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Third parties' role in the frozen conflicts of the South Caucasus

The Cases of Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia and Abkhazia

Master thesis

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Abstract

The thesis aims to discuss effectiveness of the international conflict resolution in the region of the South Caucasus, analyzing the challenges to international efforts to solve the three conflict cases: the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh is among the frozen disputes in the region, the others Abkhazia and the South Ossetia are nominally independent states, however de facto occupied by Russia. It is the fact that three regional players Russia, Turkey and Iran and global players Russia, US, EU have different type of impacts to conflict settlements in the region which directly relate to their political and economic interests. Therefore, after two decades of mediation by powerful states provided no final resolution with numerous attempts at mediation, wherein the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has taken the lead. The complicated and interdependent relations of states make this region highly sensitive area for war and peace in the world theatrical chessboard. Author also analyzes the effectiveness of conflict management between the parties by focusing on conflicts in the South Caucasus region mentioning their historical, political, security and ethnic dimensions, where international organizations, namely OSCE, UN, EU involve.

Abstakt

The thesis aims to discuss effectiveness of the international conflict resolution in the region of the South Caucasus, analyzing the challenges to international efforts to solve the three conflict cases: the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh is among the frozen conflicts in the region, the others Abkhazia and the South Ossetia are nominally independent states, however de facto occupied by Russia. It is the fact that three regional players Russia, Turkey and Iran and global players Russia, US, EU have different type of impacts to conflict settlements in the region which directly relate to their political and economic interests. Therefore, after two decades of mediation by powerful states provided no final resolution with numerous attempts at mediation, wherein the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has taken the lead. The complicated and interdependent relations of sates make this region highly sensitive area for war and peace in the world theatrical chessboard. Author also analyzes the effectiveness of conflict management between the parties by focusing on conflicts in the South Caucasus region mentioning their historical, political, security and ethnic dimensions, where international organizations, namely OSCE, UN, EU involve.

Klíčová slova

conflict resolution, mediation, international organizations (OSCE, EU, UN), protracted conflicts, Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia, Abkhazia, self-determination, territorial integrity

Keywords

conflict resolution, mediation, international organizations (OSCE, EU, UN), protracted conflicts, Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia, Abkhazia, self-determination, territorial integrity

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Declaration of Authorship

1. The author hereby declare that she complied this thesis independently, using only the listed resources and literature.
- 2.The author hereby declare that all the sources and literature used have been properly cited.
- 3.The author hereby declare that the thesis has not been used to obtain a different or the same degree.

Prague.....**11/07/2018**

Farahkhanim Ganjaliyeva

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Institute of Political Studies

Master thesis proposal



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Proposed Topic:

**Third parties' role in the frozen conflicts of the South Caucasus.
The Cases of Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia and Abkhazia.**

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Topic Characteristics / Research Question(s):

The thesis is about investigating the international conflict resolution efforts in the region of the South Caucasus, and analyzing the challenges to international efforts in solving the three conflict cases: Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Mainly I will focus on the mediation process which analyzes asymmetric nature of mediators being bias, impartial and neutral and their

effectiveness in the role of conflict resolutions. Also, I will focus on three international organizations' role (the UN, the OSCE, the EU) which maintain umbrella approach to the South Caucasus conflicts in three conflict cases in mediation process. Among them Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has taken a lead, especially in Nagorno-Karabakh case, without providing final resolution with several attempts at mediation which last several decades.

The complexity of the region can not only be characterized with its ongoing conflicts, but also with its geo-economic battleground. The different political directions in bloody conflicts resolutions, geopolitical and business interests among the global and regional groupings like US, Russia, Iran, Turkey and EU each trying to impose their role and to have a say in the region, and regional groupings like Turkey-Georgia-Azerbaijan which supported by US, and Russia-Armenia-Iran bring complexity to the South Caucasus where the interests meet and clash. The thesis research also intends to explore 1) interdependent and complicated relations among the regional and the big states, 2) the impact of conflicts on the legal aspects of self-determination and territorial integrity in international law 3) the third parties' interventions to prevent dynamics of the emergence of threat in the South Caucasus. Thus, the thesis will analyze to what extent these international organizations effective in the achievement of final settlement of conflicts, assessing historical and legal aspects of three conflict cases of the region.

My research question can be formulated as:

Research question: How far the UN, OSCE, EU may become effective in settlement of PSC in South Caucasus depending on their "activity" and "passivity" in comparison to each other in mediation process?

The theses research question will deal with how international organizations can be effective in the conflict settlement taking into account their "activity" and "passivity" by analyzing mediators' natures (being bias, impartial, neutral), as well as their functions, chosen strategies in comparison to each other in mediation. Despite that, international organizations have not achieved a final settlement of three South Caucasus conflicts. The UN's role in Abkhazia, the OSCE's roles in South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh, their failure will also be analyzed according to their functions in mediation process.

Working hypotheses:

1. Bias, impartial, neutral actors' interests have different impact on the effectiveness of the UN, the OSCE, the EU in achievement of a settlement of the South Caucasus conflicts.
2. Bias, impartial, neutral actors' roles and strategies have different impact on the effectiveness of the UN, the OSCE, the EU in achievement of a settlement of the South Caucasus conflicts.

These two hypotheses will be tested together because they are interrelated to each other and affect process and outcome of international conflict mediation. In order to explain bias, impartial, neutral actor' interest, role and their strategies hypotheses, I will use Contingency Model of Bercovitch, Anagnoson, Willi (1991) which explains overall perspective of mediation process and their effectiveness. The Contingency Model analyzes three clusters of variables of mediation. The first cluster of variables relates to the content of mediation. Here is included: a) the nature of the dispute (malign, benign); b) the nature of the parties; c) the nature of the mediator (bias, impartiality and neutrality), the second cluster relates to the mediation strategy and process which determines the third cluster success or failure of mediation outcome.

Methodology:

This work will be based on empirical analysis tested on purely theoretical explanations. Hypotheses will also be tested with methodological tools such as qualitative comparative analysis, providing historic information to the involvement of three institutions in conflict resolutions in three conflict cases (Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia, Abkhazia). The primary and secondary sources will be provided using data from journals, statements, reports of public officials and the press releases of OSCE and UN Charter. The contribution of this methodology is to facilitate meaningful comparison between the different peace plans offered to the parties and assessment of the mediation process in global and regional context.

Outline

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"Almighty Allah has commanded not to discord the Earth, perfectly created for Humankind, not to kill, not to shed blood, not to kill the life and the Human, generated by the Creator"

Tafseer of the verse 85, Surah Al-Araf. The Holy Quran

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List of Abbreviations

CIS	COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES
CSCE	COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE
JPKF	JOINT PEACEKEEPING FORCE
UNOMIG	UNITED NATIONS OBSERVER MISSION IN GEORGIA
UNSC	UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL
ENP	EUROPEAN NEIGHBORHOOD POLICY
EU	EUROPEAN UNION
EUSR	EU SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE
IDP	INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE
NK	NAGORNO-KARABAKH
NKAO	NAGORNO-KARABAKH AUTONOMOUS OBLAST
OSCE	ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE
PCA	PARTNERSHIP AND COOPERATION AGREEMENT
TACIS	TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES
PSC	PROTRACTED SOCIAL CONFLICTS
UN	UNITED NATIONS
UNOCHA	UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS
UNHCR	THE OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES
USSR	UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS
BTC	BAKU TBLISI CEYHAN

BTE	BAKU TBLISI ERZURUM
MMO	MILITARY MONITORING OFFICERS
JCC	JOINT CONTROL COMMISSION
TANAP	TRANSANATOLIAN NATURAL GAS PIPELINE
TAP	TRANS-ADRIATIC PIPELINE
INOGATE	INTERSTATE OIL AND GAS TRANSPORT TO EUROPE

No Immediate Light at the End of the Tunnel.

The Complexity of the South Caucasus.

MAP 1



SOURCES: Heritage Foundation research based on information from Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, "Leaders Discuss Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict; Kerry Expresses 'Strong Concern,'" September 5, 2014, <http://www.rferl.org/content/nagorno-karabakh-/26567727.html> (accessed January 5, 2015), and SOCAR Romania, "The Global Scale of the State Oil Company of Azerbaijan Republic," <http://www.socar.ro/en/SOCAR-AZERBAIJAN> (accessed January 5, 2015).

1. Introduction

“There are no whole truths; all truths are half-truths. It is trying to treat them as whole truths that plays the devil.”¹

Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947)

“Good neighbors” or “Distant Relatives” – The image of the South Caucasus can be recognized with Soviet-era melodies like 1950s "Caucasus Table Song," in which three "brothers" -- the cities of Tbilisi, Baku, and Yerevan -- sing a toast to their friendship and future progress. But it was just an “image” under direct and indirect rule of Russia. After the collapse of Soviet Union in 1991, the peace and stability couldn’t be established in the South Caucasus, even it became more boiling cauldron region with its “frozen” or “protracted”, can be also called as “simmering”, “lingering”, “unresolved” conflicts (Jafarova 2015, p-2). The August 2008 war in Georgia, the four-day war in April 2016 between Armenia and Azerbaijan are the examples of labeling the conflicts as “frozen”, since it is understood that the conflicts in the region may boil over into violent hostilities at any time. As a result, the stability of the South Caucasus is unregulated and depends on untenable status quo. This status quo is built on the division of triangle of the three states with six territorial entities which three of them are unrecognized. The myth related with three bloody conflict cases – the Nagorno–Karabakh between Armenia and Azerbaijan (hence Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict), Abkhazia and the South Ossetia conflicts within Georgia which last more than 25 years - involved itself too much intrinsic situations such as self-interests and dual policies of other players. The problems of extracting enormous oil and gas resources in the Caspian region, economic success of Azerbaijan and its central role in implementation of regional energy projects, piping fuels through the South Caucasus, especially through Turkey to Western markets have encouraged new diplomatic efforts. But, at the same time, the ongoing conflicts bring challenges and threat to a growth, unity and overall security in the South Caucasus. The different political directions in bloody conflict resolutions, geopolitical and business interests among the global and regional

¹ See: Nuriyev, 2007, p-11

groupings like US, Russia, Iran, Turkey and EU, each trying to impose their role and to have a say in the region, and regional groupings like Turkey-Georgia-Azerbaijan which supported by US, and Russia-Armenia-Iran bring complexity to the South Caucasus where the interests meet and clash. (Jafarova, 2015)

The *purpose of this research* is to highlight the challenges to international conflicts resolution efforts in three cases-Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia and Abkhazia-which are unique in their own nature and to analyze the “effectiveness concept” of the OSCE, EU, UN which maintain “umbrella approach” to the South Caucasus conflicts resolution in mediation process. Therefore, the research investigates the following question trying to find solutions to conflict cases which self-interest and root factors bring big challenges to international organizations’ effectiveness.

The thesis *research question* deals with how far the UN, OSCE, EU may become effective in final settlement of PSC in the South Caucasus depending on their “activity” and “passivity” in comparison to each other in mediation process? In order to identify the mediators’ “activity” and “passivity” in mediation, first the thesis will investigate their role and interest which directly relate to mediators’ impartiality, bias and neutrality. Second, it will define how these asymmetric natures of mediators can affect their choice of strategy which their active and passive role depend on their nature greatly and identify effectiveness of mediation outcome.

Two hypotheses will be tested by the effectiveness of contingency model of Bercovitch, Anagnoson and Willi (1991) which will also lead to answer the research question which is mentioned above.

Hypothesis # 1: Bias, impartial, neutral actors’ interests have different impact on the effectiveness of the UN, the OSCE, the EU in achievement of a settlement of the South Caucasus conflicts.

Hypothesis # 2: Bias, impartial, neutral actor’s roles and strategies have different impact on the effectiveness of the UN, the OSCE, the EU in achievement of a settlement of the South Caucasus conflicts.

The thesis research also intends to explore 1) interdependent and complicated relations among the regional and the big states, 2) the impact of conflicts to principles such as self-determination and territorial integrity in international law 3) the third parties’ interventions to prevent dynamics of the emergence of threat in the South Caucasus. The contradiction between the interest, role and strategies of asymmetric nature of actors directly affect the conflict resolution process. For

example, when we look at a dual policy player like Russia which is the veto-wielding permanent member of the UN Security Council (UNSC) and one of the Co-Chair of the OSCE, former name CSCE, Minsk Group and also founder of the CIS, which can be called as Russian Commonwealth, is considered the most important global and regional player in the South Caucasus conflicts. On the one hand, Russia mediates for the peaceful solution to the conflicts, on the other hand she provides much military support to the conflicting parties and maintains her influence in other regional conflicts and aims at secessionist movements inside the sovereign states. Thus, thinking that Kremlin is more interested in maintaining the conflicts rather than solving them is one of the reason that conflicts in the region are still going on. So, Moscow hinders peace process more than solving them. At the same time, the input of US, Turkey, EU, Iran have some few impacts on the settlement of conflicts based on self-interests. (Ismayilzade, p-2)

The *methodology* of this work will be based on empirical analysis tested on purely theoretical explanations. Hypotheses will also be tested with methodological tools such as qualitative comparative analysis, providing historic information to the involvement of three institutions in conflict resolutions in three conflict cases. (Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia, Abkhazia). The primary and secondary sources will be provided using data from journals, statements, reports of public officials and the press releases of OSCE and UN Charter. The contribution of this methodology is to facilitate meaningful comparison between the different peace plans offered to the parties and assessment of the mediation processes in global and regional context.

The *structure of the thesis* is as following. Chapter 2 mentions literature review and theoretical framework which discuss the effectiveness of conflict resolution in mediation and explain the more important features which can influence the outcome and determines mediation' success and failure. Chapter 3 explains the root causes of protracted conflicts highlighting historical facts and arguments relate to three conflict cases-Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Chapter 4 mainly draws attentions to the regional and global powers' role, interest and their relation to each other. Chapter 5,6,7,8 deal with increasing participation of international organizations in the region who try to bring peace to the South Caucasus and have revealed their inability to solve protracted conflicts. Chapter 9 is a discussion part which strives to find solution to three conflict cases drawing attentions to worst and best possible scenarios that can happen in the future in order to break the geopolitical deadlock in the region. This part analyzes and assesses arguments by self-determination and territorial integrity principles in international law and ends with results of testing

hypotheses. Chapter 10 concludes with reviewing actors' positions according to conflict resolution process based on their leverage, activity and passivity to each other.

2. Literature review and theoretical framework.

A broad literature of this thesis aims at explaining *effectiveness of conflict resolution in mediation*. Bercovitch illustrated three possible actions in which international actors deal with conflict by taking one of them: unilateral, bilateral or third-party interventions. According to his analysis, the unilateral mode based on to win over the opponent through violent struggle, or it may involve withdrawal or avoidance. The bilateral mode based on some form of bargaining and compromise (negotiation). The third-party mode implies intervention of a party not directly involved in the conflict. Adjudication or mediation are the best option for non-violent settlement of conflicts. (Bercovitch et al, 2001). Author argues that the first issue is the role factor which shows that international negotiators are not unitary actors and each actors' different strategy influence the conflict process. The second issue relates to common goals which refer parties' mutual preferences for a particular course of action and outcome. When all the parties aim at for peace, they all agreed that the time was right and they all wanted to replace the "step-by-step" approach to the conflict which was preferred by Henry Kissinger, later known as "comprehensive approach".

Other scholar Burton proposed paradigm shift from power-based political realism to needs-based functionalism and "behavioral realism" which his suggestion brought great contribution to pluralist perspective in international relations. This orientation contains numerous elements in interest locked protracted conflicts such as to promote of the environmental conditions that create harmonious and cooperative relationships which he thought that remove the causes of conflict. (Fisher, p-35)

Vayrynen seeks the solutions of conflicts on the ground based on five types of generic transforms which is thought that these kinds of transforms can provide a better opportunity to solve asymmetric internal conflicts. First, Vayrynen suggests that context transformation which refers context of conflict that may radically change the conflict situation. Second, structural transformation that refers basic structure of the conflict so as to address the set of actors, issues, incompatible goals, the conflicting relationships and the society or the state within which the conflict is constituted. Root factors-the asymmetric conflicts cannot be transformed without

changing the unbalanced and contested relationship between both disputants that lie at their roots. Third, issue transformation concerns the conflicting positions take on issues such as territorial, legal, military. Issues in conflict are the underlying causes of disputes and one of the most difficult negotiation problems. They seem to be inherent in the conflict but not matter of choice. Fourth, “applying political change” or “actor transformation” which is thought that new actors may have to redefine their goals, alter their approach to conflict and adopt different perspectives to seek peace. Fifth, “personal change”, changes in heart or mind in individual leaders or groups with decision-making power at turning points such as inconclusive victory or a loss of foreign support, may be important. Accordingly, external actors will try to reach these leaders and bring about this personal change. (Vayrenen,1991, p-4)

Power mediation, what Pruitt (2000) refers to as “heavy mediation” or Zartman (2008) calls manipulation” is the most coercive form of intervention which third party can use their resources carrots and sticks to push the parties into an agreement. Third party can sweeten the terms of potential settlement by offering aid to the disputants. Or third party might also push the parties toward an agreement by threatening punishment such as economic sanctions or military strikes. (Grieg, p-9). But this can be used as a last mediation strategy by a third party which is not also possible to apply to South Caucasus protracted conflicts which involve other issues that clash the interests of international actors as well.

Now, let’s look why third party’s mediation fails and cannot be successful in conflict resolution. Fisher suggests that third party should be impartial, without favoring one party over the other. So, impartiality is seen one of the main requirements of acceptability by the parties. If there is the trust between all parties that mediation will be more successful. But Zartman (1989) argue that the motives of the mediators in international conflict are best described in the context of power politics which means all mediators almost always have their own interests. So, impartiality is less important than the achievement of favorable outcome when we look to parties’ perspective in conflicts parties choose the relationship with powerful mediators. (Fisher, p-173)

Other factor relates to intensity of conflict which is discussed by different analysts, showing this case from different point of view. For example, Bercovitch finds that the longer a dispute lasts, the more polarized the positions of disputants will become rejecting any mediation effort. Both part will try to “win” at all costs. (Kleiboer 2006, cited in Modelski 1964; Frei 1975; Brockner 1982, p-363). Thus, protracted conflicts should have managed in a different way.

But some other analysts think in an optimistic way and come to this conclusion that the greater the intensity of conflict, the higher the acceptance of mediation by both sides and successful as a method of minimizing losses. (ibid, p-364).

Bercovitch offered zero-sum game for five type of conflicts issues: 1) sovereignty issues which relates incompatible claims of rivalries to a specific territory, 2) ideology issues relating to basic values and beliefs, 3) security issues concerning borders, territories, 4) self-determination, 5) a residual category of other conflicts. It is suggested to redefine and fractionate it into negotiable subunits and try trade those off against one another. This case can only be useful if interests are decoupled from values. If no, disputes are difficult to solve. (Kleiboer et.al, 2006, p-364)

Bohmelt argues that different type of ToDs (track diplomacy), T1-involves state and official actors, unofficial diplomatic intervention which is formed by T2 and T1.5, empirically tested and thought more effective in conflict settlement. He also emphasized (along with Beardsley et al, 2006, Jackson, 2000) high intensity of ethno political and identity based conflicts are more complex, which leads to greater uncertainty and makes reaching to a settlement more difficult. He proposed possible inverted U-shaped relationship, (balancing power disparity) between conflict intensity with the help of track intervention, also including the square of the intensity variable: both low and high intensity disputes are less likely to see intervention and effective outcome. (Bohmelt 2010, p-173, cited in Masson and Fett, 1996, p-551). He also used dummy variables, dichotomous variables for these kinds of conflicts if at least one other party actively supports one of the belligerents.

2.1 Understanding the role of protracted inter/intra state conflicts in conflict resolution.

Several scholars like Dr. Edward Azar (1985, 1986a, 1990), Bercovith, Lynch (2004), Zartman, Fisher explained the components that are necessary for PSC (protracted social conflict) to occur and show several models for successful third-party mediation in conflict process. But PSC is different from other conflicts and can be defined by Azar as: *a prolonged conflictual relationship between at least one non-state actor and another entity over an extended period of time with the intermittent violent interactions adequate to be fully embedded in the social fabric of conflict groups wherein issues of contention can remain same or change over time, national, individual, social needs which are to be inseparable by both actors are considered non-negotiable.* (Azar, 1985) According to Azar's theoretical work PSC has four necessary components which explain

deep roots of PSC nature. These are effective participation, security, self-identity and group-identity. (Azar, et.al. 1985, p- 29). Azar assumes that “distinctive identity” is the main contribution to PSC in its enduring nature by examining security.

According to primordialist approach which is close to Azar’s idea, also see ethnicity, cultural differences such as language, religion, cultural traditions have their impact on psychological make-up of individuals which relate to primordial objects such as biological features and especially territorial location, automatically lead to conflict because they assume that culturally defined groups are by nature exclusionary and are dominated by parochial values that outweigh universalistic norms which lead to extremism and it raises the odds of violence. But what primordialist neglect is that cultural identities lead to conflict only when they have politically charged. And cultural identity is politicized only when it comes criterion for discrimination and privilege in struggles over the distribution of political and economic resources, rights and protection. Instrumentalists explain it as ethnic war rooted in new situation who used their cultural groups as sites of mass mobilization as constituencies in their competition for power and resources, because they found them more effective than social classes. Constructivist approach stress the importance of the socially constructed nature of ethnic group such as socially constructed identities, charismatic leaders can lead rational actors to escalate a dispute to violence, even sometimes it can lead rational group can escalate a dispute to violence. (Mohammadzadeh, 2016, et al Carment, 2000, Lake, Rotchild 1996)

Ethnic identity issue is also discussed by Stritecky analyzing the deep root of violent conflicts in Soviet period. He argued that it is only a “second image” explanation which is the primary cause should be seen in the actions of skillful entrepreneurs, who managed to mobilize the people on the grounds of identity politics in the conditions of the fragile transformation [...].(Stritecky, p-11) Carment (2000, p.175, cited in Snyder (1993), Lake and Rothchild 1996) also stated that ethnic conflicts spread with purpose rather than inevitability.

Another factor relates to the role of proximity of the actors to violent conflict. The role of geographic attributes, resources, territorial lines have been found to be trigger factors that push actors to conflicts. (Starr, 2005)

Gartner compared four type actors’ decision regarding conflicting parties which plays decisive role in conflict resolution according to their place in international system. 1) Similar (e.g both emphasize consensual agreements). These are superpowers: Russia-USA. 2) Seemingly similar

but actually different (e.g both can result in agreement but they have categorically different enforceability). These actors are: Russia-Iran. They are more pro-Armenian. 3) Seemingly different but relationally similar (e.g contrasting the threat of war and litigation). This can relate to EU member states which have neutral approach to the South Caucasus conflict resolution. 4) Different (e.g international dispute mediators have no clear applicability to conflict resolutions). Here is included all playing actors in inter/intrastate conflicts. (Gartner, 2014, p-271)

Cornell even go into a deep investigation and showed territorial autonomy as a main reason to the violent conflicts in the South Caucasus. Besides autonomy, he also proposed nine other factors derived from the theoretical literature (cultural differences, national conception, past conflict and myth, rough terrain, relative demography, existence of ethnic kin, economic viability, radical leadership and external support) and contrasted them with the three violent and six peaceful cases. So, Cornell came to this conclusion that territorial autonomy is a root cause of wars which occurred in former Soviet autonomies. (Stritecky cited in Cornell, 2001, p-23). Only Ajaria has stayed peaceful, just like all the remaining formerly non-autonomous minorities. (Ibid, p-23)

Galtung also highlighted the cultural and structural aspects of the conflict which are invisible and he stressed that these factors are the facts that play the most important role during the prevention of other stages of conflict. What he illustrated the visible side of this conflict is the direct violence which are known as the killed, displaced people and the material damage etc. which ruin the civilian's life in war. He modelled visible and invisible factors in a "Galtung triangle" showing invisible side is more vicious than direct visible violence. And this direct visible violence controls these two factors which inspire them. So, Galtung suggests that in order to prevent the violent bloody war, these two factors must be avoided and taken into account. (Galtung, 2004)

When it comes to structural balance of the world nations in a grand world strategy chessboard, international relations theorist Zeev Maoz found that conflicts are the results of relational imbalances that violate structural balance. According to network designers, politicians explain it in a triangle of three people in which two friends are connected to each other. And a common enemy is more stable than one in which one person has a friendly relationship with two other people who do not like each other which shows this principle in creating networks in deeply divided societies. Looking at strategies of connection balanced relationship can be possible in two cases: 1) The friend of my friend is my friend. 2) The enemy of my enemy is my friend. The network will not hold if 3) the friend of my enemy is my friend, 4) The enemy of my enemy is my

enemy. Even though, these last networks don't exist according to theorist Zeev Maoz, it can be applied to conflict in the South Caucasus region where Russia or other neutral states can be considered as a friend of my enemy at the same time friend of mine. (Slaughter, 2017, p-105)

2.2 The role of conflicting narratives in conflict resolution.

Some scholars see the “plethora of convergences” (Jafarova 2015, Laberre et al, Niculescu 2016, Nuriyev 2007) as the challenge in conflict resolution, pointing similar triggers and the same set of actors involved in conflict resolution during the same timelines of eruption at the collapse of Soviet Union. Jafarova, (2015) defined them as “conflicting narratives” who are both triggers and challenges to conflict resolution effort. As well as Jafarova mentions some actors' interest stand for both a trigger and a challenge, for example, Russia's as said above, also other actors such as Turkey and the U.S may be seen mainly as challenges to conflict resolutions. Cornell (2017) argues that the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan is the original “frozen” conflict of Eurasia and by no means a parochial squabble in a Eurasian backwater and it has grown into international hotspot which involve significant powerhouses of Eurasia and beyond. Analyzing geopolitical background of the region Cornell mentions that this conflict had an inverse effect on the two countries' geopolitical choices: it led Armenia to return to Russia's fold, pushed Azerbaijan toward the West and contributed to the alignment of Georgia and Azerbaijan. Thus, it is unclear to what degree the quid pro quo was explicit but the logic was straightforward: Armenia would align with Russia in regional affairs and in exchange receive protection for its control of NK. What is complicated for Russia is the perceived need to keep both protagonist—Armenia and Azerbaijan—within the Russian sphere of influence and to check any drift toward the West. Azerbaijan and Armenia have twice been very close to peace and only Russian intervention did not allow concluding a peace agreement. A peace treaty was prepared between the governments of Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Abulfel Elchibey, which was planned to be signed in the autumn of 1993, however, the military coup in Azerbaijan inspired and supported by Russia and destroyed those plans. Another attempt for a peace treaty was made between the government of Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Heydar Aliyev, but military coup in Armenia (1998) again supported by Russia destroyed the plan. These are major factors show Russia's major role in NK conflict. (Nuriyev,2007, p-59)

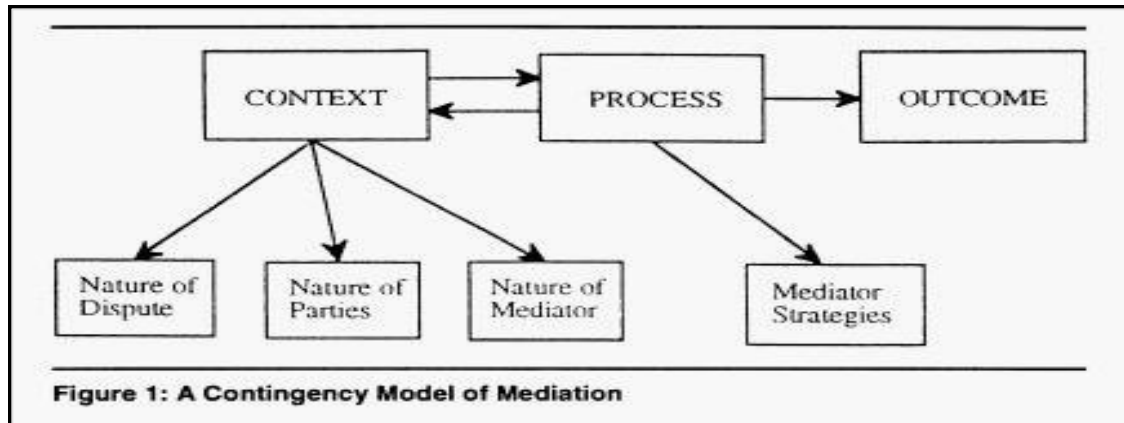
South Caucasus is also characterized in terms of two types of intertwined knots, battle in geopolitical and geo-economic fields where the entangled interests of geopolitical powers may result in either positive or negative consequences. Gasimli argues that in order to attract foreign players to the South Caucasus– “energy cooperation and conflict resolution”–must be separated from each other. This kind of approach diminish opportunities for using one issue as leverage to influence the other. (Gasimli, 2016, p-76).

Tomas De Waal (2009) tells about a “Karabakh trap” in which deep settle identities factor become harder to renegotiate by parties, since they become part of societies’ self-image. In order to overcome win-loss mentality, in which Armenia gains and Azerbaijan losses or vice-versa or focusing on win-win by all sides on long-term, author mentions the crucial role of regional actors in peace–building in conflict. (de Waal, 2009)

2.3 Third party intervention theory. Mediation. Contingency approach.

Mediation is a special tool as third-party intervention in protracted conflicts. Mitchell (1981) defines mediation as “intermediary activity undertaken by third party with the primary intention of achieving some compromise settlement of issues at stake between the parties, ending disruptive conflict behavior and reach a consensual settlement that will accommodate their needs.

Bercovitch and Anagnoson, Willi (1991) offered specific contingency approach which stipulates variables with specific operational criteria, each of them interrelated with each other and have an impact on mediation effectiveness and outcome. Each cluster contingent upon with following variables: 1) previous relation of parties (political, economic, cultural ties, history of conflicts and cooperation between the parties) 2) the nature of dispute (e.g. the intensity, the issue and the duration), 3) the nature of mediators (bias/impartiality/neutral and their political, economic ties with disputants), 4) mediation strategy (communication/facilitation, procedural and directive strategies) 5) outcome (success or failure). The contingency model is useful analytical tool to understand the whole mediation process and to analyze effectiveness of international organizations and actors’ role and strategy in protracted inter/intra state conflicts.



Source: Bercovitch, Anagnoson, Willi/International Mediation (1991)

Authors suggest that the previous relations between the conflicting parties is a major factor for the success of mediation. If previous relations were friendly, the mediation can be more successful than the conflicting past which depends on the number of disputes with other parties, parties' previous relationship and the level of hostility (use of force, threat of force, war). The history of hostility and the use of force have negative impact on conflict management efforts, which is less likely the mediation to be successful.

Another factor relates to objective and tangible measures that drive conflicting parties to control over resources and power is an endemic part of human relations, interactions and conflict. The main matter here is that states can cooperate, understand each other depending on their degree of commonality. Parties from similar political systems or social structures (ethnic, cultural or religious organizing society) will have fewer negative perceptions about each other. Parties with a high degree of commonality are less likely to require assistance with communication aspects of the mediation process.

"The success or failure" of mediation is largely defined by the nature of the dispute. The duration of a dispute and time of initiating, mediation may somehow determine its success. To be effective mediation, it is important that it must take place at a propitious moment. For example, such mediation is more likely to be effective if it is attempted at an early stage.

The most important part is the issues at the heart of the dispute which relate to territory, ideology, security, resources, independence. Some problems are more difficult to solve, especially serious value based conflicts are harder to solve and labeled as "intractable". Bercovitch and Langley verified that the mediation efforts involving territorial and security issues are more likely to succeed than those concerning ideological and self-determination issues. The main challenge

for solving these kinds of malign issues are based on fundamental assumptions that cannot be proved right or wrong.

Asymmetric nature of mediators' interest and role also bring puzzles to the outcome of mediation process. The complex role of biased mediator in interstate conflict mediation, the multiple actors and actions frequently associated with interstate conflict resolution, mediator strategy and outcomes, the importance of selection effects for understanding the deceptive appearance of inter/state conflict mediation's effectiveness have positive and negative impact on the conflict resolution. (Gartner, 2014). Author argues that the mediator has his/her self-interest in the dispute, which here included superpowers, international organizations and medium sized powers. Bias can undermine voluntary conflict resolution. (Gent, et al. 2011). Thus, traditional view hold that neutrality and impartiality is vital to the promotion of trust between disputants and third parties. Neutral mediators do not support any of the side directly, engage only because of their interest to end the civil war. This interest can be truly humanitarian impulses and altruistic motivations but can also defined as political concern about their image and reputation.

Mediators choose three types of strategies depending on their behavior have impact on mediation success and failure. Communication-facilitation strategies describe mediators' behavior as fairly passive role which only provide channeling information, facilitating cooperation but have little control over the process or the substance of mediation. Procedural strategies enable mediator to exert more formal control over the mediation depending on their problem-solving capacity. Such kind of mediators may control constituency influences, the distribution of information, situational powers of the parties, resources, as well as the communication between the parties. The most effective strategy is directive strategy. It can help parties to equalize power imbalances and generally move the disputants toward a more cooperative orientation.

This explanatory study will be used to test hypotheses about mediator identity and behavior and their impact on international disputes. It will also be tested how these interrelated variables can affect mediation strategy (problem solving capacity), process and outcome which verify mediation success and failure.

H1 # Bias, impartial and neutral actors' interests

Bias mediator plays very important role especially in protracted inter/intra state conflicts. Biased mediators have incentives to protect their protégés, ensure that they are stronger mechanism in

peacemaking process and create incentives for crafting arrangements that are beneficial to the side closest to them. Being government-biased mediators or rebel-sided mediators-typically are unrecognized, materially weaker but exclusively focused on achieving their goals in the conflict with the government side-is hindered nature of bias mediators. Even though, bias mediators can bring peace in civil wars according to their leverage, interest and role. (Svensson, 2013). For example, according to the ability of biased mediators in bargaining process can generate private information and credibly share such information, so that the parties can identify each other's true red lines and find a joint reference point for an agreement. And they are more suitable to deliver their side to make concessions on the basic issues at stake, enabling agreement on the peace institutions. Also, biased mediators have the advantage of being more credible in the eyes of the vulnerable side and in protecting them against future exploitation through conciliatory offers. A biased mediator can therefore counter-balance the risk for cheating on concessions (ibid).

In comparison to bias mediators, neutrals may bring agreements less quality due to their lack of interest. But they can be better positioned to support the transformation that need to occur in a peace process, also to the peace agreement. An important role of neutral mediator can work with potential mediators that is biased due to their historical ties to one side during mediation process. Such collaborations can be effective in peacemaking process and it is possible to achieve a long-term stability between disputants.

Impartial mediators on the other hand can be seen as "assisted negotiators" who play fairly in negotiation process. Beside the fact that impartial mediators are more preferable actors in international disputes mediation, the interest, leverage and resources that impartial mediators should possess in achieving successful outcome must be acceptable to both sides. Therefore, resources and leverage can exert greater influence on the adversaries' decision-making.

H2# Bias, impartial and neutral actors' roles and strategies

Bias, neutral, impartial actors' role and strategies hypothesis play a key role in the effectiveness of mediation outcome depends on the degree of power disparity of mediators and their relation with adversaries. The smaller the power differences between the adversaries, the greater the effectiveness of international mediation. If bias and a strong mediator is ally with one of the adversaries, she/he may not be prepared to countenance any concessions and compromise which are essential to mediation success. Bias, regional and global power has consensual decision-

making capacity and veto wielding power which has decisive impact on malign problem-solving issue. Thus, power resources and the impact of international mediation can make the mediation outcome successful and effective, if power capabilities of all actors in mediation process are matched and low to no impact when power disparity is high and decisions are uncrossed. Therefore, inclusiveness plays a key role in more malign problems which means that all parties in a given group must join for a solution of their effective implementation.

Second, the more important issue is a choose of strategy of mediators depends on their interest, their role and capacity in solving international disputes. The more active mediator behavior occurs when a third party begins to affect the content of negotiations as well as the process. In low-intensity conflicts, for instance, communication strategies are more effective. In high intensity conflicts directive strategies are more successful in reaching an agreement or when negotiations have reached a deadlock. Depending mediators' leverage and chosen strategies during consensual agreements can affect the content and substance of bargaining process, deal directly with an aim to change the issues and behavior in dispute.

Third, the coalition of bias, neutral, impartial mediators in peacemaking process must take the history of hostility into account in which disputed parties stuck. In such circumstances, the mediation must be complemented by initiatives using from top-to bottom approach (e.g dialogue groups, interethnic and interfaith groups, problem solving workshops and so on) to overcome burden of history and establish peaceful relations. However, this kind of malign problems in which involve the actors who have cross cutting opinions is difficult to solve. In such case disputants can find agreement in concentrating interest not positions. This kind of technique can provide win-win outcome for contending parties. (Munévar, 2005) For example, such kind of interests can be linked with selection of incentives for cooperation in different fields and transform conflict context to more benign issues with high decision-making capacity.

3. The roots of conflicts in the South Caucasus:

Regional actors-Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia

Located between East and West and being as a bridge, the South Caucasus can be portrayed beyond its geostrategic, geopolitical and geo-economic factors, also with its deadlock ethnic conflicts which stick strongly to their ethnic, identity, traditional issues which are the core factors of conflicts bring challenges to international organizations to solve them. Let's analyze the history

of three conflict cases–Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia and South Ossetia-and see if the population of these areas really have the rights to claim for secession. Or is it a secession or annexation of one sovereign country’s territory by other neighboring country?

3.1 Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.



Map 2: Nagorno-Karabakh.

Source: Coyle, J.J (2018). *“Russia’s border force and frozen conflicts”*. Palgrave Macmillan. Springer International Publishing AG, Switzerland, p-208.

The Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region (NKAO) occupied the south-eastern part of the Lesser Caucasus and covered an area of 4,388 square kilometers. The territory of the region stretched for 120 kilometers from north to south and for 35-60 kilometers from east to west. (karabakh,2011)

In the year 1988, Armenians who were majority in Karabakh openly laid claim to the territory of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO) of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Azerbaijan. Both sides claim to the ownership of the region, therefore several historical factors were written and told differently by both parties. Even today, Armenians are not considered

indigenous people of the South Caucasus. According to a Caucasian anthropologist, I.I. Pantukhov (19th century), Armenians, who have covered a centuries-long thorny road from Europe (Balkan) to Asia Minor (Turkey, Anatolia) including the Caucasus, have always attempted to “Armenianize” the territories, states, tribes and ethnic groups along the way. A serious Armenian researcher N. Adonts wrote in 1908: “In the 7th century (B.C) the invasion of the Cimmerians caused a migration of peoples to Asia Minor. The Armenians of Phrygia (an ancient country in the north-western part of Asia Minor today's Anatolia) crossed the Euphrates and mixed with the local Aramaic (Urartu) people. The mixture of the alien Phrygians with aborigines of Aramaic origin formed the core of the Armenian nation. The double name of the Armenians-among themselves- “Hai” and among neighbors “Armen-ius”-is the best proof of their double composition: one name originating from the incomers, the other coming from the aboriginals. (Yuzbashyan, p,4-5)

According to Azerbaijan’ narratives, from 4th century B.C to 8th century A.D-the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh was one of the provinces of Caucasian Albania. (Kocharli, 2004). And the people who lived in Caucasian Albania should not be confused with European Albania. This ancient state existed on the territory of modern Azerbaijan till 8 A.D. (Shafiyev, 2015)

Garabagh also was part of different Muslim states such as Sajids, Salarids, Shaddadids, Atabays, Garagoyunlu, Aghgoyunlu which replaced one another in Azerbaijan after its occupation by the Arabs. In 18th century Karabakh turned into an independent Karabakh Khanate. (karabakh,2011)

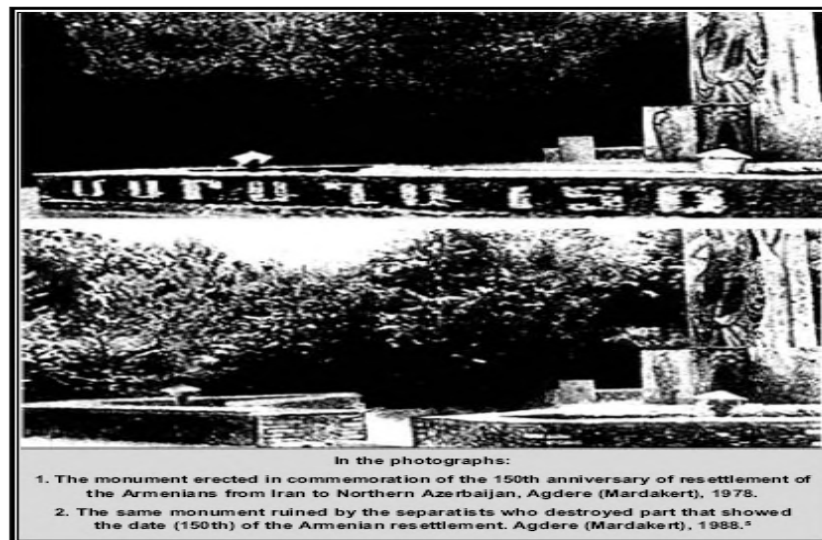
During this period Russia started her Grand strategy as a part of expansionism policy which included here 1) center-driven expansionism (geography and geopolitical factors played a dominant role), 2) mercantile interest 3) religious factor which Russia believed that the best way to strengthen provinces occupied by Russia was to increase Christian population (especially Armenians) and decrease Muslims. At the end of 18th century two Armenians-Iosef Argutinsky and Ivan Lazarev (Ovanes Lazarian) used this situation and reached high level in St. Petersburgs’ circle indented their aim to establishment Armenian state with the capital in Erivan to Potemkin. At the same time, the target place was Karabakh, thinking that Armenia might be easily restored and in a short time many Armenians can flow in and create “Great Armenia” expanding their state at the expense of the territories of Eastern Turkey and Azerbaijan. (Shafiyev,2015)

As a result of Russia’s expansionism policy Karabakh khanate’s independence couldn’t last and all entities, also Karabakh khanate had come under the rule of Tsarist Russia. According to Kurekchay Treaty (1805), Karabakh khanate ended its independence. (karabakh,2011)

Later on, Russia applied “divide and rule” policy to the South Caucasus which played decisive role in nations’ fate. Two treaties-Gulustan Treaty (1813) and Turkmenchay Treaty (1828) are the major agreements which prove the dividing of the South Caucasus between Russia and Persia. After the Turkmenchay Treaty, Russian empire started massive deportation of Armenians from Turkey and Iran and settled them in Karabakh. (ibid)

According to Russian scholar N. Shavrov by the end of XIX century said: “From 1.300.000 Armenians now living in Transcaucasia, more than 1.000.000 don't belong to the number of indigenous inhabitants and were resettled here by us”. 124.000 Armenians were resettled in the territories of Karabakh and Iravan khanates by Russia only during 1813-1830. Apart from 124.000 Armenians, which were resettled officially, a great number of Armenians settled there unofficially, so the total number of settlers considerably exceeds 200.000. (Aliyev.H Foundation,2007) Therefore, the population of Nagorno-Karabakh are Armenians in majority.

After the settlement Armenians started to destroy slowly all monuments, mosques, tried to ruin everything in Karabakh which belong to Azerbaijani people. The monument which is below founded by Armenians the occasion of the 150th anniversary of their resettlement from Iran to Northern Azerbaijan but it was erased later by Armenians, trying to clean their past and show to the world that they are indigenous people of Nagorno-Karabakh. (ibid)



Source: Heydar Aliyev Foundation (2007). *The serious of “The true facts about Garabagh”*. War against Azerbaijan. Targeting Cultural heritage. Baku. Also available at: <http://www.war-culture.az>

The beginning of XX century was marked with bloody clashes between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Especially, the July 5, 1921 decision of Caucasus Bureau on Nagorno-Karabakh gave rise to serious controversies. Bureau decided to retain the Nagorno-Karabakh region within Azerbaijan which proves that Nagorno-Karabakh was an integral part before this decision which nullifies Armenian's claims. According to this decision: "Taking into account the necessity of national peace between the Muslims and the Armenians, the economic relations between upper and lower Karabakh and permanent relations of upper Karabakh with Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh shall be retained within the Azerbaijan SSR and broad autonomy shall be given to Nagorno-Karabakh with Shusha city as an administrative center." (MFA. Department of analysis and strategic studies, 2017, UN Doc: A/64/475-S/2009/508, p-176)

Armenians deny Stalin's decision which was in favor of Azerbaijan and see it as a political decision of Stalin who wanted to establish better relations with Turkey which had close ties with Azerbaijan. (Nagorno-Karabakh crisis, 2000)

Contrary to Azerbaijan's narratives, Armenians also argue that NK has always been historical part of Armenia for several thousand years. Armenians also accept that NK was annexed by Tsarist Russia according to Gulistan and Turkmenchay Treaties. Armenians also reject any settlement of Armenians from Persia and Turkey. (karabakh,2011)

According to the first argument one has to immediately ask: Did the Armenian state itself exist for "several thousand years" in order that Nagorno-Karabakh could be part of it for "several thousand years?". Let us assume that Armenian authors are right considering the Urartu Kingdom which emerged in the 9th century B.C, to be the first Armenian state. Even that is so, there is no evidence proving that the Nagorno-Karabakh was a part of Urartu, which existed until then. Also, annexation of the region by different empires could not serve as a basis for a nation to make territorial claims on another. (Kocharli,2004, p-19)

Armenian authors also try to prove that population of Arsakh was Armenian and their language "was the Arsakh dialect of the Armenian language" on the basis of the following"

1. In the era of Strabon the population of Armenia was monolingual, that is its language was Armenian and this of course, concerns Arsakh as well.
2. "In the 7th century Arsakh was not only an ethnically Armenian province, but it also had its own Arsakh dialect of the Armenian language and this was testified by Stephan Syunetsi." (Kocharli cited in Nagorno-Karabakh. Historical letter. Erevan,1988)

But this is a vain claim. The 8th century author Stephan Syunetsi noted that Sunik and Arsakh had respectively their own Sunik and Arsakh languages. (Mammadova, p-6)

Another major misperception related to the terms “enclave”, “disputed enclave”, “disputed region” regarding Nagorno-Karabakh which cannot be applied to an area completely surrounded by the territory of another country. NKAO was part of the Azerbaijan SSR and was surrounded by Azerbaijani territory. Therefore, neither “enclave” nor “exclave” a part of one country cannot be separated geographically from its main body by the territory of another and other countries. Concerning “disputed” term, it is used for administrative unit under discussion which is the subject between the parties to the conflict. Since there is no change in the position of Azerbaijan, it considers the region as its undisputed territory and it is internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan. Thus, the term “disputed” or “disputed region” is not applicable either and Armenians have no right to claim to the territory. (Imranli-Lowe, 2015, p-154)

3.1.2 Contemporary stage and escalation of the conflict.

Contemporary stage of Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict started before the dissolution of USSR, during period of Michael Gorbachov who initiated glasnost and perestroika. On 20 January 1988, the representatives of the Armenian community at the session of the Soviet of People’s Deputies of the NKAO adopted a resolution seeking the transfer of the NKAO from the Azerbaijan SSR to the Armenian SSR. Their pretext was that Azerbaijani government violates the right of Karabakh Armenians’ self-determination and abusing their human rights and applies discriminating policy. But, if we look back attentively, it should be mentioned that Azerbaijani and Armenians lived together peacefully and had very good relations in the past. (Rupesinghe, et al King, Vorkunova, p-134)

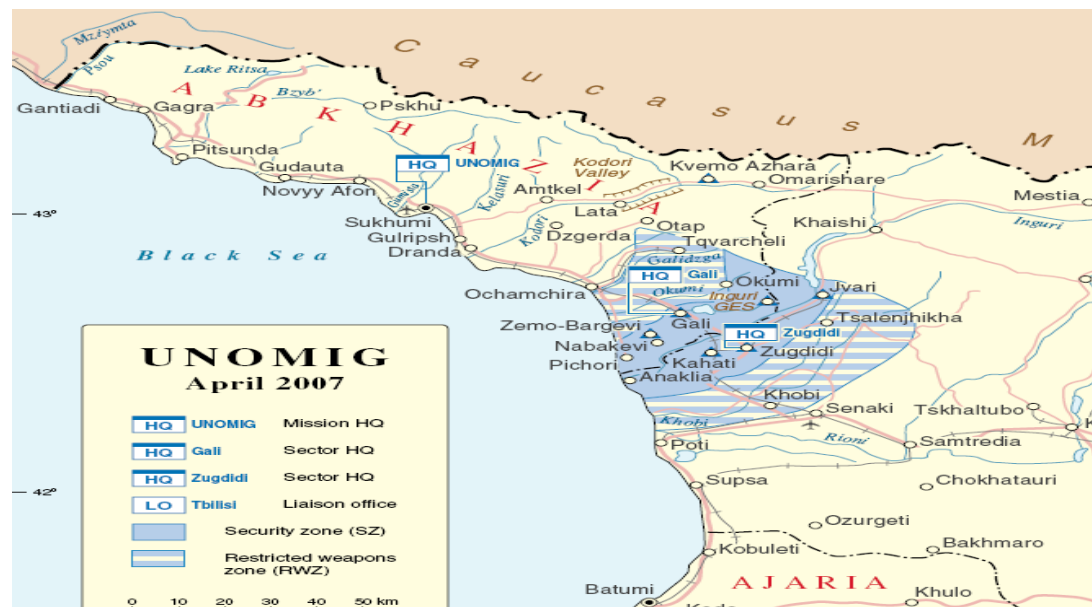
At the end of 1991 and the beginning of 1992, the claim of “reunification of Nagorno-Karabakh” which adopted by Armenians at that time being part of USSR alongside Azerbaijan and declared its independence in 1992 brought political turmoil and conflict turned into a military phase. (MFA. Department of analysis and strategic studies, 2017, UN Doc: A/64/475-S/2009/508, p-180)

February 1992, the first armed attack by the Republic of Armenia to the town of Khojaly in the Republic of Azerbaijan resulted in an unprecedented massacre. This bloody tragedy, which became known as the Khojaly genocide. 613 civilians were killed, including 106 women, 63 children and 70 elderlies, 1275 taken hostage. To this day, 150 people from Khojaly remain

missing. Consequently, 20% of the Azerbaijani territory was occupied by the Armenian Armed Forces: Shusha (1992), Kalbajar (April 1993), Aghdam (July 1993), Jabrayil (August 1993), Gubadly (August 1993), Fizuli (August 1993) and Zangilan (October 1993). As a result, more than 20,000 Azerbaijanis were killed and over 1 million were displaced as a result of the large-scale hostilities. (ibid)

The ceasefire was established according to Bishkek Protocol which is signed on May 4-5, 1994 by representatives of the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Russia. (Ibid). However, Armenia continues to violate the rules of law. So far, Armenians deny any kind of involvement in the war between Azerbaijan, reemphasizing that this is the war between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan and the conflict will not be solved unless Azerbaijani side accept dependence of Nagorno-Karabakh “Republic” which is not acceptable in any case by Azerbaijan.

3.2 Abkhazia



Map 3: Abkhazia between Georgia and Russia.

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Atlas_of_Abkhazia

Another myth of 1980s of ethnic conflicts in the South Caucasus relates to Abkhazia, which is bigger in its size among others in Georgia metaphorically described by Releya (1998) and Kaplan such kind of trans-state entities as “postmodern cracks in the Westphalian dam” or “ends of earth” (Kopecek, et al Hoch, Baar, p-88).

3.2.1 Old Period-Geographically squeezed between the Black Sea and the Caucasus mountains, it had been known as Soviet Riviera (Coppieters,1999, p-1) where modern Abkhazians and Georgians lived together from ancient times as tribes. According to Georgian historiography the tribes that settled in Abkhazia were the people who gradually arrived as Adyghean (Circassian) tribes from northwest Caucasus to part of the territory present day Abkhazia, identified with the ancient Apsila and Abazga tribes (these being ancestors of the modern Abkhazians). (Souleimanov, n.d, et al, Coppieters cited in Ingoroqva, p-116). Irakli Tsereteli, who is one of the co-founders of the Georgian political nation, also states:

Those whom we call Abkhazians are not Abkhazians. The Abkhazians were a Georgian tribe. The present Abkhazians are the descendants of Kabardeys and Balkars who migrated into Georgia in the mid 19th century. (Souleimanov, n.d, p-116)

Accordingly, it is important to mention that apkhazeti or afkhazeti in Georgian are the people speak West Kartvel dialect (the language of Kochida) said to be close to the modern Mingrelian tongue, the original Georgian population of Kolkhida, however, over time was assimilated by the arriving Circassian tribes. (ibid, p-117). Another interesting fact is mentioned in Souleimanov’s book relates to toponym of the modern Abkhazia (Apsua), Apsny which were stated by Georgian historians that it has nothing in common with the Georgian root, Abkhaz. (ibid, p-117)

Playing important roles in Georgian history, both Abkhazia and Georgia became the place of invasions of Greece, Romans, Byzantines, Persians, Arabs, Turks-Seljuks, Mongols, Ottoman Turks and Tsarist Russia who tried to strengthen their influence and nation’s unity was repeatedly destroyed. Beginnings with the 1st millennium BC, the mixture of Western and Eastern cultural elements influenced of tribal confederation in west Georgia where the ancient Colchis civilization was created then the Karts, Mingrelians, Laz and Svans came to the fore among the Georgian tribes. After their unification and as a result of their consolidation in 6th to 4th centuries BC, two state confederations took shape on the territory of Georgia. The west Georgia was called the kingdom of Colchis and eastern Georgia was called the Kingdom of Kartli or Iberia. In the 4th

century BC the kingdom of Colchis came under rule the influence of the kingdom of Kartli-Iberia, which contributing towards formation of a single Georgian state in which king Parnavaz ruled over united western and eastern Georgia between 299 and 234 BC with the capital Mtskheta. In the last centuries pre-Christian era, Georgia, in the form of the kingdom of Kartli-Iberia, was strongly influenced by Greece to the west and Persia to the east. (Nuriyev, 2007, p-36)

The adoption of Christianity in the 4th century became state religion of the Kartli-Iberia kingdom as well as it was officially proclaimed in the western part of Georgia and Georgian language are the foremost factors in retaining national identity and played a decisive role in the process of consolidation of the Georgian nation. Even N. Berdzenishvili comments this issue like that “each tribe or people had their own culture, had their own tribal language too, but Christianity was a great new phenomenon, adopted to new relation, strong weapon of feudalism and its language was Georgian too. It is quite natural, if all tribal languages and cultures became “home” ones. (Anchabadze, p-62)

Later on, in the 1st centuries AD, the country was again divided into eastern part, subject to Persian influence–Kartli-Iberia and western–Lasica which was dominated by Byzantium. The most interesting fact is that these Georgian nobilities sought favor from these powerful empires sometimes choosing alliances and sometimes acceding to force. (Ibid, p-37)

By the mid 7th century Arabs appeared in the regional scene and unable to impose Islam. Arabs captured the capital city of Tbilisi in 645 A.D, which became an Arab emirate for about 500 years, though Kartli-Iberia retained considerable independence under local Arab rules.

In the end of the 10th and the beginning of the 11th century after the decline of the Arabs in the region, the new Georgian kingdoms and principalities appeared under the name “Sakartvelo” during the reign of King Bagrat III. (Ibid, p-38). Parallel domination of east and west tribes in different period in Georgia proofs again that these tribes coexisted peacefully. Especially it is important to mention that a much earlier name “Kartli” gave the country its name and language. And during 8th and 13th centuries Georgia was referred to as “Abkhazia “because of its long line of Georgian kings, including the king of Abkhazians, Kartvelians, Khakhetians and others. (Alasaniya, 1996). This period can be called Golden Age till the 13th century of Mongol invasion. Abkhazian and Georgian dynasties established a unified Abkhazian–Georgian state under the reign of King David IV the Builder. After thirty years of struggle David the Builder in 1122 liberated

Tbilisi from the Arabs and attacked the Turk-Seljuks several times. And Georgia's statehood reached its peak in the period of rule by Queen Tamar in 12th century. (Ibid, 39)

Genghis Khan's Mongol invasion in 1236 terminated Georgia's Golden Age and marked the beginning of the century of decline. The invasion of Ottoman and Persian Empires in the mid of 15th century, which divided Georgia into spheres of influence in 1553 and redistributed Georgian territory among them. (ibid)

A completely new stage of Georgian history began with Russian presence in the region. Using different kind of mechanisms (political, economic and military covers)-more precisely it is called colonialist policies at that time, Russia annexed the breakaway territories under the pretext of achieving security and supporting them. In the mid 18th century the eastern Georgia rebelled against Persia and in 1762 King Irakli II was able to re-unite the eastern Georgian principalities of Kartli and Kakheti under his tenuous rule. In 1773, King Irakli II began efforts to gain Russian protection from the Turks. In this period, Russian troops intermittently occupied parts of Georgia, making the country a pawn in the explosive Russian-Turkish rivalry of the last three decades of the 18th century. At this time, King Irakli II appealed to Orthodox Russian Tsar for protection, referring particularly common religion. After the Georgievski Treaty which Georgia signed with Russia in 1783 thus establishing military alliance, Russia annexed all Georgian principalities, one after another and secured control over Georgia through military victories over Persia and Ottoman Empires by 1828. (Nuriyev, p-40)

In the 19th century Russia's war in the Caucasus led to a large exodus of Muslim peoples such as Abkhaz and Lezgins to the Ottoman Empire. According to Thornike Gordadze this exodus described by him like that: *"The mukhadzhirstvo is the first tragic consequence of the classification which clearly differentiated the two ethnic groups in the region-the Abkhaz and the Georgians."* The czarist government didn't allow Georgians to settle in Abkhazia, at the same time, territory was settled with Russians, Armenians and other nationalities. (Gegeshidze, et al, 2011, p-6)

As a result, Abkhazia became under protection of the Russian in 1810 but it was autonomy until 1864. Ajaria was ceded to Russia by the Ottoman Empire in 1878, as a result of the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78. (Ibid, p-41). As a result of Tsarist Russia' reform, Georgia was divided into two gubernias-Tiflis and Kutaisi, that is the names "Georgia" (Sakartvelo) and "Abkhazia" disappeared from geographic maps. Abkhazia was renamed "the Sukhumi Military Department which was under the subordination of the Kutaisi governor-general.

When Georgia declared independence in the spring of 1918, it ultimately established direct military rule over the whole territory. According to Georgian perspective, it is said that Georgia itself offered wide self-rule to Abkhazia, which was also a big mistake, resulted in 1921 with “a special union treaty” as an establishment a confederation between Abkhazia and Georgia after the Sovietization. However, in 1931 Stalin downgraded Abkhazia’s status to that of an autonomous entity within Georgia. (Phillips, 2008, p-3)

But according to Abkhaz perceptivities, when Georgia gained independence, Abkhazia also gained independence in 1921 under the leadership of Nestor Lakoba who promoted of the Abkhazian national cause and demand to autonomy. Abkhazia existed as a Soviet republic equal in status to Georgia while united with the latter under the short-lived Transcaucasian Federation. This status was written into Abkhazia’s constitution of 1925, whose unilateral restoration in the summer of 1992 became a pretext for the current war with Georgia. Thus, with the 1925 constitution began the institutionalization of the political identity. Two other factors-Moscow’s recognition of the Abkhazian language as one separate from Georgian and its policy of preferential treatment for Abkhazian peasants—both reinforced this separate political identity and created increasing tension within Georgia. (Nuriyev,2007)

It is also claimed by Abkhazians that during the exodus of the mahajees Abkhazes became a minority in their own land, settled in dispersed, discontinuous areas and their place became land of different settlers like Georgians, Armenians, Greeks and most of the North Caucasian mountaineers. Thereafter, the Georgian population in Abkhazia increased from 37,000 or 28% in 1914 to 240,000 or 45.7 % in 1989. Even though Abkhazians were a minority in Abkhazia, it had been achieved the status of a titular nationality through the efforts of Nestor Lakoba who potentate Abkhazia and received all the potential benefits that status conferred until his mysterious death in 1936 by Laverinti Beria. (Crawford, et al, n.d, p-266)

3.2.2 Period between 1980s and 2008 war-Toward the end of Soviet Union between 1980s and the beginnings of 90s hastened by the Gorbachev’s policy of “glasnost and perestroika” gave Abkhazians opportunity to demand regranteeing their status of Soviet Socialist republic of 1921-31. In March 1989, several thousand Abkhaz signed the Lykhny Declaration, organized by the People Forum of Abkhazia, which called for the creation of a Soviet Socialist Republic of Abkhazia, separate from the Georgian Union Republic. (Lynch, 2004, p-27) The conflict started in July 1989

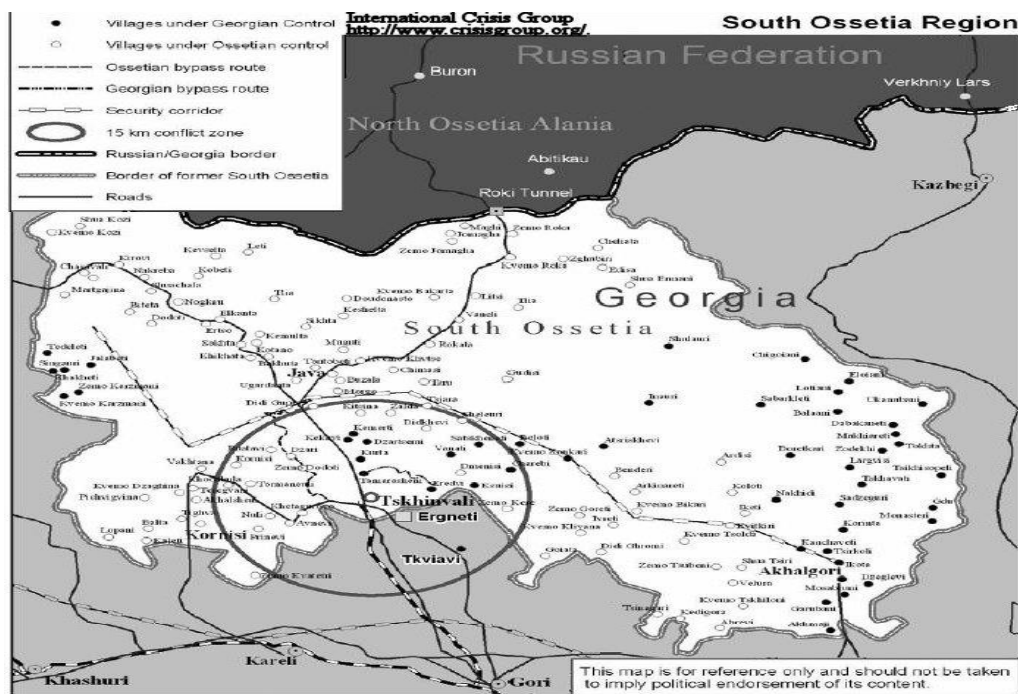
in Abkhazian capital Sukhumi in response to set up a Georgian branch in Abkhaz State university in Sukhumi and ended up in severe confrontation. On August 5, 1990, the Parliament of Abkhazia adopted a Declaration “On the State Sovereignty of Abkhazia and on July 1992 annulled its 1978 Constitution and returned to the 1925 according to which it had equal treaty based status with Georgia. After the collapse of Soviet Union, when Georgia declared its independence, Abkhazians also raised their voices for independence from Georgia. (ibid)

Military conflict intensified between Zviad Gamsakhurdia’s government and Vladislav Ardzinba’s authorities who became president in 1990s in Abkhazia and also became a leader in Abkhazian movement for independence in 1980s-1990s. By the end of 1993 with support of Russian troops Abkhazians can sustain the control over the whole territory and forced the Georgian population to leave the Gali region. From 1992, to 1993 Georgia took control of Abkhazian territory, including Sukhumi. But again, with Russia’s big support Abkhazia again gained control over the Abkhazia which ended with a ceasefire agreement which was established under Russian mediation in Sochi. According to the article of Sochi Agreement (July 27,1993), it called for disarmament of the warring sides, to be accompanied by a prompt withdrawal of Georgian troops from Abkhazia and return of the Abkhaz government to Sukhumi. (Nuriyev, 2007, p-182)

Later in early April 1994, the Abkhaz and Georgian sides, under Russia’s mediation and with participation of the UN and the CSCE representatives held official talks in Moscow and signed an interim peace agreement which set out general guidelines of political settlement of the conflict, the return of internally displaced persons and the referendum of future political status of Abkhazia. (Nuriyev,2007, p-186) The actual fact of an agreement was the issue of deployment of a peacekeeping force(PKF) separate the combatants and help to displaced persons. On May 1994, the Georgian and Abkhaz sides signed the Moscow Agreement on another form of ceasefire and the separation of forces. According to this agreement Russian troops to be deployed under a CIS mandate in a security zone along the Inguri River which divides Abkhazia from the rest of Georgia and also along this “security zone” about 12 kilometers on each side of the ceasefire line was created where officers and peacekeeping operations were only allowed. In the same period, Vladislav Ardzinba also proposed a union state with Georgia on the basis on equal partnership. In response, Georgian authorities withdrew from the next round of the UN sponsored negotiations. Until July 2006, the situation was more or less stable and parties agreed not to use of force. However, military escalation occurred, when Georgia embarked on which is called as “anti-

criminal operation” in Kodori Valley in order to disarm local militia who were threatening Georgia’s constitutional order. Later the August 2008 war between Georgia and Russia was more destructive and shifted the “concept of internal conflict of Georgia” into status quo under the name of “frozen conflict”. Ethnic cleansing and massive resettlement of 300 000 ethnic Georgian population from Abkhazia during and after 1992-1993 war was the harshest consequence of Georgian Abkhaz war. (Jafarova, 2015, p-27)

3.3 South Ossetia



Map 4: South Ossetia between Georgia and Russia.

Source: <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/georgia/images/south-ossetia-map01.jpg>

South Ossetia is an extremely mountainous region situated on the southern side of the Caucasus, separated from the more populous North Ossetia and extending southward to Georgia’s Mtkvari river. Unlike Abkhazians, South Ossetians have had common history, intermarriages, good relations, including the engagement economic activities with Georgians. (Nuriyev, 2007, p-196)

Generally, South Ossetians are people of Iranian origin and belong to old Persian speaking people, are said to descend from Scythians and Sarmatians who came to Caucasus relatively later

in medieval times to the region, lived and spread in southern parts of today's Russia. Most of them lived in North Ossetia throughout history and came to South Ossetia from North Caucasus. (ibid)

The central question in Georgian-Ossetian dispute is to whom the land historically belongs. According to Georgian perspective, South Ossetia is considered to be historic Georgian territory and called Samochablo, which was ceded to Ossetians by Bolsheviks in return to use of the hand of Ossetians to occupy independent Georgian Republic in 1920. They also consider that Ossetians are newcomers to this region, having their historical homeland in North Ossetia within the Russian Federation. Thus, they have no right to territorial autonomy. Ossetians on the contrary consider that historically both North Ossetia and South Ossetia (in the Russian territory) were the parts of common Alan heritage-Skif-Sarmat-Alans and their people have been living here in this area for centuries, mainly emphasizing that the South Ossetians consider themselves to be the southern branch of the Ossetian nation. (Jafarova, 2015, p-28)

Three uprisings in 1918, 1919 and 1920 by the South Ossetian population of the Shida Kartli region became the root of the present conflict between the government of Tbilisi and South Ossetia, where people of South Ossetia dissatisfied with the central government claiming that it only supports the interests of big landowners who most of them were ethnic Georgians. This struggle soon developed into armed conflict in 1918. The dissatisfaction of the South Ossetians with the policies of the Menshevik government in Tbilisi strengthened their sympathy for the Bolsheviks and traditionally warm relations between the Ossetians and the Russians. In 1919 and 1920 the South Ossetian rebels received support from Red Army and political elite the goal of being annexed to Soviet Russia. Later the liquidation of South Ossetian sovereignty was accompanied by ethnic cleansing which cost the lives of 3000-7000 people. In 1922, the South Ossetian Autonomous Region was created. (Souleimanov, n.d, p,113-114) However, under Soviet rule South Ossetia had much less formal autonomy within the Georgian SSR, while North Ossetia was an autonomous republic within the Russian SSR but it was rejected later by Georgia. (German,2006, p-52)

The idea of uniting the two Ossetians emerged during national revival movement at the end of 1980s during Mikhail Gorbachev's era of perestroika. The new Ossetian nationalist movement leader Ademon Nykhas sparked tensions between Ossetians and Georgians by sending an open letter expressing support for their claims for independence from Georgia. The focus of the movement in South Ossetia was a campaign to enhance the status of the South Ossetia as an

autonomous oblast. (Potier,2001, p-13) In September 1990, South Ossetia declared itself independent republic, however, in the same year December Georgian Supreme Soviet rejected this decision and abolished the status of autonomy. In 1990, South Ossetians again declared their independence of autonomy and later demanded unification with North Ossetia which resulted active hostilities in Tskhinvali lasted until June 1992. In 1991, the Gamsakhurdia-led administration ordered Georgian militias to bombard Tskhinvali from surrounding hills. In so doing, serious fighting between Georgian and Ossetian troop took place mainly in and around Tskhinvali. The hostilities continued until the Ossetians strongly supported by North Caucasian guerrillas. Despite Gamsakhurdia's strong desire to crush the Ossetian secession by force, the Georgian troops failed to occupy Tskhinvali. Indeed, Russia's role was very vague and contradictory and a number of leading Russian politicians supported openly the South Ossetians.

As a result, a final ceasefire agreement was achieved in Sochi in the summer of 1992. According to Sochi Agreement/ also known as Dagomys Peace, Shevardnadze was forced to accept a ceasefire to avoid a large-scale confrontation with Russia. Under Russian auspices the Georgian government and South Ossetian separatist agreed to refrain from the use of force against each other. Georgian authorities also pledged not to improve sanctions against South Ossetia. Yeltsin and Shevardnadze also agreed on the establishment of a Joint Peacekeeping Forces(JPKF). (Nuriyev, 2007, p-200)

Despite lasting a ceasefire, a political settlement of the dispute has remained elusive and separatist authorities remain in to control of the majority of the region's territory. Even prior to ceasefire agreement there were some attempts to normalize the situation between breakaway territories and Georgia. On May 29 1992, when South Ossetian Parliament adopted a new declaration of independence, which laid the first step of de facto independent state in post-Soviet era, Georgian government and Abkhazia agreed upon a Declaration of Measures for a Political settlement Georgian-Abkhaz conflict on April 1994 and took a commitment to strictly observe the cease-fire. The demilitarized security zone was set out along the Inguri river on May, 1994 and Memorandum was signed in may 1996 relates with non-use of force in mutual relations and sought a final settlement of the conflict. (Jafarova, 2015, p-29)

The new confrontation between Georgia, South Ossetia and Russia was triggered in Saakashvili's presidency period who came to the power during the "Rose-Revolution" (2003) determined to tackle the problems that went unresolved during Shevardnadze era and tried to get state sovereignty at all cost. Immediately after his election in 2004, Saakashvili began to increase

pressure on South Ossetia by tightening border controls, especially setting up custom posts on the South Ossetia section of the Russian border in order to put an end to smuggling where Russian organized crime and corrupt Georgian officials involved. In May 2004, the Georgian authorities also started “anti-smuggling campaign” between Georgia and South Ossetia area and shut down Ergneti market in South Ossetia which is a major trading center for tax-free goods from Russia. It resulted with big discontent by South Ossetians and “felt that their main source of income, that is contraband, was under threat.” In accordance with 1992 peace accords, checkpoints can only be established within the permission of the JCC, which Georgia had not sought. Thus, the commander of the Russian peacekeeping troops in the region, General Svyatoslav Nabzdorov was sent to defend the post where 300 Georgian Interior Ministry troops were there. The deployment of Georgian troops provoked fears amongst the local population that Georgia was seeking to resolve stalemate by military means. In response, in televised address, Saakashvili assured Ossetians that Georgia only intended to re-assert its control over the region by peaceful means, stating that the political status of the region should be decided through negotiations rather than force. (German, 2006, p-52)

In July 2005, Saakashvili offered broad autonomy and reconstruction of the region’s infrastructure to South Ossetians but this offer was rejected by separatist South Ossetia leader Kokoity and insisted that, “we [South Ossetians] are citizens of Russia”, the people of the South Ossetia do not regard themselves as part of Georgia. (Nichol, p-3). In November 2006, South Ossetia again claimed for independence and held referendum which was declined to recognize votes by Georgian government. In March 2007, Saakashvili offered another peace plan that involved creating “transitional administrative districts throughout the region”- ostensibly under Sanakoyev’s authority. It was also not implemented later as a result of Russian hand. (ibid)

The further escalation in Georgian-South Ossetian conflict culminated with Saakashvili’s pro-western policy which irritated Russia who strongly disapproved Georgia’s exponentially widening partnership with NATO. In order to punish Georgia, Russia banned the import of Georgian wine in 2006 and deported Georgian citizen in 2007 and forced Georgia to give up closer relations with the West. (Jafarova, 2015, p-29)

3.4 Russo-Georgian War of 2008.

The Five-Day War in Georgia caused for all the international turmoil and tension which sparked debates about Russia and its policy which remembered as a product of the “sleep of reason”. (Federov, December 2008, p,3-4). According to some analysts, Russia’s interest in “near abroad” relates with “historical revanche”, superpower status where Russia is seeking any single pretext to broad its sphere of influence again. Late at night on August 7, 2008, the attack of Georgian troops to Tskhinvali was one of this pretext, which automatically makes Tbilisi guilty of initiating the war and justifies Russian intervention. (Ibid)

Matthew Bryza, a State Department envoy to the South Caucasus declared: “I did indeed advise the Georgian leadership not to get drawn into a trap. That was our consistent advice for several years. (Cheterian, June 2009, p-163) On 13 August, President Saakashvili in response declared:

I am sickened by the speculation that Georgia started anything.... We clearly responded to the Russians... The point here is that around 11 o'clock. Russian tanks started to move into Georgian territory, 150 at first. And that was a clear-cut invasion. That was the moment when we started to open fire with artillery, because otherwise they would have crossed the bridge and moved into Tskhinvali. (Cheterian, 2009, cited in Clover, p-161)

Tbilisi argued that Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Ajaria were strategically important to Georgia. Georgia is a small country and to be broken up into ever smaller entities is meaningless. Georgians didn't see them as autonomous entities and were only sustainable due to continued Russian support. Their economies were weak, as a result of the republics become the centers of organized crimes, smuggling and the black market which were the threat for the rest of Georgia. Thus, Georgia needed to use of force to suppress secessionist uprisings in South Ossetia and Abkhazia and build constitutional order. On August 8, Saakashvili declared that the Georgian troops had liberated most of South Ossetia, also with the help of 2000 troops were recalled from Iraq to resist the Russian invasion. (ibid)

Russia started military operation from three sides applying C4ISR capabilities-(command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance):1) Roki tunnel from the north of South Ossetia 2) Kodori Valley (Abkhazia) 3) Sea Coast of Abkhazia. Apart from ground force bases, Russia created naval base for the Black Sea Fleet in Ochamchire. Russia withdrew its three military bases from Akhalkalaki, Batumi and Vaziani. (Pallin, et al,2009, p-403) First, Russian tank columns engaged in and around Tskhinvali and were able to push back

Georgian troops from South Ossetia. Russia also attacked military targets in Gori, Vaziani, Senaki and Poti. And destroyed Georgian aircraft defenses and naval forces in Black Sea. Second, Russia attacked and occupied Kodori Gorge with the support of Abkhazians. Kodori Valley was the only place in Abkhazia which was under control of Georgia. Russia also took the towns of Zugdidi. After occupying Gori on 13 August, the country was cut in two. (Cheterian, 2009, p-159).

Who started the war? It is still ambiguous who was the aggressor in August war. Russia claims that the war escalated a direct Georgian attack on Tskhinvali where Georgia committed genocide. Georgians insist that the cause to attack on South Ossetia was the reason of report they got relating the movement of large number of Russian troops from North. As a proof, Georgian officials released transcripts of Russian mobile telephone conversations with the Ossetian body guard at Roki tunnel which showed Russian military troops would reach South before Georgian attack. Some other facts such as repairing a total of 54 km railroad track in Abkhazia and deployment of Russian units via railway links prove that Russian military operation in Georgia had been planned for several years. (Pallin & Westerlund, 2009, p-404)

However, Russia denied all these facts and claimed that it was unexpected war. Neither Putin nor Medvedev was in Moscow at that time. Putin was at the opening of the Olympics in Beijing and Medvedev in his summer holiday. And Moscow was only able to response and protect the civilians in South Ossetia after 48 hours. This was a peace support operation did not materialize into military strategy. (ibid)

Russia also blame Saakashvili in mistrust to Russia despite some hope rapprochement between Moscow and Tbilisi concerning Ajaria. When Saakashvili gained power over Ajaria, Putin didn't deny and prevent it to happening. Even Putin promised to remove all the Russian military bases from Georgia by 2008. But Saakashvili's western policy and his refuse to sign an agreement non-use of force regarding the autonomy of two national republics turned the situation adverse. (ibid, p-200) V. Putin responded with the statement that:

“Now remember, we did not intervene in Adjara, but you won't have any gifts from us in South Ossetia and Abkhazia.” (Cornell & Starr, 2009, p-55)

EU Parliament and other foreign officials knew that Georgia started the war but they blame Russia for the tragic result that happened for Georgia who used all means and possible mechanisms to achieve its objectives and prepared to it for a long time. They see Russia as a trouble maker in a number of way. First of all, the Russification of both Abkhazia and South Ossetia is one of the

best tactic of Russia, such as enabling Russian passports for South Ossetians and Abkhazians, to justify its intervention in both republics to defend its nationals. Making the ruble the official currency, increasing reliance of Russian economy in these regions, filling the important positions with Russian officials in both regional governmental organizations and enabling military support (currently, Moscow has several well-developed military bases with including strategic missiles such as Smerch multiple rocket launchers, Tochka-U tactical ballistic missiles and S-300 missile systems in Abkhazia-zone near Gudauta, one in Tskhinvali and another in Java) which enable Kremlin freely and without obstacles affect its policies. (Studzinska,2015, p-25) Second, Western recognition Kosovar independence as possible precedent for Moscow's decision and supporting and recognizing Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent republics.

2008 August Russo-Georgian war ended with the victory of Russia. On August 25, 2008, the Federation Council and the State Duma prepared a letter to be recognized by President Dmitry Medvedev the independence of both states and establish diplomatic relations. On August 26, 2008 President Medvedev signed decree recognizing the independence of both Abkhazia and South Ossetia as sovereign states. Nauru, Nicaragua, and Venezuela also recognized their independence as state. (Nichol, 2012).

4. Main Actors.

4.1 Russia's interest

Russia remains a global power and firmly sees the United States as a leading competitor in the region. She has also not equal roles with other major powers such as Turkey, Iran and the EU which all these five are not equal and their roles and interests are different to the region and the regional conflicts as well. In order to extend her sphere of influence in the South Caucasus, Russia built strong economic, political ties with three regional countries which served her egoistic national interests. Flexibility of her policy and be able to put the leverage at the right moment made her bias and superior position in the Great Game.

Russia's main ally in the region is Armenia which is fully dependent on her. Relations between Moscow and Yerevan were significantly strengthened in 2010, with the signing of an extension of their 1995 agreement on the 102nd Russian military base at Gyumri which will be prolonged until 2044. Under the new agreement, Russian border guards will protect the border between Armenia

and Azerbaijan, as well as the Armenian-Turkish one. One thing is clear that Russian policy seeks to keep the conflict unresolved and attempts to manipulate the conflict between the two states. This risky strategy of Kremlin can turn this country from a safe into a problematic neighbor, specifically can rise tension in Georgia's Armenian populated Javakheti area. (German,2012, p-91) Also, Moscow and Yerevan have long aimed to broaden military ties from Russia's Akhalkalaki base in Georgia to Russia's base at Gyumri and Yerevan airport in Armenia. It is also worth to mention that in 1997 Russia secretly shipped more than \$1 billion worth of arms to Armenia, apparently to be used against Azerbaijan and to keep the Azerbaijanis and their strategic oil reserves within the Russian sphere of interest. And Metsamor nuclear energy plant in Armenia is another real threat to the region, locating 120 km from Azerbaijan and only 16 km from Turkey, besides the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh. (Nuriyev,2007)

4.2 US's interest

The first American interest in the South Caucasus began in 1994 when multinational energy companies drew the attention of oil business circles to the Caspian basin and it was known as "Contract of the Century". Concerning Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) project, US has three geo-strategic objectives:1) it has prevented Russia from having a monopoly on Caspian transit routes, shut Iran out of the picture and boosted Turkish influence in the region 2) this project has become geopolitical axis, linking Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey with US support 3) the most of all, Turkey and US policy towards the South Caucasus has played significant role, serving as the financial and business hub of entire region. (Nuriyev, 2007, p-288)

The second, U.S interest had increased in the region due to its geopolitical role and geo-strategic importance which could play a transit corridor in American foreign policy strategy. So, after September 11th terrorist attack on the United States, American combat aircraft that took part in military operation in Afghanistan transited the airspace of this region, especially Georgia and Azerbaijan, declaring war against terrorism. (ibid)

The third interest area of U.S in the region relates to frozen conflicts, which US understand that renewed military conflict would destabilize the entire region and probability of intervening regional powers such as Russia, Iran and Turkey would pose a serious threat to long term US interest in the region. (ibid, p-292)

4.3 EU's interest

Western interests are traditionally viewed in three groups: sovereignty and security, energy and trade and governance. The 2008 war in Georgia and escalation of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict since 2010 threaten Western interests. First, the EU sees the protracted conflicts as an endanger important transport corridor; second, they provide an ongoing pretext for intervention by Russia, also Iran and third, these conflicts could lead to the subordination of the region one more between two powers Russian and Iranian control. Thus, West has interest in the resolution of the protracted conflicts. (Cornel, et al,2015, p-16)

The most important factor links the EU with the South Caucasus is energy interest. The implementation of regional projects such as TANAP, TAP are good examples to provide a direct means for west Caspian (i.e. Azerbaijani) oil to reach European markets. Also, the Caucasus corridor is important to transit East Caspian (Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan) oil and gas resources through Trans-Caspian connections to Europe. Another interest of Caucasus corridor is being a land-based continent-wide trade corridor that connect China and India with Europe, Middle East and vice versa. (ibid, p-17)

The EU also seeks to build or maintain secular forms of government, provide equal treatment for citizens irrespective of ethnic origin in the region. (ibid)

4.4 Turkey's interest

Turkey plays a key role as a model of significant transporting Caspian petroleum resources to international markets in the region. Turkey's orientation remains westward and it sees Azerbaijan and Georgia as its allies. Baku and Tbilisi in turn seek to promote their military and political cooperation with Turkey, which serves as an effective model for developing market economy reform efforts for the small region. (Nuriyev, 2007, p-272)

The Turkey-Azerbaijan-Georgia triangle was established with strategic cooperation the BTC oil pipeline and the BTE gas pipeline projects. The August 2008 war brought three countries even closer. The BTE gas pipeline began in 2002 and ended in 2006 transporting 7.7 billion cubic meters of gas annually. (Gafarli, et.al, u.d, p-17)

Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey signed an agreement in 2012 on the Trans-Anatolian Pipeline (TANAP, natural gas) and the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP, natural gas) projects. According to

predictions the volume of transited natural gas in 2023 will be 23 billion cubic meters and in 2026 the volume might reach 31 billion (ibid). These gas pipelines can be good alternatives for Europe diminishing dependency on Russia. Thus, the US especially plays fourth outsider partner to this cooperation. (ibid)

Turkey's closest friend in the region is Azerbaijan, which is called "one nation in two states", shares the same religion, language and ethnic identity and supports Azerbaijan whenever and wherever possible. (Jafarova, 2015) After the collapse of USSR, Turkey closed borders with Armenia in April 1993 and announced three conditions to open it. Ankara demanded that Armenia must recognize the existing borders (although Armenia has never officially disputed them), stop the efforts of gaining worldwide recognition of the 1915 Armenian genocide by the Ottoman Empire, and return all territories back which were taken from Azerbaijan. However, there was the first attempt to open the borders in 2008 when the Turkish and Armenian presidents attended a soccer match, which later was known as the "football diplomacy". Despite any hope and signing of diplomatic protocols in 2009 in Switzerland, the process was soon frozen. The main failure of the protocol related to Turkish demand for Armenia to evacuate some territories around the former NKAO in exchange border opening. However, Armenia insisted on separating the Turkey-Armenia relations from the NK peace process. Despite claiming Turkey's commitment of genocide against Armenians in 1915. (ibid, p-19)

Turkey's improving relation with Russia challenges the situation both in economic and political fields in the region. Alternative gas pipeline project and other trade relations between them help Russia to secure her position by giving Ankara leverage in its negotiations with Moscow. But the coin has the other side. First, conflict between Russia and Georgia in August 2008 and later recognition of independence of the breakaway republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia posed challenge to Turkey's view on supporting peace and stability in the South Caucasus. Second, the possibility of war between Armenia and Azerbaijan could increase tension between Russia and Turkey. Turkey again will support Azerbaijan and Russia will support her ally Armenia. Third, as a NATO member and US ally, Turkey is affected by negative and positive reactions in the relationship between US and Russia. (Torbakov, 2008)

4.5 Iran's interest

Iran is another significant player in the Great Game, as it has historical, economic, cultural and ideological interests throughout the South Caucasus. Its main interest specifically is divided into three policy issues: 1) the emergence of the independent state of Azerbaijan in the north after the collapse of USSR, 2) an impressive improvement in relations with Russia that has developed into a strategic partnership 3) an increasing desire to control the development of petroleum resources in the Caspian basin, seeking to restrain Turkish influence over pipeline routes. (Nuriyev, 2007, p-275)

Tehran's attitude toward its neighbors is complicated, as relations with Georgia had traditionally been fairly cool. Some steps were made in 1998, when former president Mohammed Khatami in a meeting with the Georgian Foreign Minister, called for an expansion of relations and touched the need for peaceful resolution of regional disputes and the importance of safeguarding security in the South Caucasus. (ibid)

In comparison to Georgia, Tehran failed to cooperate with Azerbaijan in early 1990s. The root ties with Armenians and former Azerbaijan president Elchibey's anti Iranian attitude regarding Azeri minorities living in the North Iran who claimed unification, sped up Iran's support toward Armenia in the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh in 1992 who played a stronger role in mediation attempts at that time. Tehran also worried about increasing U.S engagement in Azerbaijan. However, bilateral contacts with Azerbaijan have been normalized in the past years, Iran still builds strong Russia-Armenia-Iran allies against US-Turkey-Azerbaijan-Georgia coalitions in the region. Iran sees Armenia as a buffer to Turkish influence on the northwest borders of their counties, despite their religious and ideological differences. Iran has become the most significant trading partner of Armenia, with the export of Iranian consumer goods, supply of oil, gas and electricity. (ibid, p-277)

Iran has found common ground with Russia in many strategic issues. Beyond the economic benefit, Iran and Russia try to keep Western hegemony out of the region which they are part. Also, Iran and Russia has trade and technical cooperation in nuclear field, which has disturbed Russo-American relations. (ibid, p-278)

5. OSCE role in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution.

Nagorno-Karabakh protracted conflict has been on the agenda of international organizations, especially CSCE/OSCE² which consisted of eleven member states³ since February 1992. It is currently co-chaired by representatives from three countries-“Troika”-France, Russia, and the United States which have taken many significant steps for influencing the mediation processes in which Russia plays a key role. CSCE and UN⁴ couldn’t involve in early stage of NK conflict. The first reason is that the ethnic and political tensions in the region started before the breaking up of the Soviet Union, so any taken commitments can be understood as an intervene of internal affairs of the USSR. Second, CSCE created newly at that time and was lack of experience with this type of conflict, make it weak to intervene. The question of conflicts in NK was dealt with the CSCE only after the dissolution of the Soviet Union (December 1991), the acceptance of Azerbaijan, Armenia as full members of the CSCE and the failure of the Yeltsin, Nazarbayev peace initiative in 1991-1992. (Mooradian, et al, 1999, p-710)

For the first time the Foreign Ministers of the Participating states reiterated their call for an immediate and effective ceasefire and requested the Chairman-in-Office “to keep in close contact with the UN and to arrange for exchanges of information. Thus, Council took three important steps. First, it is called “soft action” sending special mission of rapporteurs under the leadership of the Chairman-in-Office, Jiri Dienstbier and Czech diplomat Karl Schwarzenberg to the region in order to collect information and examine the possibilities of establishing a ceasefire and overall settlement. Second, it requested the Chairman-in-Office to convene a peace conference on Nagorno Karabakh in Minsk under the auspices of the CSCE with 11 member states. Third, the Council call all member states and all concerned parties to help in providing humanitarian assistance opening safe corridor and organizing international monitoring. (Paye & Remacle, n.d, unpagged)

The further occupation by the Armenian forces of the last Azeri city Shusha (9 May 1992) and the Lachin corridor on Azeri territory, which linked Armenia with Nagorno–Karabakh (17 May 1992) escalated the war and is urged immediate ceasefire. In 1993, Four-822,853, 874, 884-the UN Security Council resolutions were adopted and demanded immediate cessation of all hostile

² OSCE membership-Azerbaijan, Armenia (30 January, 1992), Georgia (24 March, 1992)- (<http://www.osce.org/>)

³ In 1992, CSCE members- In very beginning they were 9 members. USA, Russia, France, Belarus, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Italy, Turkey, Sweden. Armenia, Azerbaijan were member later. Afterwards, the group’s composition was slightly changed again.

⁴ UN membership: Azerbaijan (2 March, 1992), Armenia (2 March, 1992), Georgia (31 July, 1992)- (<http://www.un.org>)

acts, immediate and unconditional withdrawal of occupying forces from all occupied regions of the territory of Azerbaijan and reaffirmed respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, inviolability of the international borders of the Republic of Azerbaijan in response to Armenian occupation of Azeri territories. However, these resolutions were not implemented by Armenians. (MFA. Department for analysis and strategic studies, 2017, UN Doc. A/64/475-S/2009/508, *p-186*)

The shift of mediating party from CSCE to individual actor such as Russia acquired a hegemonic position in the management of the crisis again during the government change in Azerbaijan and consequently attack of Armenian side to Azerbaijan, significantly changed the role of CSCE. The Azerbaijan President Heydar Aliyev's new policy which started direct negotiations on the cease-fire with the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh, with Russian mediation and especially Azerbaijan acceptance the entrance into the collective security agreement of the CIS (Tashkent Agreement of 15 May 1992) were the main reasons. After gaining domination in negotiation, the Russian special negotiator for NK, Vladimir Kazimirov, stated that "the CSCE mediation was ineffective because this organization didn't have any disposal the means of enforcing any cease-fire agreement that might be reached". (Paye & Remacle, n.d, unpagued)

In early September 1993, the Moscow talks between President Yeltsin, Turkish Prime Minister Ciller and Azeri President Aliyev showed that Turkish attitude was positive toward Russia's main role in conflict resolution. However, Turkey didn't want the deployment of either a unilateral Russian peacekeeping force or even mixed Russian-Turkish one. (*ibid*)

After several times shifting the mediation process between Russia and CSCE, Russia could hold her dominant position in both mediation process outcome through the CSCE, kept also her big influence to both conflicting parties in the region. In May 1994, the ceasefire was established with the Bishkek protocol which was signed by both countries Azerbaijan and Armenia in Bishkek under Russia's mediation. (Nuriyev, 2007, p-166)

5.1 Nagorno-Karabakh and Budapest Summit.

A new stage of peace process was started by CSCE which was reorganized into the OSCE⁵ on December 5-6, 1994 in Budapest Summit. UN resolutions were declared again and the Budapest Summit tasked the CSCE Chairman-in-Office to conduct negotiations aimed at finding a final

⁵ The OSCE Chairman-in-Office issued on 23 March 1995 the mandate for the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Process. (OSCE, 1995, Hungarian Doc. 525/95)

political agreement in Nagorno Karabakh conflict. They underlined the need for participating states to provide humanitarian assistance to internally displaced people. It was also decided to send multinational peacekeeping forces to the conflict area with a High-Level Planning Group (HLPG) which was founded in Vienna in December 1994 and aimed at the preparation of the peacekeeping operation. The true fact is that some defects appeared in this process which based on double standards displayed itself. This time not only conflicting parties were the challenge to negotiation process, but old rivalries among key members of the OSCE have been renewed and have had negative impact on negotiation as well. So, Budapest plan regarding the deployment of the composition of multinational peacekeeping forces to the conflict zone could not be achieved and left for future negotiation plan. (OSCE, 1994, p-5)

5.2 Nagorno Karabakh and Lisbon Summit.

Another negotiation of peace talks was held at the OSCE Lisbon Summit on 2-3 December 1996. The Co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group and the OSCE Chairmen-in-Office recommended the principles which should have been the basis for the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Those principles are as follows:

- Territorial integrity of the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan
- Legal status of NK defined in an agreement based on self-determination which confers on NK the highest degree of self-rule within Azerbaijan
- Guaranteed security for NK and its whole population, including mutual obligations to ensure compliance by all the Parties with the provisions of the settlement. (Key texts and agreements, p-76)

The 53 participants of OSCE accepted the statement, only the Republic of Armenia rejected it saying that the principles based on territorial integrity and the highest degree of autonomy for NK within Azerbaijan do not match its state interest. And according to consensus rule the statement was not adopted. The interesting fact is that Russia also agreed with this principle but it was not so strong that she could not influence her ally's decision. Other interesting fact relates to Armenian perception, saying that Azerbaijan tries to use its veto against meeting's final document, since they fear that their proposal may not be included in the proposal for resolving the conflict. And OSCE Chairman made the compromise by delivering an oral statement on the resolution of the conflict based on the principles proposed by Azerbaijan. If it is looked from Azerbaijan's point of view,

these principles are not satisfactory for Azerbaijan as well, even though Azerbaijan strongly supported these principles. The main point here is the NK's autonomy issue, which Azerbaijan sees it its integral territory. If Armenia accepted this statement, this would have been seen as compromise from Azerbaijan's side. However, this statement didn't have legally binding power and known as "Lisbon principles" was not suitable for both parties and failed. (ibid)

5.3. Other stages in mediation process of NK conflict.

Following the Lisbon summit, the Minsk Group Co-Chairs prepared and initiated three different peace proposals-a package agreement, a staged solution and the establishment of a "common state". In July 1997, Minsk Group proposed first a "package" approach which seeks to combine all issues in comprehensive agreement in which it seeks trade-offs across the issues. (Hopmann, 2015, p-169) Comprehensive agreement was consist of two agreements: 1) to put an end to armed hostilities and to establish good relations, 2) to reach an agreement the final status of Nagorno-Karabakh.

According to the first agreement of package it was proposed:

- Withdrawal of the respective armed forces, including that of Nagorno-Karabakh, to the borders of 1988;
- Establishing a buffer zone in the military evacuated areas and the deployment of an OSCE peacekeeping force;
- Return of refugees to the demilitarized zones;
- According to second agreement of package it was proposed:
- Nagorno-Karabakh's exclusive right to the use of Lachin corridor that the OSCE would lease from Azerbaijan;
- Evacuation and demilitarization of Shusha and Shahumian, the return of its original inhabitants and their right to representation in the parliaments in Baku and Xankendi (Stepanakert)
- Karabakh, according to the 1988 borders of the Nagorno-Karabakh Oblast, remains within Azerbaijan's territory, but with the highest status of autonomy, its own parliament, its own constitution, flag and national symbols. Azerbaijan's Constitution is amended to reflect these rights and Azeri decrees and laws would be in force in Karabakh only if they do not conflict with Karabakh's constitution and laws;
- Nagorno-Karabakh has the right to establish direct relations with foreign states and international organizations in matters concerning economic, scientific, cultural, sporting and humanitarian areas;
- Nagorno-Karabakh's population appoints representatives to Azerbaijan's parliament;
- Nagorno-Karabakh's population is regarded as Azerbaijani citizens with a special status and has the right to emigrate to Armenia, after which they may become Armenian citizens. (ibid)

This proposal was accepted by Azerbaijan, Armenians neither rejected nor accepted and claimed

that package agreement did not support the interest of the government of Nagorno-Karabakh, mainly because it meant, more or less, a return to the same position as in Soviet times. (ibid)

On 19-23 September 1997, the Co-Chairmen proposed new proposals based on the “stage-by-stage” approach to the settlement. (Garibov,2015) According to this plan it was proposed at first stage to liberate 6 occupied regions, to deploy the OSCE peacekeeping operation and to return displaced people to the liberated territories. At the second stage the issues of Lachin and Shusha were to be solved and the main principles of the status of NK were to be adopted. It was big surprise for Azerbaijan for the first time, Armenian President Ter-Petrosian accepted NK as a part of Azerbaijan and was ready to go to compromise. But after election of Robert Kocharian in March 1998 withdrew the consent to the proposals on the “stage-by-stage” settlement. (Garibov, 2015, p-81)

On 9 November 1998, a “common state” concept was put forward by the Co-Chairman. According to this proposal, NK would have the status of a state and a territorial unit in a form of republic, which together with Azerbaijan, would constitute the common state within the internationally recognized borders of Azerbaijan. This time Azerbaijan rejected those proposals which is disregard to its sovereignty and contradicted to Lisbon principles. Since then no any proposals have been made by Co-Chairman and Minsk process has reached a deadlock. (ibid)

The President of Azerbaijan and Armenia started direct talks since 1999. Presidents met several times in Washington, Istanbul, Geneva, Davos, Moscow, Yalta, Paris and Key West. However, they could not get result. (ibid)

In 2002, two meetings between the special representatives of both countries took place in Prague which was known as “Prague Process” ended without result. (ibid)

In 2005, two presidents met in Kazan. During the meeting, Minsk Group set forth “basic principles” for further negotiations. Later these principles were called “Madrid principles” which brought optimism to negotiation process about window of opportunity to achieve a settlement between the election cycles in both conflicting states. (ibid)

In 2011, two presidents met in Sochi under the mediation of Russian President, Dimitry Medvedev. Yerevan was unhappy of talk concerning its withdrawal of its forces from occupied territories. Armenia was still aiming to keep status quo and impose a fait accompli situation. (ibid)

April 2016, the four-day war in Nagorno-Karabakh renewed the situation and changed status quo in a little period of time. Both sides attacked each other and used heavy weapons in the clashes,

and dozens of soldiers from both armies were killed. As a result of war, Azerbaijan could manage to slightly shift the front line in its favor. The clash continued until 5 April and ended with both sides announcing ceasefire. However, this war doesn't change status quo later. OSCE still continues to use different mechanisms and strengthens the capacities for effective resolution of deadlock conflict. (ibid)

6. OSCE role in South Ossetia conflict.

In early 1990s international organizations took active steps to initiate a peace process in Georgian's conflicts. OSCE Mission to Georgia was established in 1992 and the branch office of OSCE Mission in Tskhinvali was opened in 1997. It primarily deals with South Ossetian conflict and supports the UN led peace process in the zone of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict (1993). (Lynch, 2010, p-141)

Why the OSCE has not been successful in Georgia? Is it a failure of the OSCE or was there paradoxical logic behind the scene? In order to explain these questions, it is better to structure the argument in three parts. The first part will examine OSCE mechanism for early warning and conflict prevention in Georgia. The second part will look closely at OSCE activities during the August war 2008. The third part will outline elements that led events into escalatory cycle and worked ultimately to offset the functions of OSCE engagements in the region.

On March 29, 1994 mandate of the Mission was defined first for creation political framework for a lasting political settlement which could be achieved on the basis of CSCE principles. Thus, Mission aimed at encouraging active dialogue among the parties, eliminating sources of tension, upholding the July 1992 ceasefire and monitoring the Russian led Joint Peacekeeping Force (JPKF), which consists of Georgian, Russian and South Ossetian forces. (Nuriyev, 2007, p-202). Beside this, unarmed OSCE Military Monitoring Officers (MMO) played a crucial role in monitoring security situation in the conflict. In addition to this, Joint Control Commission (JCC), which supported by OSCE, was also created by the 1992 Sochi cease fire agreement which comprised the representatives from Georgia, South Ossetia, North Ossetia, Russia, OSCE. The three lines of creation peacekeeping forces, in reality it is based on mistrust to each other, even though they served as intermediaries when tension rose. (Lynch, 2010, p-142)

One of the important fact must be mentioned that OSCE didn't participate in the preparation and in the process of negotiation of Dagomys Agreement between Tbilisi, Moscow and Tskhinvali. It

was not active, only was charged with monitoring the activities JCC on the initiative Georgian side. In March 1997, more intensive negotiation was held under OSCE and Russian mediation. Shevardnadze and South Ossetian leader Chibirov signed a protocol which envisaged that Georgia's territorial integrity would be preserved and South Ossetia would have unspecified "special powers for self-determination". It was also agreed during negotiation process to create a JCC on the economic reconstruction of the conflict-ridden region, return of refugees to their places, gained from the conduction of joint law-enforcement operation by the Georgian police, South Ossetia militia and the Russian-led JPKF. (Nuriyev, 2007, p-203)

Another positive development in negotiation process took place from 11-13 of July, 2000 in Baden, Austria under the mediation of Russia and the OSCE. At the meeting, the conflicting sides agreed on "Draft Intermediary Document" that specified special principles in which included :1) the recognition of Georgia's integrity, 2) the acceptance of the development of special links between South Ossetia and North Ossetia, 3) the granting of a high level of autonomy to South Ossetia, 4) the introduction of international security guarantees, including the presence of Russian troops in South Ossetia. (ibid, p-204). But these principles were not implemented due to the presidential elections in South Ossetia in 2001. Eduard Kokoity, who had close ties to Moscow and senior Russian generals, won the election and was seeking the unification with North Ossetia and reintegration with Russia. The interesting fact here is that if any leader of secessionist regions wanted to be close to parent state or tried to find a final resolution to the conflict, that leader lost his place. This happened to South Ossetian leader Ludwig Chibirov and Armenian President Ter-Petrosyan. Russian hand is clearly seen in such occasions and these leaders could not perform the role defined for them by the Russian leadership.

During Kokoity leadership period, the conflict tension was increased, especially when he asked Vladimir Putin to recognize the independence of South Ossetia. As a response, V. Putin sent military equipment, including 12 T-55 tanks via Roki tunnel to South Ossetia. These were deployed near Java, in the northern part of the territory, to which international observers did not have access. Russian military bases in South Ossetia was a major point of discussion at the 1999 OSCE Istanbul Summit. It was demanded from Russia to withdraw military bases from South Ossetia by 2006. Also at 13th meeting in Ljubljana in December 2005, the OSCE Ministerial Council adopted a statement on Georgia, particularly underscoring "the withdrawal of part of the Russian heavy military equipment from Georgian territory. (Nuriyev, 2007, p-323). Moscow not

only refused to withdraw the bases before 2014, but also exerted further pressure on Tbilisi by refusing to attend a routine meeting of the JCC which was scheduled for February 20-21, 2003 in Vienna. (Cornell, et al Starr, 2009, p-54)

In 2005 the OSCE Mission focused its activities on spheres of confidence building and economic rehabilitation issues which have become an important part of concerning approach to bring a lasting solution to the conflict of South Ossetia. In 2006, Economic Rehabilitation Programme became a needs assessment mission. OSCE led ERP guaranteed to aid 7.8 million euro to build confidence between Georgian and Ossetian communities in and around the conflict zone. It is thought that economic rehabilitation approach could be an effective mechanism for confidence building and even full-scale resolution of the conflict. This is the main agreement part which JCC parties seemed to be able to communicate. (Lynch,2010, p-143).

The next stage of OSCE preventive diplomacy and international conflict management during 2008 war in Georgia did not achieve their aims, because of gradual erosion of previously negotiated and agreed parameters. Also, each representative's own interest made poles, even use of force as a means to attain political goals by moving away the principles of international law such as violating territorial integrity of sovereign state and lesser thought was given to conflict prevention. (Council of European Union, September 2009, p-35)

After bloody 2008 conflict in Georgia, the Geneva discussion were launched on the basis of Six Point Agreement of 12 August 2008 which co-chaired by the OSCE, the EU, the UN. The representatives of Georgia, Russia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia also attended in the discussion. This agreement contributed to end of hostilities on the ground, to withdraw Russian forces from beyond Abkhazia and South Ossetia, to subsequent establishment EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia. Non-use of force was the main discussion point of Geneva talks. Georgia insisted on that Russia must also follow these principles. But the Russia refused to follow these principles, saying that it is not a party of conflict, instead of that it demanded from Georgia to sign treaty non-use of force directly with breakaway regions which Georgia didn't follow it and said that these entities its part of sovereign state. Thus, there is no need to do that. So, Russia did not agree with Sarkozy agreement, thinking that it is not sufficient for security of independent states. (Phillips,2011)

So, as a result of Russia's victory in 2008 war diminished OSCE Mission's activity in South Ossetia. Russia even did not allow OSCE MMO deployment to the region. South Ossetian government also dislikes the OSCE and wants its Head of office in Tskhinvali to be removed.

South Ossetia sees OSCE only supporter of Georgia and preventer Russia's influence to its region. Georgia also dissatisfied with JCC because of its composition which it feels very unbiased to its wishes. The failure of OSCE Mission in Georgia relates to two main conditions: 1) a commitment to a peace agreement by all sides and 2) possibility to impose sanctions in case of violations of existing agreements. (Bernath, 2005, unpagged). So, all these paradoxes are the main factors of OSCE's failure in Georgia.

7. UN role in Abkhazia.

The UN was the first international organization which became involved in the resolution of Georgian-Abkhaz conflict in November 1992. In May 1993, the UN Secretary-General appointed a Special Representative Swiss diplomat Eduard Brunner for Georgia. In July of the same year the UN Security Council passed Resolution No.849 calling for an end to the fighting. At the same time, in August 1993, UN Security Council decided to establish a permanent United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) with Resolution 858 comprising 88 unarmed military observers to monitor the agreed ceasefire. Later, UNOMIG increased a Chief Military Observer up to 136 subordinate observers from large number of UN member states. The mission also included 95 civilian personnel and 175 local civilian staff. UNOMIG headquarters was officially located in Sukhumi, there was also office in Tbilisi. (Stewart,2003, p-3) However, UNOMIG was forced to suspend peacekeeping operation due to the renewed fighting in Abkhazia in September 1993. In response, the UN Security Council demanded separatist militias to withdraw immediately. (Nuriyev,2007, p-94)

The most complex issue in the UN attempt in conflict resolution in Abkhazia is the involvement of Russia which had already established itself not only as a co-mediator, but also as a participant in the conflict. In more broad extent, the UN was forced to play the second role after Russia and had to permit Russia to proceed with its declared intent of deploying Russian troops (CIS peacekeepers) as the backbone of a UN peacekeeping force in Abkhazia. However, UNOMIG's work is attached to so-called "Geneva peace process" (1997) to bring all negotiations on the conflict under the UN umbrella which includes here Russia as "a facilitator", OSCE as an observer and the "Group of Friends of the Secretary General on Georgia" which was created in 1994 composed of the US, UK, France, Germany and Russia as coordinators. In early December 1993, the 1st round negotiation between Georgia and Abkhazia was held in Abkhazia where conflicting

sides signed memorandum of understanding non-use of force, agreements on the return of refugee and internally displaced people (IDP) and establishment economic and social issues. But the agreement related the future status of Abkhazia was not signed in Moscow on December 21 1993. The UN especially focused on the establishment of a quadripartite commission on refugees and IDPs which negotiation was concluded in January 1994. However, its implementation has been refused by Abkhaz side and aside spontaneous repatriation, the number of refugees and IDPs to return to Abkhazia has been small. Later on, UNDP, UNOCHA, UNV became involved in supplying assistance to Abkhazia, especially the Gali region. (Stewart, 2003, p-13)

After Sochi Agreement and Kodori Valley Incident, UNOMIG's mandate was extended for another six months until the end of January and for the reason of that bombs and low-level guerrilla activity was continued. In November 2000, the UN-supported Joint Assessment Mission (JAM) visited the Gali district. The purpose was to evaluate conditions and Gali, the Kodori Gorge remained unstable and insecure places for IDPs return. (Nuriyev, 2007, p-192)

Georgia's territorial integrity issue was again on agenda in December 2001 based on "the Basic Principles for the Distribution of Competences", so called the "Boden plan" between Tbilisi and Sukhumi. According to this document which was stated by the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the UN Dieter Boden: "the future status of Abkhazia, has to be such that Abkhazia will be a part of the Georgian state". The Abkhaz secessionist regime, however, refused even to discuss the document, mainly arguing that their status was already determined to be independent. And the volatile security situation in Kodori Gorge and the deployment of Georgian troops there according Moscow agreement 1994, was not contributing to peaceful negotiations on Abkhazia's future status. Thus, this document was not implemented and sank. (Labarre, et al, 2016, p-86)

In January 2006, both Georgia and Abkhaz sides offered to the Secretary-General new peaceful and comprehensive settlement plans. The Georgian side was urged to take into account the Abkhaz security concerns and the Abkhaz side effectively to meet the security and human rights concerns of the local population and returners to the Gali district. The Council allowed Georgian side for independent and regular monitoring situation in upper Kodori valley by joint UNOMIG and CIS peacekeeping forces. Even there were optimistic side were seen toward reopening of the railways between Sochi and Tbilisi and towards returning of refugees. However, the shooting down UNOMIG helicopter in the Kodori valley and various hostage-taking incidents change the

situation adverse and the plans were not implemented again which Georgia also insisted on its territorial integrity and Abkhazia claimed on its independence. (United Nations, 2009)

The 2008 war limited UNOMIG's mandate to the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict which military operation carried out in and around the Mission's area responsibility only. On 12 August 2008 French presidency of EU yielded a six-point cease fire agreement and called withdrawal Russian, Georgian forces to their positions. Russia only began to withdraw her troops from undisputed Georgian territory. But Russia's recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states could not return the status quo ante. Russia vetoed the extension of UNOMIG at the UN Security Council and the mission closed in June 2009. (ibid)

8. EU role in the South Caucasus conflict resolution.

The EU engagement in the South Caucasus conflicts' resolution could be assessed in two different stages. The first stage can be described as a shift "from its passive role in early 1990s, then intensified and even culminated until the year 2003, with the appointment of the EU Special Representative for South Caucasus. The second stage can be characterized by "its active role as facilitator-mediator" which would cover a period since 2003 until present.

The EU distant approach towards facilitating the conflict resolution in the first stage relates with its new appearance on the South Caucasus scene after the collapse of the Soviet Union. After the entry into force of Partnership and Cooperation Agreements in 1999 in Luxembourg, the EU applied different assistance programs which aimed at promoting democracy, civil society, economy, etc. It reinforced political dialogue with the young states, supported the OSCE in conflict-torn areas through funding rehabilitation programs, assisted the OSCE in monitoring sections of the Georgian Russian border and declared to support with large scale fund in the case of settlement of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. EU also implemented other programs such as Technical Assistance for Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS), Transport Corridor Europe Caucasus Asia (TRACECA) and Interstate Oil and Gas Transport to Europe (INOGATE) as its policy tools. (Jafarova.E, 2011, p-2) So, 1999-2001 were the years of politicization of EU actions in the South Caucasus. (Jafarova, 2011, p-1)

The appointment of the EUSR the Finnish diplomat Heikki Talvitie in July 2003 became an important step for the EU member states. The EU viewed the South Caucasus as a strategic corridor linking the southern Europe with Central Asia, which became a strategic hub due to its

hydrocarbon resources and its strategic position. Thus, the region became more interest area of EU, calling EU strategy under a name of the “Southern Dimension”. (ibid) The EU applied two types of security in the region. The first one is an internal security which is threatened by political tensions and separatist conflicts. The second one is an external security that is influenced by external rivalries and their influence to the relation between states. (Nuriyev, 2007, p-6)

The EU involvement in Nagorno-Karabakh resolution is very limited and has not been actively involved in conflict resolution process. For Nagorno-Karabakh, the EU adopted “wait and see” approach which EU has not specific strategy for conflict resolution. It only supports the OSCE and the UN in their effort to solve the protracted conflicts in the region and provided financial aid for the rehabilitation of territories damaged during the conflict. (Efe, 2012, p-6)

EU paid more attention to Abkhazia and South Ossetia conflicts and became the largest donor in Abkhazia by providing EUR 25 million to humanitarian, rehabilitation, reconstruction projects before the Georgian Russian war. In comparison to Abkhazia, South Ossetia conflict was thought to be solve easier and the early resolution could be more desirable due to the region’s geographic proximity to the Georgian capital Tbilisi. EU has also funded projects in South Ossetia between 1997-2006. However, the EU did not play important political role in conflict resolution process in both Abkhazia and South Ossetia. (Jafarova, 2011, p-4)

The second stage an increased role of the EU became more visible in EU-South Caucasus relations was the inclusion of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia into the European Neighborhood Policy in 2004. After it, ENP Action Plans (APs) were adopted with these three countries on 14 November 2006. The EU’s “us-ness”, embodying the EU’s understanding of the “self”, its aspirations and capacities build block which becomes a “credible force for good” for “other-ness” such as states outside Europe. (Korostelova, u.d, p-133) It can be understood as to be a neutral actor in the region and ENP objective “to foster closer cooperation among the EU’s neighbors themselves “cannot be cure to the South Caucasus conflicts. The EU has always tried to build positive relations with regional powers. At the same time, the EU has no desire to become the key security actor in south eastern periphery, which perfectly suits Russian and American interests. Also, the same with regional conflict actors, such as Armenia and Azerbaijan. For example, when it comes to Azerbaijan, the EU emphasized the importance of respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, while with Armenian it underlined the right of self-determination which shows no concrete EU policy toward conflict resolution. (Nuriyev, 2008, p-162)

The EU direct involvement as mediator happened after the tragic 2008 war in Georgia. With both Russia and U.S, the EU made a tripartite negotiation format by replacing France. After it, EU was also active deploying EU Monitoring Mission in the Georgian controlled territories and appointed its Special Representative to Georgia. The EU acts as one of the negotiation parties at the multi-party Geneva negotiations as well. However, the resolution of 17 January 2008 which applied by EU on “a more effective EU policy for the South Caucasus: from promises to action” supports sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia and Azerbaijan, but it also again emphasized the right to self-determination in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Also, the resolution of 20 May 2010 “on the need for an EU Strategy for South Caucasus” which supports conflict resolution through confidence building, reconstruction and rehabilitation made it more visible. But it still plays second role after U.S, Russia, Turkey in the region. (Jafarova, 2011, p.13-14)

9. Where is the solution?

9.1 Territorial Integrity and Self-determination in International Law.

Two basic arguments a) based on territorial integrity and b) based on human rights are core principles in protracted conflicts which both sides claim to support their arguments by international law. Karabakh Armenians, Abkhazians, South Ossetians claim that they are indigenous people and majority in these areas. For example, Karabakh Armenians claim this by pointing to Armenian inscriptions and Armenian religious buildings that were built in various historical periods and are found throughout the territory. The Azerbaijani argument, on the other hand claims that territory belongs to Azerbaijan and points to major sources which proof that people claiming to be Armenian Karabakhis are actually 19th century settlers from Persia or even Albanian descendants, making them in fact Azeris, (Hoon, 2012, p-51) which I have already mentioned above. Thus, first of all, it is clear today that the acquisition of territory by force alone is illegal under international law. Security Council resolution 242, emphasized “inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war”, while the Declaration of Principles of International Law adopted by the UN General Assembly provides that:

the territory of a state shall not be the object of acquisition by another state resulting from the threat or use of force. No territorial acquisition resulting from the threat or use of force shall be recognized as legal. (Shaw, p-502)

The other important international instrument that refers the territorial integrity are the Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter and the Helsinki Final Act require the following: “The participating States will refrain in the mutual relations, as well as in their international relations in general, from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State. (Libarona, 2012, p-109)

To assist secession of breakaway regions is also unlawful according to Article 1 of the Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States of 1934 which sets out the key attributes of sovereignty that define: 1) a permanent population; 2) a defined territory; 3) government 4) capacity to enter into relations with the other states. So, when analyzing each of these concepts is problematic, especially “a defined territory” remains fundamental to the recognition of the statehood and the trappings of the sovereignty that accompany it. (Castellino, 2008, p-507)

Even the doctrine of *uti possidetis juris* guarantees the rights of existing stakeholders to the land and mentions that “new States will come to independence with the same boundaries that they had when they were administrative units the territory or territories of one colonial power”. This was applicable to Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, etc. which was designed to protect existing arrangements of possession without regard to the merits of the dispute. Thus, this doctrine *uti possidetis ita possidetis* is translated as “as you possess, so you possess”. (ibid, p-508) Armenians can openly say that they claim to the territory of NKAO of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Azerbaijan at the end of 1987, which both states Armenia SSR and Azerbaijan SSR were under rule of Soviet Union at that time, so this doctrine may not applicable to their case. However, it is worth to mention that to claim other state’s territory was contrary to the Constitution of the USSR, which guaranteed the territorial integrity and inviolability of borders of the Union Republics. And according to legal principle of *uti possidetis*, Azerbaijan validly came to independence within the borders that it had under Soviet law in the period preceding the restoration of its independence. These borders included the territory of the former NKAO as affirmed by legitimate authorities of the USSR at the relevant time. (Musayev, 2011, p-5)

When it comes to the concept of self-determination which was first appeared in Europe after the WWI with the effort of President Wilson, it was not included in the League of Nations Covenant and it was clearly not regarded as a legal principle. Later, UN Charter Article 1(2) and Art 55 noted

the development of friendly relations among nations based upon respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination as one of the purpose of organization but this principle was disputed whether the reference to the principle was sufficient to be recognized as a binding right but the majority view was against it. It is especially touched that the term of the self-determination was set in the Colonial Declaration with its emphasis upon the colonial context and its opposition to secession and has been regarded by some as constituting a binding interpretation of the Charter and all UN resolutions dealing with self-determination expressly refer to it. (Resolution 1514(xv), the Declaration on the Granting of independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, Shaw, p-252)

In another means, self-determination has also been used in conjunction with the principle of the territorial integrity so as to protect the territory of former colonial states and to prevent a rule permitting secession from independent states from arising. (Shaw, p-258)

If the principle exists as a legal one, such as UN formulations of the principle from the 1960 Colonial Declaration to the 1970 Declaration on Principles of International Law and the 1966 International Covenants on Human Rights stress that this is the right of “all peoples”. If this is so, then all peoples-the people of parent states as well would become thereby to some extent subjects of international law. (MFA. Department for analysis and strategic studies,2017, UN Doc: UN Doc. A/63/664-S/2008/823, p-93)

Another argument of breakaway regions’ people relates to claiming to be indigenous of those area which historically it has already proven that it is not true. Also, a Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which was adopted by the United Nations in 2007 states that, nothing that indigenous peoples have the right to the full enjoyment, as a collective or as individuals, of all human rights and fundamental as recognized in the Charter of the United Nations. It was also noted that indigenous peoples have the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs, as well as ways and means for financing their autonomous functions. (Musayev,2011, p-18). While thus essentially defining the meaning self-determination for indigenous peoples, the point was underlined in article 46 (1) that:

“Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any state, people, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act contrary to the Charter of the United Nations or construed as authorizing or encouraging any action which would dismember or impair, totally or in part, the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent states”. (ibid, cited in Shaw, p-18)

Another issue of Kosovo independence is discussed by Armenia and Russia claiming that South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Nagorno-Karabakh have also right for secession. If West recognized Kosovo, so why not these areas were claimed by them. In response to this argument, the Court made clear that “general international law contains no applicable prohibition of declaration of independence” and, accordingly, “that the declaration of independence of 17 February 2008 of Kosovo did not violate general international law. It is *sui generis* and Judge Bruno Simma correctly noted in the declaration that an act might be “tolerated” would not necessarily mean that it is “legal”, but rather it is “not illegal”. In the sense that Security Council noted in detail that its recognition relates in connection “with the unlawful use of force or other egregious violations of norms of general international law, in particular those of a peremptory character (*jus cogens*)” So, it is noted as follows:

“The illegality attached to the declarations of independence.... stemmed not from the unilateral character of these declaration as such, but from the fact they were, or would have been, connected with the unlawful use of force or other egregious violations of norms of general international law, in particular those of a peremptory character (*jus cogens*). In the context of Kosovo, the Security. Council has never taken this position.”
(Musayev,2011, p-23)

When it comes to peremptory norms of general international law (*jus cogens*) which mention the prohibition of aggression, genocide, slavery, racial discrimination, crimes against humanity and torture and the right to self-determination, there can be no doubt that Armenia and subordinate separatist regime illegally established by it on the occupied territory of Azerbaijan and bear responsibility for violation of such norms by committing genocide in Khojaly. (ibid, p.23-24)

So, generally “international law expects that the right to self-determination will be exercised by peoples within the framework of existing sovereign states and consistently with the maintenance of the territorial integrity of those states. The various international documents that support the existence of the people’s right to self-determination also contain parallel statements supportive of the conclusion that the exercise of such a right must be sufficiently limited to prevent threats to an existing state’s territorial integrity or the stability of relations between sovereign states” was concluded by the Canadian Supreme Court in the Quebec secession case. (MFA.Department of analysis and strategic studies, 2017, UN Doc.A/63/664-S/2008/823, p-124)

9.2. The Worst Possible Scenario.

The situation in Georgia-South Ossetia-Abkhazia triangle will remain frozen if the West doesn't want to be active in the conflict resolution in Georgia. The unsuccessful attempt of the Georgian leadership in August 2008 to resolve the issue by military means changed the status quo and ended with the recognition of Russia which also put Abkhazia and South Ossetia into a situation of complete dependence upon Russia as their patron. Living behind "iron curtain" which shaped by Russia forever will not bring freedom to the people of South Ossetia and Abkhazia with Russia's manipulation which blocked them economically and politically. Regarding Georgia, it is more "European state" and vulnerable to outside and inside pressures.

In Armenia-Nagorno-Karabakh triangle Russia applies the same scenario. If Russia continues to exploit the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, she will not only affect Azerbaijan but the extent the Armenian sovereignty will be limited in decision making and strongly influence her relationship with the direct neighbors, as well as her domestic policy. The lack of interest of Western states to the conflicts is due to not to confront with Russia in the small area will bring tension threatening the other interests of all the parties involved and making peaceful solution much more difficult to achieve.

The worst possible scenario of the South Caucasus can be characterized as a result of renewed conflicts which Russia uses regional minorities as tool for further escalations in the region, if international organizations fail to change perceptions among political elites. Regarding Karabakh conflict, it will be solved in accordance with Russian plan, which means the deployment of Russian troops in Nagorno-Karabakh. In another word, the Kremlin may take control of Azerbaijan and Georgia (including the control of all regional energy transport projects) and can reach the Azerbaijani-Iranian border. This means that Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia completely lose their sovereignty. After paralyzing the whole region, it will also open Russia a new gate to further annexations.

9.3. The Best Possible Scenario-Policy Recommendations.

To solve protracted conflicts are tough issues today which several attempts have been already tried without result. But still there is hope for resolving them:

- **Federalization** of Georgia can be the best option as a means to solve both Abkhazia and South Ossetia conflicts in the region. Federation and confederation guarantee extent of self-rule to sub-national units. Regarding Azerbaijan, it is a unitary state but Azerbaijani constitution has some elements of federalism such as the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic which has its own constitutionally provided set of competencies. Chinese model can be suitable for Azerbaijan. According to Chinese constitution China is also a **unitary multi-national State** created jointly by the people of all its nationalities, includes Special Administrative Regions Hong-Kong and Macau.
- **Multiple pipeline projects or piece pipelines.** Linking more malign problem with benign issue can reduce hostilities and bring peace. For example, today Azerbaijan implements high regional projects such as TANAP, TAP which bypass breakaway regions. If parent states involve those leaders of breakaway regions to the regional projects and they also compromise with them in territory can be good initiative for solving conflicts. For example, TANAP, TAP pipelines in the future can pass through South Ossetia, Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh and Yerevan. All sides will benefit, bring prosperity to the region and reduce dependency on Russia. Thus, the United States should actively support the construction of multiple pipelines through the region.
- **International peace guarantee.** If Armenia takes the path of true independence from Russia and build trust with Azerbaijan, it can be one of the option to conflict resolution for NK. Because once there was such kind of rapprochement between Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Heydar Aliyev. In this case the European Union could be the guarantee of any peace agreement reached.
- **Trade and economic cooperation.** Applying methods of unilateral action could also prove helpful when one of the conflicting parties unilaterally makes positive step. For example, the restoration of the Ergneti market on the South Ossetia-Georgia contact line and the Sadakhlo market in Sadakhlo village whose population is Azerbaijani and situated on the border junction between Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia was known economic hub can again turn trade and economic cooperation area and used as a tool for human contacts between the societies separated by conflicts. To link conflicting sides through economic

relations and creating economic integrated area will bring benefit to all sides in the conflicts. (Caucasus, 2011)

- **Eastern Partnership program.** It is also possible to involve the non-recognized and partially recognized entities NK, South Ossetia and Abkhazia to this program. The main aim is that with this way Azerbaijan and Georgia can come up with an initiative to involve these entities into joint humanitarian, cultural and youth projects which in no case would mean a predetermination of their statuses. Because the lack of direct contact with them makes obstacles for peace solution and this can be a good option. Thus, common action and cooperation are possible keys to South Caucasus conflict resolution.
- **Russia's "soft power".** This is the major and the most important issue which lie on the root of all conflict resolutions in the South Caucasus. When to analyze Russia's behavior, she chooses special cases which uses them as tools such as minority issues, economic deadlock, weak regions for her strategy. In order to diminish Russia's invisible hand in the region, the West must actively intervene and impose Russia to apply her "soft power". This can happen if Western countries, international organizations intensify dialogues with her. In another case, economic sanctions are the last option that can be applied by Western countries.
- **No discrimination.** Conflict resolutions requires any discrimination against each party to the conflict. Today, Armenian lobby and diasporas are very active and capable to solve any issues to their favor in abroad. Their powerful communities have settled in Russia, France, Iran, and the United States and politically influence national parties. Thus, such partiality has negative effect to mediation. Equal treatment is important to facilitating the process of mediation.

9.4 Results. Test of hypotheses.

Two hypotheses-*bias, impartial, neutral actors' interest, role and their strategies*, which interrelated with each other, directly has different impact on the outcome of mediation effectiveness.

Today Russia's highly active role and having monopoly over the peacemaking process who is

outside impartial and inside biased tries to block any resolution within the UN, OSCE regarding Georgia's territorial integrity. The UN could not employ any sanctions against Russia who was strategically interested party in Abkhazian and South Ossetian conflicts. The UN and OSCE only provided good offices and were effective in implementing communication, facilitation strategies. The EU neutral and distant approach toward resolving the conflict does not have special tools to intervene in the peace process, offering only confidence-building activities in further mediation process. The EU has interest in energy and trade cooperation in the South Caucasus. But regarding previous relationship between mediators and disputed parties it must be mentioned that France as a member of EU had a great role in preventing Russia's occupation of whole Georgia after 2008 war.

Regarding Nagorno-Karabakh conflict OSCE has partial success but has not been able to implement full settlement of the conflict yet. First, Russian factor play a decisive role and it is unlikely that Russia-led peace talks will effectively solve the crisis in the near future. Moscow will exploit peace process to gain more economic, military and political power. Russia needs to keep things as they are and managing instability in the region. Second, the history of ethnic clashes between the parties such as Armenia and Azerbaijan complicates the achievement of settlement the dispute and challenges Co-Chairs' effective functions in mediation process. But there is hope that Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Abkhazian, South Ossetians used to live together in some period of history, shared the same culture, even they have a lot marriages, political and economic ties and these factors can change the content of dispute in the future. Also, religious factor is not the main cause of dispute in the region and there are good relations between Christian and Muslim states in two poles.

Moreover, the most difficult issue for mediators is to solve the conflicts relating *self-determination and territorial integrity* in the region. When to compare South Ossetia with Abkhazia, there is difference in their nature which can be taken into account in future conflict resolution process. First, South Ossetia was occurred in recent past and communist party had not incentive to create special status of South Ossetia during the Soviet period. Second, South Ossetians do not know they want to integrate to North Ossetia or Russia. Third, South Ossetians has great relations with Georgians unlike Abkhazians throughout the history. Also, Abkhazian wanted to be independent, neither to be dependent on Russia, nor on Georgia. Nevertheless, these breakaway regions are partially recognized today and Georgia insists on its territorial integrity,

neither UN nor OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs have never supported these two principles equally. These actors only played balanced act between disputed states due to their interest and role in the conflicts.

For effective mediation directive strategies were implemented by OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs several times but were not successful. In Nagorno-Karabakh case, both foreign ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia could not come to an agreement. The Model suggests that in order to gain “win-win” in protracted conflicts, the disputed parties must pay attention to interest, not position. Here is the not important what they want but issues at stake can be benefit for all region. It means that both parties must compromise in order to “win-win” in deadlock conflicts. Thus, as a support of direct strategy economic incentives, regional projects and human interactions in regional conflicts with international organizations’ assistance might help conflict resolution in the South Caucasus region.

10. Conclusion.

This work analyzed three South Caucasus states and conflicts that are conditioned by their key geopolitical location at a crossroads between regional actors as well as by their relationship based on interest to each other and other global actors such as US, the OSCE, the EU, and their role in effective resolution of the conflicts in mediation.

The thesis especially touched *Russia’s* dual policy as bias actor *in* “near abroad” who struggles with the challenge of her post-Soviet transition; however, she tries to balance her power and to take control in political and economic spheres in the region through international organizations. She effectively imposes her interest within the UNSC which she has veto power due to consensus formula where other smaller UN members cannot reject accepted decision. However, Russia’s position is often challenged in OSCE where she has an equal status with other members. She can also manipulate any decision according to her interest which was revealed throughout the thesis from past to present and achieved her goals by recognizing and keeping breakaway regions, South Ossetia and Abkhazia, under her control.

Another third-party intervener the EU’s role and interest as neutral actor was explained as. First, the EU’s distant approach toward the conflict resolutions directly relates to the lack of interest of EU member states to the region. Second, the visible and increasing role of France which effectively

mediated after 2008 August war in Georgia. Third, the EU's role and interest basically relate to energy, economy, humanitarian issues and supporter of implementation of regional projects.

Thesis also emphasized all three regional actors-*Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia*-which have played balancing game leveraging relations with one external power against the other. US has been an important global actor in this sense and has the same power as Russia. But according to the distant to the region as a territory and lack of intention to confront with Russia in a small area it gives opportunity to Russia to manipulate protracted conflicts. Also, Turkey is not in position to exert stabilizing influence in the region due to its trade and economic interests with neighbors, especially with Russia. Azerbaijan is a major regional actor who has oil and gas resources and plays a key role in the regional projects and can be supportive as a regional conflict resolution initiative. *Iran* too is hardly in a position to stabilize and project its influence in the South Caucasus. The conflict torn South Caucasus is not an interest area of Iran. As well as Iran's relationship with Russia is becoming too important to risk over the South Caucasus. Also, international community isolates Iran as a problematic partner, especially getting pressure from the United States for its nuclear ambitions which is threat to the region.

In sum up, assessing "activity" and "passivity" of three international organizations-the *UN, OSCE, EU*-in final settlement of PSC in the South Caucasus in comparison to each other in mediation process which is the main research question of the thesis can be qualified as: The UN was not effective in finding a final solution to the Abkhazian conflict. UNOMIG mission could not extend its function and closed. The same happened to OSCE role in South Ossetia. After occupation these regions by Russia, neither UN nor OSCE could influence and prevent its happening. Actors' role and strategies are greatly reduced by the presence of different and conflicting members' interest, especially by Russia who seeks to fulfill her objectives by influencing others. Thus, the UN role in Abkhazia and OSCE role in South Ossetia were passive in the sense that all members' impartiality was lacking. The EU role can be partially active according to France mediation after 2008 Russo-Georgian war who succeeded to prevent the whole occupation of Georgia by Russia. Also, the EU provided financial aid to the conflicting areas. The OSCE role in Nagorno-Karabakh is active, however it cannot reach final settlement of the conflict and it still continues its function today.

To conclude that thesis defended the arguments using historical facts and self-determination, territorial integrity principles of international law to prove that 1) it is an annexation of one

sovereign state's territory by other neighboring country, however they deny it 2) the people of breakaway regions do not have right for secession. It is only possible within the framework of rules and respect for the territorial integrity of sovereign states.

So, for solving protracted conflicts, the work contributed to use both Track-I and Track-II diplomacies together which can be good for future research to analyze the effectiveness of conflict resolution in such cases.

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