
CONFLICT RESOLUTION

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Comparative Analysis of Conflicts: Modeling Problems**TIGRAN TOROSYAN***Brusov State University of Languages and Social Sciences, Armenia
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Conflict resolution remains among the most complicated issues in modern international relations. Their number is not reduced worldwide; the resolution processes often last for decades. Conflicts vary both in their characteristics and the efficiency of resolution process. Their studies are often conducted using the method of comparative analysis. However, the lack of a common strategy and modeling reduces the efficiency of such studies and the reliance on their results. Thus, the modeling of a common strategy applicable to the comparative study of conflicts will enable to make highly reliable assessments regarding conflict resolution processes, the reasons behind different courses, the factors hindering these processes, as well as the general trends of resolution processes and the possibilities of increasing their efficiency. The article discusses the modeling problems concerning the comparative analysis of conflicts and the possibilities of their solutions.

Keywords

Conflicts, comparative analysis, modeling, variables, resolutions, key events, the right to self-determination

Introduction

Over the last decades the method of comparative analysis is increasingly used to study conflict resolution process. Still, to outline a common model for studying this process is rather complicated due to a problem complexity and a large number of diverse factors. After the collapse of the USSR, the problem has been further complicated by the processes of new world order formation since the powerful states rather

frequently attempt to influence the development of these processes either through their promotion or freezing. Regardless of the full bases for conflict resolution developed under international law in the last decades¹, and the growing tendency of the empowered international organizations to act as mediators, the number of unsettled conflicts tends to grow. According to the research made by Stockholm International Institute, more than 61 peace operations – the highest number since 1999 – were conducted worldwide in 2007 aimed at reducing conflict “activeness”².

The article studies ethno-political conflicts aiming to outline a model for studying the processes of their regulation. Conflicts vary in political (geopolitical), legal, economic, historical and other aspects that in their turn may result in significant differences among resolution processes. Still, the study of these processes can help to disclose certain patterns the use of which will enable to increase the accuracy of their results in further researches, and, thus, the overall efficiency of resolution processes. The nature of ethno-political conflicts is of key importance in terms of their studies.

Strategy of studying conflict resolution processes

Nature of conflicts: According to their nature, ethno-political conflicts fall into two large groups: self-determination and non-self-determination conflicts³. The core difference between these two groups lies in the legal component. The regulation of self-determination conflicts relies on the right to self-determination, whilst the latter is not applicable to non-self-determination conflicts regardless of whether or not one of the parties to the conflict claims for its right to self-determination. With respect to such cases (Northern Cyprus, Republika Srpska, etc)

¹ **Torosyan T.**, To the Resolution of Intractable Conflicts: Nagorno-Karabakh and Kosovo, *Iran and the Caucasus*, 2013, 17, 3, 427-441.

² **Soder. K.**, Multilateral Peace Operations in 2007. Appendix 3A/SIPRI Yearbook 2008. Armaments, Disarmament and International Security. Stockholm. p. 113.

³ **Torosyan T.**, Perspectives of Rights and Challenges of Political Interests in Conflict Resolution: The Cases of Kosovo and Nagorno-Karabakh, *Essex Human Right Review*, 2015, 10, 1.

Babbitt E., Mediating Rights-Based Conflicts: Self-Determination Negotiable, *Internatioanl Negotiation*, 2006, 11, 185-208.

international law defines the only precondition for non-applicability of the right to self-determination which works out in case the party seeking to self-determination uses military aggression or any other crime against humanity⁴. The process of conflict resolution has two major components – legal and political⁵. The legal components of self-determination and non-self-determination conflicts fundamentally vary. Non-self-determination conflicts are easier to regulate (though some exceptions do exist, e.g. the problem of Cyprus remains unsettled for nearly four decades). The reason is that the problem is more distinct in terms of the political component as the legal aspect does not provide for a change of state borders, no new entity is formed and the only thing required is the achievement of the reconciliation between parties to the conflict. The legal basis of self-determination conflicts is likewise clear and exhaustive. The fundamental documents on the right of peoples to self-determination⁶ define that it is a peremptory norm of international law and it is not subject to any restriction. Under Article 1(2) of the UN Charter, the member states of the UN are obliged to run the internal and external policy based on the respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples⁷. International law provides for the legal resolution of self-determination conflicts (determination of territory's political status) according to the “Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations”. The Declaration identifies several modes of self-determination to be freely implemented by the peoples subject to self-determination:

1. Establishment of a sovereign and independent state,
2. Free integration with any independent state,

⁴ Accordance with International Law of the unilateral Declaration of Independence in Respect of Kosovo. ICJ Advisory Opinion, 22.07.2010

⁵ **Torosyan T.**, *To ...*, Op. cit.

⁶ Declaration on Principles of International Law Friendly Relations And Co-Operation among States In accordance With The Charter Of The United Nations, available at

<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/topic,459d17822,459d17a82,3dda1f104,0.html> ,

(17.03.2015); Charter of the United Nations, available at

<http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/>, (18.03.2015); Helsinki Final Act, available at <http://www.osce.org/mc/39501>, (18.03.2015).

⁷ Charter ..., Op. cit.

3. Association with any independent state,
4. Any other political status freely determined by the people.⁸

Regardless of periodically voiced opinions – proceeding from political expediency – on the dichotomy between the right to self-determination and territorial integrity⁹, such claims are absolutely groundless¹⁰ (according to the definition, the principle of territorial integrity regulates the disputes between the recognized states, whereas the right to self-determination – between people seeking to self-determination and the metropolitan power).

However, as already mentioned above, the process of regulating such complicated issues has both the legal and political aspects the synchronization of which the success of the overall process depends from. The process of conflict regulation starts with the political component, i.e., negotiations, in which a significant role is attached to mediators¹¹. Moreover, the more complex the situation is, the more important is the ability of mediators to handle it¹². The attempts of international organizations to achieve a compromise resolution of conflicts through negotiations are quite understandable. There is a widespread opinion that it facilitates the process of achieving reconciliation between conflict parties. Obviously, in cases of self-determination conflicts when the secession and the formation of an independent state by the people seeking to self-determination is the probable outcome of the settlement, the metropolitan power does not generally put up with such a solution. In cases there is practically no possibility of reaching a compromise solution as well as an increased risk of armed clashes renewal, the international organizations – either explicitly or implicitly authorized to or involved in the process of conflict prevention and regulation – have all the necessary means for providing a

⁸ Declaration ..., Op. cit.

⁹ **Вельяминов Г.**, Признание “непризнанных” и международное право, *Россия в глобальной политике*, 2007, 1, 120-129; **Аксененок А.**, Самоопределение: между правом и политикой, *Россия в глобальной политике*, 2006, 5, 185-198.

¹⁰ **Torosyan T.**, To ..., Op. cit.

¹¹ **Torosyan T., Vardanyan A.**, The South Caucasus Conflicts in the Context of Struggle for the Eurasian Heartland, *Geopolitics*, 20, 3, 2015, 559-582.

¹² **Torosyan T.**, Nagorno-Karabakh and Kosovo: Conflicts, Negotiations, *Geopolitics*, Tigran Mets Publishing House, Yerevan, 2012, p. 45 (In Armenian).

legitimate settlement, and, consequently, final resolution of the conflict. In this respect, the norms of international law are rather clear and exhaustive. Moreover, the decision making mechanisms – these organizations have developed – enable to extend their functions by increasing the overall efficiency and establishing interim administrative structures¹³. To ensure the efficiency of regulation process, it is first necessary to clearly define the nature of conflict, the legal framework of regulation process, as well as to apply international legal norms for providing a peaceful settlement of conflicts¹⁴. However, this is sometimes overlooked due to the geopolitical interests of the powerful states. The geopolitical rivalry often turns into one of the major impediments on the way of peaceful resolution of conflicts. The clash of interests between influential powers or a lack of it in a given region may have a crucial impact on conflict resolution processes¹⁵. This accounts for a large number of unsettled conflicts conditioned not merely by the limited regulatory opportunities, but by the lack of “collective” political will¹⁶, resulted from the clash of interests between powerful states and the rigid political controversies¹⁷. This may prolong the process of conflict resolution and lead to the resurgence of the armed clashes.

Selection of study method: Arend Lijphart’s article “Comparative Politics and Comparative Method”¹⁸ was a turning point in the selection of the methods of political studies. It stipulated the rapid growth of similar studies in 1970s¹⁹. The article is focused on the comparative

¹³ **Kirakosyan M.**, The possibilities of Increasing the Efficiency of International Territorial Administration, *Armenian Journal of Political Science*, 1, 2015, pp. 117-135.

¹⁴ **Ознобищев С.**, Международные конфликты: Бессилие силы и дефицит коллективной воли, *Мировая экономика и международные отношения*, 2009, 12, 107-112.

¹⁵ **Torosyan T., Vardanyan A.**, Op. cit.

¹⁶ **Богатуров А.**, Экономика и политика в современных международных конфликтах, Москва, 2008.

¹⁷ **Богатуров А.**, Op. cit.

¹⁸ **Lijphart A.**, Comparative Politics and Comparative Method, *The American Political Science Review*, 1971, 65, 3, 682-693.

¹⁹ **Merritt R., Rokkan S.**, Comparing Nations, the Use of Quantitative Data in Cross-National Research, Yale University Press, 1966, **Sartori G.**, Misformation in Comparative Politics, *The American Political Science Review*, 1970, 64, 4, 1033-1053.

analysis of the experimental, statistical and case study method and the comparative method. Defining the comparative method as a possibility of analyzing a small number of cases, A. Lijphart observes it in relation to three other methods (statistical, experimental and case study) to determine for each case

- How well the theory is employed through the observation of rival explanations,
- The difficulties faced in acquiring the data needed.²⁰

The experimental method provides distinct criteria through experimental control eliminating all rival explanations. Nevertheless, it is not always feasible to generate appropriate experimental data for the topics relevant to political analysis. The statistical method seeks to avoid controversial explanations through the weaker but still valuable statistical control. Still, as was the case with the previous method, it does not always enable to collect sufficient reliable data. This method is mostly applicable for the identification of the general development trends and not for a particular case study²¹. The use of the experimental and statistical methods in conflict studies is far more complicated for it is not always possible to collect reliable data on conflict variables (conflict boundaries, number of refugees and internally displaced persons, etc). Moreover, these methods are not practically applicable to the legal component of resolution process. The case-study method is effective when studying a single aspect of the process (particularly, the legal one – when the legal norms are the etalon of comparison²²). It provides far more limited opportunities for systematically testing hypotheses than the other methods²³. What refers to the political component of the resolution

²⁰ **Collier D.**, Political Science: The State of Discipline II, Ada W. Finifter, ed. American Political Science Association, Washington, 1993, p. 105.

²¹ **Butler M. J.**, Crisis Bargaining and Third-Party Mediation: Bridging the Gap, *International Negotiation*, 2007, 12, 249-274; **Steiner B. H.**, Diplomatic Mediation as an Independent Variable, *International Negotiation*, 2009, 14, 7-40; **Bercovitch J. and Gartner S. S.**, Is There Method in the Madness of Mediation? Some Lessons for Mediators from Quantitative Studies of Mediation, *International Interactions*, 2006, 32 (4), 329-354.

²² **Torosyan T.**, Conflict Resolution in the Framework of the International Law: The Case of Nagorno-Karabakh, Tigran Mets Publishing House, Yerevan, 2010.

²³ **Levy J.**, Case Studies: Types, Designs, and Logics of Inference, *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 2008, 25 (1-18), 1-19.

process, the application of this method is useless in cases there are serious clashes of political interests between influential powers.

The comparative method has an intermediate status among the methods used in political studies in terms of both criteria discussed. It provides a weaker basis than the experimental or statistical method for evaluating hypotheses²⁴, and it is defined as the main applicable method along with the experimental, statistical and case-study method aimed at discovering the general empirical trends of the ongoing developments. The comparative method, unlike the other three methods, enables to explore the empirical relationship (patterns) among variables²⁵.

The modes of comparison used in political science vary significantly. They incorporate statistical analysis, experimental research and the studies of facts and events²⁶. While comparing them, the researcher attempts to find general empirical patterns dealing with the simultaneous presence or sequence of the phenomena and conditions predetermining the trends of social processes²⁷. This accounts for a wide application of the comparative method in conflict studies.

Application of the comparative method in conflict studies

The method of comparative analysis is used not only for studying political systems, institutions, and processes but also conflicts and the processes of conflict resolution for their various developments are often impossible to explain through merely theoretical schemes. Thus, the comparative analysis is significantly important both in predicting, promoting and preventing these developments and in increasing their efficiency. The comparative analysis of conflicts enables to explore the reasons behind the conflict upsurge, inciting or renewal of military actions, the role of mediators, the efficiency of negotiations, the

²⁴ **Lijphart A.**, Comparative Politics and Comparative Method, *The American Political Science Review*, 1971, **65**, 3, 682-693.

²⁵ **Kalleberg A.**, The Logic of Comparison: A Methodological Note on the Comparative Study of Political Systems, *World Politics*, 1966, 19, 13-26.

²⁶ **Collier D.**, Political Science: The State of Discipline II, Ada W. Finifter, ed. American Political Science Association, Washington, 1993, p. 105.

²⁷ **Mill J.**, How We Compare, *Comparative Political Systems*, New-York, Oxford University Press, 1991, p. 18.

application of international law for conflict settlement, etc. Moreover, it reveals the links between the internal and external variables of the conflict, and allows for the disclosure and justification of similarities and differences between diverse cultures and social units (nations and societies) engaged in conflict²⁸. The comparison of conflict resolution processes, their structural elements, phenomena and notions is aimed at revealing the features they share and the peculiarities they stand out for. The main objective of the comparative method is to point out the characteristics that unite or split two or more cases or processes as well as to get empirical generalizations in form of patterns, models, classifications, etc.

According to Apter²⁹, comparison is a particular way of connecting ideas derived from political philosophy and theory, and based on empirical events and phenomena. The following principles of comparative studies are being distinguished:

- Comparison involves abstraction for some situations or processes can never be compared as such. Every phenomenon is unique, as well as every process, every nation, and every individual. To compare them means to select certain types or concepts and, hence, to "distort" the unique and the concrete,
- Prior to a comparison, it is necessary not only to clarify concepts and categories but also to determine the relevance of criteria the research issue is defined by to the components of social and political situation,
- It is necessary to determine the criteria of specific components that enter into a general analysis or the analysis of a particular problem,
- In attempting to develop a theory of politics it becomes necessary to formulate hypotheses emerging either from the context of a conceptual scheme or from the formulation of a problem,
- The formulation of hypothetical relations and their studies on empirical data can never lead to proof,
- It is necessary to develop a hypothetical series rather than single hypotheses,

²⁸ **Smelser N.**, On Comparative Analysis, Interdisciplinary and Internationalization in Sociology, XV International Congress, 2002.

²⁹ **Apter D.**, Comparative Politics, Old and New, A new Handbook of Political Science, New York, Oxford University Press, 1996, p 372.

- The comparative studies, even if they fall short of providing a general theory of politics, can pave the way to the gradual and cumulative development of theory. It creates the necessary conditions for better understanding of social system and helps to realize that something we have taken for granted requires explanation,

- One of the greatest dangers in hypothesizing when making comparative studies is the projection of possible relationships. Still, this can be avoided by the collection of data prior to hypothesizing³⁰.

The basic problems facing the comparative method are conditioned by two factors: number of variables and number of cases³¹. Accordingly, two problems should be solved: selection of an optimal number of variables and selection of cases sufficient for research objective. These two problems are closely interrelated and the possibilities of their solution are the following:

1. **Increase the number of cases as much as possible.** In some cases it is impossible to augment the number of cases for the problems will arise when shifting them to the dimension of statistical method. Any attempt to augment the number of cases, no matter how small the changes are, improves the chances of instituting some control. The comparative analysis of conflicts also provides space for increasing the number of cases, but not when referring to

- **regional comparisons:** This implies a selection of a group of countries or conflicts based on political, economic and other commonalities. Thus, only those countries or conflicts should turn into an object of comparative analysis that most resemble each other and do not cause the compatibility or equivalency problems. Such studies are more efficient and the conclusions arrived at – more distinct.

- **nature of conflicts:** There is a need to identify the variables in cases the conflicts vary in nature. For instance, the comparison of the regional or ethno-political conflicts is the most difficult to carry out for not having a distinct range of variables. The comparison of the conflicts with completely different natures is senseless.

- **Reduce the "space" of the analysis.** If the number of cases can not be increased, it is possible to combine two or more variables sharing

³⁰ **Macridis R., Brown B.** (eds), *Comparative Politics, Notes and Readings*, Homewood, III, Dorsey Press, 1961.

³¹ **Lijphart A.**, Op. cit.

essentially similar characteristics into a single variable. This approach is also applicable to the comparative analysis of conflicts for it enables to combine, for instance, an independence referendum with a declaration of independence, or a start of armed clashes with conflict boundaries, etc.

- **Focus the comparative analysis on "comparable" cases.**

The word "comparable" implies cases similar in a number of characteristics or variables. The conduction of such researches creates favorable conditions for the use of comparative method as it allows the disclosure of the relationships and patterns among several variables, while many other variables are regarded as constants³². It is far more effective to focus on the comparison of two or more societies or political processes with a greater number of common characteristics rather than on universal or nationwide comparison³³.

2. Focus the comparative analysis on "key" variables. The problem of many variables may be alleviated not only by the approaches suggested above but also by narrowing the general theoretical base. Comparative analysis should avoid overwhelming number of variables³⁴.

Among these four possibilities the insurance of the appropriate comparability of the cases being analyzed is of particular importance for it sharply reduces the impact of the other three on the quality of study results. In particular, the comparative analysis of the Nagorno-Karabakh and Kosovo cases provides exhaustive answers to all questions; and there is no need to increase the number of comparable cases. The method of comparative analysis is a highly efficient tool in political research³⁵. Within the field of conflict studies it is aimed at evaluating the course of conflict resolution, adjusting the internal (conflict parties, nature of conflict, etc) and external (geopolitical rivalry, interests of mediators, etc) factors influencing the overall process. While the comparative analysis is widely used in conflict studies, its efficiency can be guaranteed only when properly selected are

³² **Smelser N.**, On Comparative Analysis, Interdiscisciplinary and Internationalization in Sociology, XV International Congress, 2002.

³³ **Linz J., Miguel de A.**, Within Nation, Differences and Comparisons, The Eight Spains, Madrid, 1966, pp. 268.

³⁴ **Lijphart A.**, Op. cit.

³⁵ **Lijphart A.**, Op. cit.

- the research issue (hypotheses),
- the number and cases of comparable conflicts,
- the range of comparable variables.

The modeling problems of comparative analysis

The method of comparative analysis is often applied to address the following question: why does the regulation process of some conflicts turn to be more effective and leads to their resolution, whereas in similar cases it is characterized by a lasting effect, and, what is more, causes the resurgence of armed clashes? Apart from conflict studies some other fields of political science also face similar problems. One of the major problems raised within transitology (studies the transition from authoritarianism to democracy) can be formulated as such: why do some countries successfully complete the process of democracy building, whilst the others with similar starting point fail it? For instance, a few years after the fall of the USSR, it became apparent that the countries in the post-Soviet transformation process regardless of sharing a common past, and a common starting point, vary widely in their trajectory and the transition spotlight. A group of countries failed to establish democracy and faced the strengthening of the authoritarian and, in some instances – even the totalitarian regimes³⁶. Within transitology, the factors contributing to the establishment of democratic regimes are regarded in two dimensions – structural and procedural³⁷ – and the afore-mentioned shared characteristics may promote a wide application of this method for conflict studies. The researchers who focus on structural dimension address the issues related to the impact of the international community on democratization processes, the level of economic development, democratic values and institutions, etc. The studies on procedural issues are focused, in the first place, on the political decision-making process or the internal and external policy the state runs.

³⁶ **Torosyan T.**, Post-Soviet Transformation of Social System, Gitutyun Publishing House, Yerevan, 2006, p. 31.

³⁷ **Мельвиль А.**, Опыт теоретико-методологического синтеза структурного и процедурного подхода к демократическим транзитам, *Полис*, 1998, 2, 6-38.
Харитонова О. Г., Генезис демократии. (Попытка реконструкции логики транзитологических моделей), *Космополис*, Альманах, 1997.

A group of researchers prefer to make comparative analysis of conflicts based on the structural variables, while the others – on procedural ones. The first implies a comprehensive study on the structure of society, the level of economic development and other similar factors³⁸.

Lebedeva maintains that the development of conflicts is influenced by the following structural variables:

- coexistence of diverse ethnic groups,
- significant territorial fragmentation, level of state centralization,
- considerable socio-political changes (the emergence of new political or economic elites),
- development level of the institutions and mechanisms used to promote conflict resolution as well as the functioning of legal structures,
- level of consensual culture in a given society.³⁹

Apparently, the structural variables define the state or capacity of conflict parties, and will be effective for resolution process only when combined with the variables directly related to the conflict. The comparative analysis based on procedural or dependent variables (participants of conflict, the policy run by a third party) similarly brings forth serious challenges. Thus, regardless of formal similarity between the formulations of the issues related to post-Soviet transformation and that to conflict studies, the division of variables into structural and procedural groups is effective when studying the post-Soviet transformation rather than conflicts.

Selection of the analysis method

The comparative analysis of conflicts is usually conducted by the deductive method, particularly when the focus is on the legal

³⁸ **Bloomfield L., Moulton A.**, *Managing International Conflicts: From Theory To Policy*, New York, 1997, **Лебедева М.**, *Политическое урегулирование конфликтов: Подходы, решения, технологии*, Москва, 1997.

³⁹ **Лебедева М.**, *Межэтнические конфликты на рубеже веков (методологический аспект)*. *Мировая экономика и международные отношения*, 2000, 5, 31-39.

component⁴⁰. The method implies the use of this or that system of theoretical insights in conflict studies seeking to identify their compliance to a given case. However, in case the factor (variable) bearing a direct or indirect impact on the conflict does not correspond to the theory, it is disregarded to confirm the validity of the theory. This is the major shortcoming of the theory for it may distort the real picture and lead to false conclusions. Thus, an additional study is required to determine whether the distortion exceeds its limits or not. When there is a set of empirical data rather than a theory on the research problem, the comparative analysis of conflicts generally relies on the inductive method to disclose the patterns emerging from the generalization of realities⁴¹. However, a single use of the inductive method for the comparative analysis of conflicts may be insufficient. The significant factors (variables) lacking theoretical generalizations but greatly influencing the course and the outcome of the conflict may be overlooked. Another impediment to the applicability of the inductive method is the need to use a large amount of empirical data which is not always feasible due to a complex dynamics of the conflict. This is the primary reason why the inductive method solely, not in combination with the other methods, is rarely used in comparative analysis of conflicts. A comprehensive study may be achieved through the combination of the inductive and deductive methods which provides for the maximum highly accurate analysis on the compliance of theoretical insights to realities.

The comparative analysis of conflicts requires not only the selection of proper methods, but also the division of variables according to the research (problem) objective, and thus – the studied phenomenon.

Selection of variables for comparative analysis of conflicts

The selection of variables (nature of conflict, dynamics of conflict, interests of the mediators involved in regulation process, the level of international organizations involvement, geopolitical rivalry, clash of interests in a given region, etc) is specific to a particular conflict and in each case depends on the formulation of the research problem. At

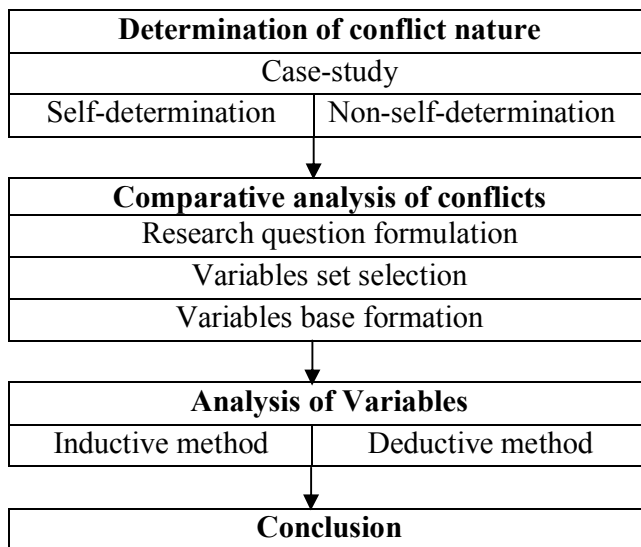
⁴⁰ **Лебедева М.**, Самоопределение регионов. Взгляд из Претории, *Международная жизнь*, 1994, 11, 84-86.

⁴¹ **Лебедева М.**, *Межэтнические ...*, Op. cit:

the same time, the outcome of any study depends not only on the formulation of the research strategy and the research problem, but also on the selection of proper variables. Different sets of variables – each applicable to a particular case – are distinguished for the comparative analysis of diverse cases.

The strategy of conflict research, built upon the analysis above, can be represented by the scheme in figure 1.

Figure 1: General scheme of conflict research strategy



The impact of the research strategy and the selection of variables on the outcome of the ongoing researches can be demonstrated through the comparative analysis of particular conflicts, as shown below.

The comparative analysis of the Northern Ireland and Chechnya conflict conducted by Busygina⁴² is based on the variables below:

- Conflict background,
- Possibilities of holding democratic elections and the results registered,
- Involved mediators,
- Engagement of different segments of society in conflict resolution process,

⁴² Бусыгина И., Северная Ирландия и Чечня: некоторые параллели. – *Мировая экономика и международные отношения*, 1996, 11, 109-113.

- Negotiations,
- Issues related to the determination of final political status.⁴³

It is easy to make sure that the research does not match the strategy in figure 1. There is no reference or analysis revealing the nature of the Chechnya conflict. Whilst the conflict of Northern Ireland is a self-determination conflict⁴⁴, the case of Chechnya is characterized by the totally different principles regarding the self-organization of society. The same holds true for the involvement of mediators, etc. If such differences are found, and the principles of the suggested strategy (determination of conflict nature, observation of comparable conflicts) are not guaranteed, then the efficiency of the research becomes low in terms of promoting the regulation process or forecasting further developments.

Babbitt identifies a set of criteria for the comparative analysis of the Northern Ireland and Nagorno-Karabakh conflict:

- Role of mediators,
- Engagement of superpowers in the process of conflict regulation,
- Responsiveness to the polity as well as to the leader,
- Problems related to the use of normative rules.⁴⁵

According to the strategy in figure 1, the conflicts are properly selected for all have the same (self-determination) nature. The main emphasis is on the exercise of the right to self-determination and on the role of mediators. The article accurately represents the mechanisms of enhancing the effectiveness of mediators' activities in self-determination conflicts. However, the suggested comparative model of conflicts does not address the resolutions adopted with regard to conflicts as well as the key events of conflicts. This is of particular importance for conducting comprehensive study. The observed conflicts have essential differences. The impact of geopolitical factor fundamentally varies; and conflict parties differ not only in religious (the case of Northern Ireland), but also in civilizational factor (the case of Nagorno-Karabakh). These differences significantly influence the process of conflict resolution, thus requiring the observation of other conflicts with similar nature to arrive at effective conclusions.

⁴³ Бусыгина И., *Op. cit.*

⁴⁴ Babbitt E., *Op. cit.*

⁴⁵ Babbitt E., *Op. cit.*

Thus, the comparative analysis of conflicts sometimes requires the observation of a number of cases. However, in some cases the comparative analysis of only two conflicts may be sufficient. The comparative analysis of the Nagorno-Karabakh and Kosovo conflicts⁴⁶ both having the same nature – that of self-determination – has been conducted based on two major components:

1. comparative analysis of normative documents,
2. comparative analysis of conflict key events.

The analysis of the second is based on several components: status prior to the conflict, the environment of its establishment and the form of it, the outnumbering people according to census, protest actions against the pressures and their forms, revocation of status, declaration of independence, referendum, repressions exercised by the metropolitan power, conflict boundaries, armed clashes, foreign military intervention, special status, resumption of armed clashes, refugee-related issues, international organizations engaged in conflict regulation, declaration of independence after the failure of negotiations, recognition of independence by different states, advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice⁴⁷. Prior to that, a separate study has been devoted to the status of the right to self-determination within international law, the modes and standards of its implementation as well as their application for the Nagorno-Karabakh and Kosovo cases⁴⁸. It served as the basis for determining the nature of conflicts – a key factor of comparative analysis. It is notable that the states concerned, even the most powerful ones, have to reckon somehow with the legal factor, and thus – with the nature of conflict⁴⁹.

Conclusion

The analysis of the efficiency and peculiarities of the comparative method applied in conflict resolution studies demonstrates that

⁴⁶ **Torosyan T.**, Nagorno-Karabakh ..., Op. cit.

⁴⁷ **Torosyan T.**, Nagorno-Karabakh ..., Op. cit., p 263.

⁴⁸ **Torosyan T.**, Conflict ..., Op. cit.

⁴⁹ **Torosyan T.**, Nagorno-Karabakh ..., Op. cit, p. 277.

1. The same nature of comparable conflicts is of key importance in ensuring the efficiency of the comparative method. Thus, prior to its application it is first necessary to define the nature of conflicts – to determine within the norms of international law whether or not the conflicts have a self-determination nature.
2. The comparative analysis should be carried out in two dimensions – key events and resolutions adopted by international organizations – to guarantee the efficiency of the comparative analysis of conflicts and their regulation processes.
3. The comparative analysis of key events enables to assess the course of resolution process, to reveal the impact of different factors on this process, as well as to review the strategy and tactics of negotiations. In case there is a necessary amount of data base, the analysis allows specifying the potential influence of variables. This will facilitate the variable selection in other conflict studies depending on the formulation of the problem.
4. The analysis of the resolutions, adopted by powerful international organizations authorized to resolve conflicts, enables to determine the approach of a particular organization, and, thus, that of the international community, to the perspectives of conflict resolution and its role in putting them into effect. A set of data on the role played during the voting of influential member states and the adoption of resolutions is a subject of separate study.
5. Two factors are of particular importance when applying the comparative method for the analysis of conflict resolution processes – selection of the number of comparable cases and selection of variables. The latter is especially difficult task for its effective outcome can be guaranteed through the identification of the probable relationships of the variables and a range of their interactions.

