

EDUCATION SYSTEM OF TAJIKISTAN DURING THE CIVIL WAR:
STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES OF HARDSHIPS

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ABSTRACT

Civil wars have devastating consequences for people who witness them. Wars collapse states' economies, ruin infrastructures, and result in death of people. The goal of this study is to examine the multiple perspectives of students about the effects of the civil war in Tajikistan on the education system. The study uses secondary data collected by the "Oral History of Independent Tajikistan Project" of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Academy. 107 interviews with participants representing all regions of the country, who were in school or university during war in Tajikistan, were selected translated, transcribed and coded. Coding revealed topics and characteristics such as the start of the war, school quality issues, and long-term consequences of the war are the effects of the war on education. The findings also revealed differences in standpoints about the effects of the war on their education based on participants' gender and region.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my daughter Sabrina and my son Samir, the most amazing people in my life. Their love and belief inspired me to complete this project. If anyone ever believed in me, it was you .You are my source of inspiration and life.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

It was the beginning of winter in 1992, but still it felt like autumn. The mornings were wonderful. My mother woke up me and my siblings as usual at 6:00 am. After having breakfast and getting dressed, my brother and I headed for school. We studied in the first shift. The morning did not preface anything frightful. However, people had lived in fear for quite a while and the horrific news about massacres and torching of villages/districts was coming everyday from various parts of the country. The cruelty and brutality of the events were being shown on the local TV daily. As usual, our parents saw us off to school, reminding us to be cautious and, very importantly, to listen to the teachers and explore the world of knowledge.

Being a 10th grader, I had six scheduled daily classes which started at 8:00am and ended at 1:15 p.m. The majority of the students would then return home, apart from a few who participated in after -school activities such as finishing a project for labor class or playing football or volleyball in the school gym.

Although we lived our day-to-day lives, the environment felt tense, and it seemed that people knew something horrible was about to happen, but no one wanted to air it. According to the media, trips to the south districts of the country were considered risky and dangerous as many people had disappeared after their travels to the districts of Vakhsh, Kurgan-tube Shahritus, Qabodiyod, and Panj. However, some people with very urgent necessities such as death of relative or other family emergencies still travelled to these regions. Many residents of these districts had left their houses to seek refuge and resided at their relatives' houses in Dushanbe, becoming internal refugees in their own

country. We had three internally displaced families seek shelter and anticipated security at our house from the Kuibyshev district (now Khujamaston).

During the fourth class period which happened to be physics class, and without warning, the school janitor burst into the classroom staggering and with a choking face said, "People are leaving their houses in the village/settlement. Go home! The war has started." Our classroom was located on the second floor, and from the windows one could clearly observe people's movement in the settlement. It was strange that nobody had noticed anything because we had been engaged in a class activities. For a few seconds we froze, not breathing, not even blinking, but then a small panic took place and we all approached the windows. Paralyzed by what we saw, we continued watching how people were hurriedly leaving their houses and carrying very necessary and basic things, especially food and some warm winter clothes. We did not know where the people were going. I wondered why nobody from home had come to get us from school, considering the situation, but my guess was that not everyone knew what was going on. Plus, not all students had attended school that day.

The learning and peaceful atmosphere in the classroom turned into panic and chaos. The boys in the class, who wanted to engage in the war play without understanding what it meant in practice, promptly rushed out of the classroom. The situation with girls was different as most of them started crying, not knowing what to do. The situation became more chaotic when we suddenly heard gun shots. We used to hear gun shots occasionally, but this time it was more alarming because as soon as they started, the gun shots continued in a non-stop manner. I ran into my brother's classroom

but could not find him because he had left the class in attempt to find me. We eventually ran into each other and all we could think about was how to get home.

We lived 15-20 minutes away from school. The situation was more complicated because we did not know where the shootings were taking place. Everybody in the streets seemed so lost in direction, and it was really hard to figure out what direction to go. I still think how lucky we were to have made it home safe that day.

When we were almost home, the gun shots intensified making us curious to see if we could locate a bullet in the air, oblivious of the danger. When we returned home, my mother met us with tears in her eyes. My dad had just returned from looking for us was in panic mode and, instead of being excited to see us safe, we were shocked that all he asked was: "Who allowed you to go to school today? Was it a good day to go there?" He asked about school because he had previously protested over us attending school thinking that it might not be safe. In fact he did allow us to go to school that morning. He did not understand that he saw us to school in the morning. Nobody thought that after only after a few hours nobody will know what is going on.

The intensified shooting was an indicator of the aggravated situation and my father ordered us to go to the stinky, musty basement that had rarely been used and was basically empty. Not only were my siblings and I in the basement, but our relatives who came to us as refugees. The basement was a bit safe from bullets and it was fun for us kids in the beginning, but after spending 6-7 hours there, all fun was over.

While we were in the basement, from what I gathered, the adults were working on an evacuation plan and thinking where would be safe for. This was indeed trying time for

my family. I felt rather sorry for our relatives who had to again leave a place they had considered a safe haven as it was not safe anymore.

The men in the village gathered for an impromptu meeting to develop a security plan. That night at midnight we all left our beautiful house, leaving our grandmother by herself. She surprisingly looked stronger that day and she even was able to see us off. Goodbyes were difficult because no one could guarantee that we would see each other again.

We were heading to Kofarnihon (now Vahdat) district that was the stronghold of the opposition and was therefore considered safe at that time. It was rather ironic to me that my family had provided refuge to internally displaced persons and now we were also faced with the same predicament of seeking refuge somewhere else.

We arrived at our destination at 4:00 a.m as we had been stopped at several check points by militaries in block posts. The situation became tense hour by hour and nobody could guarantee that we were going to a safer place. We stayed at our relatives' house and my father left us and returned home to take care of our house and protect it from looting, which became an everyday occurrence, and of course to join my grandma who was in her late 60s.

We did not hear from him for five days and there was no means of communication to learn what was happening and if he had reached home safely. I saw how my Mom was getting old before my eyes due to several uncertainties that lingered at the time. We lived on information that could be neither confirmed nor denied.

After five days we received news that my Dad safely reached home and the situation was under control, but we stayed at our relatives' house for two-three more

weeks. There was no school and nobody even mentioned anything about going to school - I did not know why. As kids we were happy and exploring the new environment. People were nice to us but the only thing we all hated was that we did not want to be called “refugees.” We hated the word.

Returning home was the happiest moment because we had missed our home very much and our interest in exploring the new place had been exhausted. We were so happy to see our grandmother whom we missed and who missed us very much. There were no frequent shooting but sometimes during the night we heard the sound of firing rifles which we used to hear throughout the day.

We returned to school on the second day after we returned home. The school was sparsely populated as most of the students who fled for safety had not yet returned to their homes. Classes were conducted as were scheduled and all teachers were returned to school. I am not certain if the teachers had left their homes as we had.

Our school was located near the Police Department and upon returning I noticed that the security in the settlement had been strengthened. More than 20 soldiers in black camouflage were patrolling the main streets, stopping and checking cars and passersby.

In May 1993, after finishing the academic year, and taking final exams at school, I officially completed school. The final year at school was hectic as the situation in the country remained tense. Everyday there was news on someone who was killed or dead bodies found in various places such as the river banks, junk yards or buried in grassy plains. Some of the bodies were never identified and therefore buried in the local cemeteries with some of their belongings kept in case anyone looked for them. The streets were still dangerous even though the shootings had stopped. Occasionally we

heard ragged gun fire. Nobody went out for no reason as many armed insurgents still committed unlawful acts, killing and kidnapping people, taking full advantage of the situation.

I attended classes regularly but the atmosphere at school was not the same as it was before the conflict. Some teachers, especially the Russian speaking teachers who mostly taught foreign languages, handed in their notice on leaving the country because most of them had relatives in Russia and they consider Russia as the country of origin. They mostly taught Russian or foreign languages at schools. Some of the teachers left the profession and the country while I was still was at school while others left after I finished the school.

The situation in the capital Dushanbe city was tolerable, the schools and other institutions were functioning. It was strange because in one part of the country there were shootings going on, there were people being killed, and most residents of these districts became refugees, but the other part of the country was quiet and people just witnessed what was occurring.

I decided to enroll in the Tajik State Pedagogical Institute named after Taras Shevchenko which after one year was re-named after Kandil Juraev (now named after Sadriddin Aini) and obtained the status of the University. There was low admission and there were not many applicants compared to previous years. The majority of applicants were from Dushanbe and the nearby districts. Very few applicants applied from Sughd, Badakhshon and Khatlon oblasts. People did not dare come to the capital city Dushanbe. Most applicants' places of residence were not peaceful and different military clashes took place there, especially in the southern regions of the country. It was dangerous to reach

Dushanbe as they would need to cross the districts where military clashes were happening.

Although it was the time of conflict, and soviet time was over, the application process was fair. I was selected on the basis of entrance results and total earned admission points. Based on this fact I can claim that the application process was still fair enough as I was able to apply and be selected with no indulgency. But later, I heard from my groupmates that they paid money to some representatives of the university for their admission or had a relative working at the university who supported their candidacy. I believe their stories as I witnessed how knowledgeable they were during classes when I officially became a student of the Tajik State Pedagogical University. After a one year period at the university I witnessed very good and qualified professors in my department as well as other departments leave their profession for other types of work while some migrated to other countries. During my fourth year at the university, being a good student, I was hired to teach some courses in the department due to the shortage of teachers.

Significance of the Study

I chose to study this topic because this war particularly affected my personal educational attainment and the war effects have not been researched academically. From my standpoint, it is crucial to study this topic and to examine the effects of the civil war from the perspective of students who personally witnessed this war as I did. The study utilizes personal stories of individuals who witnessed the war. Also the study investigates the effects of the war on education based on these individuals' personal stories and their

understanding on what happened. Their unique perceptions on the effects of the war on education are significant because the war affected each of these people individually. Each study participant represents a position and each story carries a particular and special value to better understand the effects of the war on education. This study will give this group of individuals a chance to voice their perception on the social relations and their standpoint, which will show how these individuals see the world and how they describe the effects of the war that they witnessed on education. Investigation through examination of participants' standpoint will give voice to the disadvantaged groups by allowing them to challenge the existing situation. Study participants' standpoint will differ from another although these individuals may have a similar status. It is very valuable aspect in conducting this type of study. Different standpoints will provide distinct data to analyze for the researcher and better understand the roots of the issue. The study will show the standpoint of others-students who were studying at schools during the conflict and reveal their view of the war and how it affected their school and studies. In addition, examining the impact of the war on education and providing a detailed analysis of how and what aspects of education the war has mostly impacted will be important for the policymakers. These analyses will allow them to understand the educational needs, the roots of these needs, and the future consequences for the country that survived the civil war. As previous research on this topic in Tajikistan has not been done before, my main research question is descriptive:

R.Q.1. What problems did students in Tajikistan encounter in the education system during the war?

There are additional research questions that are built upon the literature review and are introduced below.

Organization of the Study

In this thesis I will review the effects of the civil war on education system in Tajikistan from the perspective of adults who were students at the time from a variety of backgrounds. Chapter two will present the context of Tajikistan through a review of the country's geography, history and education to better examine the effects of the war on the education system. The discussion is based on the various studies that examined the civil war in Tajikistan to better understand the effect magnitude of the war on both the country and the education system.

Chapter three introduces my conceptual framework. Because I experienced the war myself, I discuss the value of standpoint theory to develop my research. Standpoint theory is a framework to analyze and interpret the concepts or discussions that refer to a particular community or a specific set of people with common facilities and views. Adler & Jermier (2005) consider that "Standpoint theory advocates challenge conventional research philosophy, arguing that if our research is going to help alleviate, rather than ignore or exacerbate, the human-made suffering and destruction around us, our concern for this suffering and destruction should guide the entire research process"(p. 5). In chapter three I also review the literature on effects of conflict and war on education in various parts of the world which says that armed conflicts effect education negatively in many and different ways. Mainly, wars result in the death and dislocation of teachers, students and staff; devastation of schools and school supplies; decline of public's well-

being and poverty; increasing school dropout and lowering students' education attainment. Based on my literature review I developed two more focused research questions:

R.Q. 2. Did students in Tajikistan face similar issues as those covered in the literature review (eg. Death, dislocation, destruction and poverty)?

RQ 3. What do the reports of students' experiences in Tajikistan during the civil war add to the literature?

Chapter four describes the methods used in this study. The data are 107 oral history interviews from adults, who were in school or university during the civil war in Tajikistan, collected by the "Oral History of Independent Tajikistan Project" of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Academy. Finally, I present my findings and conclusions in the final chapters five and six respectively.

CHAPTER 2. CONTEXT OF TAJIKISTAN

Geographical, Historical, and Educational Factors

In this chapter I want to provide a brief overview of Tajikistan and profile that will help better understand and draw a clear picture of the investigated issue. Tajikistan is a landlocked and mountainous country located in Central Asia. Mountains cover 93 percent of the country. The country has a territory of 143,100 square kilometers with a total population of 8 million. Tajiks are the largest ethnic group making 80% of the total population, Uzbeks – 15.3%, Russians and Kyrgyzes – 1.1% each, Kazakhs, Tatars, Koreans and Turkmens –0.3% each. The country borders Afghanistan to the west, Kyrgyzstan to the north, Uzbekistan to the west and north and China to the east (CIA, 2013).



Figure 1. Map of Tajikistan.

Tajiks are a Persian nation by origin divided between various Turkic states with rich and ancient culture. “The Tajiks are one of the oldest ethnic groups in Central Asia, who formed a nation state as early as the ninth century” (Lolaeva, 1992, p.32.) Tajiks also managed to preserve their language, ethnic literary traditions. The literature includes known masterpieces of world literature and poets like Omar Khayam, Saadi Shirazi, Jalaluddin Rumi and Abulqasim Ferdowsi. Tajiks preserved their culture and language over the centuries and their Persian (Farsi) language became the state language for the Turkic governors in the region. Tajiks also partially assimilated with the Turkic people living around them (Lolaeva, 1992).

Tajikistan consists of three oblasts [provinces] (Sughd, Khatlon, and Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblasts) and a large area of rayons [counties] under the Republican Subordination (RRS in brief), which surround the capital city. The capital city is Dushanbe. The majority of the population is Sunni Muslims with a small minority of Ismaili Muslims residing in Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO) also known as Pamir. They belong to the Ismaili sect. Tajik (Persian) is the officially spoken language, which belongs to the Persian group of languages (CIA, 2013).

Tajikistan was declared as a Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR) in December 1929. Before becoming a full status republic, the country was a part of Uzbekistan (SSR) which became a Soviet republic in October 1924. Stalinabad (now Dushanbe) was declared as the capital of the country and the population of the country was estimated to be 1.5 million people at that period. Educational institutes also began functioning at about the same time. The first state schools that provided basic education to both children and adults were opened around 1926. Typically, people were sent to the neighboring republic

of Uzbekistan SSR to take specialized courses in order to work in government positions and institutions during the early periods of the Soviet era (CIA, 2013).

During the Soviet period, the Tajik SSR made substantial economic and social progress, including an advanced educational system that offered free education to students at all levels. The educational system was fully financed from the state budget. Students and families could obtain educational supplies at lowered prices. After completion of eight years of secondary education, students could continue their education at the technical and vocational schools. Additionally, students were provided with stipends and could get assured jobs that included housing upon university graduation (Whitsel, 2009).

Tajik State Pedagogical Institute in Dushanbe was the first institution of higher education that opened its doors to students in 1931. Tajik State University was opened in 1948 and Tajik Polytechnic Institute was opened in Dushanbe in 1956. Both Tajik state Pedagogical Institute and Tajik Polytechnical Institute were categorized as universities after independence in 1991. University admission was very competitive during the Soviet period and required applicants' to have strong knowledge on the applied field. Tajikistan had a total of twenty institutions of higher education by the end of 1980. A total of 68,800 students were enrolled at the institutions of higher education in 1991 (U.S. Library of Congress Country Studies, 2013).

The Civil War

In this section I provide an overview of the civil war in the country. I discuss the causes and factors that led to the war according to the studies I reviewed about the war in

Tajikistan which will help the reader draw a picture of the length, magnitude, and the ending of the war.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Tajikistan declared itself as an independent country. But within a year, the country faced a brutal and devastating civil war, which lasted for five years (1992-1997). The causes of the conflict were many. Some were related to the history of Tajikistan, some to the collapse of the Soviet Union, some to politics in the region. Olivier Roy (1993) considers the causes of the Tajik conflict to be connected even to the meaning of what is Tajikistan and what is Tajik. Lynch (2001) proposes to discuss the formation of the Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic in the USSR and the nature of the Soviet era politics because “all these circumstances combined with the particular effects of the soviet collapse of Tajikistan were the main driving forces for the conflict in 1992” (p.52). According to him, one of the reasons that the civil war exploded in Tajikistan is due to Tajiks’ “weak national combined with disintegrating institutions in circumstances of economic collapse and political mobilization” (p.52).

The country was heavily dependent on support provided by Moscow, and when the Soviet Union collapsed this flow of support was cut off, too. As the result of multiple circumstances combined with economic, political, socio-historical collapses the country entered the brutal civil war. The Tajikistan economy was ruined in addition to the human loss caused by the war. Being the poorest republic among the former Soviet Union states and heavily dependent on outside aid, the economy of Tajikistan was more than hindered by the outbreak of unexpected civil war. Lynch (2001) considers that “the weakness of Tajik institution, limited central control over Tajik territory, and a state idea unable to

link disparate component of Tajik peoples into a cohesive community were critical factors leading to the outbreak of the civil war in May 1992” (p. 55). Brown (1997) shares a very similar perspective regarding the outbreak of the civil war in Tajikistan, according to him:

the civil war in Tajikistan may be ultimately attributed to the removal of soviet – era constraints that kept regional and ethnic frictions under control; as Moscow’s control weakened in the late 1980s and 1990s, indicators appeared that a political opposition was developing that might eventually pose an effective challenge to Tajikistan’s Communist leadership. The first unmistakable sign that the traditional power structure weakening was the demonstrations of February 1990. (p.86)

Roy (1993) points to the “localism-the influence of political loyalties based on local or regional origin” (p.16) as the main cause of the civil war in Tajikistan. He thinks that “localism” does not have deep roots in the history of Tajik people and it is rather the product of the Soviet period. Under the soviet system, the administrative districts became the basis of societal division in Central Asia, and the primary base of power for Tajikistan was the northern part of the country. “The Khujandis,” or people from Khujand, [the capital of the North of Tajikistan] monopolized Communist party power” (p.17) and they were promoted mostly as the “clients” of the ruling group. Lastly, Zviagelskaya (1997) states that the civil war in Tajikistan was caused by a variety of reasons:

Among these were the collapse of the USSR, which revealed how unprepared the country was to exist independently; the traditional structure of society, in which a crucial role is played by local, regional and clan ties, with old and new elites

fighting for power; the ideological dimension, with attempts to mobilize the population around Communist, Islamist and nationalist slogans; and the rapid internationalization of the conflict. All these factors taken together define the highly complex structure and dynamics of the conflict, as well as the problems connected with its de-escalation. (p. 161)

The clashes, which had regional and clannish character, developed and spread rapidly covering more districts of the country. Early in May 1992. The state of emergency and curfew was announced in Dushanbe, which banned political parties' activities and meetings, but it did not work. Once peaceful meetings held in Dushanbe "Ozodi" and "Shahidon" squares turned from the threat of power use into real use of it and the military confrontations began between the confronting sides. It was already too late, the situation was out of control, and it was the start of solving the political issues through military means and day by day the situation in the country acquired a bloody and criminal character (Toshmuhhammadov, 2004).

The human cost of the war was significant. As a result of the civil war in Tajikistan, 50,000 to 100,000 people were killed, about 100,000 became refugees, 55,000 children became orphans, and 20,000 women became widows, according to governmental statistics. Many families migrated to other districts of the country to find a safe place. As a result, more than 600,000 were internally dislocated. (Shapoatov, 2004; Lynch, 2001; McLean and Greene, 1998 and Shemyakina, 2011). Many people were killed during the civil war, mainly men. According to opposition sources, the number of people killed in the conflict is three times higher than official government statistics reaching 300,000 people, which make 5% of total population of Tajikistan.

Approximately, 40 percent of Tajikistan's population was directly affected by the war (Bushkov & Mikulsky, 1993; Shemyakina, 2011).

Zviagelskaya (1997) also thinks that the overall number of refugees is not known, and widely differing figures are given by the government and the opposition. "The government deliberately lowers them, claiming, for example, that in the border regions of Afghanistan there are now no more than 6-8,000 refugees. The opposition blatantly exaggerates the numbers, putting the total at around 1 million (including all those who emigrated or were displaced), with 126, 000 in Afghanistan" (p.170).

Military clashes, assassinations, hostage taking, rapes, murders, robberies and significant destruction mostly took place in Dushanbe, Khatlon and RRS regions. GBAO districts were affected by fighting, too, and it is also considered a war-affected region. Many people had to leave their houses and communities, finding refuge in Dushanbe, Sughd and GBAO oblasts. Some people moved to neighboring countries Uzbekistan and Afghanistan whereas some others, particularly non-Tajiks, forever left the country (Shemyakina, 2011).

The civil war devastated schools along with the country's other infrastructures, making the education system fragile and broken. One out of five schools was destroyed in Tajikistan as a result of the war (UNICEF, 2008). On the national level nearly 20% of schools were destroyed, and more than 130 school buildings needed repair (UNDP, 2000). The civil war also devastated school buildings and properties, damaged the largest part of school heating, water and sanitation systems. Most educational materials such as textbooks and school facilities were lost, destroyed and have never been restored (Curtis, 1996; Whitsel & Mehran, 2010).

The war devastated the physical infrastructures, and negatively affected children's capabilities at school. According to UNDP Human Development Report (2000), Tajikistan had performed well against educational indicators before the start of the war. "However, during the 1990s educational performance has worsened as a result of a shrinking budget, low salaries, brain drain of teachers, lack of textbooks, destruction of infrastructure especially in the zones where military activities took place, and low school attendance" (p. 33). The war increased intolerance and ruined youth behaviour leading to worsening of peoples' life.

In 1997 the General Peace Agreement and cease fire was signed by President Emomali Rakhmonov (now Emomali Rahmon) and Saidabdullo Nuri, the leader of the Tajik United Opposition in Moscow, which brought an end to fighting and activated the reconstruction process. The signed agreement was followed by a series of protocols such as an agreement on the formation of a Commission of National Reconciliation (CNR), issues of demobilization and disarmament, the return of refugees and political concerns. Even after signing the peace agreement, military clashes and violence continued to take place occasionally in various parts of the country until the government had full control over all regions. The clashes happened between government troops and opposition fighters in the form of guerilla warfare (Lynch, 2001; Toshmuhammadov, 2004; Whitsel, 2009).

CHAPTER 3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Standpoint Theory

I utilized the Standpoint Theory in this study as part of the conceptual framework of this research. Standpoint theory emphasizes how knowledge is produced by people and the power and the effects of this knowledge have people's understanding of the world in their everyday life.

The researcher's standpoint is a key aspect of the standpoint theory and it matters. This is largely because the researcher builds all stages of a research — the discovery of the issues, developing research questions, collecting and analyzing data, drawing conclusions—and uses the knowledge produced to extend his/her standpoint (Adler & Jermier, 2005). Standpoint particularly interests theorists because of its unique ability to develop a critical awareness about the nature of our social position and the difference it makes epistemically. “Standpoint theory is itself such a project, carried out both through the kinds of social research that take seriously the understanding of the insiders” (Wylie, 2005, p.31). Based on the theory's conception, a person's standpoint impacts his/her world perceptions. We all have a particular standpoint. Depending on the situation and the position, the individual's standpoints may change and differ from other individuals.

The main concepts of the theory are built on individuals' perspectives that are shaped by their experiences gained in social groups that they belong to “ a location, shared by a group experiencing outsider status, within the social structure, that lends a particular kind of sense making to a person's lived experience” (Byrd, et.al, 2013, p.5). Based on the theory's assumptions person's location in the class structure forms and

limits his/her perceptions of social relations. A person's world view begins from his/her standpoint and particular standpoint influences how he/she accept the social construct.

Standpoint theory was introduced by Nancy Hartsock in 1983. The theory was built on well-known feminist researchers' work to explain the growing successes of promising feminist research in a variety of projects. Hartsock labeled standpoint theory as feminist standpoint in order to make women's point in knowledge creation present. Therefore, it was proposed as a method/methodology to guide feminist research (Byrd, et.al, 2013; Hartsock, 1983). Gender issues are the focus of the standpoint theory and studies issues based on how women's views form the link with women themselves. This theory was developed from the known gaps between the values and experiences of women and the dominant theoretical frameworks in which they function (Keller & Longino, 1996).

Knowledge is produced through multiple standpoints (Smith, 2005). A person's particular standpoint leads the researcher to further explore a social phenomenon and generate new knowledge about it, or clarify it from a particular point of view. Therefore, women's standpoint, which Smith emphasizes in her work, explores ideas about women and how knowledge about women and their surroundings have been generated. Smith (1987) states that lived experiences of different gender groups, from various racial, ethnic, geographic and socioeconomic backgrounds are the construction of the social life which are constantly ignored. Only through detailed observations and the standpoint, the full picture of inequality among these groups is possible to capture. The observations and the particular standpoint can also reveal what types of inequalities exist within systems.

Adler and Jermier (2005) state that standpoint theory provides directions to researchers for where to start the investigation, and what and how to study. According to them, “its primary recommendation is for researchers to “study up” (to begin with the exploited) with the intent of mapping the ways “dominant institutions and their conceptual frameworks create and maintain oppressive social relations” (p.943).

According to Smith (1987), standpoint theory “creates the space for the absent subject” (p. 107) and it determines the credibility and the importance of neglected voices (Keller & Longino, 1996; Wood, 2005). Based on standpoint theory, viewpoint of people in non-dominant positions have an important standpoint because they managed to deal with both dominant groups’ social parameters and with those who were in their own group (Harding, 1991).

The central goal of standpoint researchers must be to listen to the voice of those who are not or rarely heard and create knowledge that raises awareness about oppression and exploitation that will lead toward society’s liberation. Standpoint theory is a critical theory and its application indicates how successful we are as community scholars and educators in expressing the least advantaged and oppressed people perspectives note the researchers (Adler & Jermier, 2005).

Applying the Standpoint Theory in this study will allow me to reveal unique stories of students who survived the civil war and observed how the war affected their personal education attainment together with many other students like them, whose stories will possibly never be listened to as the civil war in Tajikistan is not studied academically.. Also with the completion of the war, both sides involved in the civil war (central government and opposition) agreed to forgive each other and not to blame or dig

out the causes of the conflict in future, and with all joint efforts restore peace and develop the devastated country. My personal standpoints regarding the war in my country and how this war affected my life and education attainment led me study this topic. When I first listened to the collected interviews as a research assistant I became more interested in summarizing the voices of many other individuals from my country who were students during the war. I wanted to examine how the war affected the education of many people like me.

Thus, the original research focus in this thesis is exploratory to understand what other students also experienced during the war and. The initial research question is:

R.Q.1. What problems did students in Tajikistan encounter in the education system during the war?

Mindful of Standpoint Theory, my goal is to uncover multiple perspectives on war experiences which respondents commented upon.

Research on Conflict, War, and Education

A review of the literature, discussed in detail below, revealed that armed conflicts affect education in many and different ways. For the most part, wars result in the death or dislocation of teachers, students and staff; devastation of schools and school supplies; decline of public's well-being and increase of poverty; rise of school dropout; and lowering of students' education attainment. A number of studies that investigated the impact of armed conflicts on education development and children's schooling found strong, negative and lasting effects of armed conflicts (Akres & Walque, 2008;

Buckland, 2005; Bundervoet, Verwimp, & Akresh, 2009; Shemyakina, 2011; & Valente, 2013).

In the present literature review, the affect of armed conflicts on education is reviewed based on four categories:

1. human loss (death of teachers, students and schools staff)
2. devastation of schools and long-term recovery of the education system
3. school dropout and lowering students' education attainment
4. decline of public wellbeing; poverty, violence and fear

Human Loss (death of teachers, students and schools staff)

Wars have devastating effects on children as children constantly have been caught up in conflicts. Children suffer unreasonably from genocide, diseases, malnutrition and injury during the wars. According to UNICEF's *State of the World's Children*, in the past decade, 2 million children were killed, about 4-5 million children became disabled, 12 million were left homeless, more than 1 million were orphaned or separated from their parents and some 10 million became psychologically traumatized as the result of wars. They usually have little choice but to experience, at minimum, the same horrors as their parents—as casualties or even combatants (UNICEF, 1996, p.2).

Buckland (2005) also states that armed conflicts have the most devastating impact on education systems, children, students and teachers. According to the researcher, in the last decades wars killed more than two million children and seriously injured or permanently disabled at least six million children. The armed conflicts have long lasting impacts on students and teachers Buckland states, because “long after the guns stop

firing, the lives of students and teachers continue to be imperiled by the discarded litter of war: landmines, unexploded shells, and the proliferation of assault rifles, guns, and ammunition”(p. xi). According to the study, most of the time, teachers pay a heavy cost in times of conflict. As the result, “more than two-thirds of the teachers in primary and secondary schools were killed or fled. In Cambodia the carnage was even greater, leaving the system virtually without trained or experienced teachers. In Timor Leste, the impact on teacher numbers of that relatively short conflict was uneven: in primary schools, 80 percent of the teachers were Timorese and remained, while almost all secondary school teachers were Indonesian” (Buckland, 2005, p. xi).

In studying the impact of the 1994 Rwandan Genocide on children’s schooling, Akresh and Walque (2008) found that even though the genocide lasted only 100 days, during this period “the schools were closed throughout the entire country, school buildings and supplies destroyed, teachers killed, students and teachers became refugees abroad, families lost their savings and became poor, and many students became orphans losing one or both parents to the genocide” (p. 5). Although the civil war in Tajikistan had inter-clan and inter-ethnic characteristics, it was not conducted as genocide against a particular ethnic group in Tajikistan. The list of murdered people includes representatives of all ethnic groups residing in Tajikistan during the civil war. Governmental statistics estimate that in Tajikistan, more than 50,000 to 100,000 people were killed during the civil war (Iji & Uesugi, 2010; Toshmuhammadov, 2004).

Devastation of Schools and Long-term Recovery of the Education System

One of the main tracks that armed conflicts mostly leave is devastation and ruins. According to Chamarbagwala and Moran (2008), one of the reasons for female education's lagging rates during conflicts is the destruction of infrastructure and businesses by the war which can cause job opportunities for skilled work, mainly done by women, to become rare, leading families to value boys' education more highly than girls. As the results of conflicts, girls will remain vulnerable to sexual attacks (Ward & Marsh, 2006) and kidnapping, are compounded by lower girls' educational attainment during violent conflicts.

Lai and Thyne (2007) consider that wars are devastating to a state's system of education and affect educational expenditures and enrollment until the war is over. The government will not be able to provide educational services because civil wars destroy the government's capacity to fund the education system due to both direct (military costs, destruction of a state's/schools' infrastructure) and indirect (loss of revenue and human productivity due to death, injury and presence of the war) economic costs of the civil war. The government's investment in education will also drop after a civil war because of the loss of critical infrastructure and individuals. After the war, the state will allocate money for educational purposes, but initially it will be allocated to the rebuilding of the lost properties. Educational expenditures will continue to drop until the entire infrastructure is newly rebuilt.

Chen, Loayza and Reynal-Querol (2008) state that secondary-school enrollment recovery will remain lower in war-affected countries based on the results of their study

regarding the education improvement in conflict-affected countries. Moreover, the researchers state that:

The average recovery rate for primary-school enrolment is larger in conflict countries than in either of the control groups. In contrast, for secondary-school enrolment, conflict countries underperform compared with both control groups. The average rate of improvement in infant and adult female and male mortality rates is not different from that of at least one of the control groups (p.80).

In studying the impact of the civil war on education, which broke out in 1991 in the West African state of Sierra Leone, Wright (1997) states that the education system has been intentionally and persistently under attack as a tool of war. During the armed conflict many physical facilities have been destructed. Although the schools have been vandalized and damaged for no reason, the author states. "Health centres are looted for medical supplies, industries and shops are also looted for goods and private homes are looted for property. In the case of schools, there is usually no attempt to loot anything. It often seems to be a case of wanton destruction!" (p.24). In addition, school staff, students, and teachers had to leave the school and take refuge in safer places. As a result of the war in Sierra Leone, many students (especially young girls) were kidnapped and by the rebels and held hostage for almost two years.

Recovery of the educational destruction at the end of the Khmer Rouge regime, 1979, in Cambodia was very difficult and challenging work, states Sophoan (1997) because the entire system of educational was distorted. The education system had to be re-established with only 2,481 primary schools and 13,619 teachers to educate 724,058

enrolled students at that time, and only 87 teachers in higher education out of the 1,009 who survived the Khmer Rouge regime. “School buildings, if they had existed at all, were poor, in a state of neglect or damaged by the ravages of war. Teaching materials and books were non-existent, chalk was hard to get and paper for notebooks was a continuous problem. Some of these problems persist to the present day” (p.45). In the case of Tajikistan, the process of reconstruction and recovery of the educational system was similar in many respects to that revealed in the literature review: challenging and time-consuming. The civil war destroyed much of the country’s infrastructure; the education system fell to a very poor standard and still has not recovered much. With government and international organizations’ efforts many schools were repaired or reconstructed, many new teaching programs are being implemented to improve teaching and academic standards in order to meet international standards. However, the war recovery is still occurring in Tajikistan (BBC, 2013; Iji, 2005; Heathershaw, 2009; Toshmuhammadov, 2004; Whitsel, 2009).

School Dropout and Lowering Students’ Education Attainment

Wars lead to significant decrease in children’s education attainment of people who were of elementary school age during or immediately after the conflict state Ichino and Winter-ember (2004) who compared the educational cost of World War II for four countries of which two were directly involved (Austria, Germany) and two which were not directly involved (Sweden and Switzerland). The researchers found that Germans who were at school during World War II received less education than their peers and the degree of educational loss for this period “is 20% of a year of schooling” (p. 81).

According to Wright (1997), as the result of the war in the West African state of Sierra Leone, when many students (especially young girls) were kidnapped by the rebels, kept hostage, and due to rebel attacks on educational institutions, “the internally displaced population includes a significant proportion of pupils and teachers. This has made it quite difficult to ascertain basic enrollment and related data for the education system” (p.24).

Alderman, Hoddinott and Kinsey (2006) state that children who witnessed the civil war in Zimbabwe completed fewer grades of schooling than children who were not affected by the war. Military conflicts have substantial negative effects on males’ and females’ educational attainment. The findings of the study conducted by Chamarbagwala and Moran (2008) on the consequences of civil war in Guatemala indicate the substantial long-term wars’ economic impact on the country. Particularly, the war has negatively impacted the female education attainment level and has intensified gender disparities in education attainment in the country. As a result of the war, female education in Guatemala still continues to lag behind male education throughout the entire country. This tendency is especially more visible in the parts of the country that had witnessed more fighting between 1979 and 1984, the period with sharp increase of violence.

Similar effects have been observed by Shemyakina (2011) who studied the effect of armed conflict on schooling in Tajikistan. According to the author, civil war has negatively impacted girls’ education more than boys and the impact is huge in war-affected regions where only 12 percent of girls possibly complete secondary education compared to boys residing in this areas.

Merrouche (2011), states that human capital loss is the main long-term effect of war. School dropout is very common in war-torn societies because of the violence. In the study of the cost of war on education in Cambodia Merrouche (2011) findings showed that landmines are the main cause of children's school dropout, lack of access to school and primary cause of poverty in rural areas in Cambodia. Landmines are also the main causes of children's injuries and facilities for disabled pupils are scarce in the country. Merrouche (2011) states that wars also effect education

through several channels including destruction and reduced physical access to schools. By reducing the stock of school inputs war may affect both the quantity and quality of education and have subsequent effects on earnings. The long-run economic impacts of war remain largely unexplored empirically perhaps due to the lack of data on war damage. (p. 399)

Poverty, Violence and Fear

Armed conflicts and poverty are inseparably connected because conflicts hamper economic and social development and can be represented as a development in reverse states Buckland (2005). According to the researcher "conflict blunts, and subsequently unravels, years of hard-won economic and social development"(p. xi). Similar viewpoint is brought by Ikejiaku (2009) who states that "the fact is that whenever conflict occurs, the development of the society in most times is seriously affected" (p.16).

According to Restrepo et al., (2008), civil war can be really devastating for families causing them moral, physiological, financial, and emotional effects. Wars make

families poor, vulnerable and put them in risk in the face of various life circumstances. The relationship between the conflicts and poverty is complex as both can be the cause for each other. “Conflict obviously brings poverty in as much as it brings destruction, violence, and hatred. Poverty, however, is also thought of as being a cause of conflict: when grievances are not met, it is argued, poor people will riot, question government altogether and join rebel groups. Economic decline and extreme poverty may then reinforce tendencies to resort to violent means” (p.5).

Justino (2010) states that violent conflict affects considerably the households’ income, wellbeing and children’s education attainment in areas of violence. According to him:

Death and destruction mean that child labor is needed to compensate for lost income elsewhere. Children who need to work are not able to attend school. Even if they can combine work and school, low nutritional levels and tiredness will lower the educational outcomes of these children.

Conditional cash transfers may prove quite successful as part of post-conflict economic interventions, although few have been implemented in conflict-affected countries. (p.17)

Children who can work and earn money will be removed from school and deplete the household of their stock of human capital for future generations. Wars cause fear and fear is the key cause of children’s absence from schools during conflicts, claims Justino, Leone and Salardi (2010). Wars interrupt children’s education process through the demolition of schools, the increase of fear and insecurity, and the targeting of teachers.

Summary

Having analyzed the studies discussed above it is obvious that armed conflicts as social action have with no doubt had a very negative impact on education. Particularly, armed conflicts result in the human loss and, as is evident from the studies above, teachers and students are mainly targeted during the armed conflicts. The history of conflicts shows that the educated people were always targeted for extermination as the rebels always consider them as the strong power. Schools and educational institution are destroyed, and recovery takes a much longer time than the armed conflicts actually lasted. Armed conflicts result in school dropout and lowering students' education attainment as the conflicts cause fear and violence, decline the public wellbeing and make the education inaccessible. The review of the literature on war, conflict and education suggests additional areas to focus the study. There is also an expectation that some findings will be unique to Tajikistan. Thus, this study focuses on two additional research questions:

R.Q. 2. Did students in Tajikistan face similar issues as those covered in the literature review (eg. Death, dislocation, destruction and poverty)?

RQ 3. What do the reports of students' experiences in Tajikistan during the civil war add to the literature?

CHAPTER 4. METHODS

Data

Oral histories from adults, who were in school or university during the time of the civil war in Tajikistan (birth years 1975-1987), were used in this study. The study data were originally collected by the “Oral History of Independent Tajikistan Project” of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Academy in 2007 and 2008.

The goal of the oral history project was to retain the memory and experiences people witnessed during Tajikistan’s transition from the Soviet Union to becoming an independent state, followed by the brutal civil war of 1992-1997, and the restructuring of economic, education, and health systems along with overcoming various individuals’ challenges and achievements that took place during the country’s transformation process in these different systems. The researcher’s goal of the oral history project was to reveal that silence that was kept by ordinary people who witnessed the war, which could be examined and described by the investigators in their studies. “That is the silence of ordinary persons who have lived through all these transforming processes” (Whitsel, 2008, p.3).

The interviews tell the life story of people, how they survived through difficulties and were able to celebrate happy moments, and particularly what they witnessed during the transforming period in Tajikistan that was followed by the brutal civil war. The study participants tell about issues and events that have changed their life and the life of their

family members, relatives and friends and how these issues were kept in silence even though they have affected the future life of all Tajikistan people.

In brief, this study is the oral history of the ordinary people's experiences, observations and perceptions of every day in their own individual stories. The interviews tell stories such as going barefoot to school, surviving deadly diseases and knowing that there will not be medical help, and making sense of the highly wanted independence and what it brings. The experiences and observations studied in the given study do not match with some universal logic of life. "Rather, they will be individual and family experiences, political and apolitical observations of every day" (Whitsel, 2008, p.3). The study is the memories that capture the fifteen years life episode of these respondents that some tell with a smile, somebody with tear and somebody with irony and regret.

The sampling procedure was conducted in two phases. The selection of interviewers formed the first phase of sampling. Interviewers, both male and female, were selected from all of the regions of Tajikistan (mostly from Dushanbe, Khatlon, and RRS), with various ethnic and/or clan backgrounds. The second phase happened as the interviewers were tasked with specifically interviewing people from their home region with similar gender and ethnic/clan/regional backgrounds. This sampling framework works well with this thesis's emphasis on standpoint theory as it utilizes interviewers of various backgrounds to gather stories of people with similar standpoints.

In the frames of the given project, 21 interviewers (8 males and 13 females) were trained who conducted over 1,000 interviews with ordinary people from all regions of the country, which ranged from 12 minutes to 4 hours and 42 minutes. In order to interview more people from GBAO and Sughd oblast and increase regional diversity, as most

interviewers were from Khatlon and Dushanbe, additional interviews were conducted in 2008. Over 60 % of study participants were women.

Interviewers also were trained to inform respondents of the background of the project, their rights as participants, and asking for the respondents' agreement to participate in the project during their first meeting. Interviews with respondents were scheduled at a time suitable for the respondent. The interviews were conducted in Tajik, Russian, and Uzbek languages as the majority of the Tajikistan population speaks at least one or two of these languages. Tajiks, Russians and Uzbeks are the three major ethnic groups living in Tajikistan.

Study Subsample

For this particular project, oral histories of all adults who were school or university age at the time of the war in 1992 (born between 1976 and 1987) were selected as study participants. A total of 128 interviews that fell within this range were selected for translation, transcribing, and coding. The interview sections that mentioned interviewees' school experiences during the civil war period were selected and then first translated into English from Tajik and Russian. Unfortunately, 10 Uzbek transcriptions and translation were not included in this research, because of my insufficient knowledge of the Uzbek language. The remaining 118 oral histories interviews were listened to in entirety and only the sections that directly related to education were transcribed and translated. Another 11 oral histories were discarded after listening to the stories because they did not address schooling issues in their discussions. A final total of 107 oral

histories were coded and analyzed. Below is a table displaying key descriptive statistics of the resulting sample.

Table 1. Study respondents' information.

Ethnicity	N
Tajik	95
Uzbek	8
Russian	3
Ukrainian	1
Gender	
Male	41
Female	66
Birth Years	
1975-1979 (age 17-13 in 1992)	90
1980-1987 (age 12-15 in 1992)	17
Region of Interview took place	
Khatlon	33
Sughd	8
Badakhshon	1
RRS	17
Dushanbe	48

Coding

I began coding after having transcribed and translated the excerpts about education from participants' descriptions of life and experiences during the civil period. It should be noted that I first began transcribing excerpts as a research assistant for Dr. Whitsel. Then I chose to do research on the topic for my thesis; therefore, I conducted a literature review and passed a thesis proposal defense between having transcribed the excerpts and having begun coding.

Coding was done in two stages. In the initial stage of coding I coded the sentences and paragraphs from the interviews by giving them code labels. The selected excerpts were coded using Atlas. ti software. Two initial coding labels - *topic* and *characteristics*- were developed and used for labeling. Topics represented independent and general topics, and characteristics represented the quality and feature of the topic. I used this system in order to better comprehend the characteristics of topics. Initially, I easily saw the various topics in the participants' stories, but my coding system did not contain qualities along with the topics. This type of coding system revealed a richer description of the topics that I saw. Paragraphs and sentences that expressed a similar meaning were coded with the same label. This approach was developed with my advisor because early in the coding process I easily recognized various topics, but did not code qualities of the topics. Thus I was instructed to add the layer of characteristics so differences among the topics could be clarified. The initial coding of interviews revealed 30 topics and 50 characteristics. Some examples are given below:

Table 2. Examples of the initially revealed topics.

#	Topic
1.	CIVIL WAR PERIOD
2.	EDUCATION AND POVERTY
3.	FAMILY
4.	GIRLS' EDUCATION
5.	MARRIAGE
6.	UNIVERSITY
7.	VIOLENCE
8.	WAR TIME EDUCATION

Table 3. Examples of the initially revealed characteristics.

	Characteristics
1.	Damaged
2.	Abroad
3.	Afraid
4.	Attendance
5.	Bad reputation
6.	Bribe
7.	Chaos
8.	Controlled

In the second stage, the emerged themes and characteristics were reviewed carefully and themes and characteristics that had similar meanings or belonged to one group were merged. For example the *start of the war* topic was merged with *start of collapse* topic as they all indicated the beginning of the conflict and the effects of then on education. Other examples include merging *poor* with *poverty characteristics*, *new education* topic with *education after the war* characteristics, *peace* with *free, rise and new times* characteristics. As a result of the second stage of coding, 10 topics and 13 characteristics were developed. The final list of the topics and characteristics is the following:

Table 3. Final table of topics and characteristics.

#	Topics	#	Characteristics
1.	EDUCATION AND POVERTY	1.	Chaos
2.	FUTURE PLANS	2.	Shortage
3.	GIRLS' EDUCATION	3.	Rural
4.	EDUCATION BEFORE THE CONFLICT	4.	Peace
5.	NEW EDUCATION	5.	Lost time
6.	START OF COLLAPSE	6.	International support
7.	WAR TIME EDUCATION	7.	Afraid
8.	WAR TIME DREAMS	8.	Education out of the country
9.	TODAY'S EDUCATION	9.	Difficult times
10.	RELIGION	10.	Disappointment
		11.	Cotton
		12.	Abroad
		13.	Different

I focused the study by creating 5 page memos which analyzed quotations (typically paragraphs) associated with the most frequent topics (*chaos*-coded 79 times, *afraid*- coded 98 times, *girls' education* -coded 115 times), and those that were of interest to me theoretically (difficult times- coded 116 times, war time education- coded 264 times, education and poverty- coded 79 times). In this stage, I returned to the transcripts and reviewed the selected labeled excerpts. I analyzed what they meant in the context and provided direct quotes from the interview transcripts. I then returned to the literature review and compared my original codes and the respondents' comments in light of the categories developed in the literature review. The final result of the coding process led to the organization of the findings of the following themes: start of the war, school quality issues, and long-term consequences of the war. During the write up phase I paid attention to the gender and regional differences, which are highlighted below, in keeping with the use of Standpoint Theory as a framework for the study.

CHAPTER 5. FINDINGS

In this chapter, I will present the findings of this study. Some of the findings mentioned aroused my curiosity as they match my own experience. Others were the most frequently mentioned and theoretically interesting. Below I review the findings under some key categories: start of the war, school quality issues, and long-term consequences of the war. The category school quality issues will be followed by subcategories destruction and the school attendance. The long-term consequences category will be discussed with fear and violence, poverty, school supplies, teachers, and gendered differences effects of the war subcategories. The quotations are labeled based on interview code in the oral history archive, gender of the interviewee, and the region where the interview with study participant took place.

Start of the War

Similar to my experiences, the start of the conflict in my hometown was a horrific moment for respondents. Almost every respondent remembers how everything started to collapse in their once peaceful life. The happy life of people all of a sudden turned to a gloomy period that changed people's entire life. The dreadful events of the war stuck in their minds as less desired recollections of the past. The start of the war was described as the collapse of dreams, life, achievement, and education. Because the study sample consists of people like me who were school children or university students at the time of the war, the respondents reported that the collapse often happened with schools' closure, dismissal of classes, shortage of teachers and missing of classes and school. The collapse did not start in one day but through ongoing meetings and demonstrations in the streets

where people demanded changes in government and believed that they can express their thoughts and nothing bad would come out of it. But instead of improving, the situation became dangerous, and it resulted in the classes' cancellation and Schools' closure. The quotation below demonstrates the chaos at the beginning of the war.

K142. (Female, Rumi, Khatlon Oblast): There was no a good school...there were no proper classes...teachers also were everywhere [throughout the country]...it was so strange....nothing had a meaning...we went to school and had one class and then we were walking around and returned home... rumors that there will be a war were everywhere...

Some of these demonstrations or protests were referred to as “maidons”, which translates as a square or parade ground for public meetings, events and matches because the first demonstrations were held in two main squares in Dushanbe: Maidoni “Ozodi” (Freedom) Square and Maidoni “Shahidon” (Martyrs) Square. The conflict later moved to regions, particularly, to the Khatlon oblasts towns and districts of Kommunisti (now Bokhtar), Kolkhozobod (now Rumi), Vakhsh, Shahritus, Qubodiyon, Qumsangir, Panj, and Kurgan-tube. The quotation below mentions the protests and how they were discussed as the beginning of the war. However, the respondent noted that the demonstrations themselves did not harm the educational setting, it was only when violence broke out.

K 39. (Female, Rumi, Khatlon Oblast): When these events with maidons [Shahidon/Ozodi] started...the school still was good...there were classes going on...teachers all were working...TV talked and showed the maidons everyday

....we watched it...also teachers explained it [situation] to us at school....of course we did not know what will be the results of these meetings....but many people knew...and they said that they [actions taking place at maidons] will not have any good results...I mean these meetings...and demonstrations...our situation with studying was more or less good...but in May during the examination sessions... we found that the civil war started...but despite all these we passed all our exams at school...and after it everything ended and we also did not attend the school anymore...yes I remember it was 1992.

Analyses of the respondents' interviews from Khatlon oblast clearly show the start of the war and how the war actually began. According to respondents' information, the start of the war began the summer in May 1992 at the end of academic year. The respondents remembered this summer well as the schools were closed for a longer time period as the quotations below indicate.

K19. (Male, Kurgan-tube, Khatlon Oblast): ...the school lost all control during the summer school break ...everything started in February...I remember the tents and other things [demonstrations] in Dushanbe in 1992. tents and meetings in Dushanbe...and if I am not mistaken the culmination of this process started during the summer school vacations....and the first refugees left Kurgan-tube on 29 of September in 1992...as far as we were told Mahmud with the support of Russian military division crashed into the city with tanks...and loud shooting started...

N66. (Female, Bokhtar, Khatlon Oblast): In 1992, when we finished the school [the end of May], I remember one event and I will never forget it. We had a small party with our classmates. We celebrated the last day of class [zangi okhiron] and the finish of the school... we all were together...we had laid the table [dastarkhon] with foods ... had our nice and new clothes on...like in a holiday and we were dancing. Suddenly, one of our neighbors (a woman) came and said that the war started and asked us to go home...and that it is not allowed to have party at this time...

Schools in the capital city of Dushanbe and Region of Republican Subordination (RRS) were also closed, but for a shorter time. The classes' dismissal and schools' closure were the result of the instability followed by shootings and massacres but also due to bad studying conditions and outbreak of diseases as the quotation below indicates:

G46. (Male, Dushanbe): We studied till the end of December...till 2nd quarter...we did not attend the school about all 3rd quarter...it was winter, cold we could be sick...and then again medicines. And that's why we did not go to school during this time...school conditions were not good ... teachers did not get good salaries...girls did not attend school...

Some students did not experience any bad effects from the war and even were able to successfully finish school on the eve of the war. The war seemed to pass them by as the quotation below indicates:

D. 37. (Female, Dushanbe): ... We were quite far from conflict zone... because our village was far from the conflict zone...we did not hear much about conflicts

and war...plus I was able to finish the complete school program and finish 11 classes.

The start of the war ruined the daily life/routine of people/students and forced them to forget about their dreams they wanted to realize. The dream to continue studies and become a specialist in a certain field was postponed for an unknown period of time. The wish to stay safe and survive the crisis became the predominant goal.

G43. (Male, Farkhor, Khatlon Oblast). I remember from my personal memories that we could not really understand what was going on...we wanted to study...know and ask questions...but at home our parents were discouraged and hopeless, they did not encourage us a lot to study...they had their vision of life at that time...there was no a day when a news of somebody being killed, shot or death did not arrive...all these affected people's life and became the reasons of their discouragement and loose of life interest. Problems were in all fields of people's life ...

Some respondents believed that they would definitely continue their studies; they never thought that the war was cruel and did not have mercy on anybody. The study participant whose quote is given below never went back to school again. She once was heading to take the entrance exams to be a doctor. In the war, she lost all supporters in her life, especially the one who promised to her to realize her dream: her father and two of her brothers.

L121. (Female, Panj, Khatlon Oblast): When I finished the school the war started.... we somehow passed all exams at school and I applied at medical

college...the war was already going on...when I wanted to come to college all roads were closed...we came and the next day we had an entrance exam...but my father did not allow me to go ...we were caught in Turkmenistan {name of the settlement in Kurgan-tube zone which were much affected by the war}...I left my bag there and everything was in it. And my father told me that if it will be peace again and if I will be alive...the medical college will be yours ... he will do everything that I could enter the college...

Instead of becoming a doctor she was proposed to get married as an option for continuing life. She agreed as it was the best option for her and everyone like her. She started a new life establishing her family and lived for her kids' future.

School Quality Issues

With the eruption of the civil war, the quality of education declined too. The war caused shortages of school and teaching supplies and made teachers leave their jobs. The deterioration of quality of education was mentioned by the majority of respondents, representatives of all regions. The respondents did not indicate the level of deterioration of education quality but most of them mentioned how painful it was to see teachers depart from schools for different reasons: not having enough school supplies at schools and not being able to purchase the supplies by themselves, not having simple conditions such as warm classrooms in the winter or glass on the windows during the academic year. These conditions were clearly described in many respondents' stories. As the result, the studies were not conducted properly because classes were cold, or the school was destroyed, or there were no teachers to teach students on all subjects, or the war killed the

enthusiasm to teach in teachers and study in students; or they did not have sufficient school supplies such as books and notebooks to learn properly.

The quality of education deteriorated since good teachers left their jobs and many of them completely departed the country for Russia or other neighboring Central Asian countries. Many schools were destroyed fully or partially in the most affected regions. Right after the war was over, many schools in affected regions opened their doors for students, but in fact the schools were not ready. The classrooms were cold, the windows were smashed, the school finances were held up and the heating systems were destroyed. Classes were dismissed during the winter time because of cold classrooms. In order to keep classrooms warm, the windows were covered with polyethylene, because the windows did not have panes of glass. In some regions, due to cold season and cold classrooms, students did not attend the school in winters for one month or for the entire winter season. The participant whose quotation is given below clearly describes school quality issues during the war in her school:

G35. (Female, Dushanbe). ...the situation was as bad as in some schools there were not tables and chairs....children could not even purchase books till 2000sschool libraries were burned in districts...if they [books] were not burned they were old and pages worn out...and that's why it was hard to study....people did not know how to study...where to find study supplies...people just could not afford buying them too...

The teachers' immigration led to the shortage of teachers on many subjects at schools. The shortage of teaching personnel at schools forced school administration to

merge classes and cover more students with a limited number of teachers. Students from upper classes/groups taught students from lower grades and they replaced the absent teachers. These students usually had some knowledge about the subject but no teaching skills at all and they still needed to study themselves. They usually taught Tajik language and literature, math, art, music and physical training. Students still did not gain any knowledge on vital subjects as the students substituting teachers could not replace experienced, knowledgeable teachers. A few classes were usually merged due to the shortage of teachers which definitely was not the best method to teach but it was a desperate measure. The quotations below describe the classroom and teaching setting in two different schools:

F.41. (Female, Dushanbe). When I was in 11th grade. It was already the war times... there was a shortage of teachers at schools...a few students from our class were selected to teach the younger ones...we taught the Tajik language and literature to 6-8 graders... I taught one more year after I finished the school as a teacher of Tajik language and literature... and then I got married.

G56. (Female, Farkhor, Khatlon Oblast):We studied together...the classrooms were joined...the teacher taught a little bit in one classroom and then he entered to another classroom...there was one corridor and three classrooms inside...all entered through one door...one classroom was in this side and another classroom was in another side...and he [teacher] conducted classes in this way...he [teacher] also had a long stick and used it to manage the classroom...he [teacher] quickly got tired because it was hard to manage three classes in one time...

You may notice that all the quotations used above are from females. Female participants mostly described the damage to schools caused by the war and how the war affected girls' education, primarily increase girls' dropout rates during and after the war. The war mostly was framed as presumed cause of girls' education declines both by female and male participants. Many girls did not complete or never attended schools. A majority of study female participants blamed the war for not accomplishing their educational goals. Some female participants said they were not able to continue studies or missed large portions of school program. Some other female participants said that they studied at schools but they did not get good education due to effects of the war on schools such as shortage of the professional teachings staff and scarcity of teaching and studying resources.

Destruction

The majority of schools were damaged mostly in Khatlon during the civil war. From respondents' interviews it became evident that as a result of the war, the schools and the studying process were badly affected in districts of Khatlon Oblast. After disorder in Dushanbe in February 1992, Vakhsh district was the first to face violence and bloodshed of the war, and as a consequence, both educational institutions were damaged and the education process was interrupted for an extensive period of time. Teachers and students became internal refugees during the conflict time, as the quotation below indicates.

G53. (Female, Kurgan-tube, Khatlon Oblast). ...the school was destroyed...very destroyed....the windows did not have glass...I know the

windows later were covered by different things in order kids were warm enough inside...our big issue at school was the teachers...we did not have enough teachers...there was a shortage of teachers at school...the classrooms were very cold...

None of the educational institutions, including schools and universities, were seriously damaged during the civil war in the capital city Dushanbe and Sughd oblast districts. In contrast, many schools and other social infrastructures were badly damaged during military clashes in RRS districts and Khatlon oblast, especially in the districts of Bokhtar, Vaksh, Panj, Shahritus, and Qabodiyod. Schools were closed one after another during various months mostly in 1992 -1993 due to ongoing military clashes.

School Attendance

With the start of the war and deterioration of the quality of education, the attendance rate decreased as well. Many respondents said that they were not allowed to attend the school with the situation change. Classes were cancelled at schools and students were sent home for unknown periods of time. But if classes were held, a few groups were combined in order to have a full class of students because of students' low attendance, as it is mentioned in the quotation below:

L16. (Male, Kurgan -Tube, Khatlon oblast) : When we went to school on September 1st...it was very unsafe time...we came to school and we had only one class..."the peace class"...from 11th graders there were 10 students and from all 35 students at school they made one class/group ...they [school administration] jointed us....and there were 20 of us....and then the situation became too

dangerousonly brave ones came to school ...10 students attended the school...it was very difficult....the meeting started that day..... We came and our teachers told us to stay home till September 9th... it was an Independence Day but was not celebrated very festive...

Many parents did not send their children. Students were afraid to attend the school as well because of a sudden confrontation by different factions that could happen unexpectedly. They could happen anywhere and at any time. That was the canon of the war. Usually many of these confrontations ended with shooting and killing of the innocent people. Flying bullets could hit anybody in their path. Most of the time, after such clashes, nobody provided explanation on what happened and the murderers/criminals often went unanswered. Additionally, people were terrified by various rumors that went around; in fact many rumors turned out to be true, and that's why every new whisper was considered very seriously. Although the specificities of their exact reasoning may differ, every respondent in the study shared the common thread of not attending the school during the most difficult period of the war as the quote below shows:

K142. (Female, Kolkhozobod (now Rumi), Khatlon Oblast). We studied the full September and after at the end of the month we did not go to school anymore...Everyone was scared...we were told that boeviks [gunmen] are all around the villages with cars...and that they catch girls...and that they beat girls...we heard different things... The unknown cars could stop in front of girls,

that's why people were afraid and parents did not allow their daughters to go to school anymore....

Male participants' standpoints revealed their focus on describing violent accidents in educational institutions during the war. Male participants mainly discussed the injustices towards school staff and students as the quotations listed below show.

N64. (Male, Bokhtar, Khatlon Oblast). Unknown guys came and approached teachers and demanded from them to give grades to students stating that they are their nephews....Teachers ...seeing their faces were scared not to give the grades...

G43. (Male, Farkhor, Khatlon Oblast). During the exams...there were students who did not have sufficient knowledge and in order to get their exam grades or take passes they brought the militaries [boeviks] to universities to threaten the teachers...

The respondents' responses signified that girls' school attendance sharply decreased during the conflict and it continued to decline after the war too. This phenomenon definitely had many specific reasons. One of the reasons is that the girls were more disproportionately disadvantaged in terms of personal safety and were more defenseless than boys in any type of conflicts. They were mostly considered as the point of revenge in conflicts. Also, girls were more vulnerable and helpless due to their participation and role in conflicts. Joint parents' decision not to send daughters to school quickly received acceptance among other parents, and in case if some parents wanted to send their daughter to school, they felt alone in doing so as the following quotation says:

This quotation is also an excellent example of the standpoint of many girls who described the direct effects of the war on girls' education.

F41. (Female, Dushanbe). I finished the school in 1995 and it was difficult times...it impacted the girls' education a lot...parents did not allow their girls to study...Nobody wanted to send daughter to school... especially in far villages... it was especially hard in rural areas ...

Most often girls were not allowed to attend the school by their parents, but some respondents stated in the interviews that the other relatives and family members (brothers, uncles, and grandparents) influenced their parents not to allow them to study. Despite the fact that girls stayed at home and performed the work about the house, their brothers, or boys in general, attended the school. Most often girls from rural areas or war affected districts were not allowed to attend the schools. The situation in the most urbanized parts of the country looked better according to the respondents' responses. Males also shared similar reports about girls' education. Most of male participants shared in their interviews female participants' standpoints about harsher effects of war on girls' education than on boys. Majority of male participants mentioned about girls' education opportunities decline, educational restrictions for girls, and the increase of early and forced marriages for girls during the war. Both male and female participants blamed early marriages as one of the reasons that kept girls away from studying during this hectic period. The quotations below are examples of males highlighting girls' education decline during and after the war:

G43. (Male, Farkhor, Khatlon Oblast): I can say for sure that after 9th grade at

school 50 % of girls even maybe more but not less, girls do not continue education.... usually children from educated parents and families continue education...ordinary citizens they usually do not allow their daughters to study and they themselves become the reasons that their daughters do not become educated...

G76. (Male, Dushanbe). it was not safe for girls at that time...and girls mostly were not allowed by parents to go to school...we wore that galosh in the morning at school and when we came from school girls wore them at home...it was the time that you could not wish anything....not about the school or anything elsewe did not have money in our pocket...

For numerous students it was a straightforward decision to cut studies or postpone them to a later time with the hope that the situation would change, and they could continue studies one day. In fact, some students were able to go back to schools after the war was over but others never returned to schools due to many known and unknown reasons. For some respondents the dream to go back to school remained as an unfulfilled life project. Some study respondents blamed the war that ruined their plans while others tolerated the situation and accepted it as a nasty fact of their lives. They stated that at that period for them the fear for life and survival dominated the fear of being uneducated as the following quotations below indicate:

S25. (Male, Dushanbe).After finishing the secondary school in 1991 I entered the Medical University but I cut studying because of the civil war that started ... as it was not the time to study

Another respondent shared a similar perspective.

S33. (Male, Dushanbe). At that time....people did not have a great desire to study ...my mom somehow was glad that I did not enter university...she probably thought that it is better if I stay by her, especially during such events...

Long Term Consequences of the War

No doubt, the war had long-term consequences on the respondents' war time life and after. Some respondents remembered their experiences with laughter, but some with tears and pauses during the interviews to let them calm down. A number of respondents stated that they were able to recover and are grateful that they have a peaceful life now, but some others said that it is very hard to forget those days. It is very difficult for them to forget people who they lost, and the memory of hardships they overcame will always remind them about those bitter days.

Some of the respondents called their generation the "children of the war," meaning that this group of children survived the war and faced many bitter moments in their childhoods. They missed precious school years because they did not attend the school, and they did not learn necessary life skills and knowledge that they need now as adults. They missed childhood, the most carefree time, and they matured quickly. According to respondents, these children who witnessed the war will always remain

children of the war and they will convey the war memories to others. They will always have a story of their own about the war they witnessed.

R10. (Female, Khujand, Sughd). My childhood was good until the war started...when the war started the schools were closed ...there were no classes and we missed many things, [childhood, time to study, learn new things] and that's why today we are called the war time/period children.

Students were dislocated and resided in different parts of the country during the war. Some of them stated they had to leave the school when the shooting started. School administrations did not have any other choice than dismissing students from classes. Classes were conducted in a hectic way and with no consistency and clear structure. Teachers were not enthusiastic in giving knowledge but were rather concerned about students' safety and security. Many respondents stated that they experienced being refugees during the war. Some were refugees for a long period of time and some for a shorter period. Some respondents said that they were able to continue studying at schools of their new places of residency. Others said that they could not continue education due to many substantiate reasons as the quotation below indicates:

N85. (Female, Bokhtar, Khatlon Oblast). We studied only one week of September...we studied one lesson then suddenly shooting began...and the classes were dismissed...we usually had one or two classes in a day...then teachers asked us to go home because they were afraid that somebody will be shot ...we studied only one week in my 9th grade...then we became refugees....

School and classes dismissal and not attending the school for long periods of time definitely negatively affected children's education. Many children did not study at all, and as a result they became illiterate. The reasons were that they could not properly finish the school, they did not have good teachers, teachers became refugees, and that they were not allowed to attend the school by their families. The ones who did attend the school either had no proper classes or they studied but they did not have teachers on all subjects. The quotations below indicate why students could not attend the school and how it affected their personal growth:

D 12. (Female, Dushanbe, originally from Vakhsh, Khatlon Oblast). I did not go to school... at all....I am completely illiterate...

P 23. (Female, Dushanbe, originally from Panj, Khatlon Oblast). I myself could not complete the school...I want to repeat that because of the war that started.... I started the school in 1982....and in 1992 I was in my tenth grade and we had to study one more year....finish 11th grade and then graduate but due to the war we could not graduate and finish the school...

For families which had a student finishing the school in a year or two became problematic to send them to school due to potential risks and danger for the life of students on the way to educational facilities. The danger and fear exceeded benefits of attending the school and gaining knowledge. Even though parents understood the significance of gaining knowledge and education and the importance of having degrees in certain fields, the fear of having their kids murdered or receiving any trauma killed all the desire for and the substance of education for their kids. Parents' right decision for their

kids was to have them by their side for the period of the conflict. Still, there were students who, despite all the war danger and threats, were able to complete their education. They do not regret completing education and it makes them feel proud of themselves as the quotations below indicate:

F 81. (Female, Vahdat, RRS). I got married in 1998 and I was the fourth year student at the university...only one year was left to finish the university but my husband's relatives/family did not want me to study...but again I insisted and continued my studies. I did not listen to anyone because I studied in such a difficult time...during the all first four years of being a student.

F 81. (Female, Vahdat, RRS). I studied in such a difficult time...walked to the university from Vahdat district...came to classes during the conflict/war time despite all danger and risks. Despite the armed groups that were staying in the roads on the way to Dushanbe from Vahdat I was able to finish the studies. Remembering these difficult moments of my life/studies I decided not to listen to anyone...meaning my mother-in-law and my father-in-law I continued my studies. And one more year I came to university from my husband's home and graduate it and got my diploma on my hands.

Some students were optimistic by nature and studied by themselves even during difficult times. They believed that if they survived they would certainly benefit from what they learned, and this knowledge gained in the most difficult time would be necessary for them in the future, which would be bright as expressed in the following quotation:

G35. (Female, Dushanbe) I always said that even if I die my learned things will not harm me but if I survive they will definitely help...

Many students did not attend the school because they were not in their hometowns during the conflict. They became internal refugees and moved to safer regions of the country. Except for students from Sughd and Badakhshan oblasts, the majority of students from other regions of the country did not attend the school for some period of time. Some students did not attend the school because of a very simple reason: their classmates fled to Badakhshan oblast or to the north of the country, to Sughd. The remaining students, especially girls, were not allowed to go to school by their parents because of risks and danger for their lives.

You may notice that most excerpts were selected from participants' interviews representing Khatlon and RRS districts. Only a few excerpts were selected from participants' interviews representing Sughd oblast districts. This selection has many reasons: one reason was that participants from Sughd and Badakhshan oblasts did not recall in their interviews about the effects war on education. This group of participants either discussed their memories about education before the war or their interviews did not contain anything significant for this study regarding the effects of the war on education. Participants of these regions considered their regions disconnected from the capital of the country during the war. They were frightened to come to study in the capital city in Dushanbe. The disconnection from the capital city, where most universities are located, generally affected girls' education as the quotation below indicates:

R4. (Female, Khujand, Sughd oblast). After the school I wanted to enter the Medical University in Dushanbe but first family's financial situation and then different gossips that the situation in Dushanbe was still difficult and not safe, especially for girls, all these inconsistencies stopped me to go and continue my studies and let's say my dream did not come true...

Fear and Violence

A majority of respondents said that they were threatened and terrified by the evil actions taking place around them. War threats and realities put fear and horror in the hearts and minds of people. Parents were most frightened by the situation and tried to keep their children in safety as the situation demanded it. Schools were not considered a safe place for their children anymore. Children were especially fearful and threatened because the scary stories were not kept away from them any longer. Parents discussed the situation with their children and tried to teach them how to behave and what to do during the emergencies. The children most often heard "Be careful" and "Be cautious" when they left the house to go to school. Children often were not allowed to go to school when the situation remained tense. Parents understood the seriousness of the situation and knew that it could cause harm to their children. Many children did not attend the school because their parents were not confident about their safety. Also parents generally wanted to help their children understand the current situation realistically, as the quotation below indicates:

F47. (Female, Vahdat, RRS). We finished school when the war started ...but during the war nobody went to school especially in our district...and then the girls

were not allowed to go to schools...there was a school...but even the boys did not attend it well.

With the start of military actions, life became difficult. Students had to miss school not because they did not want to, but because many schools were officially closed or stopped functioning due to ongoing military clashes in the region. The decision to close the schools or dismiss students' classes was made by the Ministry of Education for the safety of students. Sometimes students knew the length of their study breaks and sometimes not. As this quotation states, students were informed about classes' dismissal from the head of the departments of their schools:

N34. (Male, Bokhtar, Khatlon Oblast) There was a statement from the Ministry of Education which said that students, for some certain period of time, must be dismissed from classes due to situation and this time will be restored with compensation of the examination session...it meant no semester break...this decision was made in the Ministry of Education and we were informed by our Department's Dean...he held a meeting and announced it ...

Even though students were dismissed from classes for safety purposes, it did not help save all of them. As the result of military clashes, many students were missing, kidnapped, and killed in unknown circumstances. Nobody guaranteed safety; even the law enforcement agencies which were partially functioning in those chaotic days could not restore simple order. Everybody wanted to survive for themselves.

Standpoint of participants from regions most affected by the war were based on discussion of the collapse of education and pauses in studies and schools during the civil

war. These participants blamed the war as the main cause on their illiteracy and incomplete education. Students from Khatlon oblast districts mentioned their experiences of being refugees during the war while many other participants from other regions temporarily did not attend school but never experienced being refugees as the quotation below indicates:

G35. (Female, Dushanbe). When we returned to university after classes were dismissed ...we saw that many students are not studying anymore...some were killed...some were kidnapped...some were missing...there were many such cases...also one of my groupmates was killed and the body was thrown to the river...

All study respondents mentioned that they had fear and were affected in many ways by the ongoing war in the country. Due to fear and violence surrounding them, many children developed life-long emotional and psychological disorders. These had a detrimental effect on their future growth and personality. Children of war, as some respondents identified themselves, had developed issues with loss of identity and self-esteem. Along with their children, parents also went through stress and fear related to war, which strongly affected their character. The situation could seem peaceful and calm in the morning, but it could turn to a war battle in the middle of the day. It was really tough for parents to send the children to school and be sure that they would arrive home safely. Some students had to drive hours to reach the schools, particularly those students who studied in the city but resided in the nearby districts/towns like this study participant whose quotation is given below:

S24. (Female, Tursunzoda, RRS) it was really difficult to get to Dushanbe as there were many military patrols in the roads and they stopped and checked...and my mom was worried and she did not allow me to continue studies during these years because it was very difficult years ...

Wearing European clothes for girls and women, which was a mostly excepted style of dressing for many girls and women was banned by *mujahids* (armed individuals) in various districts in the country. This ban did not affect men. They continued dressing the European clothes such as shirts, pants, and T-shirts even though there is a traditional men dressing for them. The girls and women who did not obey the new rules were beaten and insulted in public and nobody could do anything about it. In order to avoid the unwanted meetings with such people in the streets, the best choice for girls was to stay home or change the clothes if they wanted to go out. This situation was difficult for ethnic groups, as wearing skirts and blouses that were not approved, was their traditional style of clothes. These mujahids did not have mercy on anyone and any small resistance could have very bad consequences. The terrible part of the story was that nobody could come to the defense of somebody. If anybody dared, they were met with force, which could be deadly. The situation differed from one region to another region.

S3. (Female, Dushanbe). ...it was very dangerous in the streets...not safe at all...those girls who were wearing skirts ...I mean European clothes...my friends told me that “*boeviks*” [militaries] were even beating them for it.... such cases happened even in public transportation...I was so scared that I did not go out at all....

Students also witnesses shootings and killings themselves that made the fear of the war for them truly real. From witnessed scenes, the war was not an illusion of adults or a fiction story anymore. Some scenes of the war became a part of their daily life. In the language of dramaturgy, the children were a part of the terrifying and horrific play or movie.

S38. (Female, Dushanbe).I remember once the main street was closed and the shooting has started...I remember a tank was shooting...I saw a few people in the street shot...it was so scary ...all students were crying at school...then we were locked at school and we were told that if the shooting becomes more intense then we will go down to the school basement...we were all crying...

In order to survive, parents not only kept their children by their side, but also kept them at separate locations. This way gave parents hope that if something happens, it will not happen to all of their children, some of children will stay alive. This opinion was definitely in the thoughts of parents and they all were based on their individual situation. Students were sent to live temporarily with different family members or relatives in various parts of the country which were considered safer places. The children sometimes attended school and sometimes not, depending if they had some savings or could afford attend school. Being far from home and separated from parents, children also feared that they could not see their parents again or they will never return home.

Z4. (Male, Dushanbe)....we [family members] lived separately in different places...nobody dared to live in one place together at that periodthey [siblings] lived with my aunts...they lived there and studied and helped my

aunts....but they all had one wish - to come back to Dushanbe as quickly as possible.

According to the respondents, not only students became refugees and were not able to attend the school but teachers were also dislocated. Many teachers left their communities and places of residency for safer places. In other words, teachers also wanted to save their lives, families, and children. One of the reasons for schools' closure and classes' dismissal was that there were no teachers to conduct classes.

F33. (Female, Dushanbe). The school condition was bad at that times...it was not easy ...many teachers became refugees...the students attendance was also very low...to some extend the knowledge of students decreased at that times...we had outbreak of many diseases...there was quarantine at schools...1-2 months schools were not functioning...

Along with overall settlement issues in new places, student -refugees experienced difficulties with many aspects of adjustment in new places, including those associated with self, family, school, and the changing situation. Coming to a new place did not guarantee safety and satisfaction as the map of the conflict was changing daily, and involved more and more districts in violent military and clashes. The fear to stay alive made people leave the country or move internally to a safer place. Primarily, local ethnicities left the country such as Russians, Jews, Koreans, etc. they are most likely to be from another country or have relatives in another country. Teachers and students were also among these groups who left the country for their fear of life. They left the country to find safety for their children and for a brighter future.

S30. (Male, Dushanbe)....when all these events, many teachers started to leave the school and my Russian speaking groupmates also started to leave.

Poverty

Poverty is one of many long term consequences of the civil war in Tajikistan. Long lasting civil war made students, their families, and the education system poor. Students could not realize their educational goals due to poverty, and the education system could not accomplish its educational functions because of its vulnerable situation and weaknesses. The war destroyed the financial infrastructure, collapsed businesses, and broke networking which lead to a rise of unemployment. People did not have jobs and salaries, and unemployment affected their daily life and the life of their children. Because of poverty, families became unable to meet the educational needs of their children. Some respondents stated that they did not attend school because they did not have clothes and footwear. Parents did not have jobs and money to purchase their clothes for children. Parents were most concerned with how to feed their children which was a very difficult job at that period, and the idea not to let their children die from hunger overtook the need for getting an education.

G61. (Female, Farkhor, Khatlon Oblast) we [children] did not have nice clothes to wear....we used to sew the footwear for several times and wear it at school...after school we worked in the field (kolkhoz/collective farm), we could not afford (*sharoit nabud*) to buy nice school uniform/clothes and wear at school....

The situation at the universities did not differ very much from the secondary schools. University students turned into the poorest population during the war. Students from rural areas who studied at the universities in the cities faced the most difficulties with finding proper and sufficient food. Most of these students lived apart from their families, which were poor in most cases. Students did not have any other supporting sources and the universities where they studied did not provide any particular support to them. The stipend that students received was enough for the purchase of one proper meal a day.

M37. (Male, Bokhtar, Khatlon Oblast). In 1994 I became a student and my big difficulty was finding bread...I entered National University...the situation in Dushanbe was the same bad as it was at home... at home they ate “Zagora”[bread made from corn]...

After independence, many universities decreased budgeted groups and opened commercial groups. Students enrolled in budget groups did not pay for the tuition but students in commercial groups paid. Education became very expensive. Students were not able to cover their own expenses and the tuition was very hard to pay for. Due to poverty in families and unavailability of resources, many students quit their studies.

C 19. (Male, Dushanbe). When I finished the school I entered the Institute of Arts named after M. Tursunzoda. (Donishkadai Hunarhoi Zebo) with a support of one of my friend. I studied there for one year and due to financial difficulties I stopped studying and went to Russian as a labor migrant.

S34. (Male, Dushanbe). My mom did not know how badly I lived ...I did not tell to upset her... I sometimes did not eat for a few days...no breakfast...no lunch and no dinner...there were many of such days.

School Supplies

The outbreak of an unexpected civil war broke the economy of the country and led to the deficit of certain things including the school supplies. War affected the education system financially. According to the respondents, they had few or no teachers at school but the shortage of school supplies. None of the respondents mentioned that they had newly published books or new editions of the books. Even though Tajikistan was an independent country, the old books published and used during the Soviet times were used at school in the period of the civil war. Both students and teachers felt lucky enough to have at least those materials.

G51. (Male, Bokhtar, Khatlon). Books were not sufficient...there was only one book...and our teacher used it and taught us...35 students used one book....

Most school supplies were imported to the country from other republics during the Soviet Union as they had internal commodity circulation. The collapse of the Soviet empire and the occurrence of the war broke the established economic relations and contacts, and Tajikistan did not receive certain commodities from other republics that they used to receive in the past. Nevertheless, it did not prevent everyone from attending school. Despite economic difficulties and deficits many families could manage to send their kids to school as the quotation below indicates:

R5. (Female, Panjakent, Sughd). Most students did not care about studies at that times...not everyone had a backpack...two children [in a family] used one backpack...one used before noon and another carried it after the noon...

It was difficult to purchase school necessities as they were imported to the country, particularly, clothes, footwear, backpacks, etc. Obtaining them in some stores was rare. The inconveniences in daily activities, dangerous, and unknown situation in the country, negatively affected people making them think if they need to study or continue to study or if they need to postpone studies for a period of time.

G36. (Female, Dushanbe).there was no backpacks...in some stores they sold other types of bags so students bought bags there ...any type of bag they liked....no one said anything... after us, when we finished the school students went to school even with plastic bags...we saw it...because there was not school bags on sale....nothing of school accessories were on salenothing...

G61. (Male, Farkhor, Khatlon Oblast). We [students] used those books that were published during the soviet times...and I remember they did not have proper pages....they [book]were already worn outand we found the necessary page in each other's books and studied in this way....I studied till 11th grade....

Once full of different clothes, store shelves abruptly became empty, and it became very difficult for parents to dress their children. Students during the Soviet era used to wear school uniforms and their shortage made students wear whatever clothes they had available to school. Even previously prohibited national dresses became regular clothing

for students. The following quotations indicate families' poverty magnitude and students' clothes experiences at schools:

K112. (Female, Kolkhozobod (now Rumi), Khatlon Oblast). I always was dressed in one clothing...I did not have anything else...there was no uniforms...I wear pombalkh (one type of material used to make national dresses for girls) and one kerchief around my neck...it was very cold and I was very cold...and I went to school.

G35. (Female, Dushanbe)....students did not have clothes...footwear...they could not go to school barefoot or naked...that's why people dropped schools with this reason...due to these reasons some of our people became illiterate during that time..

Participants region based standpoints showed that the war had left a significant negative impact on the educational attainment of each study participant. Everyone who was at school during the civil war experienced certain hardship in the process of getting proper education. Some participants did not attend school at all due to the tense situation that was accompanied with shootings and killings. Some others could not fulfill their educational goals due to financial and poverty problems caused as a result of the war, and some other participants could not complete or advance their educational level due to social problems such as early marriage and cultural definition and acceptance of the importance of education for their children. All these aspects were highlighted in most study participants' interviews.

Khatlon oblast participants expressed their standpoint in telling more about the casualties of the war, such as massacres and shootings, in their regions that hindered their studies. These participants also mentioned the existence of armed groups or individuals in their regions during the war who negatively affected the teaching process and caused fear and panic among people who are considering sending their children to school. Khatlon districts participants pointed to the casualties of the war and the situation as the main hindrance to study during the war.

Teachers

Students often mentioned their teachers' lives during the conflict in their interviews. The war affected teachers directly and struck them financially. Political instability in the country and families' financial instabilities definitely affected teachers' performance at schools. Respondents stated that due to family issues and financial issues at home, teachers also did not pay proper attention at teaching and students' knowledge gaining processes. Eventually it led to the decline of a strong system of education that was built for more than 70 years. Suddenly this system was collapsing, losing its relevancy and importance. People's long term hopes and values were ruined. New times did not propose anything valuable but rather desperation. Teachers' lack of motivation towards students' studies and teaching was most observed by students of that period as demonstrated by the quotation below:

G36. (Female, Temurmalik, Khatlon Oblast): There was no salaries for teachers...they received salaries once in 6 months...and then nobody paid attention at school and teaching...everybody came to school wearing anything

they liked...majority came in our Tajik dresses...nobody said that you need to wear uniforms...what you need to do at school...nobody paid attention at schools...no attention at all...teachers left schools...teachers also came in what they wanted to wear... students too....

The difficult situation made teachers think how to live further and feed their children. The main goal was to survive and live the day granted to them. Teachers, like other residents of the country, lived on short term plans as the extended plans were not working. Work duties became less important; enthusiasm and interest towards the work was gradually dying with the changing situation. The quotation below is a good example of teachers' situations at schools:

K35. (Male, Vahdat, R.R.S.):Teachers did not pay attention...they were not enthusiastic... the situation [*sharoit*] was difficult...shortages...deficits...all teachers and teaching personnel were thinking how to carry the life...they were thinking if they survive after all these conflicts....teachers also thought that “I work hard and how this hard work will be rewarded or maybe it will not”...”what will be with our country”...later teachers also stopped teaching and classes were not conducted any more...we studied little bit but mostly people were thinking how to carry life....people were upset and sad...

Teachers had also lived through difficult times. The civil war affected the economy of the country badly and left teachers without salaries. Only a few teachers received salaries. Teachers during the war were confronted with the most difficult choice:

to go teach and disregard difficulties or focus on their families' well-being. It was a tough decision for them.

G35. (Female, Dushanbe). ...teachers left schools due to low salaries...teachers also were doing some kind of business...some later became big businessmen... there was no anyone left at schools to teach children...that's why the situation became very bad...starting from 1992 till 2002 this ten years the situation in education was very bad.

When the choice of teachers was to teach or survive, definitely the second option took over. Even though teachers understood the importance of their work, no matter that the civil war was going on in the country, their obligation in front of their family members, and their children dominated. The situation was difficult and to make a decision was difficult too. Despair and people's hopelessness was not an illusion but a reality of their daily life. The dangerous situation raised fear among students to attend school and kept teachers away from teaching and the students from studying. School attendance depended on the situation and how safe and secure it looked in the morning. The risks and threat to life were real and nobody wanted to knowingly put his/her life in danger, as the quotations below indicates:

K35. (Male, Vahdat, R.R.S). The situation (*sharoit*) became complicated... schools and teachers life also was at risk...they could not freely walk in the street and felt scared to be called the enemies of nation (*dushmanoni millat*) and that they also could be killed...especially in our village several innocent people were killed...burned...they were just innocent and people got into panic...and neither

teachers thought about students nor students about teachers...and it continued until it became safe...

U11. (Male, Shahrinav, R.R.S). Students did not attend the schools very much because it was not safe enough...then the teachers had fears to go to the school because there was a war and nobody knew anyone at that time. There were many armed men in the streets, and maybe it was the reason that many students did not attend the schools.

Analyses of the interviews' revealed that students and teachers believed this situation was a temporary phenomenon and sooner or later it would be over. Faced with many social, political, and economical problems, many teachers left their jobs. However, those devoted to their profession continued working and teaching at schools and universities, but things still turned worse each day.

G43. (Male, Farkhor, Khatlon Oblast). They [teachers] worked without salaries...they told about it to us and kept believing that the future will be good...there were the days when we did not have classes and we did not have anything to do...sometimes we had 1-2 classes in a day and that's it...classes did not take place...

The situation with teachers' salaries had different stories and solutions in various parts of the county. Every head of the district's administration tried to solve the teachers' salary issues based on the available recourses in the district in order to motivate teachers to stay at school and teach. In some districts teachers received food stamps while in other districts' teachers received their salary in the form of food. Teachers had privileges in the

form of reduced payment or property taxes or utility bills. Still, these small privileges did not solve teachers' life issues and many of them quit their jobs. Teachers stopped teaching at schools, leaving many students without a source of gaining knowledge. Besides the schools in the cities, all other schools in the districts, particularly schools in rural areas, urgently needed teachers on many subjects. Difficulties in life and lack of finances discouraged teachers from teaching. Schools, students, and teachers were not integrated as a part of education. Unmotivated teachers did not execute their duties and it negatively affected students' education attainment. An additional solution to provide all students with schools and teachers was to fill the shortage of teachers with students themselves or recent school graduates. The students from upper grades were selected and assigned to teach the lower grades. Typically, these students taught in the elementary classes or they taught Tajik language and literature classes to students. The quotations below describe the situation with the teacher shortage and replacement at schools:

G36. (Female, Dushanbe). students who were smarter than others...they taught students at the elementary classes with no diploma or certificate....Let's say that the teacher who taught labor class [*talimi mehnat*], this teacher became a school director....respected people in the communities moved to other places ...people from villages moved to the districts center...people from districts moved to the city.

F41. (Female, Dushanbe). ...there was shortages of teachers at schools...a few students from our class were selected to teach the younger ones...we taught the Tajik language and literature to 6-8 graders... I taught one more year after I

finished the school as a teacher of Tajik language and literature... and then I got married.

Not all teachers left their jobs despite a difficult time in their careers and despite financial difficulties. Some teachers continued to work at schools because they did not have another choice, some others were optimistic that the conflict would be over soon, or worked in different jobs such as construction, sales and food service that made them capable to continue teaching. The students of such schools, where teachers continued teaching in the most difficult times, were the lucky ones.

G86. (Female, Dushanbe). They [teachers] had to do their work. Despite hard economic difficulties teachers did their work and did not leave their places of work. They came to school and waited for students and that they conducted their lessons. I finished the school in 1995 ...when we finished the school we did not have one or two subjects' teachers because they went to work in other part of the district ...

The chaos was going on in teachers' teaching processes. Not only did the situation affect teaching processes and put the teachers under stress, but the war also allowed some students to act aggressively during this period. Students could demand grades from teachers and threaten them with bodily harm.

N64. (Male, Bokhtar, Khatlon Oblast). Unknown guys came and approached teachers and demanded from them to give grades to students stating that they are their nephews....Teachers ...seeing their faces were scared not to give the grades...

The most hectic period for teachers was the examination session or the end of the semester. Usually during this period universities were overcrowded. Some students were supported by boeviks [armed insurgents] who could come to the university and demand from teachers to give grades to certain students. Some students never showed up to the classes and teachers only knew their names from the class registrars.

G43. (Male, Farkhor, Khatlon Oblast). During the exams...there were students who did not have sufficient knowledge and in order to get their exam grades or take passes they brought the militaries [boeviks] to universities to threaten the teachers...

Some teachers could negotiate with these students and their supporters. These teachers understood that they did not have another choice than giving the grade or helping these students to graduate. Some teachers did not bow to the reality and showed resistance. These groups of teachers were harshly penalized. The worst scenario was that this all could happen in front of other students. It discouraged some students and motivated others to do the same when they were challenged by studies and classes.

L14.(Female, Bokhtar, Khatlon Oblast). Poor teachers...they were under pressure...especially students from Kulob by origin brought “boeviks” to put pressure on teachers during exams...the rest of students passed exams based on their knowledge and skills...many were witnessed how students brought boeviks...

N.34. (Male, Bokhtar, Khatlon Oblast). They took the teacher inside the classroom and shut the door....students were left outside....we heard how the teacher was saying that: “Hang me from the window from the third floor but I will not give them the grades”....They frightened the teacher...even beat him because when we entered the class it was obvious...

Gendered Differences Effects of the War

An additional long-term consequence of the war was that it created long-term gendered differences in getting education. Many female respondents said that they could not finish school or were withdrawn from school while their brothers or boys in their family were able to finish school and even could continue education when the war was over. Boys also could attend the schools during intensive military operations while girls stayed home, which continued even when the war was over. Boys usually had more chances to return and finish their studies. Moreover, they were able to continue and enhance their education further according to the participants quoted below:

G59. (Female, Farkhor, Khatlon Oblast). Girls usually stayed at home but boys went to boarding school [*internat*] and studied there....but girls did not...

G59. (Female, Farkhor, Khatlon oblast). There are five sisters in our family....three of us studied till 3rd grade and after I finished the school ...it became 9 years and the rest girls ...my 2 sisters in the family studied till 9th grade...but boys studied all...all three of them studied....

In rural areas, people usually have more conservative or culturally dominated thoughts about girls' education in Tajikistan. The war made these thoughts more relevant for the public to accept due to the life conditions and violent situation towards girls' education by certain radical groups, who with the threat of death, made people live with their rules. If parents had limited financial resources they would definitely spend them on boys' education while girls were mostly engaged more in household chores and child-rearing. Girls mostly helped their moms in the house and with other kids. Many respondents mentioned that their parents were positive about their daughters' educational opportunities but also clearly measured the current violent situation and their powerlessness to do anything about it. All in all, the facts did not give parents any other chance than to put up and live with the realities of life, sacrificing education which, at that point, was not as important as the survival and life of their children. The quotation given below portrays girls' education experiences during the war:

T4. (Female, Rudaki, RRS). Majority of girls did not attend school...school administration could not attract the girls to school because people think what the girl can do with education? [*Dukhtra chi? Khondanash chi?*] Parents did not have a choice even if they wanted to send the girls to school they could not because a group of mujahids was located close to the school ...as soon as you go out, your house you will bump into a mujahid and of course it was better to sit at home...if they do not see you they will not say anything about you or to you.... if I went out with a kerchief or without it I will for sure meet them. That's why, many parents did not want their daughters to study and the girls stayed at home...some girls still attended the school but wearing the big kerchiefs and went to school with fear

Parents also withdrew their daughters from school and resisted their continuing education because they wanted to protect them from sexual assault, kidnapping, and harassment. It was not safe for girls in the streets because the streets were full of gunmen whose identities nobody could know. Chaos, disorder, and cases of sexual assaults towards women had worsened the girls' educational attainment situation. Younger and unmarried girls were at greater risk of being sexually assaulted, raped, and harassed during the war.

Z28. (Female, Dushanbe). When we were coming from classes the men in the streets were flirting to us....in general it was the time when nothing was guaranteed and you could not trust anyone and because of the situation everyone had some fear

Only in some exceptional cases did parents feel more confident about their daughters' education. Parents had more peace of mind when a relative or a family member was working at the school who could provide some observation and protection when it was needed. The quotations below provide another picture of girls' education during the war:

T17. (Female, Hissor, RRS). Young girls quitted studies after 8th grades...most parents did not want their girls to study....some girls studied, for example my uncle was the head teacher at school and I attended the school freely because I was under his attention/observance and that's why my parents were sure that I am school , safe and studying. But schools' condition has worsened and I think the situation did not improve since then

N 36. (Male, Kurgan-tube, Khatlon Oblast). I finished school in 1992 and got married in 1993...at that time nobody studied ...no boys and no girls...it was scary....for girls there were many rumors that there are some armed insurgents [boeviko] and they kidnap the girls...fear...I did not study anywhere...as soon as girls finished the school they got married...after two or three months...some girls were engaged while being at school during the final exams...

Parents sent their daughters to school risking her safety and the family's reputation. Only a rumor could ruin the life of the girl and put shame on the entire family members' reputation. Girls were dressed like adult women in order not to attract the strangers' attention. Light colors of clothes were not preferred as they could increase strangers' attention to them. These strangers could be local militants known as *mujahids* or localized well-armed groups that had power. Some of these groups, or particular individuals, dictated to local people how to live and what to do. The local authorities could not say or do anything about it, as the majority of local authorities lived in isolation as can be seen in the quotation given below:

T4.(Female, Rudaki, RRS).Only some girls attended school...adolescent girls came to school wearing big kerchiefs and younger girls attended the school in small ones ...everybody wore dresses...no uniforms, the school administration was afraid of those mujahids....everybody was afraid of them...no one could visit us from the Ministry of Education... we were just isolated....all problems were solved inside the community...schools looked like mosques...it seems that people came there to pray...girls were wearing hijabs.

Parents thought a lot about how to preserve their children from harm during the war. For girls, early marriage was considered as the best and fastest solution for their safety. The decision of marriage was made by parents; the girls had no choice other than obeying. Most of these marriages were arranged by parents, and in the most cases grooms were either a neighbor or a relative. This trend led to the increase of early marriages and as a result a large number of girls got married during the war. This tendency has many reasons. Parents wanted to fulfill their parental duty by organizing their daughters' marriage and at the same time were passing the responsibility of their daughters' safety to their husbands. Many study respondents said that they got married very early and could not continue their studies. Some of them mentioned that after the war their husbands and in-laws did not allow them to continue studies. Others could not go back to school because they already had children and were not physically capable to study. Additionally, the continuation of education required financial resources which not every young family could afford as the following study participants stated below:

S17. (Female, Dushanbe). I finished the school in 1992 and did not continue education because of the war...but I got married very early in 1993.

L112. (Female, Bokhtar, Khatlon Oblast). When I finished the school I wanted to enter a college or a university but it did not happen...the war started we became refugees and when we returned ...after 1 -2 years I was engaged and did not plan any studying after...

General Summary of the Findings Chapter

Interviews with children of the war revealed key categories as the start of the war, school quality issues, and long-term consequences of the war. These categories included the subcategories destruction and school attendance, fear and violence, poverty, school supplies, teachers, and gendered differences of the effects of the war. The findings showed a clear picture of how the war began, what parts of the country the war affected most, what issues schools faced, what hardships students overcame during the war, how the war affected students' education attainment, and the consequences of the war on schools and students' studies. Findings also revealed different participants' standpoints about the effect of the war on their education. The standpoint variations were defined based on participants' gender and region of study. Gender based standpoints revealed that girls' education was more affected by the war than boys' education. Most girls could not complete or did not get any education due to the war, but in general, all study participants highlighted the negative effects of the war on their education. The region based standpoints showed that participants from most war affected regions had different experiences than participants of less war affected regions. Participants from brutally war affected regions discussed more war casualties than participants from less affected regions who mostly discussed deterioration of teaching quality and shortages of schools supplies and teaching staff at their schools.

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION

This study examined the civil war in Tajikistan (1992-1997) and its effects on the education system of the country. I am a part of the generation affected by the civil war because I was a school student at the time. Even after the war was over, events reminded people how much harm and grief they went through. During five years studying at the Tajik State Pedagogical University, I still suffered from aftermath of the war, which was officially declared to be over in 1997. Occasionally, some clashes between various groups or between differing factions and the central government continued to occur in various parts of the country. These clashes very often had fatal results both among confronting groups and among peaceful citizens. At the university, I witnessed the departure of qualified professionals, deterioration of quality of education, and people trying to recover from the war. The education system was experiencing hard times. The current situation in the country did not inspire confidence, and the people had no hope in our future. Many specialists, including teachers were leaving the country because some of them lost a family member, or felt insecure for their own life and the life of their children. Some others just left because they never believed that the peace will be restored soon, and they wanted to leave the land of pain, wanted to escape from calamity and save the people dear to them. I can be included in the list of the small number of lucky people who survived and did not lose any family members. But I shared the grief and tragedy of my friends, peers, and neighbors who lost people very close to them. I understood even at that time that a person alone cannot be happy if everyone around is unhappy. My view on the topic has been impacted by experiences of the war, being a woman, coming from war affected region, and having educated parents. I used Standpoint Theory

because the theory emphasizes the knowledge produced by people and the importance of the researcher's standpoint. I experienced similar hardships as the study participants during the civil war in my country, and I have my own standpoint on what in reality happened. For example, because I was in the capital city, I continued my university education and I successfully graduated. I did not have any difficulty to find a place to live when I was a student. I resided with my parents and had opportunity to have breakfast and dinner at home daily. I did not have to worry about anything else besides my studies. I was also fortunate to specialize in English which opened many educational opportunities for me for travelling, working and future studying. Thanks to my specialty and properly completion the entire course of study I was able to find a good job with international organizations and communication with other parts of the world. It allowed me to expand my knowledge via internet and communication with other people outside of my country.

Particular standpoint helps the researcher further explore the subject and produce new knowledge about or explain it. In this study I present the topic as a valuable research subject to explore further and rely on my own knowledge as the point to begin the investigation of how the civil war affected the education system, and education experiences of thousand students. Exploration of this subject will help better understand the civil period, its effects of the education system, and students' experience. Based on this investigation, particular knowledge will be generated about this topic. Another key objective of standpoint research is to listen to the voice of those who are not or rarely heard. Civil war victims and survivors have unique stories to tell. In this study using

standpoint theory I want to raise awareness of war stories of students who experienced the hardships caused by the war.

The first research question of the study was exploratory as no research had been done on this topic. The second research question was whether they faced issues covered in the literature review of the study such as death, dislocation, destruction, and poverty. Additionally, the study attempted to reveal what experiences appear to be unique to Tajikistan.

The data used in the study were oral history interviews collected by the “Oral History of Independent Tajikistan Project” of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Academy in 2007 and 2008. The interviews tell the life story of people and how they survived through difficulties during the civil war were taken from adults, who were in school or university during the time of the civil war in Tajikistan (birth years 1975-1987).

Study findings revealed similar results to the literature review. The civil war in Tajikistan led to partial or full destruction of schools and educational institutions, dislocation of students and teachers (making them refugees), decline of education quality, lowered education attainment, increased gendered differentiation in education attainment, worsened the public well-being and led to poverty. As a result of the civil war in Tajikistan, many schools and educational institutions were partially or completely destroyed in districts mostly affected by the war, especially in Khatlon oblast districts and some districts of Rayons of Republican Subordination (RRS). Many of these schools were still open for students when the conflict tension calmed down. Study respondents stated that they continued studying and had classes in classrooms with windows smashed

and teaching materials vandalized or stolen. The civil war caused enormous damage to schools' infrastructure as was found in the literature review which revealed that wars lead to devastation of the state's capacity to allocate funds for rebuilding of the lost properties and reconstruction of educational infrastructure (Lai & Thyne, 2007). Based on the study results of Wright (1997), during the wars educational physical facilities are mostly destroyed and vandalized. Other facilities are looted purposefully however, educational facilities are destroyed wantonly.

The literature review also revealed that wars force school staff, students, and teachers to leave the school and places of residency in order to take refuge in safer places (Wright, 1997). The study findings show that during the civil war in Tajikistan many students and teachers were dislocated from the places where they resided and had to leave the country and became internal or external refugees for various periods of time. They temporarily or permanently left their places of residence and gained the status of refugees due to the war. Many of these teachers and students never returned to their previous places of living. Literature review showed that for the internally displaced population, most of which were students and teachers, it became difficult to ascertain basic enrollment and related data for the education system. Displaced students in Tajikistan were not always enrolled at school due to many reasons; some of them did not want to attend the school because of safety reasons in their newly resided places, some others could not because of poverty, and some others did not attain education because of culturally dominated prejudices, particularly regarding girls' education. Many students who witnessed the war in Tajikistan did not complete the full academic course or, in other words, attended fewer grades of schooling. Alderman, Hoddinott and Kinsey (2006)

also observed the lowering of educational attainment among children who witnessed the war in their study. Study respondents stated that students who were finishing school on the eve of the war, they were able to finish secondary school education. Not completing the school or partial completion of school left many students illiterate or less educated which affected their further life accomplishment.

Also wars disrupted the maintenance of normal studying process, according to literature review. The literature revealed that the wars lead to school dropout, lowering students' education attainment (Ichino & Winter-ember, 2004), long recovery, and shortages (Sophoan, 1997). In their study Ichino and Winter-ember (2004) also concluded that during World War II there was a significant decrease in students' education attainment in countries involved in the war: Austria, Germany, Sweden, and Switzerland. This study's findings showed that during the civil war in Tajikistan many students could not and did not attend the school or could not continue to advance in their education due to ongoing five year conflict. Recovery of the education systems is extensive after the wars; education systems become poor and schools and educational institutions will face shortages of finances and teaching materials, as revealed by (Sophoan, 1997). The present study results showed that many respondents still continued studying or finished studying in not fully reconstructed and restored schools. The education system is still in the stage of recovery in Tajikistan.

The literature review showed that military conflicts have negative effects on males' and females' educational attainment. However, wars have substantial harmful effects on females' education attainment levels and intensify gender disparities in education attainment in the war affected countries (Alderman, Hoddinott & Kinsey,

2006; Shemyakina, 2010). Study findings also revealed that in Tajikistan, the civil war had pervasive negative effects on girls' education. As a result of the war, many girls temporarily stopped attending school, some never returned, even after the war was over. Early marriages, instead of studying and advancing education, prevailed during the war and became typical after the war for the majority of young girls. Marriage of daughters was considered completing the last parental duty and settling the life of daughters. In addition, girls' education attainment dropout in Tajikistan was due to insecurity of girls in the streets and in communities. Parents did not allow their daughters to attend school because of safety concerns. Young and unmarried girls were the most targeted for violence. Fear and seeing violent scenes kept girls far from schools. Studying and learning were not the primary goals during the war time.

Study findings show that the civil war totally destroyed the economy of the country, led to poverty, and worsened people's well-being. Devastated economy affected the country's expenditure on educational needs. The civil war in Tajikistan destroyed the country's capacity to provide proper education to students, sufficient salaries to teachers, sufficient education supplies to schools, and enough funding to education programs at schools. Education expenses became hard to pay and purchase of school supplies became unaffordable for parents due to poverty. It resulted in many students not attending school due to the fact that they did not have clothes, footwear, or school supplies.

Literature review also revealed that wars hamper economic and social development of countries and people (Buckland, 2005). The results of the war will be devastating for families to cope after the war because war causes moral, physiological, physical, and emotional effects and make families poor and vulnerable (Justino, 2010). In

addition, economic decline and extreme poverty may then strengthen tendencies leading to violent behaviors (Restrepo et al, 2008). Poverty was the war's long term effect on the Tajikistan. The country remains on the list of the poorest countries among its neighbors and former soviet states. The civil war played an enormous role in putting the country on its knees. Many respondents mentioned in their interviews that they were still economically coping with life difficulties but it was especially difficult during the war. Students were the poorest group of the population. The situation was really very tough with students who studied far from their homes. These students were in charge of finding food for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Many families did not have sufficient money to cover their children's school expenses such as clothes, footwear, and school supplies. Sharing footwear and clothes to attend school was the most common practice among siblings. Many other students just did not attend school because they did not have anything to wear to school. Due to poverty many families could not afford to invest in their children's education or give the professional/technical education. In such families, students did not even try to advance their education level after finishing secondary school as poverty fully affected their entire life and this poverty took originated from the civil war.

Human loss, death and violence are the direct outcomes of wars and all types of military conflicts, according to the literature review. Children are victims during wars. As the result of wars, children are psychologically traumatized and witness horror and violent scenes (UNICEF, 1996). Many study respondents stated that they lost groupmates during the war. Some witnessed the horrible killing scenes and some survived massacre. Numerous students were killed in armed clashes along with many other innocent citizens.

Many study respondents said that they learned about their peers' deaths when they returned to school but their friends' seats were empty. Many of these students' deaths were never investigated and nobody was penalized for their deaths. These students' deaths became a part of the war story and were left in the memory of the friends and family members.

The literature review revealed that all countries that went through civil wars or any type of military clashes faced economic, political, social, and educational hardships. All countries that witnessed civil wars have similar aspects, but what is unique in this study of Tajikistan's civil war? No doubt that the war in Tajikistan caused chaos in the life of students, ruining their dreams and plans. The war happened without prior notice, although the signs of it were evident. Until the last moment people believed that it would not happen. The war swallowed one region after another, destroying everything on its way. Study findings showed that civil war in Tajikistan had different regional characteristics. The war had damaged many school/education infrastructures in Khatlon oblast and some districts of RRS. Students and teachers were dislocated and became internal and external refugees also in Khatlon oblast districts and some districts of RRS. Massacre and chaos were happening in Khatlon and some RRS districts while fortunately, people living in Sughd oblast districts lived the normal life and only heard terrible war stories that were occurring in the country. Many schools were closed and classes were dismissed in war affected districts, again Khatlon and RRS oblasts, while in Dushanbe city and Sughd oblast schools classes were all taking place. Tajikistan was still fortunate not to be fully burned in this civil war. Unequal distribution of clashes still saved many students and teachers and gave hope to people that the horror would be over

soon. Dislocated people tried to find a safer place to survive and they mostly headed to the north, to Sughd oblast and to Dushanbe. People tried to support each other because dozens of schools in Sughd, Dushanbe, and Badakhshan hosted terrified students from Khatlon and RRS during the war. The level of destruction and the amount of harm to the education system differed from one region to another. The most damaged and affected region during the civil war remained Khatlon oblast. Khatlon oblast districts were first affected by the civil war as the most fighting took place mainly in rural areas. As a result of the civil war, many types of civil infrastructure, including school infrastructure, was considerably damaged. Many people lost their possessions, wealth, and very precious family members. Human loss was the most expensive loss in the war.

The standpoint analyses of study participants revealed that study participants had different standpoints regarding the effects of the war on their education. The major standpoints difference was classified by participants' genders and regions that they represented. Gender based standpoints illustrated that female participants more often than males described the aftermath of the war and its effects on education, particularly, the war's negative effects on girls' education rather than on boys'. Regional based standpoints in the finding section revealed most excerpts selected and coded for participants' interviews represented Khatlon and RRS districts with a few interviews representing Sughd oblast districts. Also, regional based standpoints demonstrated that the participants from Khatlon and RRS districts had gone through most hardships in regards to educational and school processes during the war in comparison to other regions.

Benefits and Limitations

This study utilizes secondary data from the “Oral History of Independent Tajikistan Project” collected by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Academy. No doubt using secondary data in research had certain benefits for the researcher. Mostly, it saved time and finances because information from different sources and populations was already collected. However, using secondary data also had certain limitations. When using secondary data in analysis, the researcher does not take part in collection of the data and all nuances of data collection and data are not known to the researcher, which is a very important aspect of the research. The researcher cannot control the process of data collection and sometimes important pieces of information will be missed to collect. Secondary data will not always meet the research questions and objectives, and during analyses the researcher can sometimes face the issue of inappropriateness or incomplete data. This happens simply because data were collected to answer a different research question or objectives. Secondary data do not provide the researcher the opportunity to go back to the source for further clarification.

Additionally, these particular interviews for the study were conducted more than ten years after the war was over. This time period has played a significant role in shaping study participants’ memories and lived experiences. Average age of the study participants during the war was 10-15 years old; subsequently many experiences were forgotten or analyzed in a different way or viewed differently. Many of these participants already told their stories, some more than once, to various people, causing some of these experienced war hardships to become a random story to tell or a brief story to tell quickly, and forget about. It would be beneficial for future studies to compare similar war stories that were

recorded during the war or only a few months or years after the war to compare findings. New findings could add and complete some incomplete analyses and complement this study's results.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study has provided a glimpse in to the civil war in Tajikistan and its effects on the education system of the country. The civil war in Tajikistan has limited academic research and study. The civil war studies conducted so far have investigated certain pieces of this horrible part of the history of Tajikistan, but there is no comprehensive study about this war. Further research is needed to develop a more concrete understanding of the phenomenon and compare with other war/conflict studies. All findings of this study are based on the oral histories interviews collected for the "Oral History of Independent Tajikistan Project" which is a great resource to explore what in fact happened in communities as well as what people experienced and witnessed. However, these interviews were not specifically conducted for this study and left the researcher many questions about that could not be asked details. Future research is needed to conduct relative/comparative interviews with other participants from various parts of Tajikistan to compare and complete the study findings. New interviews could provide further clues to what really happened with people/students and the system of education during the war. Additionally, the study findings revealed different effects of the war on the education system and how people overcame different experiences with the same war. Therefore, future research is needed to compare experiences of people from particular regions affected by the civil war to better explain occurred differences.

Future research also needs to be conducted with teachers and representatives of the Ministry of Education to compare study findings with resources and archives of the ministry. Finally, another suggestion for further research is to conduct quantitative or mixed research to better understand and get results that will allow a fuller picture of the civil war in Tajikistan and its effects on education. The results of mixed studies will provide relevant statistics and more sound explanation of the civil war effects on education of the country.

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