



Literature Review:

The role of civil society in managing memories of disputed territories

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this literature review is to cover the existing research across the theme ‘The role of civil society in managing memories of disputed territories.’ It consists of six contributions where the different aspects of interactions between civil society, Diaspora, memory and reconciliation are discussed. The theory of agonistic memory related to the post conflict situations gives an opportunity to consider the agonistic strategies and practices of remembrance which can be applied to different contexts, because ‘Agonistic moments or inroads depend on local memory frames and political contexts, so the ways in which the different social agents interact with them convey a varied meaning to formally similar mnemonic practices’ (Bull and Hansen, 2015).

To being, Dr. *Harutyun Marutyan* discusses the literature related to the role of memory/remembrance for civil society. He stresses on the topics related to the concept of the past, the role of collective memory in the context of interrelations of the past and present. In particular, he emphasizes three different approaches in social remembrance studies: ‘present’ and ‘past’ based, and collective memory as a process of continuous discussion.

PhD student *Ruzanna Tsaturyan* is analyzing the concept of civil society through its participation and role in memory management. She concludes, that, similar to other post-conflict societies, in Armenia also civil society organizations are mostly involved in capacity building, reconstruction and rehabilitation initiatives with local and international support, meanwhile the issues of conflicting memories remain unresolved.

In his paper Dr. *Arsen Hakobyan* discusses the interaction between Diaspora, civil society and memory/conflict, trying to find answers to the following questions: How

the Diaspora became a civil society actor? What is the role of Diaspora as a political actor in the context of conflicts, and what is the role of memory in this process? His conclusion is optimistic: The memory can be a part of the reconciliation process because the memory can play a key role in processes of change and transition.

Dr. *Muhammad Younis* discusses literature on one of the concrete manifestations of the theory of memory – the social aspects (healing, apologies, truth commissions, negotiated memory aimed on reconciliation between people, collective remembrance and commemoration) of transitional justice and the role of civil society in it.

In the penultimate section *Syed Shah* (PhD candidate, University of Bath) continues to discuss the how diaspora communities continue to maintain economic, political and social ties to the 'homeland'. Through several cases, Syed highlights the importance of memory in this process.

Ms. *Ani Lecrivain*, discussing the issue of the Armenian Genocide (which in different ways is present in all papers of third work package), states, that for the Armenian civil society is impossible to forget the events of the past. Anyway, there are efforts in Diaspora to focus on discussion and exchanges with Turkish civil society, to have a greater presence on the ground in Turkey, hoping for recognition of Genocide throughout the reconciliation of civil societies, unavoidable with the development of knowledge, and thus hope for compensations.