The effect of non-governmental organizations on the formation of Azerbaijan foreign policy

Abstract

Non-governmental organizations in Azerbaijan started to form since 1872. The first non-governmental organizations can be defined as organizations for the purpose of aid or education to raise awareness of the society. It is seen that the formations in the political field have started with the beginning of these organizations to overcome social problems. It has been seen that the duty of non-governmental organizations to raise awareness of the society against the assimilation policies, then with the struggle for independence, they prepared the society for a new formation, the struggle for independence. It can be said that he made great contributions to the formation of social memory by fighting for freedom during the period of Tsarist Russia and the USSR. It can be said that the main parameters of the foreign policy of Azerbaijan, which regained its independence in the period of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic established in 1918 and in 1992, were shaped within the framework of the programs of these non-governmental organizations.

Keywords: Foreign policy, Azerbaijan, non-governmental organizations.

Introduction

Looking at the history of Azerbaijan, two important turning points should be emphasized. One of these turning points can be said to be the declaration of independence in 1918 and 1991. In both periods of Azerbaijan, on the way to independence, it was first tried to raise awareness of the society by forming NGOs. Even though the Czarist Russia or the USSR tried to prevent the established NGOs, these organizations tried to achieve independence by giving importance to peaceful and democratic values without resorting to violence. It can be said that the development of the idea of civil society in Azerbaijan started with the enlightenment process in the 1850s. It was tried to develop ideas against the enlightenment process, religious reform and Russian occupation first. In this period, the Russian occupation of the region was completed and it can be said that the society started to resist in different forms. The enlightenment process, which first started in the field of thought, led to the consciousness of the society by uniting around new formations. At that time, the struggle started by the intelligentsia of the society in many areas; NGOs were established with the aim of education, human rights, equality between women and men, helping the poor, improving the quality of life, eliminating religious oppression, establishing religious institutions and developing the idea of independence. It can be said that these NGOs play a very important role in achieving independence.

NGOs played a very important role in the formation of the idea of independence and separation from Tsarist Russia. It is known that the managers and members of these NGOs ruled the country in the Republican period and in the first periods of the Soviet Union. Therefore, it is known that NGO activities are very important in the first and second independence periods of Azerbaijan. The aim of this study is to examine the place and importance of non-governmental organizations in the formation of Azerbaijan’s
foreign policy, and its impact on foreign policy and how this effect has changed over time. It will be discussed how effective non-governmental organizations are in the foreign policy making process and the effect of this on the diversification of Azerbaijan’s foreign policy at a time when the importance of non-governmental organizations is increasing. By dividing Azerbaijan’s foreign policy into periods, it will be tried to examine which non-governmental organizations are more effective.

**Foreign policy non-governmental organization relationship**

According to James Rosenau, foreign policy tendencies and principles stem from understanding embedded in the lives and historical experiences, traditions and ideals of every society (Tur, 2010, 76-77). According to this definition, social memory and accumulation constitute the core and core of foreign policy. On this essence, the vital interests and daily policies of the state can be built. It can be said that NGOs are one of the important institutions that transfer the social memory to the future. In order to better understand and explain foreign policy, it is necessary to know the foreign policy decisions of the actors and the factors affecting these decisions. In order for foreign policy decisions to be predictable and to take all aspects of events into account, the influence of non-governmental organizations as well as state institutions should not be ignored (İşyar, 2009, 2). Foreign policy, according to Morgenthau, certain political conditions, according to Allison, foreign political events, according to Munton, daily activities or national goals, according to Modelski, national foreign political actions, according to Lovell, to determine, understand and understand the mission and motivation of the actor. It is seen that studies are carried out to make sense of it (İşyar, 2009, 7-9). The common point of all the authors’ definitions and the result they want to achieve are focused on which factors determine foreign policy and which method should be chosen to explain it (İşyar, 2009, 8-9). In this study, foreign policy will be explained on the basis of internal formations and will be tried to be explained through the behaviors of non-governmental organizations, which are among state actors. By using the national level in the explanation of Azerbaijan’s foreign policy, internal factors will be brought to the fore, and explanations and interpretations will be made within the framework of NGOs.

In order to understand and explain foreign policy more comprehensively, several criteria can be evaluated. These criteria are: it is emphasized that it is necessary to examine national values, time, available response time, predictability in the decision-making process, crisis and non-crisis situations. Considering all these criteria, it is necessary to write scenarios for different situations beforehand in order for foreign policy to be predictable, otherwise daily policies can be produced or inaccurate decisions can be made by giving instantaneous reactions to events. In order to avoid such situations and to produce healthier foreign policy decisions, a long-term perspective can be formed by referring to the memory created by NGOs and taking into account the reports and recommendations prepared by NGOs. NGOs can help the state to take the right decision by considering the wishes of the society and the interests of the state. NGOs can take the lead in transferring the said decisions to both the domestic society and the international system. The impartial and reliable status of these organizations, which work independently of the state, in the international system may be more effective in the implementation of foreign policy decisions (İşyar, 2009, 29-30).

With globalization, the concept of foreign policy, like other concepts, has been opened to discussion, and it is argued that the line between foreign policy and domestic policy has disappeared. Foreign policy defined as high policy was explained with the black box model, while foreign policy decisions were not open to discussion. With the weakening of the sovereignty borders of the states with the effect of globalization, foreign policy decisions have started to be discussed. These developments have highlighted the importance of taking into account other factors while making foreign policy decisions. It is claimed that by considering many factors together, the right foreign policy decision among multiple options can be explained with the spider web model. It can be said that together with the foreign policy globalization, which is the monopoly of the state, the issues determined as low politics come to the fore. In this case, it can be said that the border between domestic policy and foreign policy has disappeared or the pass-through is increasing day by day. Another factor that triggers this pass-through is non-governmental organizations. The state needs non-governmental organizations in order to transfer its political preferences to the society more easily with its central organization. Non-governmental organizations, on the other hand, act as intermediaries between the society and the state, helping to implement the decisions taken. He states that by expanding the intermediary role of non-governmental organizations in terms of content and space, they play a role in changing the quality of power by leading to the development of a new type of bond and relationship between societies and governments at the global level, beyond just establishing a connection between the state and society at home.

**The ways non-governmental organizations influence foreign policy**

Non-governmental organizations are involved in foreign policy making processes by complimenting or cooperating
with the state. Groups that are not satisfied with the monopoly of the foreign policy shaped and controlled by the state and the foreign policy carried out affect the foreign policy decisions depending on their ability to generate new resources and influence the political system through civil society. With globalization, non-governmental organizations formed by social groups are competing with the state in the field of foreign policy and trying to change/influence the foreign policies maintained by the state. Another way of entry of non-governmental organizations into foreign policy is in the form of penetrating the areas left empty by the state. Some new issues, which are not among the foreign policy issues that the state is traditionally interested in, are becoming areas of foreign policy today. In cases where the bureaucracy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is not interested or is less interested, non-governmental organizations tend to these new areas left empty by the state and try to make that area the subject of foreign policy. Non-governmental organizations can also be effective by cooperating continuously and directly with political decision makers on foreign policy issues. In this case, non-governmental organizations interested in foreign policy support them in their policies in areas that political decision makers deem important. In return for this support, they are included in the political processes through a regular consultation mechanism.

The interventions of non-governmental organizations in foreign policy processes also differ in terms of the mechanisms they use and mobilize. Some non-governmental organizations try to establish influence directly on governments or foreign affairs bureaucracy in order to influence foreign policy. Thus, they try to shape the official foreign policy and direct it. Another mechanism of participation is in the form of directly addressing the foreign focus towards which foreign policy is directed. Some non-governmental organizations turn to foreign NGOs, international organizations and governments that official foreign policy has little influence on and try to influence them directly. Especially if the foreign NGOs that are oriented to be influenced have a high capacity to influence their own governments and national governments through their governments, then especially opposition groups and their NGOs try to mobilize these foreign actors for their indirect interventions in the domestic political arena. Another method or strategy that NGOs use for the purpose of participating and influencing the foreign policy formation process is to work with international organizations and try to have an impact on both national governments and international institutions. In this case, Non-Governmental Organizations with independent agendas from the state and trying to carry out and realize an international agenda both with and against the state are encountered. The cooperation of NGOs with international organizations may be aimed at changing/influencing world politics in general or a region-oriented policy or regime.

The influence of non-governmental organizations on foreign policy plays a role in many factors, from the capacity of the organizations to the political conditions of the period, the power of the resources they mobilize, and the openness of the organizations to consider the demands of their focus.

The ability of Non-Governmental Organizations to change the content or style of foreign policy can only be realized with the perspective of civil society they bring to this field. One of the important indicators of such an effect is the ability of NGOs to develop new discourses on foreign policy by using a different language. In addition, the facts that they can bring new and different issues or problems to the agenda of the society and the state and create a foreign policy agenda are other indicators of impact. Non-Governmental Organizations can undertake a mediation and transformative mission to the extent that they can put new questions on the state's agenda, instead of digging out some problems from the state's own foreign policy activity and preoccupation. Such a function does not mean that current issues are excluded from the work area of Non-Governmental Organizations. However, while non-Governmental Organizations are dealing with current problems, they can bring innovations to the field of foreign policy to the extent that they can adopt an approach that liberates the society, instead of being stuck in the language and agenda of the state. The fact that NGOs are imprisoned in the state's agenda and language not only blinds these organizations, but also makes society unable to see far. It should also be remembered that civil society interest and participation is not a necessary but sufficient condition for socializing and clarifying foreign policy. There is always the possibility that the functions of Non-Governmental Organizations in foreign policy will turn into the legitimization of official foreign policy preferences of states. The quest of states to create social support for their own policies through Non-Governmental Organizations in other countries, and in a sense the tendency of non-governmental organizations to instrumentize them for their own purposes, shows the need for a careful analysis of the foreign policy relationship of Non-Governmental Organizations (Doğan and Mazlum, 2006, 15-17).

The Influence of the NGO in the Formation of Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy

This decision was in line with the center country syndrome, in addition to the features he noted in his study. In Farrell’s study, it has been tried to explain that domestic policy affects foreign policy according to the political system of the country. The reasons constituting the political structure of the country were not mentioned. In fact, the most
important reason that constitutes the political structure and system of the country can be the awareness of the society and the formation of a foreign policy by changing the political structure and system of the country by uniting around a certain NGO. Long-term, healthy and permanent change in the internal political structure and the reasons that lead to it can be possible with NGOs. The society in Azerbaijan has never used violence and force to change the government. Generally, the needs of the society were not taken into account by the administrators, but the society tried to achieve this process by struggling for a long time. The intellectuals of the Azerbaijani society tried to achieve their demands and demands through civilian methods without resorting to violence during the Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union. After the invasion of Tsarist Russia, the intellectuals of the society believed that they could overcome the problems by raising the awareness of the society in time.

Non-governmental organizations formed during the period of Tsarist Russia or the Soviet period first tried to protect and maintain national unity and national culture by fighting for independence. From the period of Tsarist Russia to the present, the main determinants of Azerbaijan's foreign policy are Moscow-centered. Foreign policy is determined in line with the interests of Moscow. An independent policy was tried to be followed in the 1918 Azerbaijan Democratic Republic period and in 1992 in the period of Ebulfecz Elchibey, but it was understood that foreign policy could not be realized despite Russia. In both periods, the country's administration was weakened by being subject to obstacles both internally and by Moscow. In the period of Heydar Aliyev, foreign policy was tried to be determined under the name of "balance policy", taking into account the interests of Russia or in this direction. Although there were new approaches and changes in the foreign policy line during the Ilham Aliyev period, it can be said that Russia’s control did not weaken, on the contrary, activities were carried out taking into account Russia's interests and in line with Russia's consent.

Azerbaijan, which gained its independence by separating from the USSR, faced many foreign policy problems. The most important of these problems is its acceptance in the international system, its inability to impose its independence on the world, the removal of Russian soldiers from Azerbaijan, the Karabakh war, economic problems, the status of the Caspian, the search for oil and natural gas in the Caspian Sea and the transportation of these resources to international markets. It is foreseen that the attitudes and behaviors of the decision makers on these issues, the decisions they take and the influence of non-governmental organizations in this decision process. While most of the foreign policy decisions in ordinary situations are taken in line with the general political direction of the country, as the decisions that are made officially beforehand with minimal impact, in extraordinary situations (war, internal conflicts and natural disasters, etc.) they can become open to its influence (Bayram, 2011, 287-288).

CONCLUSION

As a result, it is argued that the state should share its existing power with other actors and that foreign policy should be formed together with new actors, leaving the monopoly of the state. In the formation of Azerbaijan's foreign policy, it can be said that the protection of the regime's security (Efegil, 2010, 42-43) comes first, ensuring the security of the state, the basic needs of the state, and the political and social preferences of the people as secondary factors. It may be possible for non-governmental organizations to offer alternatives in foreign policy decisions as the party producing information in the knowledge-power relationship and to influence the foreign policy of the state by bringing an alternative perspective to the general thought of the society. The non-governmental organizations that can offer different approaches to the pure and unchanging security and military policies of the state in foreign policy and create a diversity of preferences, become a part of the system, and the state's making policies that it does not want or cannot do over time, by non-governmental organizations, and forming a foreign policy by taking into account the demands of social groups, today's state. It is one of the strengths.

REFERENCES


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