

Ethnic Lobbying in the US

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Abstract

Ethnic lobbies have proven to be influential in shaping US foreign policy. In lobbying US foreign policy makers, lobbies rely on their membership, its voting potentials, organization capacities, campaign donations, and building alliances with other social forces and networks within the policy making bodies. Through presentation of the successes of Serbian lobbying in the US Congress in recent years, compared to the Armenian-American role model case, the general argument made in this thesis is that influencing US Congress' foreign policy outputs can be achieved by diplomats and government officials, relying on marketing the homeland's objectives in line with US values and policies and supportive networks in policy making bodies. The findings of this research contradict the habitual beliefs that exerting pressure on foreign policy makers by ethnic groups necessarily relies on the activities of ethnic groups' members.

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INTRODUCTION

Although the general public, and the media in particular, all over the world have repeatedly expressed the interest in the secrets of lobbying in politics, political science has not offered a comprehensive theory of lobbying. Even though lobbying has been documented as a significant process in political practice over a century ago¹, political science has developed a considerable amount of literature on this omnipresent political tradition only in the last few decades. It is not surprising that a controversial area in politics as lobbying causes that many debates. Constantly emerging scandals, corruption, renewed regulation of lobbying activities, the public – private interest relationship, the nature of influence, the techniques of influence are only a few of the puzzles evolving around this practice.

The existing literature on lobbying accumulated over the past few decades consists of empirical research whose findings are inconsistent at best. Still, it was the work of Berry², Wilson³, Baumgartner and Leech⁴ and Hojnacki and Kimball⁵ that provided the initial insights in the lobbying process itself. And as the research turned to an even more interesting and puzzling, but more complex aspect of lobbying, lobbying by ethnic groups in the US, insights were found in studies of Smith⁶, Shain⁷ and Ambrosio⁸. The hottest debate with

¹ There have been beliefs in the American tradition of lobbying that the word has been in use since the US President Grant's Administration (1869 – 1877), suggesting that since he had not been allowed by his wife to smoke in the White House, he used to smoke in the lobby of a near by hotel, and eventually politicians and other parties started asking him for favours there. However, the most widely accepted fact is that the term and the practice have originated in the practice of the British House of Commons' lobby, where the antecedent lobbyist used to approach Members of Parliament.

² Jeffrey M. Berry (1997). "The Interest Group Society", 3rd edition, Longman, London

³ Graham K. Wilson (1990) "Interest groups", Blackwell, Oxford

⁴ Baumgartner, Frank B. and Beth L. Leech 1998. "Basic Interests: The Importance of Groups in Politics and in Political Science", Princeton University Press, Princeton N. J.

⁵ Hojnacki, Marie and David C. Kimball (1999) "The Who and How of Organizations' Lobbying Strategies in Committee" in: *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 61, No. 4, pp. 999 – 1024.

⁶ Tony Smith (2000) "Foreign Attachments: The Power of Ethnic Groups in the Making of American Foreign Policy", Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts

⁷ Yossi Shain (1994) "Ethnic Diasporas and U.S. Foreign Policy" in: *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 109, No. 5

⁸ Ambrosio, Thomas (2002) "Ethnic Identity Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy" in: *Ethnic Identity Groups and U.S. Foreign policy*, Thomas Ambrosio (ed), Praeger, Westport

regard to ethnic lobbying in the US has developed around the role ethnic groups play in shaping US foreign policy. Two blocs can be identified in this debate; those that claim that ethnic groups' influence is strong and poses a threat to American national interest (for instance, Samuel Huntington) and those that argue that ethnic groups are influential only to some extent, and that influence is a good thing for promoting American values and objectives abroad (for example, Yossi Shain). However, the assessment whether the role of ethnic groups is "good" or "bad" in articulating US foreign policy will not be the subject of this thesis. The manner in which they do it will be.

The interest of this thesis is the means ethnic groups use to shape US policies, particularly towards their homelands. The scholars of ethnic group influence have stated that ethnic groups become influential by exercising voting potentials of the members of the ethnic group, boosting their organization capacities, donating campaign funds, building alliances with other social forces and networks within the policy making bodies. In other words, they exert pressure on foreign policy makers by relying on their membership. Still, observing the successes of Serbian lobbying in the US in recent years and recognizing the fact that the group of Serbian-Americans is small and largely inactive in the US, I will argue that success in lobbying the Congress can be achieved through marketing the homeland's objectives in line with US values and policies while relying on the features of the system of US Congress and a creation of supportive networks in policy making bodies. In addition, I will argue that, despite the regulation of the lobbying process in the US, diplomats and "foreign principals"⁹ do engage in what is indeed lobbying.

⁹ According to the *Foreign Agents Registration Act*, the term foreign principal includes all foreign governments, but it also includes foreign political parties, a person or organization based outside the US (excluding citizens of the US), a partnership, association, corporation, organization in the US but organized under the laws of a foreign country, and a partnership, association, corporation, organization in the US whose main business headquarters are based in a foreign country. However, the term excludes recognized diplomats and other agents engaged in bona fide activities.

The research underlying this thesis was carried out in Washington, DC from April 15th to April 25th, 2007, during which time House Resolution 309 on independence of Kosovo, accompanying the one previously introduced in the Senate, was introduced and a hearing on this Resolution was held on April 17th. The conclusions of this thesis were drawn by observing the Serbian lobbying efforts during this hectic period, interviews with Serbian lobbying agents, Mr. Borislav Stefanovic, Serbian Deputy Chief of Mission to the US, and Mr. Vuk Jeremic, Serbian Foreign Affairs Minister, who was in charge of direct communication with US officials during his post as Foreign Policy Advisor to the Serbian President, interviews with both Serbian and Armenian nationals in the US and Armenian-American organizations' leadership.

The cases presented in this thesis are the study of the activity of the Armenian-American ethnic group, used as a role model of ethnic lobbying in the US, and individuals lobbying on behalf of Serbia. These exact cases were selected for differences in their methods. Armenian-Americans are well organized in two ethnic lobbies, Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) and Armenian Assembly of America (AAA) and exercise the potentials of influencing US foreign policy towards Armenia through voting potentials of the ethnic group, their organization capacities, donations, alliances with other social forces and the Congressional Caucus on Armenian issues in the US Congress. On the other hand, Serbian-Americans are not as well organized and the ethnic group itself lacks efficiency in influencing US foreign policy makers. However, the homelands, Serbia and Armenia, are both considered to be “weak states”¹⁰, that is, “poor in ideological, material, and institutional

¹⁰ Yossi Shain and Ahron Barth (2003), “Diasporas and International Relations Theory” in: *International Organization*, Cambridge University Press, p. 462

resources”¹¹ and “not necessarily fully democratic”¹² with little or no influence in international relations.

Further, the overall system of lobbying observed, the US system, is the one that usually comes to mind when lobbying is being considered. This is the case due the nature of the US political system, its decentralized decision making process and participative political culture. Ethnic lobbying is particularly characteristic of the US, as a result of the character of the very foundation of the American polity.

The content of this thesis is laid out in five chapters. Since political science has not offered a comprehensive definition of lobbying and description of the process, the first chapter of this thesis is devoted to defining, regulation, origins and techniques of lobbying. The second chapter unveils the general features of the US system of lobbying, its characteristics and possible targets. The third chapter “Ethnicity and US foreign policy” offers general perspectives on ethnic groups’ influence on the foreign policy making process in the US. The fourth chapter depicts the practice of ethnic groups’ organization and mobilization, and especially the ethnic Armenian and Serbian cases. The last chapter reveals the details of Armenian-American and Serbian successes in lobbying US policy makers.

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Ibid

CHAPTER 1: LOBBYING

1.1 Definition of lobbying

If an area in politics is as controversial as lobbying is, it is natural that it causes many debates. Surprisingly, political science did not develop comprehensive theory or description of this omnipresent activity. Perhaps, this is because lobbying is considered sort of a craft or because a major part of it is hidden from the public eye and it cannot be fully explored.

The origins of both the word “lobbying” and the process itself are political. The word “lobbying” derives from the term “lobby”, and not any lobby, but the lobbies in parliaments, those where interest groups’ representatives have waited for members of parliament to present their views on current legislation and tried to influence their votes. However, in the American tradition of lobbying, claims have been made that the word had been in use since the US President Grant’s Administration (1869 – 1877), suggesting that since he did not use to smoke in the White House, but in the lobby of a nearby hotel, politicians and other parties eventually started attempting to meet him there and ask him for favours. The practice, on the other hand, has its roots in distant history. For example, Graham K. Wilson in his article “American interest groups” states that in the 1896 elections a certain lobbyist “Mark Hanna, relaying on business executives’ fear of the populists, raised millions of dollars for the Republicans”¹³.

The existing literature on lobbying rarely offers a precise definition. Indeed, most authors avoid defining it and use simple, operational and descriptive definitions that identify the verb “to lobby” as “to solicit or try to influence the votes of members of a legislative body”¹⁴. For instance, Anthony J. Nownes and Patricia Freeman define it as “any attempt to influence public policy” in an explanatory footnote of their article on lobbying¹⁵.

¹³ Graham K. Wilson (1993) “American interest groups” in: *Pressure groups*, ed. Jeremy J. Richardson, p. 131, Oxford University Press, New York

¹⁴ www.dictionary.com, last revised on December 28th, 2006

¹⁵ Anthony J. Nownes and Patricia Freeman (1998). “Interest Group Activity in the States”, in: *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 60, No. 1, p. 90, footnote 3

On the other hand, the acts regulating lobbying in the US offer a more valuable insight into the essence of this process. Lobbying in the US is regulated explicitly by two acts at the federal level, the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 and in case of foreign lobbyists, Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938.

The *Lobbying Disclosure Act* differentiates and defines two notions meaningful for defining lobbying – *lobbying activity* and *lobbying contact*. According to this Act, "lobbying activity means lobbying contacts and efforts in support of such contacts, including preparation and planning activities, research and other background work that is intended, at the time it is performed, for use in contacts, and coordination with the lobbying activities of others."¹⁶ The other important notion, *lobbying contact* is defined in the following way:

The term "lobbying contact" means any oral or written communication (including an electronic communication) to a covered executive branch official or a covered legislative branch official that is made on behalf of a client with regard to—

- (i) the formulation, modification, or adoption of Federal legislation (including legislative proposals);
- (ii) the formulation, modification, or adoption of a Federal rule, regulation, Executive order, or any other program, policy, or position of the United States Government;
- (iii) the administration or execution of a Federal program or policy (including the negotiation, award, or administration of a Federal contract, grant, loan, permit, or license); or
- (iv) the nomination or confirmation of a person for a position subject to confirmation by the Senate.¹⁷

The second act, the *Foreign Agents Registration Act* of 1938, initially enacted to limit the activity of Nazi movement in the US, requires all foreign agents representing foreign principals to register with the Department of Justice, disclosing the purpose of representation, and income. It only requires registration of foreign agents and disclosure of their activities, not attempting to restrict their behavior. The term foreign principal includes all foreign governments, but it also includes foreign political parties, a person or organization based

¹⁶ The Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, sec. 3(7)

¹⁷ The Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, sec 3(A)

outside the US (excluding citizens of the US), a partnership, association, corporation, organization in the US but organized under the laws of a foreign country, and a partnership, association, corporation, organization in the US whose main business headquarters are based in a foreign country. However, the term excludes recognized diplomats and other agents engaged in bona fide activities¹⁸. Nevertheless, this last exclusion of diplomats from the group of lobbying agents in the US does not appear to fully agree with the contemporary practice, as it will be argued in this thesis, particularly while reviewing the case study of Serbian lobbying in the US.

1.2 Approaches to lobbying

In addition to few attempts to define lobbying to be discussed below, political science has offered different approaches to the process. The existing approaches to lobbying highlighted different aspects or a different nature of lobbying. Accordingly to different views of the essence of lobbying each approach pointed to, they could be divided into three major ones. The first group could be designated as the pluralist approach, the second one as the neo-pluralist approach and the newest one is identified as “the legislative subsidy” theory¹⁹.

1.2.1 Pluralist approach

The classical pluralism approach is based on the simple assumption that there is a multitude of different interests and that it is the role of the state to arbitrate, respect and promote the represented interests. This approach has been endorsed by various authors, for instance David B. Truman²⁰, but it is far more interesting to observe the historical origin of this approach. The idea of a government that acts as service to its citizens’ interest goes as far

¹⁸ Both acts available at www.usdoj.gov, last revised on January 5th, 2007

¹⁹ Richard L. Hall and Alan V. Deardorff (2006), “Lobbying as a Legislative Subsidy” in: *American Political Science Journal*, Vol. 100, No. 1, pp. 69 – 84.

²⁰ See: David B. Truman (1958) “The Governmental Process: political interests and public opinion”, New York: Alfred A. Knopf

as the “Federalist papers”, Essay No. 10. Explicitly, James Madison foresaw, before lobbies or even parties were created in the US, that people would organize in order to promote their common interest because it is in the nature of man. In Essay No. 10, Madison states that “the regulation of these various and interfering interests forms the principal task of modern legislation and involves the spirit of party and faction in the necessary and ordinary operations of government”²¹. Furthermore, Madison perceived these groups or “factions” as a potential threat to the popular government, claiming that some groups and some interest might become more powerful and more influential than others (“mischief of factions”). Madison worried that some interest could become as powerful as to hurt the common, public interest. “Madison’s dilemma”, as Jeffrey M. Berry entitles it²², about the democratic nature of interest groups and lobbying remains the greatest obscurity when organized interests or in other words lobbying is concerned.

1.2.2 Neo-pluralist approach

The fear James Madison had expressed, that some private interests might become even more powerful than the common, public interest was exactly what the neo-realists claimed had happened. For example, authors such as Lindblom or Austen-Smith²³ addressed these asymmetries of power. What they basically advocated was that governments needed these powerful interests, such as business, to run a state, therefore business interests prevail. According to this approach, the state assumes an active role in empowering specifically these citizen groups.

²¹ James Madison, Alexander Hamilton and John Jay [1788] (1987) “The Federalist Papers”, X, The Penguin Books, London, p.124

²² Berry (1997). “The Interest Group Society”

²³ See: David Austen-Smith, (1996) “Interest Groups: Money, Information and Influence.” In *Perspectives on Public Choice*, ed. Dennis Mueller. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

We could also identify another set of theories with similar, but somewhat extended arguments. The exchange theories, also known as the vote buying theories of lobbying in which the lobbyists were perceived as “agents of exchange”²⁴, engaging in mutually beneficial trades. The model is based on the assumption that campaign contributions are exchanged for votes. Thus, the highest contributors’ interests are those that get endorsed.

1.2.3 Subsidy approach

When it comes to the observed practice of ethnic lobbying, “the subsidy approach” to lobbying has great explanatory power, stating that representatives willingly meet with representatives of ethnic groups in order to gain more information before articulating a policy. The approach was introduced by Hall and Deardorff’s. They define lobbying as a form of legislative subsidy – “a matching grant of policy information, political intelligence, and legislative labor to the enterprises of strategically selected legislators”²⁵. In other words, lobbyists try to subsidize the legislative procedures of those legislative targets that are already their allies. However, as empirical researches show, lobbyists do not lobby only their allies, but also undecided targets and even unfriendly targets, in order to weaken their opposition. Nevertheless, the “legislative subsidy” theory can be considered noteworthy for overcoming the pluralists’ postulation that the success of a lobbying attempt depends solely on the target that is lobbied; that targets “hear what they want to hear”²⁶.

Complementary to this approach are theories that view lobbying as persuasion or informative signalling about the citizens’ preferences, argued by Hansen, Wright and Hojnacki and Kimball²⁷. The idea of these authors is different to the classical pluralist approach in one distinctive feature concerned with voters; Hansen argued that lobbying

²⁴ Hall and Deardorff (2006), “Lobbying as a Legislative Subsidy”, p. 70.

²⁵ Ibid, p. 69.

²⁶ Ibid, p.70.

²⁷ See for instance: John Mark Hansen. (1991) «Gaining Access: Congress and the Farm Lobby, 1919–1981». Chicago: University of Chicago

targets, pursuing re-election, could be influenced by obtaining and presenting information about their constituency's preferences that are lobbyist-friendly.

1.3 Defining lobbying

Although political science has not offered a comprehensive definition of lobbying, for the purpose of establishing this definition, two concepts will be assessed. The broader concept is David Easton's theory of political systems, more precisely, his conception of inputs into the political system.

Easton distinguishes two types of inputs into the political system, demands and support. He subclassifies the variety of demands made to the political system (the black box of governance) in the following way: 1. demands for allocations of goods and services, 2. demands for the regulation of behavior, 3. demands for participation in the political system and 4. demands for communication and information²⁸. By furthering Easton's concept, we arrive at demarcating lobbying as a practice of communicating society-based demands to government in order to shape or change the polity.

The second, narrower concept is the Milbrath's attempt to delineate the term "lobbying" by setting several boundaries. The first boundary is that "lobbying relates only to governmental decision-making"²⁹, that is, to those that "affect the entire body politic"³⁰. Second, there has to be present the intent to influence governmental decision-making in contrast to other factors that might affect that decision-making process. The third element of lobbying according to Milbrath would be the presence of "an intermediary or representative as a communication link between citizens and government"³¹. The last component of his definition of lobbying is that it has to involve an act of communication. Finally, Milbrath

²⁸ David Easton (1957), "An approach to the Analysis of Political Systems" in: *World Politics*, April, 1957, pp. 383 - 408

²⁹ Lester W. Milbrath (1963) "The Washington Lobbyist", Rand McNally & Company, Chicago, p. 7

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ Ibid, p. 8

broadly defines lobbying as “the stipulation and transmission of a communication, by someone other than a citizen acting on his behalf, directed to a governmental decision-maker with the hope of influencing his decision”³².

Although Milbrath’s concept presents a worthy attempt in defining lobbying, due to being described more than 40 years ago, his definition lacks several contemporary additions. Most of all, Milbrath’s definition is inadequate for including solely the intra-state elements and excluding transnational elements. This has left his notion of lobbying insufficient for explaining the attempts of ethnic minorities (that are always to some degree linked to their homeland’s governments or, in cases of minorities that only claim their homeland, are motivated by the notion of homeland) to influence the hostland’s officials.

For the purpose of defining lobbying in this thesis and for the definition to incorporate features of ethnic lobbying, several elements of Milbrath’s definition will be maintained; First, Milbrath’s observation that lobbying is the attempt to influence decisions of governmental officials and not other agents; Secondly, his concept of an intermediary has to be somewhat altered to include the observed changes of the term ‘lobbying agent’, namely it would have to include diplomats working with Congress and special envoys of homeland’s government, since the observation of the practice clearly suggests that their work with the US Congress matches lobbying accurately.

Therefore, the definition of lobbying to be referred to in this paper states that lobbying is a process of continuous communicating, to policymaking officials, the demands for the creation, alteration or termination of a policy made by professional lobbyists, diplomats, politicians or other agents.

³² Ibid

1.4 Techniques of lobbying

For lobbying to be examined properly, every effort to define it should include a list of techniques for influencing the targets lobbied. The literature based on surveys and actual practice usually depicts the inside/outside dichotomy to categorize lobbying techniques. Techniques used to influence actual policy makers are discussed as techniques of “inside lobbying” and the techniques used to influence a broader public (that is, the constituencies, public opinion and the media) are regarded as “outside lobbying”. Deriving from this division, interest groups engaged in lobbying themselves are classified as “insider” and “outsider” groups. However, the evolution of the practice of lobbying in the USA has made this dichotomy obsolete and outdated (both the dichotomy concerning techniques and the group characterization deriving from it), since most of the interest groups use every possible technique from both spectrums ignoring the theoretical division.

Baumgartner’s and Leech’s “Basic interest”³³ successfully puts forward the sum of different views on lobbying activities. Their examination of the techniques used supposes the following categorization:

testimony at legislative or agency hearings, **direct contacts** of legislators or other officials, **presenting research results**, **coalitions**: working with other groups and planning strategy with government officials, **mass media**: talking to journalists and paid advertisements, **policy formation**: drafting legislations, drafting regulations, shaping policy implementation, serving on advisory commissions, agenda setting, **constituent influence**: letter writing campaigns, working with influential citizens, alerting legislators to district effects, **litigation**: filing suits or amicus briefs, **elections**: campaign contributions, campaign work, candidate endorsements, protests and demonstrations, **other**: monitoring, influencing appointments, doing favors for officials.³⁴

Although the majority of the examined literature on lobbying promotes either grassroots or direct strategies, a new approach of correlating the selected target and

³³ Baumgartner and Leech (1998) “Basic Interests: The Importance of Groups in Politics and in Political Science”

³⁴ Ibid, p.152

techniques of influence appears to apply to the lobbying reality the best. Such an approach was proposed by Hojnacki and Kimball³⁵. They conclude that the choice of lobbying methods is affected by the following: 1. preference for policy (are lobbying efforts oriented toward policy change or status quo), 2. expectations about whether and how the target is likely to help, 3. the capacities of the lobbying body direct and grassroots- based appeals. In other words, lobbyists select targets and match the selected tactics to their targets strategically in order to approach the selected target in the most effective manner for achieving their objectives.

³⁵ Hojnacki and Kimball (1999) "The Who and How of Organizations' Lobbying Strategies in Committee"

CHAPTER 2: US SYSTEM OF LOBBYING

2.1 Characteristics of the US system of lobbying

It is customary to link lobbying to the political system of USA. This is not without a cause. There are a great number of reasons why the US is a fertile ground for the emergence of interest groups and lobbies. These reasons arise out of the nature of the political system, its decentralized decision making process and participative political culture.

Graham K. Wilson³⁶ refers to Alexis de Tocqueville and Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba claiming that Americans are more willing than most people to join interest groups and that this willingness is the reason there are very few interests without representation in Washington, DC in current American life. In addition, Americans are encouraged to participate in political life from grade school on.

Beyond this general willingness and socialization lies a multitude of institutional predispositions to congregate a large number of represented interests. First, the state – society relation is determined by the lack of state autonomy since the governmental decision making process is deeply penetrated by interest groups. According to Smith³⁷, the weakness of central government is a product of the very founding of the American polity. Considerations that argued for the creation of a weak government varied, from the preservation of greater powers of the states, given their different character they had as colonies, followed by the better protection of private property and special features of the development of capitalism and market (opposing more forcefully regulation of the state, compared to other democracies), and religious reasons for limiting state power and an overall culture of safeguarding freedom.

According to the limits set before the central government, the Founding Fathers created a system of checks and balances as well, that resulted “not so much in a division of

³⁶ Wilson (1990) “Interest groups”, p. 40

³⁷ Smith (2000) “Foreign Attachments: The Power of Ethnic Groups in the Making of American Foreign Policy”

power as in a sharing or overlap of responsibilities that works to see that no single branch, much less individual, can monopolize power”³⁸, opening, in this way, more access for organized interest to influence the decision making process.

The second reason is the nature of the party / electoral system, resulting in ill-discipline of American political parties. Due to the majority electoral system, a legislator would rarely be subject to any sanctions from party leadership for not following the party line if his or her constituency would demand it, because in a majority system like the American, it all leads back to the voters. An elected representative responds to his or her constituency and is always sensitive to its interests. According to Wilson³⁹, besides the lack of discipline, American parties also lack the ideological division. This facilitates for lobbyists to approach representatives disregarding their ideological and/or party affiliation.

Beside the institutional arrangements that enhance lobbying in the US, there are several practical distinctive US features that boost the number of lobbying accesses to elected representatives. One of these distinctions is the existence of Political Action Committees. A Political Action Committee or PAC is a group organized to fund the election campaigns of candidates favourable to the interests of the respective group. Funds collected are donated to the legislator that will advance the groups agenda. Regulated by the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971⁴⁰, PACs had become significant agents in the US politics.

The second distinction is the organization of institutions being lobbied, that is, the large number of staffers and other officials serving in offices of legislators. According to Berry, lower ranked officials are more accessible and it is even more efficient to influence them than the actual representatives, since they can include various interests in the legislation proposal faster than the representatives.

³⁸ Ibid, p. 87

³⁹ Wilson (1990) “Interest groups”, p.

⁴⁰ Amended in 1974

The third distinct characteristic of the US lobbying system is the role of think tanks. Abandoning their previous role as “little universities without students”⁴¹ and taking the more active, advocating role, scholars have taken an important role in the policymaking process. As Berry reports, think tanks design their projects to cover the legislation currently being drafted, shape them into short, easily comprehensible outlines and initiate a public relations campaign and even hire lobbyist to lobby their stands.

2.2 Targets in the US system of lobbying

After examining the features of the system, the next step would be to examine the list of targets that are normally lobbied within the US system. The study of the possible lobbying targets is important for practical reasons, as well, since setting the target right is of vital importance for successful lobbying. Targets most frequently lobbied in the US are the Congress, the executive branch (the White House and various administrative agencies) and the courts.

2.2.1 The Congress

The Congress is, among the abovementioned targets, the most frequently lobbied institution in the US. The most obvious reason for the Congress being lobbied more than other institutions is that the elections and (possibly even more so) re-elections of the representatives depends on the voters in their electoral districts, hence representatives are very sensitive to their interests and consequently more accessible to representatives of these interests. Within the Congress, the targets most lobbied are the chairmen of committees of the highest interest to the society and both the majority and minority leadership.

The form of lobbying the House or Senate representatives most widely used is lobbying the committees or sub-committees of their interest. Due to the fact that most of the

⁴¹ Berry (1997), “Interest group society”, p. 126

Congress' work is done in committees, most of lobbyists' work is done there too. According to Wilson, it is customary for legislators to join committees "which will enable them to provide useful services to constituents"⁴². This makes representatives willing to meet with lobbyists and hear their arguments. Here, lobbyists serve as a kind of "unpaid staff"⁴³ for the representatives, being a source of information for the legislators.

As Berry claims, the most prestigious form of lobbying in the Congress is testifying at a Congressional hearing since it shows that the "...group plays an important part in the legislative process, and because it helps to legitimize their further participation."⁴⁴ Besides, the hearings can bring publicity to the issue. However, the most efficient form of lobbying in the Congress is meeting personally with representatives and their staffers. Presenting their case in a private meeting gives lobbyists a chance to "make the legislator understand the virtue of the group's position"⁴⁵

When dealing with representatives, lobbyists place them in categories, of which each requires its own strategy:

1. Champions – dedicated, tireless advocates of the groups' interest. These representatives lobby their colleagues and serve as spokespersons for the cause. All they need from lobbyists are information.
2. Allies – another group of supportive legislators. The only difference is that they need more persuading to campaign the cause.
3. Fence-sitters – uncommitted legislators that could potentially support either sides. They are the ones most frequently targeted by lobbyists.
4. Mellow opponents – opposition legislators. In lobbying these representatives the main goal is to keep them from being active.

⁴² Wilson, (1990) "Interest groups", p. 54

⁴³ Ibid, p. 43

⁴⁴ Berry, (1997) "Interest groups society", p. 164

⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 165

5. Hard core opponents – leaders of the interest's opposition. The most important thing in lobbying them is to isolate them, highlighting the extremes of their stands and stopping other legislators to join them.⁴⁶

2.2.2 The executive branch

In order to maximize the efforts of lobbying legislation, lobbyists need to monitor the process of regulation of details and implementation usually left to the executive agencies. The techniques widely used to influence the executive branch are helping to draft administrative regulations and testifying at fact-finding hearings held by an agency.

Lobbying bureaucrats in the US differs to that in Europe. For instance, Wilson claims that “American bureaucrats are not simply administrators. Rather, they are political administrators”⁴⁷ balancing between overseeing by the chief executive (the President's office), the Congress' committees and the courts. This ‘political’ element in the life of bureaucracy naturally includes interests of various groups concerned with a particular agency.

Although bureaucrats are somewhat bounded by day-to-day politics, there is a significant difference between lobbying administrators and actual politicians. Bureaucrats are appointed, hence they are not worried about popularity and the next elections and not inclined to be sensitive to any constituencies' interests. Furthermore, they are considerably more experienced and informed about their area of expertise, so a lobbyist trying to influence them has to be of similar skills. On the other hand, administrative agencies can benefit from good relations with lobbyist influential in the Congress in terms of budget increase.

Lobbying the inner circle of the highest executive office, the White House, presumes having effective contacts more than any other form of lobbying, since that circle usually is extremely selective about who they see.

⁴⁶ The categories available at www.democracymc.org/lobbying_basics, last revised on January 5th, 2007

⁴⁷ Wilson (1997) “Interest groups”, p. 60

2.2.3 The courts

One of the most distinctive features of the American lobbying system is lobbying the courts. Due to the distinctiveness of the judicial branch in the US (the rulings of the court having the power of laws and policies), and despite the barriers to exerting pressure on influencing judiciary, imposed by “the deliberate isolation of the judiciary from the political process and by the aura of impartiality surrounding it”⁴⁸, courts are a noteworthy target of lobbying. Lobbying the courts has several forms. Wilson lists four:

- First, interest groups can be direct parties in litigations.
- Second, they can encourage an individual to bring a case to court bearing the costs of trial. Third, an interest group can challenge decisions in the Appeals Courts.
- Finally, interest group can intervene in cases of importance without being directly involved, acting as ‘a friend of the court’ filing numerous briefs. From this aspect, courts seem to provide a forum for different interests.

Targeting the courts is especially characteristic of those groups that failed to lobby other policymaking institutions.

Nevertheless, the major element in influencing the judiciary is attempting to affect the selection of federal judges. Once the president announces a nominee, the Senate has to confirm the nomination. The most famous example of interest group affecting the selection process is the nomination of judge Bork in 1987. Berry presents an example of the rejection of the nomination of Judge Robert Bork to the Supreme Court following the efforts of the

⁴⁸ Milbrath (1963) “The Washington Lobbyist”

liberal interest groups, led by the National Abortion Rights Action League and People for the American Way, which launched a large public relations campaign to discredit Judge Bork⁴⁹.

These are only the general predispositions for the American polity to succumb to the influence of various interest groups. Due to this pluralism of American politics, each subset of organized interest finds furthered conditions to exercise its lobbying efforts within its area of interest.

⁴⁹ Berry (1997), "Interest group society" , p.173

CHAPTER 3: ETHNICITY AND US FOREIGN POLICY

As Wilson argued⁵⁰, there are very few interests without representation in the American politics. Interest groups organized around ethnicity are a feature of the more recent period in US politics, and the rise of the efficiency and power of these groups is characteristic especially in the post-Cold War times. Smith defined ethnic interest group as “a voluntary organization of people with a collective identity based on an intellectually formulated and emotionally felt assertion of their distinctiveness from other peoples.”⁵¹ He further claimed that this collective identity is “typically expressed in an account of a people’s common history, their common culture (a variable mix of language, symbols and ceremonies religious beliefs and family practices), and their common destiny – all felt with enough intensity to give this community the unity and purpose to seek to be politically represented for the sake of demands specific to their group identity at the level of the state”.⁵² Smith differentiated the notion of ethnicity from the related notion of nationality, arguing that the notion of a nation to be “a politically more demanding variant of ethnic consciousness, one that calls for a state on a designated territory to give sovereign political form to the collective life of an ethnically described people.”⁵³ In this way, the concept of dual, divided or conflicted loyalties was brought into the American politics’ discourse, allowing for groups to have another collective identity, in addition to being American nationals.

Ethnic interest groups are a subset of interest groups with a specific feature. They often have connections outside the US, being either a part of a diaspora with ethnic kin in their historical homeland or scattered among numerous countries or perceiving similarities with another ethnic group.

⁵⁰ Wilson (1990) “Interest groups”

⁵¹ Smith (2000) “Foreign Attachments”, p. 21

⁵² Ibid

⁵³ Ibid

3.1 Influencing US foreign policy

US foreign policy has long been influenced by ethnic lobbies. The influence was visible as far back as the 19th century, but it became obviously affected by ethnic lobbies in the 20th century, especially in the post-Cold War period⁵⁴. There are several conditions enhancing various points of access to foreign policy decision making process for ethnic lobbies.

First, after the end of the Cold War, the US stood to be the only remaining Great Power with the ability to significantly influence world affairs. Given that the notions of national interest and common good are vague concepts, open for interpretation, and usually beyond the grasp of a wide circle of people and public opinion, US foreign policy in a unipolar world has become a powerful tool for shaping the life of the homeland for any ethnic group and their empowerment in this period is only natural. Furthermore, the newly risen state of world affairs has consequently reawakened American internationalism, as opposed to its isolationism in preceding eras.

Second, the multiethnic character of the American polity is the basis for the activity of ethnic groups. Namely, it was the ethnic composition of the American electorate that provided the precondition for ethnic lobbies' to be able to form the US policies. Being the "nation of immigrants", however, was not sufficient. Although there had always been groups in the US that had affective political ties to their homeland and kinship all over the world, these groups were limited by some degree of assimilation within the "overarching and separate 'American' national identity"⁵⁵. It was the rise of multiculturalism in the 1970s and 1980s that "led to a greater acceptance of multiple identities within the American body politic without calling into

⁵⁴ According to Smith, the most influential ethnic group in the US in the 19th century were the Irish Americans, the early 20th century American foreign policy was directed by the German, Scandinavian, Irish and later Italian Americans; during the Cold war the US foreign policy was affected by West European, East European or Balkan Americans that feared communism, and by Jewish American that supported the creation of Israel; the post-Cold War period is marked by a multitude of ethnic groups' attempts' to shape US foreign policy.

⁵⁵ Ambrosio (2002) "Ethnic Identity Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy", p. 3

question the loyalty of those holding multiple identities”⁵⁶. Consequentially, this rising multiculturalism had endorsed political mobilization of ethnic groups that enhanced the power of ethnic lobbies in creating US foreign policy towards their respective homelands.

Most importantly, the actual political situation in the last few decades in the US, intertwined with the institutional system, had a significant effect for the rise of countless ethnic lobbies and their influence. The 1990s witnessed great changes in the foreign policy establishment; firstly, the decline of the domination of the executive branch in the foreign policy process. It has developed into a more open, pluralist process. Although the presidency remained the most powerful institution, it now must contend with the Congress, the executive bureaucracy and respond to pressures initiated by the media, public opinion, think tanks and interest groups. Further, the Congress itself is a decentralized institution. As a result of its numerous “points at which legislation can be either initiated or blocked, even civic interests operating on a small social base may find their concerns being reflected in Congress”⁵⁷. In other words, it is only necessary for a group to have a clear agenda, no powerful enemies and to be demographically well concentrated to gain a disproportional effect on members of Congress, “who, in turn, become advocates for their constituents’ ethnic kin outside of the United States”⁵⁸. The mentioned erosion of the autonomy of the president in foreign policy affairs was additionally exacerbated by President Clinton, “who was initially focused on domestic issues and less interested and experienced in foreign policy matters”⁵⁹, followed by its successor’s, George W. Bush’s inexperience in foreign policy and his controversial election⁶⁰. In addition, the ‘divided government’ arrangement was further increased by the narrow balances of Republicans and Democrats in Congress and Senate, opening even wider gaps in the foreign policy process for ethnic lobbies to fill in.

⁵⁶ Ibid

⁵⁷ Smith (2000) “Foreign Attachments”, p.88

⁵⁸ Ambrosio (2002) “Ethnic Identity Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy”, p. 9

⁵⁹ Ibid

⁶⁰ Ibid

3.1.1 Ways of influence

According to Smith⁶¹, there are three general ways in which ethnic lobbies bring pressure on the policy makers; by voting, by campaign contributions and by an organizational body which formulates the strategy, provides unity for the community, builds alliances with other social forces, and monitors the policy making process.

3.1.1.1 Voting

From looking at numbers, it is hard to argue that ethnic voting gives leverage to ethnic groups. The most powerful ethnic groups in Washington, Jewish Americans are only 3 percent of the American population, Greek Americans barely 1, Cuban and Armenian at most half percent⁶². However, there have been several cases in recent American history where ethnoracial voting played a crucial role in the presidential elections. For instance, in Clinton's victory both in 1992 and 1996 general elections. According to Smith, in 1996 elections, Clinton received only 43 percent of the 'white vote', while his counterpart, Robert Dole got 46 percent. Nevertheless, his marginal victory was the result of 84 percent of the 'black' and 72 percent of 'Hispanic vote'. Further, he won 72 percent of the 'Jewish vote' and the majority of the 'white Catholic vote' (mainly, 'Irish' and 'Polish vote'). The power of ethno racial voting made him "the ethnic group's president"⁶³.

The 'votes for influence' formula is even more applicable in elections for Congress. Ethnic lobbies can well exercise their influence through well placed members of Congress, senior senators or representatives in charge of committees of interest of the ethnic community. Due to the role of primaries in the congressional elections, the voting pressure on Congress,

⁶¹ Smith (2000) "Foreign Attachments", p.85 - 129

⁶² Smith (2000) "Foreign Attachments", p. 95

⁶³ Ibid, p. 96

particularly on the House of Representatives, opens a source of access for ethnic lobbies. For instance, the number of ethnic Albanians may be small, but they account for 17 percent of the population in upstate New York, which makes their representative attentive to their concerns.

3.1.1.2 Campaign Donations

Due to the often emerging scandals, campaign donations are one of the most controversial issues of American political tradition. When influence is concerned, there is an ongoing debate on how much influence campaign donations can buy. However, campaign donations offer another source of access to policy makers for ethnic lobbies, important for two reasons. First, the donations allow small constituencies, lacking voting power, to have an impact on representatives. Second, it is allowed for the figures outside the districts do donate money to the campaigns for races they might be interested in. Nevertheless, in the relation between ethnic lobbies and campaign donations there is always another important consideration and that is the role of foreign governments in ethnic donations.

3.1.1.3 Organization

Maintaining an organization of an ethnic community is probably the most important condition for an ethnic lobby to become a viable political force. As already mentioned the primary tasks of an organization are preserving unity within the community, forming alliances with other groups and advocating policy positions and monitoring the behaviour of government officials.

According to Smith, for an ethnic lobby to be effective as an organization, it requires institutional strength, funds must be raised, voters mobilized, harmony of personalities and ideological consensus ensured within the organization. Usually, the major constraints on ethnic lobbies are personal or inter – organizational rivalries, disagreements about policy

direction and differences in opinion with elected officials or public opinion in homeland, i.e. the obstacles for speaking with a single voice.

Smith also listed a number of empowering parallels shared by major ethnic lobbies (Jewish, Greek and Armenian); they all enjoy solidarity based on distinctive religious basis; they have foreign governments to which they can relate and a powerful foreign enemy that stirs fear. In addition, most of these groups have assimilated smoothly into American society.

3.1.1.4 Monitoring policy making

The final condition for successful lobbying is the ability to closely monitor and define the policy, and that presumes networks of contacts in decision making bodies. Obviously, the President is the single most important decision maker. However, it is highly difficult to gain access to the President; therefore, ethnic lobbies use the advantages of easier access to the Congress, especially to the House of Representatives. Congressional caucuses have proven to have the authority to be crucial actors in processing legislation. Hence, major ethnic lobbies maintain to gather significant, influential Representatives and Senators in their caucuses in order to become part of the system. The efficiency and access gained by these “infrastructures of influence”⁶⁴ are attributes of an ethnic lobby that votes and money alone cannot buy, but instead are gained by “patience, intelligence, determination, and time”⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Smith (2000) “Foreign Attachments”, p.124

⁶⁵ Ibid

CHAPTER 4: ETHNIC LOBBYING

Ethnic lobbying in the US is done by ethnic groups' members; they exert grassroots pressure as US citizens on their representatives. Meanwhile, they are organized in ethnic organizations that function as interest groups. However, there are major differences that distinguish ethnic groups and ethnically conscious citizens from other groups and individual citizens. The fundamental difference is the “transnational” element⁶⁶ and their connection to their homeland which might have a role in shaping US policies in international relations.

4.1 Ethnic lobbies

4.1.1 Terminology

The existing literature on ethnicity uses several terms, “diaspora” or “ethnic identity group” or “ethnic lobby”, when referring to citizens with foreign origins, without setting the difference between them and using them interchangeably. This lack of precision causes confusion. Therefore, for the purpose of clarity, a difference between the terms has to be set.

Ultimately, all the terms suggest more or less the same entity from different perspectives. As Shain and Barth define, “diaspora” enumerates “people with a common origin who reside, more or less on a permanent basis, outside the borders of their ethnic or religious homeland—whether that homeland is real or symbolic, independent or under foreign control. Diaspora members identify themselves, or are identified by others—inside and outside their homeland—as part of the homeland’s national community, and as such are often

⁶⁶ The term “transnationalism” is used by scholars of ethnicity issues to describe a new concern in American politics. By this term Shain suggested that “far more than their predecessors, they [ethnic minorities] keep ‘one foot’ in their homeland and the other in the United States.” Shain attributes this change to the improvements in transportation and communication that allows immigrants to remain political actors both in their homelands and in the US. The concern that has been raised in the US about the role immigrants might have in formulating the American national interest.

called upon to participate, or are entangled, in homeland-related affairs.”⁶⁷. To assert the meaning of the term, Shain also delineates diaspora as “mainly migrants and their descendants who are linked by ties of origin, ethnic association, or nationality - feel a sense of kinship with the land of their ancestors and share an abiding interest in the politics of their ancestral country or symbolic homeland.”⁶⁸

The second term “ethnic identity group” is used to depict “politically relevant social divisions based on a shared sense of cultural distinctiveness”⁶⁹, suggesting their precise distinction is their connection outside of the US. “Either they are part of a diaspora, with ethnic kin in their historical homelands or scattered among numerous countries, or they perceive similarities between themselves and other ethnic groups...”⁷⁰.

The last term “ethnic lobby” is the most specific of them all. It identifies “political organizations established along cultural, ethnic, religious or racial lines that seek to directly or indirectly influence U.S. foreign policy in support of their homeland and / or ethnic kin abroad.”⁷¹ Basically, they represent interest groups organized around ethnicity and concentrated mostly on foreign policy, as ground research shows, more precisely on foreign aid, military assistance and exerting pressure to affect the hostland’s position in international disputes.

As observed, there is in fact a difference in these terms. The broadest of them, the term “diaspora” suggests an overall diaspora, a group of people of the same origin but scattered in different countries, other than their homeland. The second, “ethnic identity group”, more narrow in meaning, suggests an ethnic minority within one society that has the potential of organizing in “ethnic lobbies”, the third term under consideration, which encompasses an

⁶⁷ Yossi Shain and Ahron Barth (2003), “Diasporas and International Relations Theory” in: *International Organization*, Cambridge University Press, p. 452

⁶⁸ Shain (1994) “Ethnic Diasporas and U.S. Foreign Policy” p. 811

⁶⁹ Ambrosio (ed.), (2002) “Ethnic Identity Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy”, p. 1

⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 2

⁷¹ Ibid

actual organization, a hierarchy, offices, activists and supporters, and a goal. Therefore, when observing the Armenian- and Serbian – American case studies, the terms will be used according to this distinction; ethnic group to denominate the Armenian and Serbian population in the US, and ethnic lobby to indicate the organization of their leadership.

4.2 Ethnic groups' activity in the US

Because the US is a “melting pot” society, it does not come as a surprise its ethnic constitution frequently shapes its politics. However, perhaps the hardest task when it comes to analysis of ethnic groups in the US is assessing its size, its composition, distribution and especially its propensity to influence the home country’s politics. This propensity is related to the level of ethnic cohesion within the hostland and ethnic groups’ connection to homeland. These two elements are the major indicators of a group’s potential to mobilize its members and engage in political activity.

4.2.1 Ethnic mobilization

Political mobilization, or “the process by which masses become politically active”⁷², along ethnic lines persisted into modernity despite expectations. Ethnic mobilization, as stated is related to the sense of cohesion among the members of an ethnic group. Ethnic cohesion indicates “the levels of interaction among group members as well as their connection with outsiders”⁷³. As Kotler- Berkowitz noted “[t]he more ethnic group members interact frequently and non-conflictually in structural spheres, the higher the level of ethnic cohesion”⁷⁴.

⁷² Paul, (2002) “Serbian–American Mobilization and Lobbying: The relevance of Jasenovac and Kosovo to contemporary Grassroots efforts in the United States” in: *Ethnic Identity Groups and U.S. Foreign policy*, Thomas Ambrosio (ed), Praeger, Westport, p. 93 - 111

⁷³ Ibid, p. 10

⁷⁴ Quoted according to Shain (1999) “Marketing the American Creed Abroad”, p. 10

However, there is no consensus among scholars concerning the ways ethnic cohesion is transformed to political mobilization. According to Paul⁷⁵, instrumentalism posits that ethnicity is “a tool for mobilizing groups for competitive purposes”⁷⁶ and that elites use it to “achieve political goals during societal development”⁷⁷. Further, she adds the constructionist explanation that ethnic identity that boosts ethnic cohesion is “‘constructed’ by elites through the process of state building and is dependent in part upon changes in communication within societies.”⁷⁸ She asserts that the constructionist recognition of the function of outside forces in identity forming has a high significance in explaining ethnic mobilization over time.

4.2.2 Political mobilization of ethnic Armenians and Serbs in the US

Political mobilization of the two ethnic groups to be portrayed in this thesis is shaped by the force of group memory and experience. Indeed, the scholars of the constructionist school point to the importance of group memory and collective myths – “with particular significance assigned to the role of group trauma in promoting solidarity.”⁷⁹ In the case of Armenian – Americans, it is the memory of the genocide and its recognition by others that provokes action. On the other hand, the attempts to mobilize the Serbian – American population rely as well on a sense of victimization and the myth of Kosovo.

4.2.2.1 Ethnic Armenians

As stated earlier, the size, composition and distribution of an ethnic population in the US is hard to assess. According to speculations of Armenian – American lobbies, the number of ethnic Armenians in the US is close to 1.5 million and they have fortunately settled in

⁷⁵ Rachel Paul, (2002) “Serbian–American Mobilization and Lobbying: The relevance of Jasenovac and Kosovo to contemporary Grassroots efforts in the United States”

⁷⁶ Ibid, p. 98

⁷⁷ Ibid

⁷⁸ Ibid

⁷⁹ Ibid, p. 99

California, Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Michigan mostly. This concentration allows them to have great voting power in those districts. Further, they are one of the best organized ethnic groups in the US. Two Armenian organizations work in the US, the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) that traces its roots back to 1918 and the Armenian Assembly of America, active from 1972; and a large and very active political action committee run by the Armenian National Committee – ANC-PAC. Their lobbying efforts, although motivated by the memory of the Armenian Genocide, were triggered by the devastating earthquake in Armenia in 1988. According to Aram Hamparian⁸⁰, all Armenian lobbying effort are aimed at enacting a US Congress Resolution recognizing Armenian genocide, the status of the Azeri region Nagorno-Karabakh populated predominantly by Armenians, US Foreign Aid to Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, preventing foreign and military aid for Azerbaijan and economic issues. The efforts of Armenian-Americans in aiding Armenia “earned it the sobriquet of “The Israel of the Caucuses”⁸¹

4.2.2.2 The Armenian Genocide as a source of political mobilization

Robin Cohen characterizes the Armenian diaspora as a “victim diaspora”⁸² following the massacres and forcible deportation of supposedly over a million Armenians during 1915 – 1917 (1923)⁸³ under the government of Young Turks. The Armenian genocide is “the first major example of what has come to be known as ‘ethnic cleansing’.”⁸⁴ What frustrates the Armenian diaspora is that, although several countries recognized the events of 1915 as

⁸⁰ Executive director of ANCA, (author interview, April 19th, 2007).

⁸¹ Shain (1999) “Marketing the American Creed Abroad”, p. 64

⁸² Robin Cohen (1996) “Diasporas and the Nation-State: From Victims to Challengers», in: *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)*, Vol. 72, No. 3, Ethnicity and International Relations, p. 507 - 520

⁸³ The data on the Armenian genocide is still under scholarly debate, some scholars claim that the genocide started in the 19th century.

⁸⁴ Ibid, p. 512

genocide, the Turkish government still refuses to recognize it as such. Since eighty percent⁸⁵ of diasporic Armenians are descendants of genocide survivors, the memory of this atrocity is naturally the most important vehicle with which to trigger a national identity dynamic. For this reason, but particularly in the face of Turkey's refusal to take responsibility for the atrocities, major lobbying efforts by Armenian-Americans are motivated by this frustration and anger and focused on keeping and spreading the memory of the events. Surprisingly, while the genocide is the central issue to the diaspora's identity, organization and mobilization, it is less important to the Armenian homeland community, since Armenians in Armenia "for the most part escaped the trauma"⁸⁶.

The collective suffering is in the very foundation of the Armenian-Americans' collective action, and the victimization process is transferred to other concerns of the ethnic group. It has been argued that the politicization of the genocide has served to create the mentality that the atrocities might be repeated⁸⁷. Furthermore, it is also argued that the images of the genocide have been projected onto the Karabakh conflict⁸⁸.

4.2.2.3 Ethnic Serbs

The difficulty of assessing the size, the distribution and the composition of an ethnic group has proven to be even greater in the case of Serbian-Americans. The data on the Serbian-American population is not reliable since the Serbs in the US may also identify themselves as "Yugoslav" or avoid identifying themselves as "Serbs" because of the general portrayal of Serbs as aggressors in recent conflicts in the Balkans. In the 1990 US census the number of Serbs totaled 89,500. The most noteworthy Serbian-American organization is the Serbian Unity Congress (SUC). The SUC was established in 1990 by a group of Serbian-

⁸⁵ Data according to: Shain and Barth (2003), "Diasporas and International Relations Theory"

⁸⁶ Ibid, p. 469

⁸⁷ See: Shain and Barth (2003), "Diasporas and International Relations Theory", p. 473

⁸⁸ Ibid

American professionals and the late Prince Andrej Karadjordjevic. Despite the SUC's effort to unite and mobilize Serbs in the US, the most successful attempts to influence American foreign policy towards Serbia and the region have been undertaken by Serbian diplomats in the US and Serbian government foreign policy officials. The goals of Serbian lobbying in the US are promoting overall US support for Serbia's transition towards democracy, shifting the US administration position on the status of the southern Serbian province of Kosovo and reestablishing the image of Serbia that has been subject to relentless defamation over the past decades.

4.2.2.4 Kosovo as a source of political mobilization

It is the issue of the status of Kosovo that, correspondingly to the Armenian genocide for the Armenian-American community, enhances Serbian ethnic identity and political mobilization among the Serbian population. Undeniably, the identification with the historical Serbian state and "the perception of continued efforts to destroy the historical Serbian nation-state" are motivating the mobilization of Serbian diaspora.

The story of the Battle of Kosovo is the dominant story shaping the Serbian mythical and national being. The story asserts that the Ottomans and Serbs met in battle in the Field of Kosovo in 1389. Both the leader of the Turks Sultan Murad I and the Serbian leader Prince Lazar died in the battle. The battle was a "crushing defeat for the Serbs, who were forced to leave the region and subsequently suffered five centuries of the Ottoman occupation and the death of the Serbian Empire."⁸⁹ The distant battle continues to have great significance for contemporary Serbs.

⁸⁹ Paul (2002) "Serbian-American Mobilization and Lobbying: The relevance of Jasenovac and Kosovo to contemporary Grassroots efforts in the United States"

Hence, analyzing the myth of the battle of Kosovo and its relation to contemporary Serbia, Florian Bieber⁹⁰ notes that transforming the time of the battle of Kosovo into an eternal present, or the history repeating itself, asserted the self-perception of Serbs as perpetual victims. As Bieber observes it,

“...official discourse emphasized the victimization of Serbs by neighboring countries and the international community, while the opposition also emphasized its oppression at the hands of its oppression at the hands of the regime: thus Serbs were suffering helplessly both as Serbs and as citizens....This sense of collective victimhood lingered after the war: ‘revenge attacks and the persecution of Serbs by the victorious Kosovo Liberation Army impacted heavily on public opinion in Serbia...reinforcing the nationalist self-perception of Serbian suffering.’”⁹¹

However, contrary to the Armenian-Americans’ situation, the memories of Serbian suffering are not sufficient to provoke collective lobbying action in the US. Neither was the NATO intervention in Serbia.

There are several reasons Serbian-Americans choose not to be involved in lobbying their US representatives on behalf of their homeland. First, as King and Pomper assert, influential ethnic communities «are typically (1) well organized at the local level where political activists learn the arts of local politics, (2) geographically concentrated, and (3) active voters. »⁹². Serbian-Americans lack all of the three preconditions to influence US policy towards Serbia and Kosovo through voting power. For the most part, ethnic Serbs in the US do not engage in US politics, they rarely even register to vote and donate campaign contributions randomly. The insufficient motivation to engage in politics of the hostland is both home- and hostland-based.

As the interviews with Serbian nationals in the US show, the host land, the US, caused disappointment of its ethnic Serbian minority due to the US administration’s role in

⁹⁰ Florian Bieber (2002), “Nationalist Mobilization and Stories of Serb Suffering. The Kosovo myth from 600th anniversary to the present” in: *Rethinking history* 6, European Centre for Minority Issues, Belgrade, p. 95 - 110

⁹¹ Ibid, p. 105

⁹² David King and Miles Pomper (2004), “The U.S. Congress and the Contingent Influence of Diaspora Lobbies: Lessons from U.S. Policy Toward Armenia and Azerbaijan», in: *Journal of Armenian Studies*,(VIII, 1), Summer 2004, p.12

the bombing of Serbia in 1999. It is usually the case that ethnic Serbs do not engage in letter writing or phone calling campaigns and refuse to give out donations to Representatives that supported the NATO intervention in Serbia. Further, the non-engagement practice is unsurprisingly related to the nature of the Serbian diaspora. Many of the Serbs abroad fled the country for social and political reasons, whether they were forced to leave the country by some of the regimes or they left to escape poverty, war or involuntary mobilization during the 1990s. Members of the ethnic community that left the country in search of a better life state that they do not wish to be involved in US politics and that they came to the US solely for exploiting economic opportunities.

On the other hand, Serbia as their homeland has been discouraging its diaspora of political activity for a long time during the 1990s in several ways. Namely, home governments have various methods of manipulating the diaspora by “establishing standards for loyal and disloyal behavior”⁹³. Moreover, governments may “include or exclude interchangeably co-nationals from the national community as a cost-benefit mechanism to ensure national loyalty”⁹⁴ or utilize institutionalized and systemic means such as “retraction of citizenship, restriction of visitation, confiscation of property, withdrawal of academic awards, prosecution of relatives in the homeland and, in extreme cases, kidnapping and political assassination.”⁹⁵ In the case of Serbia, some of the regimes have exercised these measures.

Assessing the Serbian-American motivation, it seems that neither the homeland nor the co-nationals in the US have exercised fully the possible benefits of influencing US foreign policy; the national government by not appealing to ethnic Serbs in the US and allowing them to have some advantages regarding voting rights or representatives within the government, on the one hand, and ethnic Serbs in the US by not mobilizing and organizing properly in order to establish a relatively influential lobby.

⁹³ Shain (1994) “Ethnic Diasporas and U.S. Foreign Policy”, p. 825

⁹⁴ Ibid

⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 826

4.2.3 Connection to homeland

As mentioned in the previous analysis, apart from the traumatic collective experiences, connection to the ancestor land, and its quality, is a vital source of ethnic cohesion and in particular mobilization of diaspora. Shain adds the connection of members of an ethnic group abroad to their homeland to his definition of “political diaspora” stating that “they [members of an ethnic group outside the home land] regard themselves or are regarded by others as members or potential members of their country of origin (claimed or already existing), a status held regardless of their geographical location and citizen status.”⁹⁶ Members of an ethnic group might be called upon periodically “by ethnonational elements inside or outside the home country’s territory to subscribe to a particular cause or group as an expression of their ethnonational loyalty.”⁹⁷ In fact, ethnic minorities in the US have often been dedicated to political causes of their country of origin, seeing themselves or being called upon by their home lands to act as representatives of their old country. Thus, ethnic groups “may function as pawns used to send messages between the US and their native countries.”⁹⁸

The connection members of an ethnic group keep with their homeland makes them subject to dual, conflicted or divided loyalty; keeping them entangled with obligations to both the old and to the new country. Armenians in the US usually talk about Armenia as their homeland or “Mother land”, expressing in that way their loyalty and devotion to Armenia while being US citizens. Their relatively successful lobbying attempts as US citizens towards the hostland’s government undertaken in an effort to help “the Armenian cause” point to the successful exercise of their dual allegiance.

The relationship between a country and its diaspora obviously significantly influences the diaspora’s disposition to organize and mobilize in the hostcountry. And this is the point

⁹⁶ Shain (1994) “Ethnic Diasporas and U.S. Foreign Policy”, p. 814

⁹⁷ Ibid

⁹⁸ Ibid, p. 815

where the two observed cases, the Armenian and Serbian, differ a great deal. The connection ethnic Armenians have with their “Mother land” appears to be stronger and more interactive than the relation of ethnic Serbs with Serbia⁹⁹. One of the reasons for the gap between the Serbian diaspora and their homeland continues to be the remains of the “disloyalty label” of those that left the country, which was promoted in Serbia during the 1990s.

⁹⁹ It was only in 2004 that Serbia established the Ministry for relations with the diaspora and the presidential elections in 2004 were the first elections when the diaspora had a chance to exercise its voting right. The activity of the Ministry has been pointed towards establishing greater rights for the diaspora and their connection to Serbia.

CHAPTER 5: SERBIA AND ARMENIA GAINING INFLUENCE IN THE US

As stated previously in this thesis, according to Smith¹⁰⁰, ethnic groups become influential by exercising their voting potentials, boosting their organization capacities, donating campaign funds, building alliances with other social forces and networks within the policy making bodies. That is, if the group has a clear agenda and no powerful enemies.¹⁰¹

However, both scholars and practitioners¹⁰² claim that having an agenda in line with American values and aspirations is the single most important element for succeeding in influencing US foreign policy. Hence, calls for further democratization (or regime change), liberty, independence, self-determination and protection of human rights blended with demonstration of their own impeccable record as American loyalists constitute a triumphant strategy for an ethnic group. Both Armenia's and Serbia's attempts to influence rely strongly on demanding US assistance in achieving those democratic values. However, both ethnic groups are faced with an unfriendly administration¹⁰³ and both focus lobbying efforts towards Congress. Furthermore, Serbian lobbyists are confronted in Congress with heavy opposition of the well-organized and influential Albanian lobby. Due to the late start in lobbying the Congress, Serbs have not established alliances with other lobbies, and ethnic Armenians on the other hand can rely on the assistance of the ethnic Kurds and Greeks in opposing policies favorable to Turkey.

The next chapter will be an in-depth analysis of the Armenian-American case, representing a role model case of ethnic lobbying in the US, that combines voting power, donations, organization and alliances. The chapter to follow it will include the description of

¹⁰⁰ Smith (2000) "Foreign Attachments", p. 85 – 129.

¹⁰¹ Smith (2000) "Foreign Attachments", p. 88.

¹⁰² For instance: Shain (1994) "Ethnic Diasporas and U.S. Foreign Policy"

¹⁰³ The US administration adopts policies opposite to Armenian-Americans' positions due to long-term alliance with Turkey (who is an important NATO ally) and new-found partnership with Azerbaijan during the War on Terror and impact of powerful oil lobbies engaged in oil drilling in Azerbaijan. On the other hand, the US administration supports the independence of the Serbian southern province of Kosovo, which is currently Serbia's most debated issue in international relations.

the Serbian diplomats' and officials' attempts to surmount the lack of efficient organization of ethnic Serbs in the US. Throughout, an attempt to assess whether ethnic lobbying can be effective if it relies solely on representation of ethnic issues in line with US values will be made.

5.1 Armenian success story

Assessing the foundations of disproportional success of Armenian-Americans' influence on the US foreign policy towards the Caspian region, two constituents of high value draw attention; the immense effort they put into building solid organizations and their enormous energy committed to communicating their message. The essential elements of the analysis of the Armenian-American's achievements are the already briefly mentioned organizations, the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) and the Armenian Assembly of America (AAA), and their respective policies, sub-organizations and their methods of communicating and influencing. Another important segment of ethnic representation in the US Congress will be reviewed here, the Congressional Caucus on Armenian issues.

5.1.1 Armenian organizations

The two active Armenian-American organizations in the US differ a great deal. However, it has been argued that their competition and different methods have benefited the authority of their arguments, increased the number of access points for them, led to "hypermobilization of the ethnic group's resources"¹⁰⁴ and advanced the impression of Armenian presence.

¹⁰⁴ Heather S. Gregg (2002), "Divided They Conquer: The Success of Armenian Ethnic Lobbies in the US", Working paper

5.1.1.1 ANCA

The Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) evolved from the American Committee for the Independence of Armenia (ACIA), formed in 1918, cited as the first lobby group associated with the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF)¹⁰⁵. ANCA delineates three main goals: “to foster public awareness in support of a free, united and independent Armenia; to influence and guide US policy on matters of interest to the Armenian-American community; and to represent the collective Armenian-American viewpoint on matters of public policy, while serving as liaison between the community and their elected officials.”¹⁰⁶

ANCA has its national headquarters in Washington, DC and a wide structure. It has regional offices and local chapters throughout the US; two regional offices, the Eastern and the Western, in Watertown, Massachusetts and Glendale, California. Under the Eastern regional office, 31 local chapters work on organizing the Armenian ethnic group. In the West, under the Western regional office, an additional 12 chapters work with the constituency mostly in California. ANCA also has offices Yerevan, the capital of Armenia and Stepanakert, the capital of Nagorno Karabakh, as well as a few offices in Europe.

The network of offices across the US suggests the grassroots orientation of ANCA. Indeed, ANCA stresses its essence as a “bottom-up” organization by claiming to be “the largest and most influential Armenian-American grassroots political organization.”¹⁰⁷ One of its primary goals is «mobilization of support at local level, asserting that motivated grassroots is the most valuable and powerful weapon»¹⁰⁸ in lobbying in the US. Coalition building with other ethnic groups is also one of ANCA’s strategies of lobbying. At ANCA, they stress their

¹⁰⁵ One of the major Armenian organizations, founded in 1890. It first called for the reforms within the Ottoman Empire, but then became a political party in 1910 and headed the Armenian government from 1918 to the fall to the Red Army in 1920.

¹⁰⁶ www.anca.org (last revised April 19, 2007)

¹⁰⁷ Ibid

¹⁰⁸ Profile at www.anca.org

cooperation with Greek, Greek-Cypriot and Kurdish organizations in the US in preventing military aid to Turkey.

5.1.1.2 AAA

Armenian Assembly of America (AAA) was founded in 1972 by prominent Armenian-Americans. AAA states that their primary goal is the “commitment to prevent genocide and promote human rights”¹⁰⁹, “good governance”¹¹⁰ in Armenia, defined as participatory democracy and a market economy. AAA also names as a goal that Armenians in the homeland not only survive in Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh, but to grow. Foreign policy objectives of AAA tend to coincide with those stated by ANCA.

However, the organization and strategy of AAA tend to be vastly different. AAA too has national headquarters in Washington, DC and offices in Yerevan and Stepanakert. Still, AAA is far more centralized than ANCA, it has a regional office in Beverly Hills, California. These two offices alone are responsible for policy issues, relations with the Armenian government, public affairs, membership, fundraising, and all other projects. In addition, AAA has an office in Cambridge, Massachusetts that supports the Armenian Tree Project¹¹¹ and an office in New York that works with UN. As its organization shows, AAA is more centralized and more «top-down» oriented. It targets and mobilizes “prominent Armenian-American businesspeople and professionals”¹¹². Further, AAA claims “strong and unique tie”¹¹³ with the UN and the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, with which it works closely to raise awareness of the genocide.

To date, ANCA and AAA continue to operate differently and independently of one another. Although their approaches to influencing Washington are dissimilar, it helps the

¹⁰⁹ 2006 Annual Report, www.aaainc.org (downloaded on May 20, 2007)

¹¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹¹ Project concerned with Armenian aesthetic trees.

¹¹² Gregg (2002), “Divided They Conquer: The Success of Armenian Ethnic Lobbies in the US”, p. 15

¹¹³ Ibid, p.17

general Armenian-American cause that these ethnic lobbies support the more or less identical policy objectives.

5.1.2 Communication

Communicating the message effectively is of vital significance for successful lobbying. In the case of ethnic lobbies, the process of communicating the message is a multi-layer process; first, the message has to be sent to co-nationals in the US to mobilize them and motivate them to exert pressure themselves onto their US representatives, second, spreading the message to the general public might as well be influential, and third, the message has to be advocated to policymakers in direct contacts.

5.1.2.1 Activists

Although entire theories of lobbying define campaign donations and favors for policymakers as the single most important lobbying instrument, Aram Hamparian, the executive director of ANCA, affirms that for successful ethnic lobbying PACs and donations by single members of an ethnic group are far less important than pressure exerted by an ethnically tied and active constituency. In order to successfully include an ethnic group into lobbying the US Congress, according to Hamparian, an organization first has to engage in “identifying its activists; then, in is educating them, making them understand what they need to do, and finally motivating them do it”¹¹⁴. Hamparian asserts the importance of modern technologies of communication for all of these steps. It is common for contemporary organizations to use these technologies to identify possible activist. Interactive web-sites, especially those containing opinion polls and questionnaires, are more than often used by ethnic lobbies, to harvest addresses of potential activists. Once they are identified, motivating them to get involved in lobbying actions requires a great amount of effort. One of the most

¹¹⁴ Author interview, (April 19th, 2007)

obvious methods is facilitating their involvement. Most of the ethnic lobbies post “form letters” to be sent to representatives, and include on their web sites tools for identifying one’s district’s representative. According to Hamparian, the second step is writing a handwritten letter to one’s representative; organizations offer help with handwritten letters as well. They even prepare scripts for phone calls to offices of members of Congress. Further, ethnic lobbies arrange for activists to meet their representatives and voice the concerns of their ethnic group.

5.1.2.2 General public

In addition to their efforts to mobilize Armenian-Americans, Armenian-American lobbies have broadened the spectrum of their actions to gain the sympathy of a wider public. Both of the Armenian-American lobbies issue different publications. ANCA uses a website and emails to inform its constituents and circulate its position papers. It also publishes the monthly “TransCaucasus: A Chronology” and cooperates with the *Hairenik* and *Armenian Weekly* newspapers and makes them available online, as well. AAA also uses newsletters, emails, “action alerts,” and their websites to inform the general public of Armenian and Armenian-American concerns and offers links to *Massis Weekly*, *Armenian Liberty*, *Snark New Agency*, and the *Armenian News Network*.

Still, the attempts to inform the public do not stop at publications. Armenian-Americans have also founded think tanks. The Zoryan Institute for Contemporary Armenian Research and Documentation, Inc. was founded in 1982 in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The institute focuses «on three areas of study: the Genocide, the diaspora, and Armenia»¹¹⁵. Together with the University of Toronto the Institute co-publishes «Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies», a quarterly journal and organizes seminars on Armenia and opens its resources to scholars, government, writers, journalists etc. The Institute is privately funded.

¹¹⁵ Gregg, (2002), “Divided They Conquer: The Success of Armenian Ethnic Lobbies in the US”, p. 17

AAA founded an institute, as well; the Armenian National Institute (ANI) in 1997 in order to raise public awareness on the Armenian Genocide. ANI's efforts are also aimed at developing school curricula on the Genocide and issuing an «Encyclopedia of Genocide», in collaboration with Holocaust scholars¹¹⁶.

5.1.3 Congressional Caucus

As reported, the most efficient way for ethnic groups to influence Congress is through Congressional caucuses and habitually, the first endeavor of any ethnic group is the creation of a congressional caucus. Reportedly, a caucus is “one of the first marks of a successful diaspora community”¹¹⁷.

Congressional caucuses are informal, voluntary groups of members of Congress, “without formal recognition in chamber rules or line-item appropriations, that seek a role in the policy process. They enable members of Congress to pursue policy, representation, and reelection goals.”¹¹⁸. According to Hammond, there are six types of caucuses; Party Caucuses, Personal Interest Caucuses, National Constituency Caucuses, Regional Caucuses, State/District Caucuses and State/District-Industry Caucuses. State/District Caucuses are those of interest of this thesis, since they “represent issues of concern of a constituency with a common characteristic; family farmers, rural residents or ethnic groups”¹¹⁹. The main activity of most caucuses is to provide information to its members, while others “seek to affect agendas by keeping an issue salient”¹²⁰. They can be bipartisan, and sometimes bicameral.

The Congressional Caucus on Armenian issues was created in January 1995 by Democrat Frank Pallone of New Jersey and Republican Edward Porter of Illinois, later

¹¹⁶ www.armeniangenocide.org

¹¹⁷ King and Pomper (2004), “The U.S. Congress and the Contingent Influence of Diaspora Lobbies: Lessons from U.S. Policy Toward Armenia and Azerbaijan», p. 5

¹¹⁸ Susan Webb Hammond, (1991), “Congressional Caucuses and Party Leaders” in: *Political Science Quarterly* Volume 106 Number 2, p. 277

¹¹⁹ Ibid, p.278

¹²⁰ Ibid

succeeded by Republican Joe Knollenberg. The Armenian caucus of the 110th Congress lists almost 160 members. There is a “tight correlation between membership in the caucus and votes to support issues pertaining to Armenia”¹²¹. More interestingly, affirming the importance of vote power in ethnic groups’ lobbying, there is a tight correlation between membership in the caucus and the characteristic of the representative’s district. According to King and Pomper, “eighty percent of the Congressional Armenian Caucus members come from just nine states, and those states hold eighty four percent of the Armenians in the U.S»¹²². Further, states such as California¹²³ are habitually well represented in the Armenian caucus, since fifty four percent of Armenian-Americans reside in California¹²⁴. The Massachusetts’ 8th congressional district has particularly impressive record of representatives addressing Armenian-American concerns¹²⁵, due to its large and influencing Armenian ethnic community.

The power of the constituency in shaping US Congress’ policies appears to be substantial. It is of such power that, as one respondent from the Armenian caucus’ staff said, “members do not wait for the inputs of their constituency but initiate their own ideas” regarding the Armenian-American concerns. It also appears that alliances attained through Congressional caucuses benefit ethnic lobbies considerably in lobbying Congress; whether the effort is made to pass a legislation or, even more so, to prevent it.

¹²¹ Gregg, (2002), “Divided They Conquer: The Success of Armenian Ethnic Lobbies in the US”, p. 24

¹²² King and Pomper (2004), “The U.S. Congress and the Contingent Influence of Diaspora Lobbies: Lessons from U.S. Policy Toward Armenia and Azerbaijan», p. 6

¹²³ Currently, around 25 percent of members are from California.

¹²⁴ Data by King and Pomper (2004)

¹²⁵ I.e. John F. Kennedy, Tim O’Neill, Michael Capuano, they all have represented Watertown community, where 5,000 out of 33,000 are Armenian-Americans (King and Pomper (2004))

5.1.4 Policy success

As already declared, Armenian-American community has had disproportional success in lobbying in the US, especially with regards to the friction with Azerbaijan¹²⁶ and securing aid to Armenia¹²⁷. For the purpose of analyzing Armenian lobbying success in the Congress, a closer look at perhaps the greatest achievement of Armenian-American community, the maintenance of Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act, is needed.

5.1.4.1 Section 907

The Freedom Support Act was enacted in 1992, with a purpose of aiding former Soviet States. Section 907 was passed as an appendix of the Freedom Support Act. The section banned any US aid to Azerbaijan as long as Azerbaijan continues with hostilities and blockade towards Armenia. According to the Section, US foreign aid “may not be provided to the Government of Azerbaijan until the President determines, and so reports to the Congress, that the Government of Azerbaijan is taking demonstrable steps to cease all blockades and other offensive uses of force against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh”¹²⁸, favoring «newly independent and Christian Armenia»¹²⁹ over «newly independent but Islamic, Azerbaijan»¹³⁰. At that time, Armenia and Azerbaijan were conflicted over Azeri province of Nagorno Karabakh, mostly populated by Armenians. However, with no Azeri opposition lobby in the US and the policy makers largely oblivious of the issue, the enactment of the Section was not very demanding for the Armenian-American lobbies, however, the maintenance might have been more challenging. Still, up until September 11, 2001, all attempts to override Section 907 were vigorously impeded.

¹²⁶ At least, during the 1990s.

¹²⁷ With its \$90 million in aid, Armenia is the recipient of one of the largest amounts US give through Foreign aid programme.

¹²⁸ U.S. Public Law 102-511

¹²⁹ King and Pomper (2004), “The U.S. Congress and the Contingent Influence of Diaspora Lobbies: Lessons from U.S. Policy Toward Armenia and Azerbaijan», p. 9

¹³⁰ Ibid

After the enactment of the Act with the Section, theoretically and practically, due to the “political and structural decentralization”¹³¹ of the Congress and its “multiple decision points”¹³² at which any bill can be “subject to delay, defeat or modification”¹³³, it was relatively easy for the Armenian lobbies to maintain the Section in power through alliances in the Armenian caucus. The Armenian lobbies had efficient “gate keepers” such as Senator Robert Dole and later Senator Mitch McConnell, who would block «efforts to overturn Section 907 at critical points in the legislative process»¹³⁴. These gate keepers became of utmost importance during the mid and late nineties when oil lobbies interested in Azeri oil attempted to abolish the Section. According to King and Pomper, “Azerbaijani President Heydar Aliyev signed “the deal of the century” in September 1994 with several U.S. oil companies, including Amoco, Unocal, and Penzoil collectively holding the largest stake (40 percent) in a consortium to develop his country’s oil and gas resources»¹³⁵. The enterprise was followed by establishing Azerbaijan-American Chamber of Commerce, which «also served to lobby Congress on Baku’s behalf»¹³⁶

Harsh lobbying took place in Congress in 1994 after a cease fire between Azerbaijan and Armenia, when Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh won over Azeri army. Nevertheless, the Section remained intact since “Armenia’s supporters on Capitol Hill sought to convince other lawmakers that Armenia was still the weaker party in the dispute»¹³⁷ by “taking advantage of Congress’s continuing perception of Armenia as victimized because of Turkey’s backing of

¹³¹ Walter J. Oleszek [1995] (1996), “Congressional Procedures and the Policy Process”, Congressional Quarterly Inc, Washington, DC, p. 17

¹³² Ibid, p.19

¹³³ Ibid

¹³⁴ King and Pomper (2004), “The U.S. Congress and the Contingent Influence of Diaspora Lobbies: Lessons from U.S. Policy Toward Armenia and Azerbaijan», p. 10.

¹³⁵ Ibid

¹³⁶ Ibid

¹³⁷ Ibid, p.11

Azerbaijan»¹³⁸. The argument was that withholding of Section 907 was necessary to bring Azerbaijan to stop a regional economic blockade against Armenia.

However, after the 9/11 attacks, American foreign policy objectives shifted. As early as October, 2001 a bill was passed in Congress that allowed the President to waive the ban to assistance to Azerbaijan if he determines that it is in the national interest. Since the beginning of the War on Terror, some of the representatives have argued that lifting the Section 907 ban, would complement American national interest. For instance, Senator Sam Brownback argued that by doing so the US Congress would advance American national security, since “these newly independent countries, and their vast energy wealth, were in danger of once again falling under the sway of either Iran or Russia»¹³⁹. Azeri government recognized the newly emerged opportunity and offered its air space and bases. In the meantime, members of the Armenian caucus were putting effort in maintaining the Section in power, asking the State secretary not to use the possibility of waiver. Even when Senator Brownback proposed a waiver as part of the fiscal 2002 Foreign Operations bill, after the Congress was urged by the administration to grant the waiver, Armenian lobbies worked closely with members of their caucus to draft limitations to the proposed waiver and they succeeded. Furthermore, “to soften the blow to Armenia, the Senate also agreed to support a separate McConnell amendment granting Armenia military assistance for the first time, including \$4 million in military aid and \$600,000 for International Military Education Training assistance to Armenia»¹⁴⁰.

Sideways the 2002 waiver, the Section 907 remains in power despite all the difficulties. The case presented is significant and noteworthy since it clearly points out that harmonizing an ethnic group’s objectives with US foreign policies and values and organizing and motivating constituency has supremacy over campaign donations and PAC activities in achieving efficiency in ethnic lobbying, since oil lobbies certainly donate more than

¹³⁸ Ibid, p.11

¹³⁹ Ibid, p.19

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, p.21

Armenian-American lobbies and still have failed to overrule Section 907. However, whether the use of American values and objectives without significant assistance from ethnic kin in the US is sufficient for effectively influencing US foreign policy is the topic of the next chapter on Serbian attempts to influence US foreign policy.

5.2 Serbia's attempt to succeed

Serbian lobbying in the US started simultaneously with the democratization process in Serbia itself after the overthrow of Milosevic in 2000. Before that, even when neighboring countries involved in the conflicts of the 1990s engaged in lobbying, Milosevic believed in “the moral superiority of his politics”¹⁴¹ that did not need justification, explanation or foreign help. However, Serbian lobbying in Congress did not become truly visible until the appointment of the first democratically elected Serbian President, Mr. Boris Tadic who encouraged attempts to influence US foreign policy towards Serbia. Prior to his election, according to the reports of the members of Serbian-American ethnic group, attempts to make the Serbian voice heard in Congress remained ineffective and unheard, due to policy inertia towards Serbia originated in the vilification during the 1990s and the Albanian lobby's unchallenged dominance over the issues concerning Serbia and the region. After President Tadic's inauguration in 2004, Serbia became noticeable in the US Congress by forming a Congressional Serbian Caucus, initiating Congress resolutions supporting Serbia's transition to democracy, defying Resolutions sponsored by members of the Congressional Caucus on Albanian issues in the course of congressional procedure, arranging witness testimonies in hearings on Kosovo's future status, initiating letters of members of Congress to the Administration in support of Serbia and organizing various high-level visits both of Serbian officials to the US and US officials to Serbia. Goals of Serbian lobbying, as mentioned above, are the promotion of Serbian reform course, its devotion to Euro-Atlantic integration and

¹⁴¹ Sinisa Milutinovic(2004), “Lobbying and Serbian politics” in: *The Serbian word*, November issue 2004

staging Serbia's newly established pro-western foreign and defense policy. However, currently the greatest international issue that involves Serbia is the status of Serbian southern province of Kosovo and, therefore, presently the majority of Serbian lobbying resources are occupied in attempts to influence the solution to the future status of Kosovo.

Still, the most puzzling aspect of Serbian lobbying is its form, or more precisely the agents of Serbian lobbying in Congress. As a result of the lack of an organized and motivated ethnic group within the US, lobbying for Serbian objectives in the US Congress had to be carried out by motivated individuals from Serbia. In particular, the actual relations with Congress on behalf of Serbia were processed by Deputy Chief of Mission in the Serbian Embassy to the US, Mr. Borislav Stefanovic and the Serbian Foreign Affairs Minister, Mr. Vuk Jeremic, who was in charge of direct communication with US officials during his post as Foreign Policy Advisor to the Serbian President. The duo was supported by the Serbian Embassy and Government, but conducted meetings with US Senators and Representatives and their staffs by themselves. Besides, the absence of voting power, campaign donations and PAC payments and social and political alliances reduced Serbian methods of influence to persistently trying to convince the US policy makers to assist the reforms in Serbia in order to assure regional security and promotion of democracy. In sum, the only strategy available to Serbian lobbyists, out of those already discussed (exploiting voting potentials, organization capacities, campaign funds, alliances with other social and political forces), was the clear agenda compatibility with US values and objectives. The actual content of the strategy will be described in detail below.

5.2.1 Congressional caucus

The Congressional Serbian Caucus was established in November 2004 and its formation was “a curiosity and irregularity by itself”¹⁴² since it did not rely on ethnic Serbs in the US and their organizations. At the moment of its registration, the caucus consisted of five members, only to grow to 26 members in the 110th Congress. In addition, it is bipartisan and bicameral (it lists three Senators as members). Co-chairmen of the Serbian Caucus are Representatives Dan Barton and Rahm Emanuel. According to Jeremic, the main lobbying targets for membership in the caucus were members of the US House and Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs¹⁴³, the Armed Services Committee, the Appropriations Committee and both Parties’ leadership in both Houses. The essential obstacle in promoting membership in the Serbian Caucus was that Serbia was still unattractive, even politically risky for Representatives and Senators to support. Even though the promotion of Serbia’s reforms and its progress in Congress has had results, the image Serbia had among US policy makers has not been changed completely.

5.2.2 The greatest issue

Presently, the greatest efforts of Serbian lobbyists are aimed at altering the US Administration’s policy towards the status of Kosovo by influencing the Congress. The US administration has been supporting independence for Serbia’s southern province that has been under international jurisdiction since 1999. In an attempt to shift the US position towards Serbia’s preferred policy, a broad autonomy, Serbian lobbyists face a harsh opposition of the Albanian lobby. Albanian-Americans¹⁴⁴ are a far better organized ethnic group and have been active in the US for much longer. They are represented by several ethnic organizations. The

¹⁴² Quote of Mr. Vuk Jeremic (author interview, December 15th, 2006)

¹⁴³ That is the Committee on Foreign Relations on the Senate side.

¹⁴⁴ Data extraxted from the article “Albanian Americans” by Jane Jurgens, available at www.everyculture.com (last revised on May 23, 2007)

National Albanian American Council, the Albanian American National Organization, the Albanian American Civic League, the Albanian American Society Foundation are only some of them. Albanian-Americans reside in New York (they have especially large constituency in the Bronx), Massachusetts, Michigan, Illinois, California, Ohio, Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

Within the Congress, ever since the beginning of its lobbying, Serbian efforts have often been aimed at defying resolutions proposed by members of the Albanian Caucus calling for US Congress to support the independence of Kosovo. Currently there are three such resolutions in congressional procedure; the Senate resolution 135, its accompanying House resolution 309 and previously introduced House resolution 36. The gravest issue for Serbia with regards to these resolutions is that they are sponsored by respected, powerful members of Congress, with many alliances. The first one is sponsored by Senators Joseph Lieberman, Joseph Biden (the Chairman of Senate's Foreign Relations Committee), John McCain, and the accompanying one by Representatives Eliot Engel (co- chairman of the Albanian caucus, member of Foreign Affairs Committee) and Mark Kirk, and the third one by Representatives Tom Lantos (Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee) and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (ranking member of the Foreign Affairs Committee). From the list, it is obvious that Serbian lobbying attempts to defy or even alter the text of these resolutions will require immense effort.

5.2.3 Lobbying a resolution

The period of preparatory research for this thesis coincided with the introduction of accompanying resolutions and a hearing in the House Committee on Foreign Affairs on the resolution in question. The introduction and the immediate hearing provoked an intensive reaction on the Serbian side. Serbian Deputy Chief of Mission, Mr. Stefanovic had over 50 direct meetings in Congress with members and their staff in order to ensure that Serbian

arguments would be heard in the hearing and to demonstrate that, if the resolution were to come to the mark up and vote in the Committee, Representatives supportive of Serbia's goals would be there to raise their concerns and votes against it. The meetings were mostly with those Representatives, and their staffs, who are members of relevant committees, that is, the Foreign Affairs Committee in the House and the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate. The hearing held on April 17th 2007 consisted of a witness testimony given by Mr. Nicholas Burns, State Under Secretary of Political Affairs. Representing the US administration's stands, the testimony called for US support for the independence of Kosovo and UN Special Envoy Marti Ahtisaari's plan for the Serbian province, both of which oppose Serbian interests. The Serbian interests were voiced at the hearing by members of the Serbian Caucus. Arguing Serbian interests in days prior to the hearing proved to be effective at the hearing when Serbian lobbying "champions" Representatives Dan Burton, Diane Watson and Melissa Bean vigorously represented them.

5.2.4 Serbian methods

Serbian lobbying in the US Congress includes direct contacts with the entire spectrum of targets, which has already been described in this thesis. Indeed, Serbs work in Congress with the so-called "Champions" and "Allies" (members of the Serbian Caucus), further, with "Fence-sitters" in hope that they will support the Serbian arguments eventually, but also work intensely with "Opponents" with the goal of minimizing their opposition, delaying it and even neutralizing it. For instance, lobbying the "Champions" resulted in the enactment of the resolutions supportive of Serbia's democracy. One of such resolutions is the Senate resolution 31, passed by Senate in January 2007, "expressing support for democratic forces in Serbia and encouraging the people of Serbia to remain committed to a democratic path"¹⁴⁵ only four days before the Serbian parliamentary elections, singling out Serbian President Mr. Boris Tadic.

¹⁴⁵ S. Res 31 (available at www.locate.gov, last revised on May 25, 2007)

On the other hand, convincing sponsors of the resolutions calling for independence of Kosovo (the “opponents”) that supporting the independence of Kosovo would bring much damage to Serbian democracy, advance the radical nationalist forces, and therefore endanger the entire region, resulted in resolutions being put off or altered.

Furthermore, the research has showed Hojnacki and Kimball’s argument, that lobbyists should match lobbying tactics strategically with their targets and personalize their approaches to different targets, turned out to be one of the most significant elements of Serbian success in the US Congress, taking into account that Serbian lobbying strongly depends on target’s, that is, member of Congress’ preference.

5.2.5 Winning arguments

In the absence of other components of ethnic lobbying listed above, Serbian lobbying in the US relies heavily on the Serbian interests’ consistency with US values and policies. In particular, the main Serbian line of reasoning is that Serbia’s fragile democracy should be supported, especially that the US should support the democratically oriented elite in Serbia. This argument places Serbia on the wave of further democratization that the US has pledged to support over the world. Second Serbian argument is that Serbia has been reformed a great deal since the overthrow of Milosevic in 2000. The promotion of “a new Serbia” enhances chances for Serbia to be considered a desirable and reliable US partner, especially regarding US foreign and defense policy¹⁴⁶. In line with these goals, Serbian lobbyists argue that US support for the independence of Kosovo would damage the process of democratization in Serbia by harming the Serbian pro-western democratic elite’s prospects of remaining in power. Therefore, much of Serbian lobbying efforts are aimed at countering arguments presented by the Albanian opposition in Congress and US administration. Those arguments

¹⁴⁶ US support for Serbia’s invitation to join Partnership for peace program in November 2006 was another success of Serbian lobbying in the US.

state that Kosovo's independence, apart from damaging Serbia itself, would set a precedent in international relations, since it would not rely on the "Wilsonian" right to self-determination, because Kosovo was never a state, but only a province and that granting independence to this province would detonate a wave of independence claims. Secondary, it would allow Albanians of Kosovo to be the absolute winner in the process, leaving Serbia to be the absolute loser and in a habitually instable and violent region, absolute winners and absolute losers present an immanent danger that could trigger another dark period. Thirdly, calling US policy makers' attention to human rights violations of the Serbian minority in Kosovo is a clear appeal to US vow for protection of human rights everywhere, as well as pointing to Kosovo's institutions inability to independently practice all obligations of a state.

Overall, the list of Serbian lobbying arguments indicate their multiple blending with declared US policy objectives; democracy, peace, security and human rights promotion. Given these facts, it is arguable that persistent pledging to these values, while relying on help of supportive networks within policy making bodies, was the rationale behind the Serbian lobbying success.

5.2.6 The success of Serbian lobbying

Comparing the two presented cases, the Armenian role model case and the Serbian case, it is obvious that the two exceptionally differ with regard to the methods they use. The first obvious disparate method is that the role model case, the Armenian lobbies utilize their co-ethnics to influence policy makers to respond to their homeland's needs, running letter writing and phone calling campaigns, motivating donations and arranging meetings with representatives. As already discussed, Serbian-Americans are not as driven to engage in US politics to help shape the US policy towards the region. Therefore, although the attempts to mobilize the Serbian-American ethnic group have not ceased, Serbian diplomats and foreign

policy officials choose to use the mechanisms available to them, lobbying the Congress directly and forming preference-based networks of members of Congress to help them affect US foreign policy towards Serbia, its province of Kosovo and the entire region. However, the assessment of the overall level of efficiency of Serbian lobbying methods, especially considering the opposition, the Albanian-Americans, actually use the entire spectrum of methods, proves to be complex.

Certainly, solely listing the previous successes of Serbian lobbyist, enacted resolutions, challenged resolutions, Representatives' and Senators' letters to the Administration, testimony before the Foreign Affairs Committee do indeed represent great success considering the Serbian relevance in international relations and limited resources. Still, the question before the research is whether the success of Serbian lobbyists meets sufficient requirements to argue that generally ethnic group members' grass-roots activity in the US foreign policy making process is an additional but not an essential method of ethnic lobbying. First, setting objective standards for measuring the efficiency of lobbying outcomes in general is close to impossible. And second, measuring whether the involvement of the members of the Serbian ethnic group in the US would contribute a great deal to the outcome, especially given the small size of the group, is subject to imprecise speculations. Further, the affirmation of a possible argument in these speculations that ethnic groups with a small number of members may have equal success in lobbying the policy makers with or without relying on grassroots pressure would require additional research exclusively focused on such small ethnic groups and their efforts to shape US foreign policy. However, perhaps the most challenging task would be to isolate the importance of all the elements affecting a lobbying outcome. Measuring the specific weight of all of the components that affect the results of ethnic groups' attempts to shape US foreign policy, such as the agenda compatibility with US national interest, promotion of US objectives and values use of US decision making system's

institutional dispositions to influence the foreign policy outcome or grassroots pressure from the ethnic group would require the development of a very exclusive measuring system.

Even so, what remains is that the US system of lobbying conventionally relies on grassroots pressure and that members of Congress are accustomed to responding to inputs from their constituency. Hence, in absence of a comprehensive measurement standard, the most viable suggestion would be to attempt to indulge the customs of the US decision making system if possible. If not, skillful use of its features, as proven by Serbian lobbying, can be remarkably triumphant.

CONCLUSION

This research has examined the role ethnic groups play in forming US foreign policy. The role has been studied by examining two significantly different cases, the Armenian-American and Serbian-American ethnic group. The difference between the two presented cases has served the formation of arguments with regard to ethnic groups' influence and methods they use in general.

Several questions that had been posed before this research have been addressed. To start with, for the purpose of clarity key terms have been defined and main processes described in detail, such as lobbying in general and ethnic lobbying in particular. Furthermore, the findings of the examined literature and ground research suggest that ethnic groups do indeed affect the creation of US foreign policy to an extent and within limits. The research has discovered that ethnic groups can be influential in shaping US foreign policy if their objectives correspond to US national interests, if they promote proclaimed US values, such as democracy, human rights, peace and security in their homeland's region and if their leadership is proficient in exploiting the features of the US foreign policy decision making system. Contrary to some scholars' claims, for instance Ambrosio and Smith¹⁴⁷, that the notion of US national interest has become vague after the Cold War and the foreign policy establishment has immensely been decentralized, the success Armenian-Americans had with policies towards Azerbaijan before the War on Terror when Azerbaijan was to be considered a potential US ally, indicates that an ethnic group can only be efficient in shaping US policies if its interest do not oppose US national interest as viewed by the US key foreign policy makers. The failure to influence the passage of the Armenian Genocide Resolution objected by Turkey, a US long-term ally, solely asserts that claim.

¹⁴⁷ Ambrosio (2002) "Ethnic Identity Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy", p. 9 or Smith (2000) "Foreign Attachments", p.88

In addition, the Armenian-American case has indicated another rather unexpected research outcome. The clash in Congress between oil lobbies representing Azerbaijan and ethnic Armenians' lobbies over the Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act, that Armenians won, demonstrates that in case of ethnic lobbying campaign donations and vote buying may not be significant for winning Congress as the organizational power of ethnic groups. Aside from two important indicators, the Armenian-American lobbies have demonstrated the ideal method of ethnic influence onto US foreign policy. However, the second case, the examination of Serbian lobbying experience in the US, has in many ways challenged the existing scholarly postulations on ethnic lobbying, as well as the assumptions of the US lobbying regulations.

Serbian lobbying success in the US Congress, comprising of gathering of the Serbian Congressional Caucus, various enacted resolutions and challenged resolutions of the opposing lobby, Representatives' and Senators' letters to the Administration, testimony before the Foreign Affairs Committee, was carried out by Serbian diplomats and foreign policy officials. Still, the US regulation on lobbying and the existing literature disregard diplomats as lobbying agents. In fact, diplomats are perceived as legitimate representatives of a group that has an interest in US foreign policy. Being a representative of a group of US citizens with a special interest in foreign policy is naturally an asset, though not a prerequisite, as all the scholarly models of ethnic lobbying suggest. Within the model of Serbian lobbying in the US, reliance on the constituency-pressure by members of an ethnic group would solely be one of the elements, an advantage and an addition to a leadership's, in this case diplomats', efforts to affect US foreign policy towards the homeland's issues of importance.

Nevertheless, given the nature of this thesis, and the time constraints of the research, the generalization of the Serbian example and reestablishment of the model of the ethnic lobbying in the US could not be completed. For establishing the argument that a small ethnic

group in the US, that would actually need to, can in fact rely on diplomats and government officials to lobby Congress to shift US Administration's foreign policy position in favor of their homeland, further comparative analyses of small groups' lobbying attempts would have to be undertaken. In conclusion, although the initial hypothesis, that lobbying practice in the US shows that methods of lobbying may differ from what had been previously suggested, has been proven, for a comprehensive well-grounded model of ethnic lobbying to be ascertained, further research is needed.

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