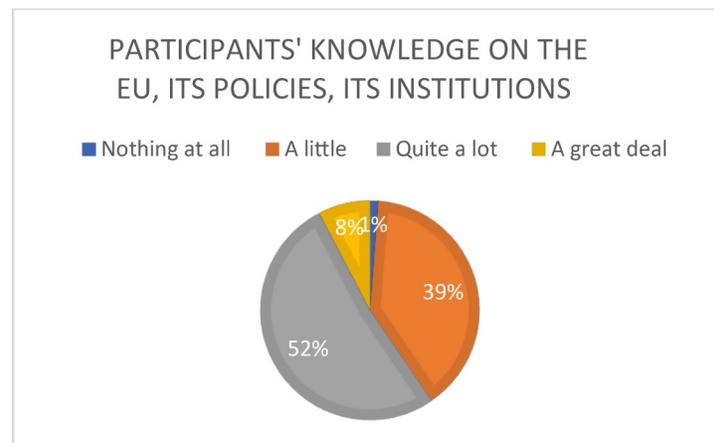
It should be also noted that by saying the program participation boosted participants' civic engagement, the research does not attribute the internal transformations happened in Armenia in 2018 to international actors, such as the EU and its "bottom-up" strategy of democratization in the country. Several years of the authoritarian rule and iniquity accompanied by economic hardships have triggered resistance and popular discontent all over the country and the latter could, either way, lead to a revolutionary situation. What the study suggests is that the implementation of such kind of programs might have accelerated and led the internal frustrations and public discontent to a revolutionary process.

4.3 The “Young Activist” project and the participants’ attitude towards the EU

As the existing literature highlights, democracy promotion and state-building efforts of international actors might be met with disapproval in recipient countries. Unwillingness to adopt certain values, norms, policies, and rules might be intrinsic not only to states but also to wider society or even a combination of both. Therefore, oftentimes Western democracy promoters, in this case, the EU, operates at multiple levels: on the one hand, it tries to reach out to wider societies to spread pro-European sentiments and democratic values, on the other hand, it works closely with the governments of target countries. Drawing on this and the fact that currently, more and more Armenians report having a positive attitude towards the EU, it was decided to find out and analyse the possible role of local NGOs in this process. More specifically how participation and engagement in different EU-funded programs might change participants’ perception of the EU.

To obtain data, participants of the “Young Activist” were asked several questions, among others how much they feel they know about the EU. As figure 11 shows the majority of respondents (60%) are well aware of the EU, whereas 39% report knowing a little and only 1% or 2 people nothing at all about the Union.

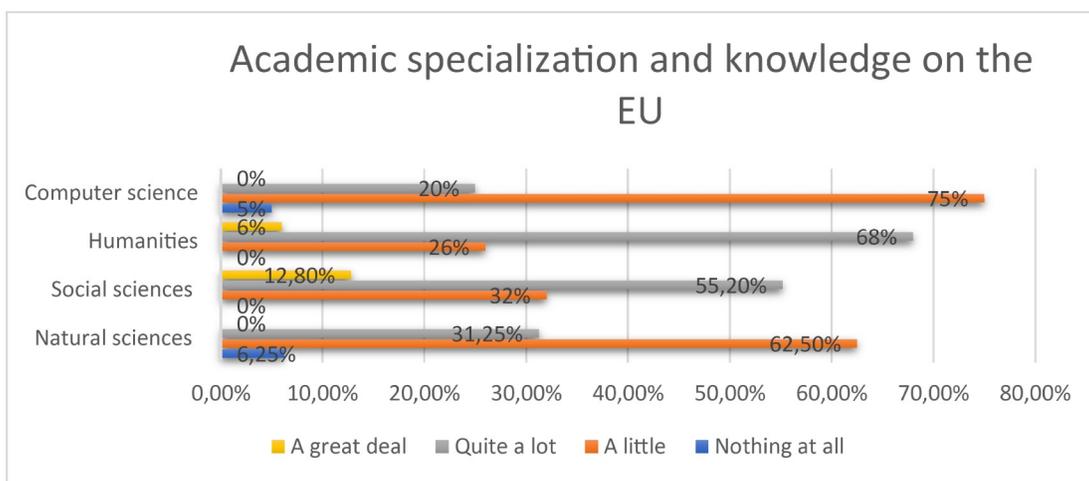
Figure 11:



After doing a cross-analysis between respondents’ academic specialization and their knowledge on the EU, it was found out that the participants with degrees in Humanities and Social Sciences are better aware of the EU (Figure 12). Overall, 74% of the respondents with humanities and 68% with social sciences backgrounds reported knowing “quite a lot” and “a great deal” about the

EU, whereas those from the remaining two categories reported having limited knowledge. It can be assumed that the participants coming from the first two backgrounds are more aware of the EU since they are more likely to touch upon it in their educational frameworks and academic interests. Moreover, the vast majority of respondents (90.5%) think the project increased their knowledge on the EU which is higher than the number of those agreeing that the program strengthened their capabilities in social campaigning, public speaking and knowledge on European programmes (82.7%)

Figure 12:

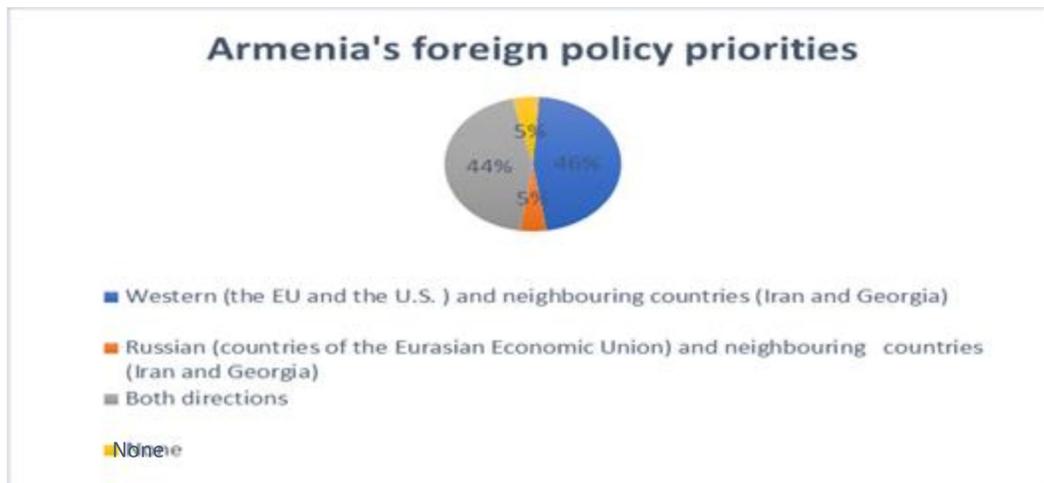


Interestingly, to the question, whether Armenia should deepen cooperation with the EU, 96.4 % of the survey participants responded positively. Even those having a neutral opinion on the EU, consider the enhancement of the collaboration with the block important for the country. Some of them noticed: *‘I can’t say I have a good attitude towards the EU, but if it can help us financially, why not.’* [Armenia] Another stated: *‘I don’t trust the EU, but I think Armenia can benefit from its relations with the Union.’*

However, as the data shows, the EU is not seen as the only possible partner for Armenia. As can be seen in Figure 13, 44 % of the respondents think that alongside the EU, Armenia should continue deepening relations with Russia and the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union. Therefore, it is seen as vital to continue the country’s complementary policy by maintaining well-balanced partnerships with all regional and global actors. As one of the respondents noticed: *‘Armenia must not make a choice. Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh’s interests and national*

security are more [important] *than geopolitical tensions and endless ‘cold war.’* Here the reference is made to the fact, that Russia is still viewed as the main guarantor of the country’s security (Delcour 2014).

Figure 13:



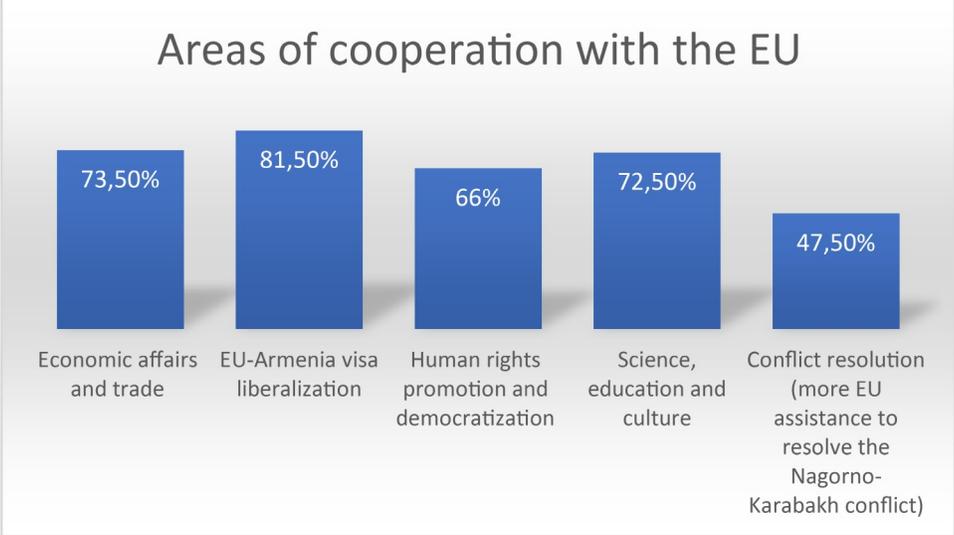
Nonetheless, it should be noted, the number of respondents who think Armenia should pursue its foreign policy only in the direction of Russia and the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union (5%) is 9 times less than the number of those who exclusively see the EU and the US as Armenia’s main partners (46%) (Figure 13). This is a quite interesting finding that once again signals that traditional pro-Russian sentiments are currently decreasing in Armenia (Shirinyan 2019). It is assumed that the EU is currently able to fill the vacuum created because of the several discrepancies currently existing between Russia and Armenia’s newly elected government.

As for the areas of collaboration, most of the respondents (81.5%) prioritize EU-Armenia visa liberalization dialogue (Figure 14). This is not a surprising finding since, after successful completion of EU-Georgia cooperation on visa liberalization, the Armenian government has been actively backing the launch of a Visa Liberalisation Action Plan (VLAP) for Armenia as well. It was preliminary announced that by 2020 Armenian citizens alongside with Ukrainians, Georgians and Moldovans would be able to freely travel to the Schengen zone. Unfortunately, at this moment even official negotiations have not started yet (Mkrtchian 2020).

As the data shows the least favoured area for cooperation is the EU’s involvement in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution process (Figure 14). It should be noted that neither side (the EU and Armenia) supports the EU’s deep engagement in this process. For the EU, the presence of France as a co-chair in the OSCE Minsk group is considered enough and there is no EU willingness to replace France in that format (Acikmese and Triantaphyllou 2015). Besides, as several EU officials highlight Russia remains a strategic actor in the South Caucasus region with its own interests in the conflict continuation [leverage to control both Armenia and Azerbaijan], and the EU in its conflict resolution attempts always adheres to ‘‘Russia-aware’’ approach, which of course excludes the possibility of EU’s more profound engagement (Popescu 2007). These messages are clearly seen both by the Armenian government and the wider society. As one of the respondents fairly noted ‘‘the EU has repeatedly stated that it cannot take any practical step without the consent of the Russian side, and do not forget the Iranian factor.’’ Because of its strained relationship with the EU and the US, one of the most important partners of Armenia in the region, Iran, opposes both military and non-military involvement of western countries in this conflict (Kouhi-Esfahani 2019).

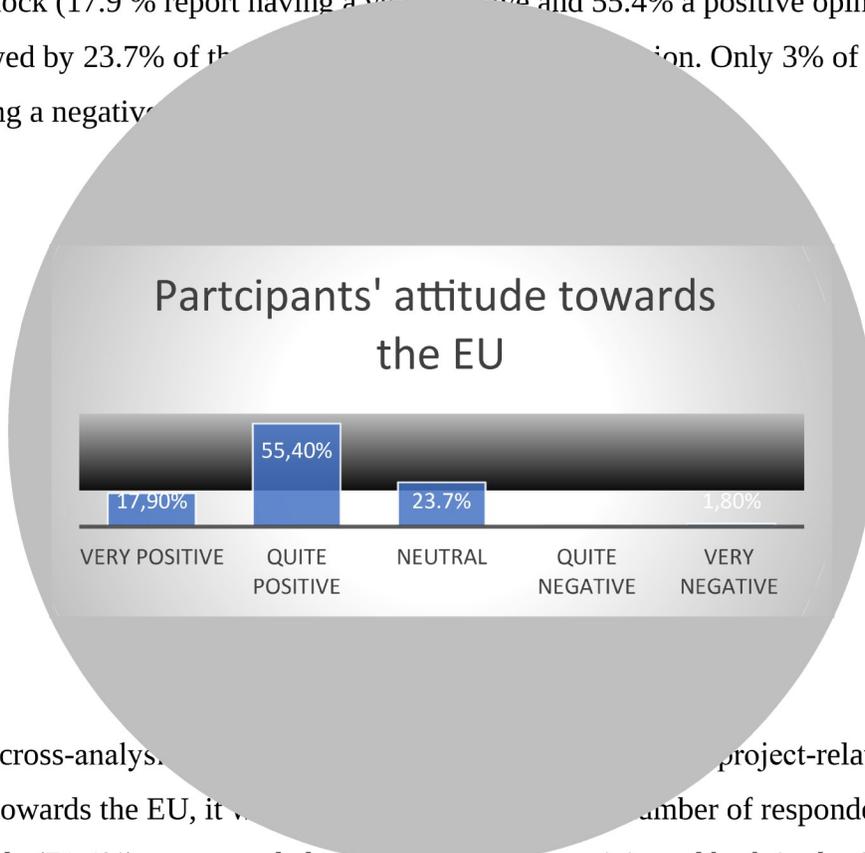
It is assumed that knowing the whole complexity of this situation, respondents are less in favour of deepening of EU-Armenia relations in this field.

Figure 14:



As for the participants' attitude towards the EU, the majority of respondents have a positive stance towards the block (17.9 % report having a very positive and 55.4% a positive opinion, overall 73.3%) followed by 23.7% of the respondents with a neutral opinion. Only 3% of the respondents reported having a negative attitude towards the EU.

Figure 15:

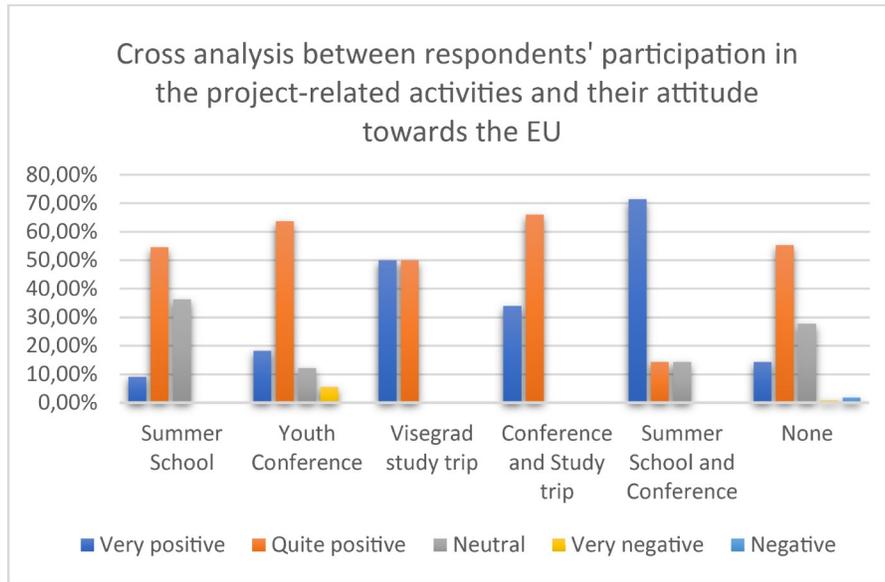


After doing a cross-analysis between the participants' participation in project-related activities and their attitude towards the EU, it was observed that the highest number of respondents with a very positive attitude (71.4%) was recorded among those who participated both in the Summer school and the Youth conference, followed by 50% of respondents attended the Visegrad study trip (Figure 16).

Interestingly, as shown in Figure 7 on the participants' opinion on the project effectiveness in terms of boosting their civic activism, most of the neutral responses were in the category of participants with no additional link to the program, however, in this case, the highest number (36.3%) is observed in the first group of respondents who besides a workshop participated in the Summer School. The same applies to the respondents with a very negative attitude towards the EU. As can be seen from Figure 16, 6% of the respondents, who attended the Youth Conference, reported having a very negative stance on the EU. This tendency can be explained by the fact that knowledge acquisition does not necessarily imply a positive outcome. Sometimes, people by widening their knowledge in a given field become more critical or even sceptical about it. As one of the respondents noticed: *“We should stop being naive and finally understand why these programs are being implemented in Armenia.”* Another respondent views these programs as a

mechanism for promoting EU interests in Armenia: *“The EU uses all possible levers to promote pro-European sentiments among Armenian population, including youth of the country.”*

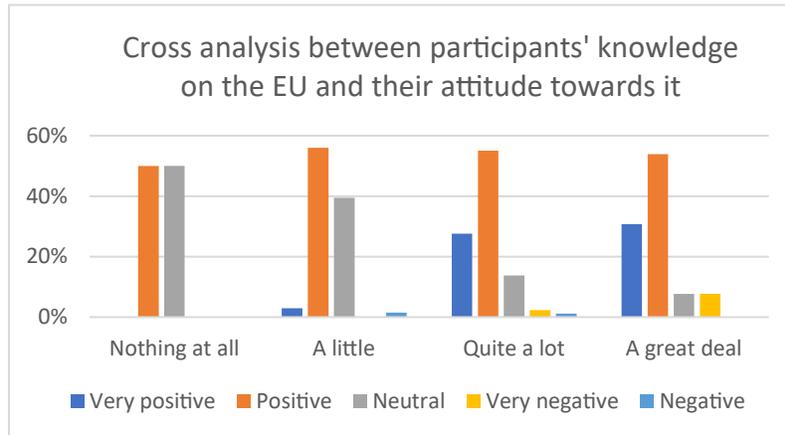
Figure 16:



Indeed, after doing a cross-analysis between respondents’ knowledge and their attitude towards the EU it was found out all 3 survey participants who reported having a very negative attitude towards the EU feel that they are well aware of it (Figure 17). At the same time, it should be noted that the highest numbers of respondents with a very positive attitude towards the EU are also among those, who consider themselves very informed about the Union (Figure 17, categories “a great deal” and “quite a lot”).

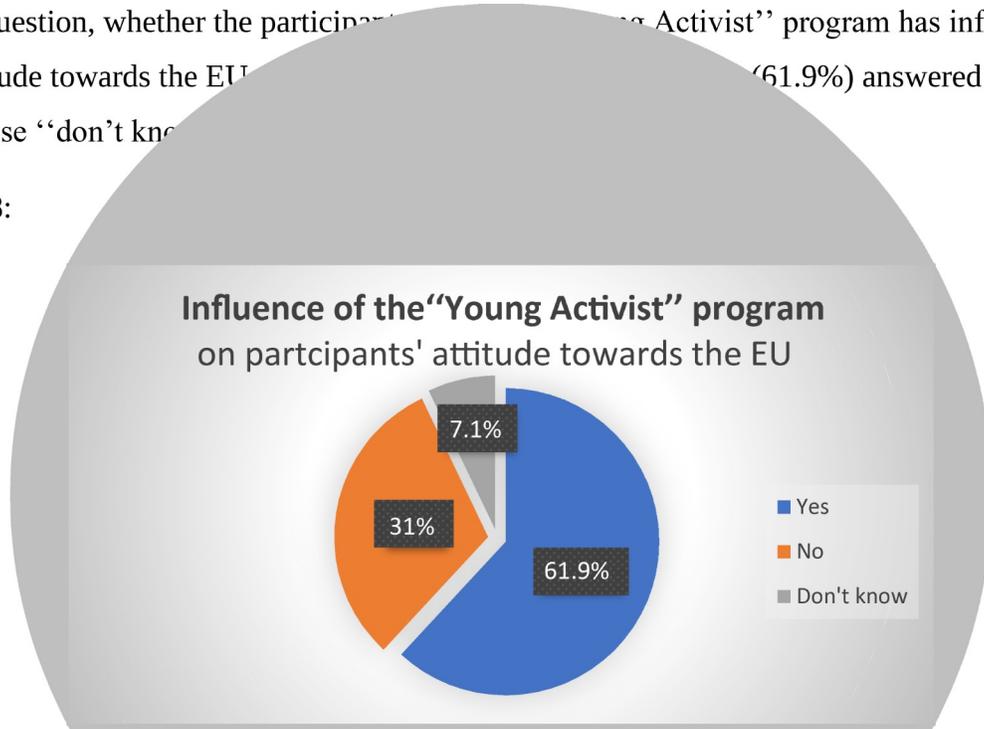
Also, it is noteworthy that even those with no or little knowledge on the EU view the block positively. Therefore, as the data shows, obtained knowledge possibly in combination with other factors might affect people’s perception towards the EU in various ways.

Figure 17:



For the question, whether the participants' attitude towards the EU has been influenced by the “Young Activist” program has influenced their attitude towards the EU, 61.9% (61.9%) answered “yes” and 31% answered “no”, and 7.1% chose “don’t know”.

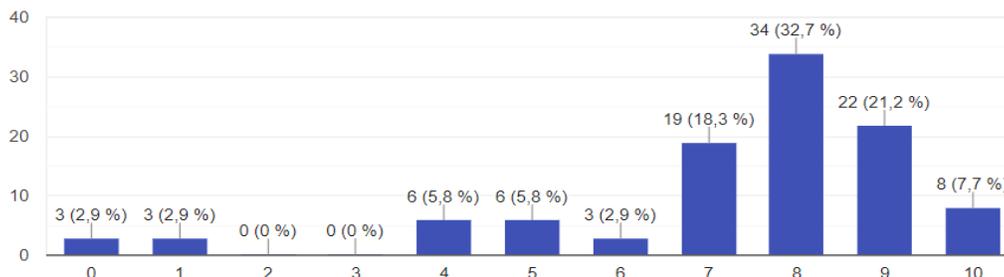
Figure 18:



Afterwards, 104 respondents were asked to rate the change of their opinion on a scale (0 being very negative and 10 being very positive). As can be seen in Figure 19, the majority of respondents (79.9%) assess the shift in their opinion in the range of 7 to 10, which is considered positive, 14.5% in the range of 4 to 6 meaning neutral, and 5.8% between 0 and 3, being negative (Figure 19). Therefore, it can

be concluded that the “Young activist” project changed respondents’ perception of the EU predominantly in a positive direction.

Figure 19:



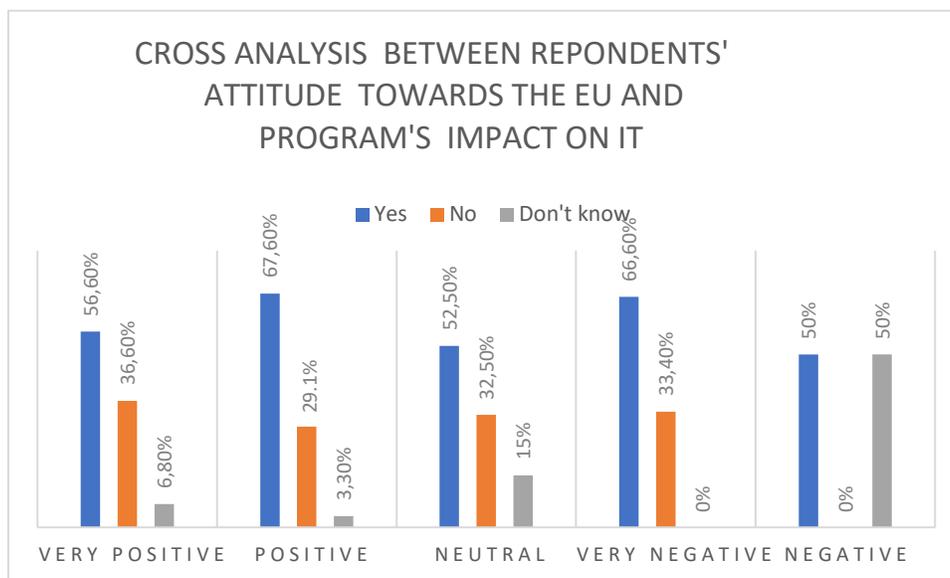
Most of the respondents (95%) explain the positive shift in their opinion by the fact that after participation in the program they became more interested in the EU, obtained knowledge about the areas of EU-Armenia cooperation and about the assistance the EU provides to the country. One of the respondents highlighted: *“The program, especially the trip to Visegrad countries allowed me to study closely the EU and to get to know what the union is about and what kind of policies it pursues towards Armenia. I think such programs are important in terms of filling an information gap that exists among Armenian youth about the EU.”* Another participant shared: *“Even before the program I had a positive attitude towards the EU, but after the program, it became stronger.”* There were even cases when people with previously negative attitude changed their view. One respondent said: *“I had a negative attitude towards the EU, but during the program, due to Q&A sessions and discussions, detailed lectures, I changed my mind.”*

However, as shown in Figure 19, in the case of 5.8% of the respondents the program had the opposite effect and made them change their attitude in a negative way. One of them stated: *“I think the critical thinking [developed during the program] is the reason why I changed my opinion.”* Continuing in the same vein, another respondent said: *“By participating in the program, I received more information about the EU and realized that my idealistic approaches to it were because of my ignorance. Now when I am better informed, I approach the structure critically.”*

Overall, it can be concluded that regardless of its direction the program participation affected and shaped the opinion of respondents towards the EU. A cross-analysis between respondents’

perception of the EU and program’s impact on it shows that 56.6% of the survey participants with “very positive”, 67.6% with “positive”, 52.5% with “neutral”, 66.6% (two people) with “very negative” and 50% (one person) with “negative” perception of the EU think the program has influenced their opinion (Figure 20).

Figure 20:



Therefore, the second hypothesis of the study that participation in EU-funded programs widens participants’ knowledge on the EU and its values and ultimately exposes them to have a better/ positive attitude towards the Union can be also confirmed. The latter is an extremely important finding, which leads to the idea that regardless of their thematic focus and primary goals, programs containing an EU component are effective in promoting pro-European/ pro-EU sentiments among the target audience.

4.4 Thematic analysis of “Երիտասարդ ակտիվիստ / Young Activist” Facebook group

“Երիտասարդ ակտիվիստ / Young Activist” has been created on May 30, 2017, first as a group hidden from the search on Facebook and later changed into a public one. The main aim of the group is to ensure cooperation and exchange of knowledge between participants. In addition, it is viewed as a platform where the organizers of the program, different NGO representatives and researchers share information on available EU-funded programs and topical issues in Armenia.

According to the coordinator, the group is open for everyone who is engaged in civic activism and is interested in EU politics in Armenia (Interview with the coordinator, April 18, 2020).

Acknowledging the fact that after completion of the project, the vast majority of participants remained in this group, it was considered reasonable to do a general analysis and reveal the main topics/themes discussed and published in the group starting from 2017. Overall, 184 posts, published by the project coordinators have been analysed (those of participants and NGO representatives have been omitted). As Table 1 shows 23% of the posts inform participants about possibilities of studying in Europe and finding scholarships, as well as include contacts of agencies (National Erasmus+ Office in Armenia, DAAD Armenia) that provide help to those with such aspirations. It is followed by 11.5% of the posts containing information on EU-Armenia cooperation, especially about the opportunities being opened by the signing of the CEPA (EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement) in 2017. The rest of the topics with their general description can be found in Table 1.

Table 1:

Main themes	Quantity	Content Description
Seminar photos	19 (10.3%)	Participants’ photos taken during the workshops and the project-related activities (Summer School, Youth Conference, etc.)
General information about the “ Young Activist ” program and its Facebook group	18 (9.9%)	Coordinator’s interview about the program, explanation of the Facebook group’s aim, type of content the group members are supposed to post, etc.) <i>“We start posting informati on about the programs implemented/being implemented by the EU in Armenia. Be informed.”</i> Coordinator’s post from January 21, 2018

Information about EU and U.S. funded programs being implemented in Armenia and open calls	18 (9.9%)	Ex. appeal to participate in projects of the EU-partnered local NGOs such as APY (Armenian Progressive Youth), “Asparez” Journalist club, Union of Informed Citizens; of U.S.-funded Eurasia Partnership Foundation, particularly “Conflict transformation school”, as well as dissemination of information on EU-funded short training in the country (ex. Media training for journalists, Training on gender equality among women, etc.)
Information on political activism, civic engagement, public speaking, lobbying, etc. (the primary aim of the program)	7 (3.8%)	Videos explaining what the civil society sector is and about the role of CSOs in democracy promotion. The coordinators also posted their own presentations from workshops (about the EU, EaP, Visegrad countries, public speaking, lobbying, etc.)
EU-Armenia cooperation and EU’s assistance to EaP countries	21 (11.4%)	Information on EU-Armenia cooperation after CEPA, including two interviews given by the project’s coordinator to the Voice of America's (VOA) Armenian service and the Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty news agency.
EU-Armenia cooperation in the civil society sector and information on EU grants	9 (4.9%)	Information on open calls for grant-looking local NGOs (ex. Open call of the International Visegrad fund)

available for Armenian NGOs within EaP		
Project writing	10 (5.10%)	Guidelines for NGOs and individuals on how to write a project to win an EU grant
Information on open calls and opportunities to participate in short-term programs in Europe within Erasmus +	9 (4.9%)	Contacts of Armenian NGOs involved in youth exchange short programs within Erasmus+ (as individuals can only apply via NGOs) and open calls
U.S. assistance to Armenia	3 (1.6%)	<i>“During our training, you were informed about EU supported programs. However, we also mentioned that there are many [programs] implemented with the help of the UnitedStates.”</i> Coordinator’s post preceding sharing of information about the U.S. assistance to Armenia
Opportunities to study in the U.S.	5 (2.7%)	Information about the Fulbright Scholar Program, and links of programs offering professional fellowships in the U.S.
Opportunities to study in Europe and do a traineeship in the EU Commission, sharing of contacts of organizations useful for these purposes	42 (23%)	Information on leading European universities and available scholarships is presented (ex. College of Europe, ALBA Graduation Business School, Marshall fund, International Visegrad fund, Erasmus Mundus funded scholarships, German Bundestag-International Parliamentary Scholarships, etc.)
Address to the participants after the Velvet Revolution and	6 (3.3%)	A congratulatory address on the occasion of the revolution, expressing their gratitude to

interviews with civic activists from Armenia		the program participants for leading a revolutionary sentiment in their communities, sharing personal stories of civic activists
Other entertaining and informative content	17 (9.2%)	Memes, educational and comic videos, etc.

In total, it was found out that at least in 109 or almost 60% of the posts, even though in different contexts, the EU and possibilities/ benefits associated with it have been mentioned. Whereas posts containing information about civic activism, democracy, human rights, public speaking, lobbying and democratic changes in the country accounted only for 7% of the total number of the posts. It is concluded that the group creation has been important in many respects: first, it provided the organizers with a platform allowing maintaining constant communication with active participants across regions even outside of the project frameworks, and for other NGOs, it became a new avenue for reaching out to young people to offer similar projects, secondly, the project organizers continued to spread information and knowledge on the EU and other relevant topics among participants, and thirdly, as promised, participants have been regularly notified about EU-supported educational opportunities existing abroad and in Armenia.

Conclusion

The study at hand originated from the necessity of assessing the effectiveness of the “bottom-up” approach of Europeanization and democratization in Armenia by identifying possible impacts of EU-funded programs implemented by local Armenian NGOs on young people in the country. Particularly, it was decided, first, to reveal whether EU’s attempts of enhancing citizenship culture among the country’s youth via a variety of civil society interventions and implementation of awareness-raising programs are workable in practice, and, secondly, whether young people by participating in EU-backed programs change their attitude towards the EU and if yes, in which directions and why. Therefore, the study applied an innovative approach and brought an individual

perspective into the debate over the origin and the efficiency of the “bottom-up” approach of Europeanization.

For the purposes of this research, the “Young Activist” project has been selected as a case study and its participants were invited to fill out the survey. The latter entailed questions asking participants’ opinion on the project success in two dimensions: whether the program strengthened participants’ capabilities in social campaigning, public speaking, and knowledge on European programmes, and whether they changed their attitude towards the EU after participating in the program. The responses to these questions allowed to examine whether there is a relationship between participants’ engagement in the program and later the Armenian Velvet Revolution of 2018, as well as by considering the way the majority of participants changed their opinion towards the EU, it became possible to come up with several assumptions about the causal mechanisms behind the “bottom-up” approach of democratization and the reasons why the EU has attributed an unprecedented role to the civil society since the initiation of the EaP.

As the survey data shows, most of the respondents find the “Young Activist” project effective in terms of enriching their theoretical knowledge about democracy, civic activism, public speaking, lobbying, etc. It is assumed that by spreading information and knowledge on democratic experiences of Western countries among Armenia’s youth, the program has inspired participants to engage later in the revolution. As mentioned above, several program-related activities have been organized with the involvement of selected “genuine” activists. The latter might have also helped to form a group of like-minded young activists, who later led revolutionary sentiment in their respective communities. Therefore, it is suggested that indirectly or even subtly the program contributed to the participants’ engagement in the revolution.

Overall, the first hypothesis of the study is regarded as confirmed. However, to identify a stronger relationship between program participation and engagement in the Armenian revolution further individual-based research is needed.

As for the second hypothesis, it is entirely confirmed. First, the vast majority of respondents (90.5%) agree that the program increased their knowledge about the EU, and, secondly, in the case of 62% of the survey participants it has also changed their attitude towards the Union. Interestingly, for almost 80% of the respondents, the change in opinion has been in a positive direction.

Participants explain this tendency by the fact that the program provided new insights into the area of EU-Armenia cooperation and made them excited to study more about the Union. Some of the survey participants also attributed this positive change to their participation in the program-related activities, such as Visegrad trip, Summer School and Youth Conference. The latter means that the more the participants were engaged in the program, the more the chances were that the program would positively impact their opinion both towards the EU and the program.

Even though in the case of the majority of respondents EU-related knowledge acquisition made them think more positively about the EU, there were also several cases when the participants changed their attitude in a negative direction. However, as the data shows, these are exceptions rather than a rule.

Drawing on this, it is suggested that by financing different projects in Armenia and spreading knowledge on the Union among young people, the EU manages to create its favourable image in the country. And here the role of CSOs/NGOs and implemented by them programs is of utmost importance:

- On the example of the “Young Activist” project it was revealed that alongside the primary thematic focus, significant attention has been paid to raising awareness on the EU. This tendency became observed after conducting a thematic analysis of the program Facebook group, where the majority of the posts cover EU-linked topics, while little attention is given to democracy-related issues. Moreover, more than 90% of the participants, while sharing their opinion about the “Young Activist” program, highlighted the fact that they obtained profound knowledge about the EU, while no one mentioned importance and newness of knowledge they acquired about civic engagement. The latter once again shows that the program among other objectives aimed to expand participants’ knowledge on the EU.
- Overall, 67.6% of the survey participants with “positive,” 56.6% with “very positive,” and 52.5% with “neutral” attitudes acknowledge that the program impacted their opinion.

Therefore, “bottom-up” approach of Europeanization and democratization can be viewed as an effective tool for promoting pro-EU/ European sentiments in target countries like Armenia, where, on the one hand, traditionally anti-European public sentiments used to exist, on the other hand, the government was unwilling to adhere to the practical implementation of EU norms and demands.

And CSOs/NGOs in Armenia should be viewed as a valuable agent in this process since one of their main functions, influencing public opinion, appears to be working in practice. The latter explains why the EU became interested in empowering civil society sector in the country.

Nonetheless, as a limitation, it should be noted that the study turned out to be a bit descriptive where, because of the time and data limitations, one case has been examined and discussed. For more complete scrutiny and well-grounded generalizations, the study should have incorporated either more units of analysis or be conducted with the involvement of young people with no experience of participation in this type of programs. The latter would allow to test and compare the existing findings with those from the control group.

However, the contribution of this study in its current form remains important in several aspects. As the first attempt of bringing an individual aspect into the analysis of the effectiveness of the “bottom-up” approach of Europeanization, it allowed to reveal how the current generation of Armenian youth tends to perceive the EU, the potential contribution of local CSOs/ NGOs in terms of developing active citizenship culture among young people and shaping/changing their attitude towards the EU, it helped to identify the factors responsible for attitude change when there is, as well as the potential reason for the EU’s engagement with the civil society sector in the country (effective tool for promotion pro-EU/ European sentiments).

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Appendix 1

Survey Questions (English version)

Dear Participant,

I would hereby like to invite you to complete a survey for which a link is provided below. The purpose of this survey and my research is to find out about young people's attitude towards the EU and EU-Armenian cooperation. I am conducting this study as part of obtaining a Master's degree at Pompeu Fabra University and it is extremely important for me to learn your opinion.

For the purposes of this study the "Young Activist" program has been chosen, and its participants are invited to fill out the survey, which will be anonymous and will take up to 15 minutes. The survey asks about your attitude towards the EU, about your experience of participating in the "Young Activist" program and its impacts on you in the form of widening your knowledge and developing new skills and capabilities. Data from this research will be stored in Excel format and reported only in the aggregate. In case you have questions about the survey you may contact me by email (gayanegevorgyan12@gmail.com) or via my Facebook page.

Thank you very much for your time and support.

To begin the survey, please click the link below.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeOD5oRsNewsY9GzkzAYkzUMS_2moKw5FKPwEu1Wo6ScLUCaQ/viewform?usp=sf_link

By participating in this survey, I give my consent to the processing of my personal data for the purposes of the research.

Yes

Below you can find a questionnaire, which I would kindly ask you to complete.

1. Where did you participate in the training organized in the framework of the "Young Activist" program?

Aragatsotn

- Ararat

- Armavir
- Gegharkunik
- Kotayk
- Lori
- Shirak
- Syunik
- Tavush
- Vayots Dzor
- Yerevan

2. Besides participating in the training seminars, which events related to the “Young Activist” you attended? (you can choose more than one)

- Summer School on Youth Civic Activism in Tsaghkadzor
- Regional Youth Conference on Civic Activism in July 2018
- Eight-day visit to the Visegrad countries
- None

3. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

4. What is your age group?

- 16 - 18
- 19 - 24

- 25 - 34

5. What is your highest level of education? If you are currently enrolled, mark the current grade or degree.

- No formal education
- Basic education (comprised of elementary and middle school 1-9 grades)
- High school (10-12 grades) or complete secondary education
- Specialized and technical secondary education
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Doctorate degree
- Other, please specify

6. In case you are a high school student/undergraduate student/graduate student, choose your major/ academic specialization

- Natural sciences (ex. Biology, Chemistry and Physics)
- Social sciences (ex. Sociology, Political science, Geography, Economics, Law, Psychology, Anthropology, etc.)
- Humanities (ex. History, Philosophy, Art history, Literature, Languages, etc.)
- Computer science (ex. Programming languages, Software engineering, Artificial intelligence, etc.)
- Other, please specify

7. How much do you feel you know about the European Union, its policies, its institutions?

- Nothing at all
- A little

- Quite a lot
 - A great deal
8. Do you follow the current developments in the EU-Armenia relations?
- Yes
 - No
9. In your opinion, should Armenia deepen cooperation with the European Union?
- Yes
 - No
10. If yes, please specify in which areas? (you can select more than one response)
- Economic affairs and trade (ex. export, import, investments, capacity development and training for Armenian companies, etc.)
 - EU-Armenia visa liberalization
 - Human rights promotion and democratization (the rule of law, anti-discrimination efforts, fight against corruption, judicial reforms, civil society development)
 - Science and education
 - Conflict resolution (more EU assistance to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict)
 - Other
11. If you were asked to choose the direction in which Armenia should develop its foreign policy, what would you choose?
- Western (the EU and the U.S.) and neighbouring countries (Iran and Georgia)
 - Russian (countries of the Eurasian Economic Union) and neighbouring countries (Iran and Georgia)
 - Both directions

- None
- Other

12. Please agree or disagree with the **following statement: The “Young Activist” program** has increased your capabilities in social campaigning, public speaking and knowledge on European programmes.

- Totally agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Totally disagree
- Don't know
- Other, please specify

13. Did you participate in the 2018 Velvet Revolution in Armenia?

- Yes
- No

14. In your opinion, did the knowledge and skills that you gained within the framework of the "Young Activist" program contribute to your participation in the Velvet Revolution?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

15. **Would you say that the “Young Activist” program has increased your knowledge about the EU?**

- Yes

- No
- Other, please specify

16. Overall, do you have a more positive or a negative attitude towards the European Union?

- Very positive
- Quite positive
- Neutral
- Quite negative
- Very negative
- Other, please specify

17. **Do you think the “Young Activist” program has influenced your attitude towards the EU?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

18. On a scale of 0-10, 0 being very negative and 10 being very positive, how would you rate the change of your opinion towards the EU?

19. In case you changed your attitude, could you explain why? (optional)

20. Overall, what did you like most and least **about the “Young Activist” program? (optional**

Appendix 2

Survey Questions (Armenian version)

Հարգելի մասնակից,

Այս հաղորդագրությամբ կցանկանայի հրավիրել Ձեզ մասնակցելու ստորև ներկայացված հարցմանը: Այս հարցման և իմ հետազոտության նպատակն է պարզել հայ երիտասարդների կարծիքը ԵՄ-ի և ԵՄ-Հայաստան համագործակցության վերաբերյալ: Այս ուսումնասիրությունն իրականացվում է իմ կողմից՝ մագիստրոսի աստիճան ստանալու նպատակով Բարսեղունայի Պոմպեո Ֆարրա համալսարանում, և ինձ համար չափազանց կարևոր է Ձեր մասնակցությունը և կարծիքը:

Սույն ուսումնասիրության շրջանակներում ընտրվել է «Երիտասարդ ակտիվիստ» ծրագիրը, որի մասնակիցներին կխնդրեի լրացնել այս հարցաթերթիկը: Վերջինս անանուն է և չի գերազանցի 15 րոպեն: Հարցումը բաղկացած է այնպիսի հարցերից, որոնք նպատակ ունեն բացահայտելու ԵՄ-ի նկատմամբ Ձեր վերաբերմունքը, ընգրկում է «Երիտասարդ ակտիվիստ» ծրագրին Ձեր մասնակցությանը առնչվող հարցեր, ինչպես նաև ինչպիսի ազդեցություն է ունեցել ծրագիրը Ձեր գիտելիքների ընդլայնման, նոր հմտությունների ու կարողությունների զարգացման համատեքստում: Այս հարցման արդյունքները կպահպանվեն Excel ձևաչափով և կհաղորդվեն միայն ընդհանրացված:

Հարցեր ունենալու դեպքում կարող եք ինձ հետ կապ հաստատել էլ. փոստով (gayanegevorgyan12@gmail.com) կամ իմ Ֆեյսբուքյան էջի միջոցով:

Շատ շնորհակալ եմ Ձեր մասնակցության և աջակցության համար:

Հարցումը սկսելու համար սեղմեք ստորև նշված հղումը:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeOD5oRsNewsY9GzkzAYkzUMS_2moKw5FKPwEu1Wo6ScLUCaQ/viewform?usp=sf_link

Մասնակցելով այս հարցմանը՝ ես համաձայնություն եմ տալիս իմ կողմից հաղորդված տվյալների մշակմանը և վերլուծությանը հետազոտության շրջանակներում:

Այո

Ստորև կարող եք գտնել հարցաշարը, որը կխնդրեի լրացնել:

1. Որտե՞ղ եք մասնակցել «Երիտասարդ ակտիվիստ» ծրագրի շրջանակներում կազմակերպված դասընթացին:

- Արագածոտնի մարզում

- Արարատի մարզում
- Արմավիրի մարզում
- Գեղարքունիքի մարզում
- Կոտայքի մարզում
- Լոռու մարզում
- Շիրակի մարզում
- Սյունիքի մարզում
- Տավուշի մարզում
- Վայոց ձորի մարզում
- Երևանում

2. Բացի դասընթացից, «Երիտասարդ ակտիվիստ» ծրագրի շրջանակներում ո՞ր միջոցառումներին եք մասնակցել: (կարող եք ընտրել մեկից ավելի պատասխան)

- Քաղաքացիական ակտիվության վերաբերյալ ամառային դպրոցին Շաղկաձորում
- 2018 թ. քաղաքացիական ակտիվության վերաբերյալ տարածաշրջանային Երիտասարդական համաժողովին
- Մասնակցել եմ ութօրյա այցին Վիշեգրադի երկրներ
- Ոչ մեկին

3. Նշեք Ձեր սեռը:

- Արական
- Իգական
- Նախընտրում եմ չնշել

4. Ո՞րն է Ձեր տարիքային խումբը:

- 16 - 18
- 19 - 24
- 25 – 34

5. Ո՞րն է Ձեր կրթական ամենաբարձր աստիճանը: Եթե ներկայումս սովորում եք, նշեք Ձեր ընթացիկ դասարանը կամ համալսարանական աստիճանը:

- Ոչ ֆորմալ կրթություն
- Հիմնական կրթություն (բաղկացած է 1-9 դասարաններից)
- Ավագ դպրոց (10-12 դասարան) կամ ամբողջական միջնակարգ կրթություն
- Մասնագիտացված և տեխնիկական միջնակարգ կրթություն
- Բակալավրի աստիճան
- Մագիստրոսի աստիճան
- Դոկտորի գիտական աստիճան
- Այլ. խնդրում ենք նշել

6. Եթե ավագ դպրոցի աշակերտ եք կամ համալսարանական ուսանող, կամ արդեն ավարտել եք համալսարանը, ընտրեք Ձեր մասնագիտական ուղղվածությունը՝ ըստ գիտությունների

- Բնական գիտություններ (օրինակ՝ կենսաբանություն, քիմիա և ֆիզիկա)
- Հասարակական գիտություններ (օրինակ՝ սոցիոլոգիա, քաղաքագիտություն, աշխարհագրություն, տնտեսագիտություն, իրավունք, հոգեբանություն, մարդաբանություն և այլն)
- Հումանիտար գիտություններ (օրինակ՝ պատմություն, փիլիսոփայություն, արվեստի պատմություն, գրականություն, լեզուներ և այլն)
- Համակարգչային գիտություններ (օրինակ՝ ծրագրավորման լեզուներ, ծրագրային սպահովման ճարտարագիտություն, արհեստական բանականություն և այլն)

- Այլ խնդրում ենք նշել

7. Ձեր կարծիքով որքանով եք տեղյակ Եվրամիության, նրա վարած քաղաքականության և ինստիտուտների մասին:

- Ոչինչ չգիտեմ
- Մի քիչ
- Բավականին տեղեկացված եմ
- Շատ տեղեկացված եմ

8. Հետևում եք ԵՄ-Հայաստան հարաբերությունների ներկա զարգացումներին:

- Այո
- Ոչ

9. Ըստ Ձեզ, պետք է արդյոք Հայաստանը խորացնի համագործակցությունը Եվրամիության հետ:

- Այո
- Ոչ

10. Կնշեք, թե ո՞ր ոլորտներում կարող եք ընտրել մեկից ավելի պատասխան:

- Տնտեսական հարաբերություններ և առևտուր (օրինակ՝ արտահանում, ներմուծում, ներդրումներ, հայկական ընկերությունների կարողությունների զարգացմանը աջակցում և ուսուցում և այլն)
- ԵՄ-Հայաստան վիզաների ազատականացում
- Մարդու իրավունքների խթանում և ժողովրդավարացում (օրենքի գերակայություն, հակակոռուպցիոն ջանքեր, խտրականության դեմ պայքար, դատական բարեփոխումներ, քաղաքացիական հասարակության զարգացում)
- Գիտություն և կրթություն

- Հակամարտությունների կարգավորում (ԵՄ-ի՝ դարաբաղյան հակամարտության կարգավորմանն ուղղված ավելի շոշափելի օժանդակություն)
- Այլ. խնդրում ենք նշել

11. Եթե Ձեզ հնարավորություն տրվեր ընտրելու որևէ ուղղություն, որով Հայաստանը կզարգացներ իր արտաքին քաղաքականությունը, ո՞րը կընտրեիք:

- Արևմտյան (ԵՄ և ԱՄՆ) և հարևան երկրներ (Իրան և Վրաստան)
- Ռուսական (Եվրասիական տնտեսական միության երկրներ) և հարևան երկրներ (Իրան և Վրաստան)
- Երկու ուղղություններով
- Ոչ մի վերը նշված ուղղությամբ
- Այլ. խնդրում ենք նշել

12. Կարող եք համաձայնել կամ չհամաձայնել հետևյալ հայտարարությանը. «Երիտասարդ ակտիվիստ» ծրագիրը նպաստել է սոցիալական քարոզչության բնագավառում Ձեր հնարավորությունների և հմտությունների, ինչպես նաև հանրային խոսքի զարգացմանը, ընդլայնել է եվրոպական ծրագրերի վերաբերյալ Ձեր գիտելիքները:

- Լիովին համաձայն եմ
- Հակված եմ համաձայնել
- Ոչ համաձայն եմ, ոչ էլ համաձայն չեմ
- Հակված եմ չհամաձայնել
- Լիովին համաձայն չեմ
- Չգիտեմ
- Այլ. խնդրում ենք նշել

13. Մասնակցե՞լ եք 2018 թ. Հայաստանում տեղի ունեցած Թավշյա հեղափոխությանը:

- Այո
- Ոչ

14. Ըստ Ձեզ, «Երիտասարդ ակտիվիստ» ծրագրի շրջանակներում ստացված գիտելիքները և հմտությունները որևէ կերպ նպաստե՞լ են Ձեր մասնակցությանը Թավշյա հեղափոխությանը:

- Այո
- Ոչ
- Չգիտեմ

15. Կարծու՞մ եք արդյոք, որ «Երիտասարդ ակտիվիստ» ծրագիրը ընդլայնեց Ձեր գիտելիքները ԵՄ-ի վերաբերյալ:

- Այո
- Ոչ
- Այլ. խնդրում ենք նշել

16. Ընդհանուր առմամբ, Դուք ունեք դրական թե՛ բացասական վերաբերմունք Եվրամիության նկատմամբ:

- Միանշանակ դրական
- Դրական
- Չեզոք
- Միանշանակ բացասական
- Բացասական
- Այլ. խնդրում ենք նշել

17. Ի՞նչ եք կարծում, «Երիտասարդ ակտիվիստ» ծրագիրը ազդե՞լ է ԵՄ-ի նկատմամբ Ձեր վերաբերմունքի վրա:

- Այո
- Ոչ
- Չգիտեմ

18. 0-10-ի սահմաններում, որտեղ 0-ն նշանակում է շատ բացասական, և 10-ը շատ դրական, ինչպե՞ս կգնահատեք Ձեր կարծիքի այս փոփոխությունը ԵՄ-ի նկատմամբ. արդյո՞ք այն դարձել է ավելի դրական թե բացասական:

19. Եթե փոխել եք Ձեր վերաբերմունքը ծրագրին մասնակցելուց հետո, կարո՞ղ եք բացատրել, թե ինչո՞վ է դա պայմանավորված: (ըստ ցանկության)

20. Ընդհանուր առմամբ, ի՞նչն է ձեզ ամենաշատը և ամենաքիչը դուր եկել «Երիտասարդ ակտիվիստ» ծրագրի հետ կապված: (ըստ ցանկության)

Appendix 3

Interview questions (English version)

1. How long has the program been running? Whose idea was it to initiate this program?
2. Who did you collaborate with to implement the “Young Activist” project?
3. Could you tell about the main purpose of the program, what kind of issues have been discussed during the workshops, and who have been the main speakers?
4. What is the reason for the EU's support / funding for the program? Are there any mechanisms of controlling the project implementation by your EU partners?
5. In general, how many people have participated in the program according to regions? In which region were the most active participants and the highest rate of participation? Do you know why?
6. Do you think the participants are satisfied with the program in general? Has the number of participants increased for the second “V4 for Youth Engagement in Local Self-Governance” program?

7. Apart from the workshops, what other events have been organized for the participants and how often?
8. Are there any plans to expand the project in the future?
9. Are you aware about other projects similar to the ‘‘Young Activist’’ program being implemented in Armenia? If so, you could you specify them?

Appendix 4

Interview questions (Armenian version)

1. Քանի՞ տարի է գործել ծրագիրը, և ո՞վ է գաղափարի հեղինակը:
2. Ու՞մ հետ եք համագործակցել ‘‘Երիտասարդ ակտիվիստ’’ ծրագիրը իրականացնելու նպատակով:
3. Կարող եք ասել, որն է եղել ծրագրի նպատակը, ի՞նչ հարցեր են քննարկվել և ովքեր են եղել բանախոսները:
4. Ինչո՞վ է պայմանավորված ԵՄ- ի աջակցությունը/ ֆինանսավորման տրամադրումը ծրագրին: Ծրագիրը ինչ-որ կերպ վերահսկվու՞մ է:
5. Ընդհանուր առմամբ քանի՞ հոգի է մասնակցել ծրագրին ըստ մարզերի: Ո՞ր մարզը և ո՞ր սեռի ներկայացուցիչներն են եղել ամենակատիվը: Գիտե՞ք ինչով է դա պայմանավորված:
6. Ընդհանուր առմամբ զո՞հ են մնացել մասնակիցները: Արդյոք մասնակիցների թիվը երկրորդ ծրագրին ավելացել է թե ոչ:
7. Բացի դասընթացից, այլ ի՞նչ միջոցառումներ են կազմակերպվել և ի՞նչ հանախականությամբ:
8. Հետագայում պլաններ կա՞ն ընդլայնել ծրագիրը:
9. Դուք տեղա՞կ եք արդյոք կան նմանատիպ այլ լայնձավալ ծրագրեր Հայաստանում: Եթե այո, կարող եք նշել դրանք:

