

Author's Note

I returned to Armenia twice after completing my Fulbright U.S. Scholar grant in December of 2016. The purpose of these trips was to complete the case study I started as part of my Fulbright grant. These trips occurred in the fall of 2017 and the spring of 2018.

My primary focus in the fall of 2017 was completing interviews that I started at one school during my Fulbright grant in 2016. During this time period, I was also given permission to do interviews at another general education school in Yerevan, that enrolled students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. I made good progress with the interviews, but I was unable to complete them, because I had to return to the U.S. to attend the ASHA Convention in Los Angeles.

In the spring of 2018, I returned to Armenia to complete remaining interviews, and do classroom observations. I thought I had more than enough time to do this, but my schedule was interrupted by something I had not anticipated: political demonstrations (Smith-Spark, 2018). There was a presidential election in early April. The former president, Serzh Sargsyan, was appointed prime minister after the election. This led to thousands of Armenians taking to the streets to protest. The focal point of the demonstrations was Republic Square, which was a block from my apartment. For approximately three weeks, there were daily demonstrations at Republic Square with crowds estimated at 100,000 people.

As best I could, I tried to observe the demonstrations from a distance, but this was challenging; it seemed like the protesters were everywhere. Thankfully, the demonstrations were peaceful. They reminded me of a college football atmosphere on a fall Saturday in the

U.S. There were people chanting, waving flags, and honking horns. The demonstrators, ranging in age from toddlers to grandparents, seemed happy, if not celebratory.

Eventually, the prime minister resigned, but the Armenian parliament refused to appoint the opposition leader, Nikol Pashinyan, as prime minister. This led to another week of protests. The following week the parliament appointed Pashinyan as prime minister (Dwyer, 2018).

By returning in the spring of 2018, I unwittingly became a witness to an historic event in Armenian history. While I was pleased to experience it first-hand, the demonstrations adversely impacted my case study. During this time period, I was unable to get to my schools. The streets around Republic Square were either blocked by the police or by protesters. I could go nowhere, except on foot. Furthermore, the schools were often closed during the demonstrations.

Once the new prime minister was appointed, and things returned to normal, I restarted the data collection for my case study. Because I lost three weeks of time due to the protests, it was now the end of the school year. Teachers were busy with many end-of-the-year tasks, and their schedules were not as malleable. Because of this, it was becoming increasingly difficult to arrange for a teacher to interpret for me during interviews or classroom observations. I did one more observation after the demonstrations ended. Even though there were other interviews and observations I would have liked to have done, I decided it was time to stop. I had enough data.

During both of my return visits to Armenia, I met regularly with two seniors at ASPU. Anna was majoring in the education of students who are deaf and hard-of-hearing, and Lilit was

majoring in SLP. My main goal was to give them experience with various aspects of a case study (Yen, 2014), such as interviewing (Seidman, 2013), and exposure to issues impacting students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing in general education classrooms. I had them interview an SLP who worked with the students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing at one school. I provided them with the interview questions. They translated these into Armenian and interviewed the SLP. Afterwards, they transcribed the interview from an audio recording, first in Armenian, and then in English. I reviewed the transcript with them and then had them code it (Saldana, 2016). Anna, also, helped me interview a parent and a general education teacher at this same school. We plan to stay in touch via email and Skype as the analysis of the data continues.

Dwyer, C. (2018, May 8). *Leader of Armenia's 'velvet revolution' takes power after weeks of protests*. Retrieved May 27, 2018 from <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2018/05/08/609364542/leader-of-armenias-velvet-revolution-takes-power-after-weeks-of-protests>

Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Seidman, I. (2013). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education & the social sciences* (4th ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.

Smith-Spark, L. (2018, May 2). *Armenia protests: What happens next?* Retrieved May 27, 2018 from <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/04/26/europe/armenia-protests-explainer-intl/index.html>

Yen, R.K. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5th ed.). Los Angeles: SAGE.