

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF ARMENIA



**NAVIGATING BETWEEN INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION PARADIGMS:
PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES FOR NAGORNO-KARABAKH**

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Introduction

When the world's 8th economy (State of California, US) decided to recognize the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (NKR) in 2014, the recognition process of this South Caucasian de facto state took an interesting turn. In the international arena it is a generally established practice that only UN member states can recognize the independence of other states. However, recently a new and still undefined paradigm has emerged when legislatures of some states in the United States and Australia have recognized the independence of Nagorno-Karabakh. This kind of recognition by sub-state subjects of the federal states is a new phenomenon, and its political and legal implications need to be studied and contextualized.

The Nagorno-Karabakh Republic is running into the period when perceptions of what post-Soviet de facto states are, and what they stand for, are undergoing significant shifts. This "sub-state" recognition implies a number of opportunities for Nagorno-Karabakh to consolidate and advance its international profile, which may contribute to the further international recognition of this de facto state. With the acceleration of the current "low-intensity war" there is a growing risk of variations in the status-quo in Nagorno-Karabakh, which may also bring to escalation of military operations.

Thus, this Master's Essay examines the reasons stimulating five US states (California, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Maine and Louisiana) as well as the most populous state of Australia- New South Wales to recognize geographically remote de facto state. And which factors have prompted these sub-state entities to launch their own policy of supporting the self-determination of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh, which is inconsistent with the foreign policy of their federal governments on this issue.

On the other hand, the study looks at legal and political implications derived of these recognitions as well as at possible prospects of this pattern of recognition.

Methodology

The hypothesis and the research questions of this Master's essay are illustrated bellow:

Hypothesis: The recognition resolutions by US and Australian States enhance the NKR's international standing

RQ1: What were the main reasons that five US states and one Australian state have recognized the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic?

RQ 2: Are there any legal and political implications of the recognition of the NKR by these US and Australian states?

RQ 3: How does the NKR employ these recognitions?

This Master's Essay has qualitative research design based on four research instruments: interviews, content analysis, discourse analysis and secondary data analysis.

Interviews: Since no other academic research has been conducted on this topic, an interview is the main instrument for getting primary data on this research. The total number of the interviews conducted in the frameworks of this research project is nineteen.

For investigating the reasons of adopting NKR recognition resolutions three interviews were conducted with the members of US and Australian Legislative bodies (who authored the recognition resolutions), and six with Armenian Community representatives from US and Australia, who have contributed to the NKR recognition by these sub-states.

For looking at the results and the implications of these sub-states' recognition resolutions on the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, five officials from the NKR (NKR Foreign Minister, Head of the NKR Parliament, Spokesman of the NKR prime minister, NKR permanent representative in US and the head of the Political Department of the NKR permanent representation in Armenia) were interviewed.

For getting more professional insights on this topic, two Political scientists and one Law expert were interviewed. Furthermore, for viewing this issue from another perspective, an interview was conducted with the member of the Parliament of the RA, who is also former Foreign Minister of Armenia. In addition, in order to learn more interpretations by the Armenian officials, the Head of Department of Americas of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the RA was interviewed.

Content Analysis: The analysis included one Australian and five US state level resolutions by which the Legislative bodies of those sub-states have recognized the NKR's independence. The format and the wording of the resolutions were also explored. In addition, the content analysis involved the investigation of international law literature on state recognition, focusing mainly on two prominent documents: UN Charter (1945) and Montevideo Convention (1933).

Discourse Analysis: The analysis included the examination of speeches on the NKR recognition made by members of the US and Australian Legislative chambers. The analysis included mainly the speeches of those US and Australian officials, who were not available for an interview.

Secondary data analysis: This instrument was mainly used for analyzing some literature on "de facto" state's features, state recognition theories and on Nagorno-Karabakh's state-building.

Literature Review

Defining de facto state and its role in the international arena

This chapter seeks to briefly define the de facto states and discuss the question of international recognition of the de facto states based on the example of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic.

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict can be considered as an ethno-political and ethno-territorial conflict, which resulted in creation of “de facto” state entity named Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (Markedonov, 2012). It is necessary here to clarify exactly what is meant by the term “de facto”. The term “de facto” has Latin origins, which means “by (the) fact”. In the international law, it also means “in practice but not necessarily authorized by law”. This term is frequently used in contrast to the other Latin term “de jure”, which means “concerning the law” (<http://www.commonlawgrandjury.com/>, 2015). Pegg (1998) in his theoretical examination defines de facto states as follows:

“De facto state exists where there is an organized political leadership which has risen to power through some degree of indigenous capability; receives popular support; and has achieved sufficient capacity to provide governmental services to a given population in a defined territorial area, over which effective control is maintained for an extended period of time.”
(Pegg 1998, 1)

Thus, many scholars agree that one of the key attributes of de facto states is the public support of local population to the “de facto” government (Pegg 1998; Kolstø 2006; Yamali 2009; Lynch 2001; Broers 2013, etc.). On the other hand, while Black’s Law Dictionary (1968) admits that “de facto state” receives internal support from the community, it argues that the de facto government “is deemed unlawful, wrongful or unjust” (Black 1968, 824). Lynch (2001) has

similar approach to this issue and argues that de facto states have no judicial right to that particular territory since that land is considered to be part of the de jure borders of other state.

Another major attribute of de facto state lies in its non-recognized or partly-recognized status. A number of studies have revealed that de facto states seek legitimate independence and widespread international recognition as a sovereign country (Pegg 1998; King 2001; Lynch 2001; Coppieters 2003). These authors argue that the international recognition can contribute to the survival of an unrecognized state and can lead to creation and strengthening of the statehood. With this regard, Kolstø (2006) points out that even if de facto governments would succeed to have high popular support and to build the sense of strong and coherent identity, they are insecure unless they will be internationally recognized or united with their parent state. Thus, lack of enough recognition can be viewed as a threat to the national security of the de facto state.

Indeed, for example the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic due to its non-recognition is out of the organizations and pacts, which are dealing with security of the states, such as OSCE, CSTO, and other security-related alliances. Thus, because of the NKR's exclusion, the international community is becoming less aware and less concerned with Nagorno-Karabakh's security. These international organizations do not monitor or ensure the non-violence of the security of NKR, as it is not considered as a sovereign state. Moreover, the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh is still de jure recognized as a part of Azerbaijan, which in legal terms means that Azerbaijan is the key guarantor of the security of NKR. Hence, it seems that the de facto status means that the NKR is not protected by international non-intervention norms should a new war begin. Therefore it still has a fundamentally insecure status.

Markedonov (2012) argues that the recognition is not a mandatory prerequisite for the existence of de facto state, but rather it facilitates the internal legitimacy of the government and

the engagement into the international politics. The evidence of this argument can be clearly seen in the case of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. Although it has not been recognized by any UN member state, it still continues to exist and to develop its statehood. Furthermore, it is not completely isolated from the all international activities and from the opportunities of getting foreign support. For instance, Nagorno-Karabakh is the only de facto state in the post-Soviet space, which has received direct financial assistance from the US Congress for realization of social programs (Markedonov, 2012) .

However, the non-recognition of the de facto states may engender a number of obstacles in the state's existence in the international system. These difficulties include but are not limited to “the association of the de facto states with armed conflict and violence; frequent association with more extreme varieties of exclusive nationalism; exclusion from international organizations, markets and financial systems; limitations on the extent of outward travel by their inhabitants and sometimes by outsiders to their territory, and a generalized sense of isolation” (Broers 2013, 2).

Broers (2013) also states that de facto states have contradictory nature if approached from the accepted norms of the international community. On the one hand, they challenge the internationally accepted state order by changing de jure borders, but on the other hand, they reproduce it by showing the normal and real appearance of a state. Thus, every state can differ in their approach and attitude to the de facto states. With this regard, Pegg (1998) argues that international society, in order to emphasize the diplomatic and financial support to all de jure states, has traditionally dealt with de facto states by three main methods: “actively opposing them through the use of embargoes and sanctions; generally ignoring them and having no dealings with them; and coming to some sort of limited acceptance and acknowledgment of their

presence” (Pegg, 1998, 4). Thus, it seems that without external support the de facto state is isolated from the all-encompassing club of states, and both its sovereignty as well as its survival becomes quite vulnerable.

When speaking about state’s sovereignty one can articulate the generally accepted idea, that the economy and state budget are vital components for every state’s existence. There are certain means of filling state budget but the major of them is collecting taxes from citizens. However, Kolstø (2006) argues that the leaders of the de facto states “often receive the bulk of their revenues not from the taxation of their own population but from international donors and through the exploitation of the country’s exportable natural resources” (Kolstø 2006, 724–725). These circumstances as well as the strong internal support of the population to its leadership can hamper the democracy building process in de facto states. Moreover, Berg and Mölder (2011), argue that de facto states “often fail to meet democratic procedures, which may put the overall legitimacy of their independence bids in question. At the same time they do not receive any attention through electoral monitoring and assessments of civil society developments due to their non-recognition by the international community”(Berg and Mölder 2011, 3).

Thus, taken into consideration the aforementioned points, it can be concluded that the non-recognition is the major attribute which distinguishes the de facto states from the de jure states. Although this lack of recognition constitutes a number of obstacles and inconveniences for the development of de facto states, it is not the required prerequisite for the existence of the state. The manifestation of this fact is the existence of a number of de facto states today (including Nagorno-Karabakh), which have not been recognized globally. However, it should be mentioned that the international recognition does facilitate de facto states’ integration into the international community.

Recognition of a state: theories of state recognition

It is generally accepted that every state holds its relations with other states by taking into consideration the legal status of those other states. In many cases, these relations imply the bilateral recognition between the two parties. Scholarly discourse on the recognition of a state wheels around the debate between two well-known recognition theories in the international law: the constitutive and declaratory.

According to the constitutive theory, the states do not legally exist until they have been recognized by the other states (Yamali 2009). Many scholars support this theory by referring to it as a definition and foundation for the statehood (Worster 2010). The constitutive theory asserts that a state can use its rights and responsibilities only after being recognized by the international community. However, this theory does not elaborate on the situation when one state is recognized not by all, but by several countries (Yamali 2009). So it lacks in explaining the legal consequences for unrecognized and partly recognized states.

On the other hand, the declaratory theory holds an opposite view on this issue. According to it, if the state meets the international standards of the sovereignty it can come into existence without being recognized by other states. The Montevideo Convention has similar approach by stating that “political existence of a state is independent of recognition by the other states” (Montevideo Convention 1933, 4). Thus, the existence of the state is free of other states’ discretion in determining which entity is entitled to be recognized as a state. This theory can also be applied to the existence of NKR. There is a group of scholars, who are proponents of this approach to the recognition of a state. This theory was likewise backed by the Arbitration Commission of the European Communities Conference on Yugoslavia case, which was

discussing the recognition and the further status of the states of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Worster 2010).

Nevertheless, the practice shows that the recognition of a state can go out of the aforementioned theories without complying with any of them. Some examples of state recognition introduced in the next chapter can serve as a manifestation to this statement.

Chapter 1: International recognition paradigms of de facto states

It is generally accepted, that a state can be considered internationally recognized if it becomes a member of the UN. There are 193 recognized states by the United Nations, which did not go through identical process of the recognition. According to some international law scholars (Yamali 2009; Worster 2009) state recognition is based on political choices rather than legal grounds. For instance, Israel is a member of the United Nations, but it has not been recognized by 32 states out of 193 UN member-states. If for some countries like for Montenegro (2006), becoming a member of the UN takes several days (United Nations 2006), other countries can strive for a membership for years. For example, the State of Palestine is recognized by 135 countries out of 193 UN member-states, but it got a status of “none member observer state” within the UN only in 2012. By this status, Palestine gets an opportunity to speak at the UN General Assembly as well as to participate in certain types of voting (General Assembly 2012).

Thus, it can be deduced that every state when recognizing or not recognizing another state has particular reasons to do so and those reasons may not necessarily be based on legal grounds. For example, since the time Kosovo announced its independence in 2008, 110 states out of 193 UN members recognized its independence (Republic of Kosovo 2015). However this fact is not enough for Kosovo’s admission to the UN as a member. The crux of the matter is that the permanent members of UN Security Council- Russia and China strongly disagree with Kosovo’s independence, and without their recommendation, Kosovo’s independence may not be put on the General Assembly’s agenda. The same problem has the State of Palestine, but in this case the opponent to its membership is another permanent member of UN Security Council- the United States (Markedonov, 2012).

If in Kosovo and particularly in Montenegro the self-determination claims have fully or partially succeeded to achieve their goals, in the South Caucasian de facto states (Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Nagorno-Karabakh) these claims were mainly ignored or considered null by the international community. If Abkhazia and South Ossetia have been recognized by four/five UN member-states, Nagorno-Karabakh Republic has not been recognized by any UN member country. According to Berg and Mölder (2011), the self-determination claims of the above-mentioned de facto states are powerless and do not bear fruits, therefore they should change the tactic of their international recognition. The authors argue that these de facto states should rather put an emphasis on persuasion of relevant parties that they are “not only the victims, they share the same (democratic) values, hence they deserve recognition” (Berg and Mölder 2011, 3).

Thus, different cases of recognition require different criteria and legal implications. In one case ethno-political self-determination claims are legitimized and welcomed by the international society, in other case these claims are not taken into account at all. However the major conclusion here can be interpreted through the words of Worster (2009), who argues that the states generally “sail between political choices, using the language of law” (Worster 2009, p.116). Hence, it can be deduced that it depends mostly on the state’s political interests whether the independence or self-determination claims of other state would be legitimized or not.

1. 1 Nagorno-Karabakh: conditions for recognition

Despite of the absence of the recognition and isolation from other de jure states, the South Caucasus region became a home for three de facto states (Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Nagorno-Karabakh). In this part, the Master’s essay examines the conditions for the international recognition of Nagorno-Karabakh Republic by referring to prominent documents in the

international law. The prominent documents discussed in this study are the UN Charter and Montevideo Convention.

As stated above, the de facto state of Nagorno-Karabakh came into existence due to the ethno-political and ethno-territorial conflict. The roots of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict date back to the Joseph Stalin's nationalities policy of 1921, by which it was decided to give the Armenian-populated (94%) territory to Soviet Azerbaijan (De Waal 2003). Thus, this kind of policy conducted by the Soviet authorities originated a long-lasting ethno-political dispute between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

The secessionist movement in Nagorno-Karabakh resulted in bloody war and unstable cease-fire agreement. This cease-fire gave a launch of continuing "low-intensity war" status-quo, which does not allow the conflicting parties to achieve a final settlement for about two decades (Minasyan 2010). Under these conditions, an international recognition became one of the most important issues for Nagorno-Karabakh Republic since it may have its positive impact on the NKR's security.

The UN Charter provides the key provisions based on which the UN's functions. However, it does not provide explicit explanation of the membership criteria. The UN Charter says that UN membership "is open to all peace-loving States that accept the obligations contained in the United Nations Charter and, in the judgment of the Organization, are able to carry out these obligations" (Charter of The United Nations, 1945,4.). The majority of the documents of an international law also argues that state's recognition, is the mandatory precondition for being independent and sovereign (Avakian 2010). However, this approach is questionable.

Thus, another prominent document in the international law Montevideo Convention signed in 1933 by 19 states (including the US), defends the declaratory theory of statehood. For

instance, the third article of Montevideo Convention (1933), states that “political existence of a state is independent of recognition by the other states. Even before recognition, the state has the right to defend its integrity and independence, to provide for its conservation and prosperity, to legislate upon its interests, administer its services, and to define the jurisdiction and competence of its courts” (Montevideo Convention 1933, 4). This statement can be applied to the continuing existence of de facto states. If we take the example of Nagorno-Karabakh, we can see that even without being recognized by any UN member state, it continues its state-building process.

According to the Article 1 of Montevideo Convention (1933), any state in order to be a subject of the international law must have: *fixed territory, permanent population, government and authority over its territory, and the ability to communicate with other states.*

It should be emphasized, that Montevideo Convention does not imply any minimum or maximum thresholds for territory or population of a state. Bellow, the main features of the sovereign state discussed before, are briefly applied and referred to the case of Nagorno-Karabakh Republic.

Defined territory: The status of the NKR’s territory is defined by the Article 142 of the NKR Constitution, which says that “public authority is exercised on the territory under factual jurisdiction of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic” (Constitution of Nagorno-Karabakh Republic 2006). In addition, as a result of the war with Azerbaijan, 470 sq. miles (15%) of the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh are under the Azerbaijani control of nowadays (Office of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic in the US, 2015).

Permanent population: This is the second generally accepted feature of a sovereign state. According to the Freedom House Report, the population of Nagorno-Karabakh Republic is about

141 thousand of people, 95% of whom are Armenian. This number has increased in comparison to the previous census result (in 2007- 138,000 people were calculated) (President of the Artsakh Republic 2014). Thus, it can be stated that the NKR does have a permanent population with a tendency to grow.

Government and authority over its territory: Permanent administration of its territory under the common political institutions is another important feature of each sovereign state. Nagorno-Karabakh's history of having governmental structures is dated back to 1923. Already in summer of 1989, the people of Nagorno-Karabakh Republic had a representative authority in the face of National Council and its Presidium, comprising 78 members. According to Zürcher (2007), these structures composed the first de facto government with high degree of acceptance and popular support. In January, 1992, a “Declaration of Independence of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic” was adopted. The current Constitution of Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (2006) says that Nagorno-Karabakh has an executive power belonging primarily to the president, its legislative body parliament- National Assembly, comprising 33 members and judicial power administered by the NKR Supreme Court. These institutions exercise complete control of the territory of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, and are the representatives of the state in the international arena. The NKR has its own Armed Forces, which as of 2007, are estimated around 20 000 soldiers and officers (Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2015).

The NKR has also developed the institution of elections by conducting several parliamentary and presidential elections, which were assessed by the international observers as democratic and transparent. These elections as well as two referendums have great significance for legitimization of the political regime in Nagorno-Karabakh.

According to the Freedom House (2015), the political rights and civil liberties are better than in Azerbaijan. Furthermore, the most recent parliamentary elections have provided 70% turnout and were monitored by about 100 international observers from 100 states (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic 2015). The observers from the US and from the other states have mostly assessed these elections as transparent and conforming to the international standards (<http://www.eafjd.eu/> 2015). In addition, the level of election turnout in Nagorno-Karabakh (70%) is higher than in a number of developed countries of the EU. This fact also illustrates that the NKR people do trust their state institutions and are concerned with the development of the state's democracy.

Ability to communicate with other states: According to Article 12 of the Constitution of Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (2006), Nagorno-Karabakh Republic conducts its foreign policy in accordance with the principles and norms of international law. Starting from 1992, for strengthening its relations with some foreign countries, Nagorno-Karabakh opened representative offices in the US, France, Germany, Russia, Lebanon, Australia and Armenia. It can be also mentioned that the authorities of NKR directly or indirectly were recognized between 1991 and 1997 by the conflicting sides (this part would be discussed more in the next chapter). Moreover, although currently Nagorno-Karabakh directly is not participating in the negotiations in the frameworks of the OSCE Minsk Group, co-chairs of the latter frequently travel to Nagorno-Karabakh and meet with its de facto authorities.

On this subject, it is important to mention the OSCE Minsk group co-chairs' press release made on the NKR's parliamentary election, which says: "In the context of a comprehensive settlement of the conflict, we recognize the role of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh in deciding their future." (OSCE 2015). They also argued in the statement, that since none of their countries

have recognized the NKR, they do not accept the NKR's elections and these election may not affect the current negotiations on Nagorno-Karabakh (OSCE 2015).

This statement is quite controversial, since the first part of the statement does not correspond to the rest of their arguments. Thus, it seems that on the one hand, they recognize the NKR's people's right to decide their future (which in this case can be decided by the parliamentary elections), but on the other hand, they do not accept these elections, which are again the expression of the NKR people's will on their future.

Hence, it can be argued that although Nagorno-Karabakh Republic more or less meets the first three criteria of Montevideo Convention, it has some problems with the fourth condition of the Convention. The major obstacle on the NKR's way to communicating with other states is the fact that the sovereign status of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic has not been recognized by any UN member state (including Armenia). However, when speaking about the NKR international recognition it is important to mention that Nagorno-Karabakh has been recognized by Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Transnistria, which are also considered to be unrecognized and partly recognized states. In addition, Nagorno-Karabakh has been also recognized by five US and one Australia states, but this part would be discussed in the next sub-chapter of this Master's essay.

Nevertheless, Nagorno-Karabakh Republic faces a number of challenges on its way to the international recognition. The major challenge is that Nagorno-Karabakh is outside of the negotiation process of its future, and other country- Armenia is representing its interests. With this regard, Berg and Mölder stated that "even if the proclamation of independent statehood in

Nagorno-Karabakh is a tactical maneuvering and a step before the final reunification with Armenia, it expresses the political will of the community” (Berg and Mölder 2011, 12).

Apart from this, Nagorno-Karabakh has an external security threat in the face of Azerbaijan with its 95 000 estimated armed forces. Therefore, in order to survive, Nagorno-Karabakh depends also on Armenian Armed Forces, which regularly sends the military conscripts to Nagorno-Karabakh (International Crisis Group 2011).

Last but not least, the financial and economic dependence of Nagorno-Karabakh on Armenia also has a negative impact on the sovereignty of the state. The war with Azerbaijan resulted in deterioration of economic and social situation in Nagorno-Karabakh. Thus, Nagorno-Karabakh began to rely on the financial assistance of its patron state Armenia, and also of the Armenian Diaspora’s aid. After the war, Armenia even started to give non-repayable loans for rebuilding devastated infrastructure as well as social and economic institutions (International Crisis Group 2005).

To sum, Nagorno-Karabakh starting from gaining its independence from Azerbaijan, has launched its path of becoming a sovereign state. The major goal of NKR is the transformation of its de facto status to the de jure through the international recognition. For this purpose, political institutions were created and Constitution was adopted. Furthermore through its electoral and referendum institutions the NKR has shown its internal unity and its ability to establish democratic system within the state.

In the context of international law, Nagorno-Karabakh possesses the major features of an independent state; permanent population, fixed territory and organized authority administrating

control over its territory. It also tries to act in the international arena through its foreign representations and with the support of Armenian government and Armenian Diaspora.

Thus, taken into consideration the aforementioned points, it can be concluded that after approximately two decades of the “low-intensity war” situation, the international recognition is one of the top priority issues for Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. Therefore, it needs to prove to the international community that it is not merely a rebellious province with self-determination and recognition calls, but rather it is a sovereign state striving for international recognition. Although, an international recognition is not mandatory precondition for the existence Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, it can contribute to its survival and development of the country by integrating it into the international society.

1.2 Dynamics of the status of Nagorno-Karabakh Republic

Currently, the negotiations over the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict are being conducted in the format of the OSCE Minsk group co-chairmanship. The parties involved in this process are:

- Armenia
- Azerbaijan
- OSCE Minsk group co-chaired by France, The United States and Russia

Thus, it seems that the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, over which the negotiations are being held, is not involved in the process of determining its future. However, the situation was different from the beginning of the conflict till 1998 (De Waal 2003).

First period

Given its vicinity both geographically and geopolitically, the first countries which tried to act as mediators for the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution were Russia and Kazakhstan in September, 1991. The result of these efforts was the signature of the Joint Communiqué in Zheleznovodsk. The signatories were the presidents of Russia, Kazakhstan, Armenia and Azerbaijan. However, the serious aspect here is that the officials of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (among them R. Kocharian, who was a Deputy of the Supreme Union of the NKR at that time) were participating in the discussions of this declaration (Zheleznovodsk Declaration 1991). Thus, for the first time Nagorno-Karabakh was somehow involved in the negotiation process, which means that the all parties signing this declaration (including Azerbaijan) accepted the de facto status of the NKR.

The stance of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic has been enhanced in the following year, when the CSCE initiated a format of the negotiations on the conflict. The first mediation efforts by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE, starting from 1994 OSCE) in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict are dated back to the February, 1992, when it started to send its missions to the conflict zone (Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) 1992). However, the direct mediation activities started in June, 1992, when CSCE Minsk group was created with the aim to provide a forum for the negotiations between conflicting parties. At this forum, Armenia and Azerbaijan became full-fledged members, and Nagorno-Karabakh Republic's status was- "concerned party" in the negotiations (First Meeting of the CSCE Council, 1992). Thus, by getting this status the NKR likewise gains the de facto recognition by Azerbaijan, which at that time reluctantly agreed with the involvement of the NKR in the negotiation process. This fact also shows, that if Armenia would recognize the Nagorno-

Karabakh Republic today, the format of the current OSCE Minsk group negotiations will not be violated, since in 1992 Nagorno-Karabakh was a negotiating side. In addition, in the OSCE Co-chairmanship Mandate there is no provision which may prohibit Armenia (or other party-Azerbaijan) from recognizing the independence of the NKR (OSCE, Mandate of Minsk Co-Chairmanship on Nagorno-Karabakh, 1995).

The status of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic' status has reached its milestone in the negotiation process in 1994, when the only cease-fire agreement between the warring parties was signed. The Bishkek Protocol (the cease-fire agreement) was signed by the Chairmen of the Supreme Soviets of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, Kyrgyzstan and Chairman of the Council of Federation of Russia (The Bishkek Protocol 1994). This can be deemed as the most important document in the whole conflict-resolution process as it brought its actual results- it stopped the full-fledged war between the parties. This document also can serve as clear evidence that Nagorno-Karabakh Republic was recognized as a political and territorial entity in the negotiations of the conflict. One could have called this fact into question, if the N. Bakhmanov, who was considered to be a leader of the Azerbaijani Community of the Nagorno-Karabakh at that time, also signed the Bishkek Protocol. But this did not happen. Furthermore, the representative of the NKR- K. Babourian was not viewed as merely the leader of the Armenian Community of Nagorno-Karabakh, but he was presented in the protocol as the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic having an equal stance as the representatives from Armenia and Azerbaijan (The Bishkek Protocol 1994).

Second period

The circumstances and the roles of the parties involved in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict negotiations began to change already in the Lisbon Summit in 1996. Starting from this time, this three-party format (Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Nagorno-Karabakh Republic) of negotiations was considered less pragmatic (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) 1996). Due to the consistent discrepancies on the major issues, principles and methods the tripartite framework started to turn into the two-party framework (Armenia and Azerbaijan). The last OSCE Minsk Group meeting conducted within the same tripartite format was in Helsinki, in 1997 (Jacoby 2005). Thus, during the period of 1995 until 1998 the NKR started to gradually lose its stance in the negotiations process.

Already in 1998, when R. Kocharian became a president of Armenia (who was also the former president of NKR) Armenia took a role of the full negotiating party instead of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. However, a key limitation of this phenomenon was its adverse impact on the NKR stance in the conflict-resolution process. The elimination of the Nagorno-Karabakh from the negotiation process was likewise discrediting NKR's ability to act as a sovereign state and to participate in the discussions on its future. Today, Armenian officials are continuously claiming that NKR should participate in the discussions on the conflict resolution. In addition, years after this decision, current president of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan also argued that "The fate of Artsakh will be decided by its people. It is consolidated by international law and a number of international documents. Therefore, the full participation of the NKR authorities in the negotiations is an imperative of the time" (The President of the RA, 2013). However, given to Azerbaijani aggressive stance today, the return of the NKR to the negotiation table would be quite more complicated process in comparison to this possibility in the late 1990s.

Third period

Starting from 1998 until now, Nagorno-Karabakh Republic has been trying to strengthen its stance in the international community and recovering from the crisis created from the elimination from the negotiation process. Already in 1997 the NKR opened its Permanent Mission in the United States (which also simultaneously serves as a Permanent Representation to Canada). Today, Nagorno-Karabakh has already seven Permanent Representations abroad: in US, Russian Federation, France, Lebanon, Australia, Armenia and Germany (<http://www.nkr.am/> 2015). These representations are functioning as the NKR's embassies, which with the significant assistance by the Armenian Diaspora structures are attracting foreign investments and humanitarian aid to the NKR. In addition, for instance the NKR representation in the US is registered in the Ministry of Justice of the US and regularly holds dialogues with the federal structures of the US such US Congress and State Department.

It is important to mention that in comparison to the other de facto states with limited recognition such as Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Northern Cyprus and Kosovo, Nagorno-Karabakh is conducting a multi-vector foreign policy. It is holding contacts both with the US and the European countries on the one side, with Russia and Lebanon on the other. Its permanent representation in France has more than 370 active members (*Représentation du Haut-Karabagh en France* 2015) . Furthermore, the NKR is continuously applying to the membership in a number of international organizations. Thus, it may be concluded that at this stage, Nagorno-Karabakh is more actively moving towards recovering its stance in the negotiation process and acquiring international recognition

Chapter 2: Recognition of Nagorno-Karabakh by the US and Australian states

This chapter investigates the major reasons for passing resolutions recognizing NKR in one Australian and five US states. In this part of Master's essay the main procedures, peculiarities as well as challenges of those resolutions would be also discussed.

Although Nagorno-Karabakh Republic has declared its independence in 1992, it has not been recognized by any UN member state until now. However, starting from 2012 some sub-state subjects of the federal states passed resolutions by which they recognized the NKR and expressed their support to the NKR's people.

Thus, Rhode Island was the first sub-state entity, which adopted a resolution recognizing the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. The recognition bill was read and passed on May 17, 2012 (State of Rhode Island 2012).

The second US state passing the resolution recognizing NKR was the State of Massachusetts, which adopted similar bill on August 6, 2012. In 2012, the most populous state of Australia- New South Wales also adopted a motion recognizing NKR's independence and calling on the Commonwealth Government also to officially recognize the NKR.

In 2013, two other US states (Maine and Louisiana) have followed the path of the states, which recognized the independence of Nagorno-Karabakh. And the last state, which recognized the NKR until today, is the US state of California.

2.1 Reasons of NKR's recognition by Australian and US states

The chart below illustrates the main reasons prompted the sub-states of Australia and the US to pass the resolutions recognizing Nagorno-Karabakh's independence, based on the answers of the all interviewees.

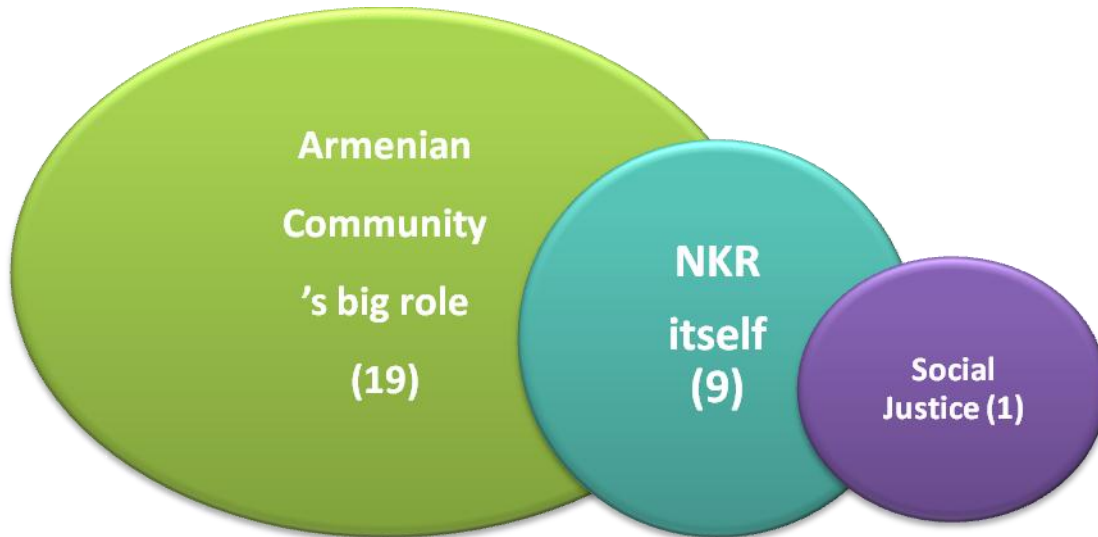


Chart 1

All interviewees were asked to mention the key reasons of recognizing NKR's independence by one Australian and five US states. And the reasons which were mentioned by them were chosen as the main descriptors of this question. Thus the analysis of the interview results shows that all the 19 interviewees have highlighted the role of Armenian Community of the US and Australia in the adoption process of the resolutions (Chart 1). However, when the intensity of interview answers was graded with the scale of 1 to 5 (1-being not important, 5- the most important), it was found out while that 9 out of 19 interviewees consider that that Armenian Community has played some role in the recognition process of the NKR, the most important reason for the NKR's recognition lies in the NKR itself (its self-determination claims,

democratic structure, compliance with the international principles of statehood, etc.). And one interviewee- Marie Ficarra (from New South Wales) argued that the key factors for the NKR's recognition are the social justice and historical correctness (Interview with the member of Legislative Council of New South Wales Parliament, April 2015). Thus, it seems that although all the interviewees mentioned that the Armenian Community in the US and Australia played some role in the recognition of the NKR, not all of them consider that this factor was the most important factor in this process.

It is necessary here to clarify exactly what is meant by the term Armenian Community. The term Armenian Community in this study has been applied to describe the embodiment of the all Armenian Diaspora structures as well as individual people (with Armenian origins) working for Armenian issues. With this regard, four of the interviewees emphasized the huge role of Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnakcutyun) party and its affiliate organization (Armenian National Committee of America). For instance, Ani Haroian (from Rhode Island) added "once the NKR's recognition became a priority goal for Dashnak party's Hay Dat (Armenian Cause) Committee, we decided to make sure that people would learn the importance of this issue by utilizing our all resources and networks in Rhode Island" (Interview with Ani Haroian, May, 2015).

Nevertheless, it would not be an exaggeration to argue that in majority of recognition cases the personal contacts and networks of the Armenian Community representatives played a big and influential role in the process of the Nagorno-Karabakh's recognition by these sub-states (the majority of the interviewees have agreed with this fact).

For instance the interviewee from Maine, Anna Astvatsaturian Turcotte mentioned during the interview that “my husband and I were responsible for the delivery of the resolution to the State Representative. If it wasn't for us, it wouldn't have happened” (Interview with Anna Astvatsaturian Turcotte, April, 2015). Scott Hamann, who was that particular State Representative proved that fact during the following interview by stating: “I submitted the Joint Resolution on behalf of a Maine citizen who requested that I do so” (Interview with Scott Hamann, March, 2015).

In some of the recognizing sub-states, there is a big Armenian Community living in that particular state and pressuring the State Legislature to pass pro-Armenian resolutions. And the State authorities are willing to attract a large number of local Armenian people living in that area by passing such resolutions, from which they may gain important votes in their favor during the elections. In California for example, there is the largest Armenian population in the United States. And the resolution was introduced by the Assembly member, who represents the 43rd Assembly District which includes the city of Glendale which is home to the largest Armenian populations in California. During the interview, the Legislative Director of the office of Assembly Member of that particular 43rd Assembly District- Aaron Moreno (March, 2015), stated that the population in Glendale and statewide has long been active in California politics. The interviewee has also highlighted that their “office worked with closely Armenian clergy as well as a number of Armenian-American advocacy groups to educate members of the legislature about the importance of Nagorno-Karabakh and the desires of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh to be independent” (Interview with Aaron Moreno, 2015).

On the other hand, the interview results have also shown that in some sub-states which also have recognized the NKR, there is such a big Armenian Community (like in California). For

instance in the capital of Louisiana- Baton Rouge, where the recognition resolution has been passed, only 28 Armenian families are living. However, the interview with the Chairman of Armenian Council of America (ACA) of Louisiana- Vasken Kaltakdjian, have illustrated that the despite this fact, the personal resources and contacts of Armenian Community of Louisiana played a huge role in the process of pushing and urging senators to recognize Nagorno-Karabakh (Interview with Vasken Kaltakdjian April, 2015). Thus, it may be deduced that in some cases of the recognition, not the size and a number of the Armenian Diaspora representatives, but the networks and power of its representatives played a key role in this process. One of the interviewees also stated with this regard, that the strong Armenian community does not necessarily mean a big number of Armenians, and the strength of the community lies in the ability to gather and express one single opinion on the issue of national issue.

The discourse analysis of the speeches and statements of State officials brings out another picture. The crux of the matter is that all official statements and the official texts of the resolutions are not mentioning the role and the influence of the Armenian Community in the process of the recognition of Nagorno-Karabakh by these sub-states. Rather, the state representatives argue that the key reason of the NKR recognition lies in Nagorno-Karabakh's people's right to self-determination and independence. The texts of the resolutions, which would be discussed later, are sending a signal to the federal government of the US, or Australia that the fledging democracy of the Nagorno-Karabakh deserves international recognition.

Thus, it seems that those nine interviewees, who have also highlighted the role of the NKR's in the process of adoption of these resolution, are agree with the interpretation of this recognition by the State representatives. The NKR's Foreign Minister- Karen Mirzoyan, Head of the Parliament Ashot Ghulian as well as the NKR' permanent representative in the US- Robert

Avetisyan hold a similar view on this issue. During the interviews all of them stated that Nagorno-Karabakh has been continuously showing to the international community that it deserves the recognition since it has the appropriate conditions (civil society, developing democracy, sovereignty, freely elected parliament) for being internationally recognized.

On the other hand, the member of Parliament of New South Wales Marie Ficarra has emphasized the historical injustice happened with Nagorno-Karabakh, and the decision to annex Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijan was in contravention of human rights. Thus, the reason of the NKR's recognition by the Parliament of New South Wales lies in New South Wales' support for the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh's right of developing as a free democratic society and to self-determination (Interview with Marie Ficarra, April, 2015).

To sum up, the recognition of the Nagorno-Karabakh by Australian and US states may be attributed to the result of combination of the two most important factors:

- The aspirations Nagorno-Karabakh people to develop democratic and independent state as well as their right of self-determination
- The long-lasting “grass-roots” political activism of Armenians in those states, who have been continuously calling on their elected representatives to recognize the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic

It may also be concluded, that the above-mentioned factors are not mutually excluding, meaning that the recognition of Nagorno-Karabakh by the Australian and US sub-states would be hardly possible if one contributing factor was missed.

2.2 Format of the resolutions

The resolutions, by which New South Wales (Australia) and five US states recognize Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, were supposed to be passed through two (upper and lower) Legislative chambers of each state. In some cases they passed only through the upper chambers like in the case of Louisiana (through Senate) and New South Wales (through Legislative Council). However, in other cases the resolution passed only through the lower house: Rhode Island House of Representatives, the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, House of Representatives of Maine. And only in the State of California there was a joint resolution, which implies that the resolution initially has to pass through the both chambers: The State Assembly and the Senate.

The problem with one-chamber resolutions is that they are passing just half way of the recognition process. According to Robert Avetisyan, although the joint resolutions convey stronger signal to the international community, both one-chamber and joint resolutions serve the same goal: to express public support to the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. The NKR representative in the US also stressed that these both types of resolutions (joint and one-chamber) brought mostly the same political implications (Interview with Robert Avetisyan, 2015).

Robert Avetisyan also stated that reason of passing the resolutions recognizing NKR either in the Senate or in the House lies mainly in the initial tactics of the people, who forwarded these resolutions to the chambers (Interview with Robert Avetisyan, March, 2015). The interview results showed that the people responsible for pushing these resolutions are mostly the representatives of local Armenian communities, who had their own connections with some members of state Legislative bodies. And depending on the strength and the scopes of their

contacts in the Senate or in the House, they were choosing the chamber to which they should apply to. With this regard Vasken Kaltakdjian (Louisiana) stated that his strong contacts with some influential senators in his state stipulated him to ask one of his friends (senator) to introduce this NKR supporting resolution in the state Senate. And the same interviewee also highlighted that although he did not personally know the senator, who introduced the resolution, he knew people who were in good relations with that senator. (Interview with Vasken Kaltakdjian, April, 2015). Thus, from this example it becomes also clear that both direct and indirect networks were utilized for pushing the NKR's recognition resolutions forward.

The same situation happened in the US State of Maine. The personal ties and commitment of the representative of local Armenian Community of Maine were the key driving factors of the adoption of the NKR recognition resolution in this sub-state (Interview with Anna Astvatsaturian Turcotte April, 2015).

However, contrary to the previous interviews, the interview with Ani Haroian (from Rhode Island) has showed that they (Armenian Community) chose to apply for NKR recognition to the House over the Senate because in Rhode Island the House is the stronger chamber. It has the final word on the state budget, and is more representative of the grass roots because there are 75 members in the House, as oppose to the 38 in the Senate (Interview with Ani Haroian, May 2015). It should be mentioned that in all other US states recognizing the NKR the lower chambers (House) have more members than the upper chambers (Senate). Thus, it can be deduced that one of the reasons why the majority of the "pushers" of these resolutions decided to apply to the House of Representatives over the Senate is that, the House controls the budget of the state, and its recognition of Nagorno-Karabakh would enable Armenian Community representatives to get some grants and funds for Nagorno-Karabakh (for example grants for

organization of conference on Nagorno-Karabakh international recognition in Rhode Island, etc.).

In addition, to the question of whether they want to introduce the resolution recognizing NKR in the Senate as well, Ani Haroian (Rhode Island) highlighted that they are not focused on this “resolution mode” of the NKR’s recognition, rather they want to get to the next step of this recognition which is the implementation of the resolution in practice (Interview with Ani Haroian, May 2015).

In the case of Australian state-New South Wales, the recognition resolution on Nagorno-Karabakh passed through the upper house of the New South Wales Parliament, named Legislative Council. However, this chamber also like the US upper chambers is smaller in its size in comparison to the lower chamber (there are 42 members in the Legislative Council, as oppose to the 93 in the Legislative Assembly (lower chamber)) (<http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/> 2015).

Finally, the last resolution recognizing Nagorno-Karabakh, which was adopted by the State of California, is unique in its nature. First, before California’s recognition of the independence of Nagorno-Karabakh at a state level, three places within the state have already passed recognition resolutions. These places are: Fresno County (April, 2013), the city of Highland (November, 2013) and Los Angeles (January, 2014).

The importance of these city/county level recognitions lies in the fact that all of them were urging California Legislature to officially recognize the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. With this regard, Aaron Moreno stated:

“The actions at the city and county level, as well as the efforts of other state legislatures, were a big help to efforts at the state level because they showed lawmakers that this was a serious issue that people cared about”

(Interview with Aaron Moreno, March 2015)

Another special significance of Californian resolution is that it is the only joint resolution, meaning that it passed both chambers of the state Legislature. California’s recognition is important in several aspects. The Californian Constitution does not imply strict regulations by the federal government on its international activities (Constitution of State of California 2005). Furthermore, the most congressmen of the House of Representatives of the US federal government are coming from California, which means that the NKR issue may be more broadly articulated on the federal level. In addition, despite the fact that it is the most populous state of the country it is also the 8th economy of the world. Therefore, the political and economic implications of this recognition resolution, which would be discussed in the next chapter, may be wider in comparison to the similar resolution passed in other US states.

2.3 Resolutions’ wording

The titles of the resolutions recognizing Nagorno-Karabakh are illustrated bellow.

Rhode Island	• State Resolution "Supporting NKR's efforts to develop as a free and independent nation"
Massachusetts	• "Supporting Nagorno-Karabakh's Right to Self-Determination and Efforts to Develop its Democracy"
Maine	• "State of Maine Joint Resolution memorializing the President of the US and US Congress to support the independence of NKR"
Lousiana	• State Resolution "Expresses support for the Nagorno Karabakh Republic's efforts to develop as a free and independent nation."
California	• "Assembly Joint Resolution No. 32—Relative to the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic"
New South Wales	• Resolution "this House notes that 2012 marks the twentieth anniversary of the declaration of independence of the Republic of Nagorno Karabagh."

From this table it can be noticed that three (out of six resolutions) are named in similar manner: supporting NKR's democracy and efforts to develop as a free and independent nation. On the other hand, the resolution passed in New South Wales (Australia) commemorates the 20th anniversary of NKR independence. While Massachusetts highlights its support to NKR's self-determination claims, the State of Maine put an emphasis on the addressees (US President and Congress) by mentioning them in the title of the resolution.

The content analysis of the wording of the resolutions has shown that the texts of the resolutions are both similar and different in some regards. In the first part of all resolutions, the historical background of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is introduced. However, the first two resolutions recognizing the NKR (Rhode Island, Massachusetts) have more condemnatory stance towards Azerbaijan than others, since they are emphasizing its aggression by indicating Armenian massacres in Sumgait (February, 1988), Kirovabad (November, 1988), and Baku

(January, 1990). In addition, the first resolution adopted on Nagorno-Karabakh's independence by the House of Rhode Island has the longest text.

The examination of the content of the resolutions has shown that one of the major similarities of these resolutions is that they all are supporting NKR's continuing efforts to develop its democratic independence. Thus, the second part of the resolutions stresses that the particular state encourages Nagorno-Karabakh people to develop as a sovereign nation and supports the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic's continuing attempts to be integrated into the international community (State of Rhode Island 2012).

All the resolutions also refer to the importance of the NKR's basic human right to self-determination and to the right a free and democratic society. For that purpose the resolutions recall the NKR's declaration of independence of 1992, as well the freely elected parliament and president. Some of the resolutions (Massachusetts, Louisiana, and California) are bringing more attention to the NKR's elections by emphasizing the fact that international observers estimated the NKR's presidential elections of 2012 as democratic and transparent.

The final part of the resolutions is urging further recognition of the NKR by the federal government: in the case of US states- by US President and US Congress and in the case of Australia- by the Commonwealth Government. This part also calls upon their federal governments to intensify the scopes of bilateral relations with the NKR. It is noteworthy, that in some cases (New South Wales, Rhode Island) the delegations of the local Armenian community as well as the Permanent Representative of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic were also present at the particular chamber during the adoption of this resolution.

In addition, the adoption of some of these recognition resolutions (Rhode Island, New South Wales) was coincided with the 20th anniversary of the independence of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, of the creation of the Republic's Army and the liberation of Shushi (Mouradian 2012).

The content analysis also showed that the addressees of the copies of the resolutions may also be different. In the case of New South Wales' resolution the addressees of the copies are not mentioned in the text. On the other hand, if the two first resolutions of Rhode Island (2012) and Massachusetts (2012) the addressees of the copies are only the US President and particular state's delegation in US Congress, the Louisianan resolution (2013) also adds to this list two more addressees- the secretary of the United States Senate and the clerk of the United States House of Representatives. The list of the copies of Californian joint resolution (2014) is becoming even longer: the US President, the Majority Leader of Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Secretary of State of California and to the California's delegation members in US Congress. Thus, a trend of gradual increase of the number of addresses during may be also noticed.

However, the most significant development in the addressee part of these resolutions happened in the US state of Maine. In the end of the resolution it is written that the copy of it should also "be transmitted to the Permanent Representative to the United States of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic" (State of Maine 2013). This fact may definitely bring its positive impact on the status of the NKR's representation in the US, as it means that the State of Maine recognizes the NKR's mission in the US as a representative body of the NKR's authorities. The interview with the NKR's Permanent Representative to the United States showed that the representation is not recognized as a diplomatic representation and is registered in the category of the "foreign

agent”. Thus, including this body in the list of addressees of this resolution somehow strengthens its status and gives more legitimacy to the representation’s activities in the US.

Taken into account the aforementioned points it may be concluded that despite some wording or other technical differences, the general provisions of the resolutions have quite similar nature; to support Nagorno-Karabakh’s self-determination and independence as well as to develop their bilateral relations with the NKR. It is also noteworthy that one of the sub-states (State of Maine) puts the NKR Permanent Representative’s name near the name of US President in the list of the resolution’s addresses. This development may likewise bring its positive implications on the recognition status of the NKR’s representation in US since it advances the profile of this representation.

2.4 Challenges on the way of the NKR recognition resolutions

The interview results showed that, all interviewees, who were participating in the process of introducing and adoption of the resolution, agree that the Turkish-Azerbaijani opposition on this issue was a huge obstacle on the path of the NKR recognition by Australian and US state.

If all interviewees from the US states (both the representatives of State Legislatures and the Armenian Community) highlighted that the opposition coming from Azerbaijani and Turkish sides was the key challenge on this issue, the interviews from Australia showed that there were other important challenges as well.

According to both Marie Ficarra (who was in charge of introducing the resolution in New South Wales Parliament) and to Vache Kahramanian (Executive Director of ANC of Australia), the most important challenge was the educating people on this issue, which took considerable

amount of time. Most of Australian parliamentarians were not aware of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, therefore telling about the history of the conflict and about Nagorno-Karabakh peoples' self-determination claims became of utmost importance for the key sponsors of the motion supporting NKR's independence. In addition, the member of the New South Wales Parliament stated that the "notices of Motion such as the one I moved on Nagorno-Karabakh can only be supported unanimously when there is not one Member out of the 42 Member Legislative Council Chamber (Upper House) in opposition. So I needed to win the support of the crossbench parties, which were the parties other than the main government (Liberal and National party coalition) and the opposition (Labor party)" (Interview with Marie Ficarra, April, 2015).

In contrast, two interviewees from the US (from Rhode Island and Louisiana) argued that they had no time for educating US senators and for appealing to their sense of social justice and historical correctness, since if Azerbaijanis or Turks learnt about the possible resolution on NKR's independence, the procedure would have become even more frustrated and longer. For that purpose, the resolutions in Rhode Island and Louisiana remained only one day on the desk of their chambers; they were introduced in the afternoon and already during the next morning the voting took place. Thus, the interviewees from these states emphasized that for not awakening the Azerbaijani opposition they needed to keep it quiet and get it done as quickly as possible (Interviews with Armenian Community representative from Rhode Island and Louisiana, April/May, 2015).

The NKR permanent representative in US stated that the Turkish-Azerbaijani opposition was also active after the adoption of the recognition resolutions, since they got some signals from different US senators and members of House, that the latter were being continuously blackmailed by pro-Azerbaijani forces. With this regard, Aaron Moreno (California) stated that Azerbaijanis

and Turks were claiming that the legislature was acting beyond their scope by taking a stand on an international issue. They also claimed that the legislature standing in support of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh was inconsistent with United States foreign policy (Interview with Aaron Moreno, March, 2015). The same problem was also mentioned by the member of the House of state of Maine. Moreover, Scott Hamann argued that the reason why the resolution never passed through the Senate is that after it passed the House, legislative leadership (Speaker of the House, President of the Senate, Majority Leaders, etc.) were contacted by advocates for the Azerbaijan community expressing strong opposition. “As a result, and to avoid controversy, the Resolution was “indefinitely postponed” in the Senate” (Interview with Scott Hamann, March 2015).

Thus, it seems that some members of the House were constantly being threatened and intimidated by Azerbaijani and Turkish forces, which in some cases resulted in postponing the NKR recognition resolution (like in the case of Maine Senate). The state of Vermont was the only state which did not pass the bill on the NKR recognition to the voting session. According to Christopher Bohjalian (from Vermont), the resolution on the NKR “stayed in committee because Azerbaijan and the Turkish Cultural Center of Vermont lobbied hard against it. In addition, two state senators threatened to prolong the session over it” (Interview with Christopher A Bohjalian , April, 2015). In addition, a number of attempts to pass the resolutions supporting Azerbaijani territorial integrity were failed in US states of Tennessee, South Dakota, Wyoming, Missouri, Mississippi, and Hawaii (Springtime for Nations (informative blog) 2014).

Taken into account the above-mentioned points, it can be deduced the key challenge on the path of NKR recognition by Australian and US states was Turkish-Azerbaijani opposition. However, in the case of Australian state New South Wales the educating of the people about NKR and its history was more important factor.

However, pro-Azerbaijani forces did not succeed to pass any resolution on territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, which would have been directly contradicting to the NKR people's self-determination claims. Azerbaijani government did not also achieve much progress in New South Wales (Australia). After six month from the adoption of the motion in New South Wales Parliament, which was supporting the NKR' independence, Azerbaijani government opened an embassy with paid staff who can advocate against this issue. Besides, there is also a big Turkish embassy supporting Azerbaijan in Australia. Nevertheless, Vache Kahramanian argued that this anti-Armenian and anti-Nagorno-Karabakh paid lobbyism was being blocked by "the well organized and educated Armenian Community, who are extremely passionate about all Armenian problems, and the vast majority of whom were advocating these issues with voluntary capacity as there is no Armenian embassy in Australia (Interview with Vache Kahramanian, April, 2015).

Chapter 3: Implications of the recognition of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic by the US and Australian states

The analysis of the interview results have shown that the main implications of the NKR recognition by these sub-states' have political nature. The legal results and the legal value of this recognition are quite disputable. On the one hand, thirteen out of nineteen interviewees stated that these resolutions can only advise the federal government in its policy, since the resolutions do not imply legally binding provisions and are expressing the political will of the particular sub-state entity. Thus, although the copies of the resolution are addressed to the US President and US Congress, the resolutions may not dictate the US foreign policy; instead they may manifest the particular sub-states' desire and the support of the NKR' s recognition by the federal government (Interview with Sergey Minasyan, April, 2015).

On the other hand, some of the interviewees (the NKR Foreign Minister and the Head of the Parliament) are keen to view these recognitions by the sub-states as a new paradigm in the international system, by highlighting the fact, that by these recognition resolutions the sub-state entities are bringing up their request of adopting their own foreign policy vector with the de facto state of Nagorno-Karabakh. Thus, it can be stated that the resolutions are also illustrating the fact that some sub-state entities are not agree with the foreign policy course of their federal governments towards Nagorno-Karabakh. With this regard, Ashot Ghulian also stated that the case of the sub-states of the US is unique in its nature, as these sub-states have their own Constitutions, their own budget and by these recognition resolutions they may also have their own policy towards Nagorno-Karabakh independent of the federal policy (Interview with Ashot Ghulian, May, 2015).

While the legal implications are debatable among the interviewees, all of them agreed on the existence of a number of political results emerging from the recognition of the NKR by Australian and US states. In some cases (New South Wales), the recognition was followed by the visit of the particular sub-state's delegation to Nagorno-Karabakh and vice versa. These bilateral visits were covered by international media which contributed to the raising of the overall awareness on Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. In addition, the resolutions also send a message to all sides in this conflict that California, New South Wales as well as all of the other states, cities, and counties that have passed resolutions, are all paying attention to this conflict, which entails some positive implication on the overall security of the de facto state as well.

According to the interviews, the resolutions did not result in the Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) at a state level since the trade policy is mainly being implemented by the federal government (not by the sub-states). However, at the individual level, some investments have been made (even before the recognition) in the hotel sector of Nagorno-Karabakh, which brought its positive impact on the tourism industry of Nagorno-Karabakh (Interview with Vache Kahramanian, New South Wales, April, 2015).

Fifteen out of the nineteen interviewees highlighted that the US sub-states' recognition sends an important political message to the Federal Government that supporting an independent and democratic Nagorno-Karabakh Republic should become an official federal policy. Moreover, the Marie Ficarra argued that the recognition of the Nagorno-Karabakh by their Legislative Council has generated much discussion and dissension in the Australian Party rooms and "many Federal Members have started to take vocal stands in the Federal Parliament supporting NK's independence" (Interview with Marie Ficarra, April, 2015).

The interview results showed that the recognition resolutions by these US and Australian sub-states consolidate and advance NKR's profile in the international platforms by referring to the fact that the NKR's independence is being supported by some public and political layers of the people of the states such as the US and Australia. This fact is definitely strengthens the de facto recognition of the NKR.

These recognition resolutions also serve as major boost to the morale of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh because of the acknowledgement of the support by some US and Australian states, in their struggle for self-determination (Interview with Anna Astvatsaturian Turcotte Maine, April, 2015). The interviewees also stressed that the recognition of the NKR indicates that the states adopting such resolutions share the same values with Nagorno-Karabakh—values of freedom, democracy and self-determination.

On the other hand, one of the interviewees mentioned that after this recognition the “lobbying wars between Armenia and Azerbaijan will get louder and stronger over time and this will consolidate a highly polarized atmosphere in Western countries on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue” (Interview with Laurence Broers, April, 2015).

Another result of the recognition of the NKR by Australian and US states was the creation of twin-cities between the cities of the NKR and other sovereign states, which also entailed a number of bilateral agreements signed between the municipalities of those cities. Thus, for example, the US city Highland was twinned with Berdzor (NKR), Montebello (US) was twinned with Stepanakert (NKR), Martuni (NKR) was twinned with French city Les Pennes-Mirabea. The interviews have shown, that this type of “city diplomacy” boosts the economic, cultural as well as political ties between twin cities by providing a large room for cooperation (Interview with Foreign Minister of the NKR-Karen Mirzoyan, April, 2015).

For testing the hypothesis of this research project, which is: *The recognition resolutions by US and Australian States improve the NKR's international standing*, the respective questions were given to the all nineteen interviewees. The chart bellow illustrates the interview results on this issue.

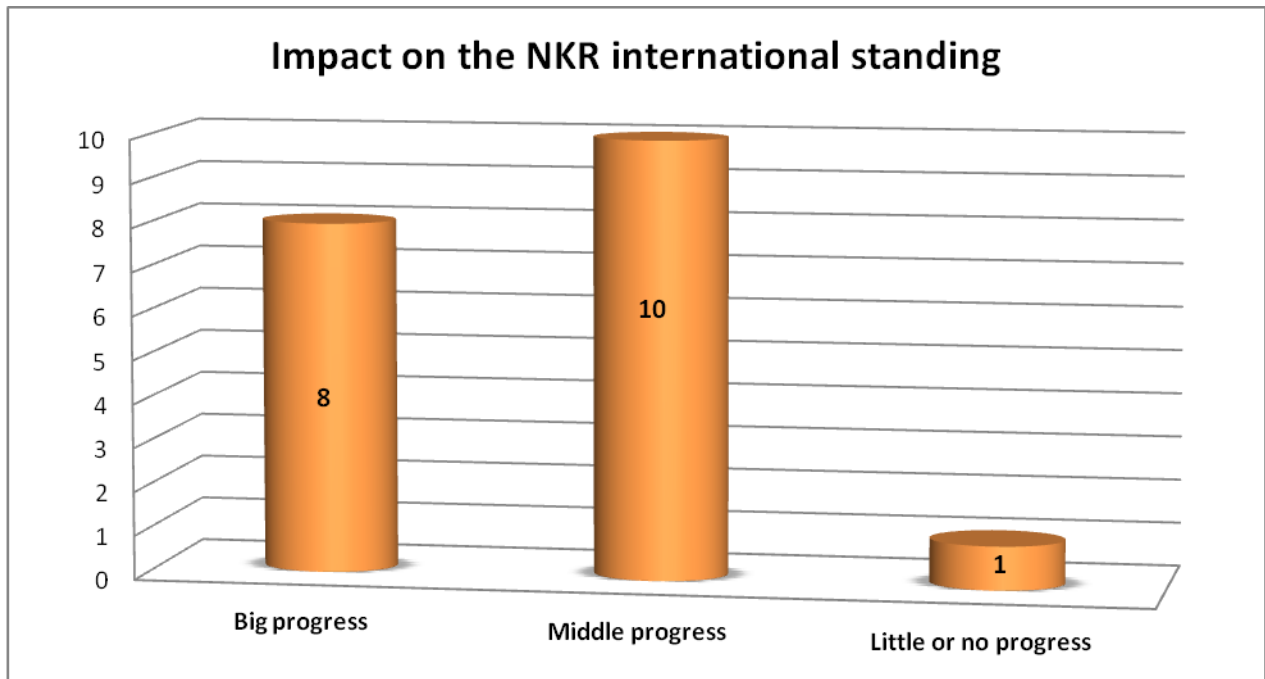


Chart 2

Hence, from this chart, it can be concluded that the majority of the respondents agreed that the NKR's recognition by one Australian and five US states do have positive impact on the overall international standing of Nagorno-Karabakh. However, the interview results also showed the most interviewees argued that these resolutions have brought some middle size progress on the NKR's international standing. On the other hand, eight out of nineteen respondents stated that these recognitions by US and Australian sub-states have brought a big progress to the international standing of the NKR. And only one interviewee mentioned that these recognition resolutions do not have any impact on the NKR's position in the international system by

highlighting the fact only sovereign states (not sub-states) can recognize the independence of the other states (Interview with the member of the National Assembly of RA- Alexander Arzumanyan, April, 2015).

Thus, it can be deduced that due to these recognition resolutions adopted in some Australian and US states the NKR's status as well as its profile at some international platforms have been consolidated and advanced. However, the analysis of the interview results have shown that the scopes and the level of the advancement of the NKR's international standing resulted after these sub-states' recognition are not big enough. Nevertheless, due to these recognition resolutions adopted by the Australian and US Legislative bodies, the NKR recognition is brought to the higher stage, and it is not extraordinary issue anymore. In other words, the recognition by the US and Australian states promotes the image of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic as a viable and democratic state entity that deserves international recognition. Despite this, while the recognition of these sub-state entities does not imply direct security guarantees, by bringing more international attention to the conflict, it may have positive impact on Nagorno-Karabakh's national security.

3.1 Progress in Europe

During the interview, Karen Mirzoyan (NKR Foreign Minister) has put a special emphasis on the new recognition trend in European Continent, which was launched in parallel to the NKR's recognition by Australian and US states. That trend was the creation of Friendship cycles and parliamentary groups between Nagorno-Karabakh and European parliamentarians as well as the recognition of the NKR by the European regional parliament (Basque Parliament).

Recognition by the Basque Parliament

The major achievement in the NKR recognition process in Europe was the recognition of the NKR by the Basque parliament in 2014, which is considered to be one of the most independent sub-states in the Europe. The motion was mainly supporting the NKR's self-determination right, and highlights the importance of the engagement of the NKR's as a negotiating party under the OSCE Minsk co-chairmanship format (Basque Parliament 2014).

Thus, by this recognition the NKR gets its first recognition by the European regional parliament, which was followed by the bilateral visits. It is noteworthy that these visits had a high format. For example, when the NKR Foreign minister went to Basque Country in September, 2014, he met with a number of Basque high officials including the president of Basque Parliament as. Furthermore, the meetings were followed by the signing agreements on development of joint programs and cooperation between Nagorno-Karabakh and Basque city San Sebastian (European Friends of Armenia, 2014). This agreement has quite unique nature, since demonstrates the real result of this sub-state's recognition. Having such agreement advances the de facto recognition of Nagorno-Karabakh by bringing closer the EU city and Nagorno-Karabakh Republic.

In addition, the member of European Parliament, who represents the Basque Country accompanied with the member of Spanish Parliament, also visited the NKR. With this regard, the member of Spanish Parliament stated that they "saw a country committed to European values, which is aspiring for new values, and is doing better than some Council of Europe member states." (Iñárritu Garcia, <http://asbarez.com/>, 2014).

The recognition by Basque Parliament is also important as it transfers these "sub-state" format recognitions from American and Australian continents to the European continent as well.

It also demonstrates the existence of support of Nagorno-Karabakh's self-determination by more than two millions of people living in the EU autonomous community.

Friendship Groups

The first Friendship group was in Lithuanian Seimas in February, 2013, when a group of Lithuanian parliamentarians formed parliamentary friendship group with the NKR. The second similar group was created in France. In March, 2013, French Senate announced that a group of French senators established a "Friendship circle" with Nagorno-Karabakh (European Friends of Armenia 2014). This developments lead to the creation of the Nagorno-Karabakh Group in the European Parliament as well in October, 2014 (European Friends of Armenia 2014).

The main purpose of these parliamentary groups is to boost bilateral contacts with NKR and cooperate in the spheres such as civil society and democratic governance as well as to promote the European values in the NKR. These groups also are aimed at engaging Nagorno-Karabakh in the EU programs and forums. Some of the EP's parliamentarians have argued in their speeches that in the process of the creation of the EP group, another group of parliamentarians-European Friends of Armenian (EuFoA) has played an instrumental role (European Friends of Armenia 2014).

When speaking about this new trend in Europe (friendship groups, Basque Parliament's recognition), Karen Mirzoyan (NKR Foreign Minister) has put an emphasis on the fact that while the Armenian Community's activities played an important role in the cases of NKR recognition in US and Australia, in Basque Country there is no such Armenian Community (only two Armenians are legally registered in Basque Country). Thus, according the NKR Foreign

Minister, there is a big group of people, who share the same values with Nagorno-Karabakh people, and who adopted this recognition motion since they wish to support the NKR independence and developing democracy. Moreover, the same reason also stimulated the Lithuanian parliamentarian to form the friendship group with Nagorno-Karabakh since there are few Armenians in Lithuania (Interview with Karen Mirzoyan, April, 2015). Thus, this phenomenon is a clear manifestation of the fact that Nagorno-Karabakh has appropriate conditions for being internationally recognized even without the help of Armenian political activist groups.

Finally, the most recent development in the European countries was the affiliation of the Democratic Party of Artsakh with the pan-European party- European Free Alliance (EFA) in April 17, 2015, which holds 12 seats in the European Parliament (European Friends of Armenia 2015). The goal of the EFA is to integrate the political parties from non-member countries into the European programs and forums, and this party is mainly advocating for the peoples' right of self-determination. The discourse analysis of the speeches of the members of the EFA has shown that the members of this party highlight the fact that the affiliation of the NKR's political party into its ranks demonstrates the fact that the NKR's developing democratic governance is in line with European democratic standards. Furthermore, the EFA party has estimated the NKR's parliamentary elections held on May 3, 2015, as "exemplary" and that by these election the NKR once again proved its democratic progress to the whole international community (European Free Alliance 2015).

It cannot be stated for sure that the NKR's progress in European countries is a result of the NKR's recognition by the US and Australian states. However, there is no doubt that this new

trend- recognition by the sub-states of the federal governments, which was initiated by the US state Rhode Island, continues to develop by being transmitted to the other continents as well.

Additionally, the interview results have revealed that the adoption of the resolutions recognizing the NKR by these sub-states is just the factor which switched the “machine” on, and launched only the initial part of the process, which would help to get to the final point- the international recognition of the NKR. In some US states (for example in Maine and California) this kind of resolutions, which support the independence the de facto states, were adopted for the first time and therefore are unique in their nature (Interviews with state representatives from Maine and California, April, 2015).

In addition, the majority of the interviewees highlighted that although the recognition of the NKR by one Australian and five US states has brought some results until today, there are much more opportunities and possibilities for using this recognition to the its fullest extent.

Chapter 4 : Prospects of the Recognition

As it stated before, the adoption of the recognition resolutions by the US and Australian Legislative bodies was just the kickoff of the long chain of the possible prospects and opportunities for the both sides. This chapter of the research project examines the potential prospects for Nagorno-Karabakh Republic derived from the NKR's recognition by the US and Australian sub-states.

One of the possible prospects of these resolutions was articulated by the majority of the interviewees, who have highlighted the “bottom-up” function of these resolutions. The major idea of this possible function is that occasionally, the federal policies both in Australia and in the US began to change at a state level. With this regard, the discourse analysis of the speech of the Californian senator Kevin De León has put an emphasis on the fact the US federal policies towards injustice of Apartheid in South Africa, or on the disinvestment of Iran were initiated at the state level and were due to the resolutions passed by the Californian as well as other sub-states' Legislatures (De León 2014). Thus, it seems that these US and Australian resolutions recognizing the NKR do have real potential for serving as sound ground for further recognition at a federal level.

The possible economic and trade implications and prospects, which may be derived from these recognition resolution by the US and Australian sub-states should not be underestimated as well. The crux of the matter is that Nagorno-Karabakh producers while exporting their goods (with the label: Made in Nagorno-Karabakh) to the other countries with face some customs barrier on the border, since their state (NKR) is not registered in the system (Interview with Gabriel Balayan (Law expert), April, 2015).

However, the NKR producers, with the help of Armenia have found other ways for selling their goods abroad. For instance, the head of the “American for Artsakh” organization- Mark Dietzen has stated that the “trade between the United States and the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic can and does happen, but goods produced in the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic must be exported via businesses officially registered in Armenia” (Interview with Mark Dietzen, April, 2015). Thus, Artsakh’s firms such as “Artsakh Brandy Company”, “Artsakh Fruit” are being sold a number of countries including the US, Russia, Italy, etc. (Interview with Ashot Melyan, April, 2015). On this subject, Ashot Ghulian (NKR’s Head of the Parliament) stated that the key obstacle on the path of exporting NKR goods to the US and Australian sub-states is the absence of common borders, which entails a number of intervening variables since other countries are involved as a mediators of this process (Interview with Ashot Ghulian, May, 2015).

The overcoming of these export barriers became the issue of utmost importance for the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic since all the interviewees from the NKR have underscored that one of the objectives of the NKR is to become export-oriented state. In addition, during an interview, Karen Mirzoyan (NKR Foreign Minister) put an emphasis on the fact that there is significant demand in the organic agricultural products of Nagorno-Karabakh in different developed states.

Thus, although these US and Australian sub-states’ recognitions are providing much room for economic opportunities and prospects for the NKR, the interview results have shown that these opportunities are not being exploited properly. It would be no exaggeration to argue that the NKR’ economy would highly benefit from having access to Californian market and holding trade relations with this world’s 8th economy (California), which has recognized its independence. The key hindrances on this issue is that the foreign trade policies of the US and Australia are mainly being conducting at a federal level. However, this should not be taken for

granted and due to this new trend (recognition by the sub-states) this axiom can be challenged since the constitutions of the sub-state entities of Australia and the US are providing a wide range of liberties and authorities.

Nevertheless, while the US state representatives in their interviews have argued that the NKR producers cannot export their goods to their states because of the custom barrier discussed above, the interviewees from South Wales (Australia) stated that the NKR producers are free to export their goods (labeled made in Nagorno-Karabakh) to New South Wales as long as exporters fulfill quality standards of the products (Interviews with member of New South Wales parliament (Marie Ficarra) and the representative of Armenian Community of New South Wales (Vache Kahramanian), April, 2015). Thus, it seems that the only challenge, which the NKR producers must overcome, is providing high-quality products to New South Wales customers.

Furthermore, Vache Kahramanian also stated that due to the NKR's recognition by the New South Wales, the NKR farmers may have an opportunity to learn from Australian farmer some state-of-the-art agricultural techniques through the farming trainings (Interview with Vache Kahramanian, April, 2015). Thus, the interview results indicate that it may be easier for Nagorno-Karabakh to trade and to conduct economic relations with the Australian state New South Wales than with the US sub-states. Yet, it is important to clarify that with the results discussed in this section of the research are just the interpretation of the assumptions of the interviewees and there is no actual evidence supporting these assumptions.

4.1 Possible investments

In comparison to the problems associated with exports of the NKR goods, foreign investments to Nagorno-Karabakh do not face serious obstacles. The interviews have shown that these resolutions may create sound ground for attracting foreign investments in the NKR. The

crux of the matter is that the new trade and investment agreements can be achieved mostly from the bilateral meetings and since these recognition resolutions have increased the number and the scopes of these visits, the potential of foreign investments has likewise increased.

However, until today these investments were mainly being implemented at individual level, not at state level since the policy of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is mostly being orchestrated by the federal government (Interview with Sergey Minasyan, April, 2015). The interviewees from New South Wales stated that currently Australians are successfully doing business and investing in Nagorno-Karabakh particularly in the sphere of hotels, restaurants, small business retail, teaching English, etc. The member of New South Wales Parliament also has highlighted that this trend will also grow in the future (Interview with Marie Ficarra, April, 2015). The similar type of financial investments are being carried out by the individual persons or companies from the US sub-state, however in this case, the US is also providing foreign aid to Nagorno-Karabakh at a federal level. Yet, this fact may not be attributed to the result of the sub-states' recognition resolutions since the aid has been provided to the NKR since 1998 while the first NKR recognition resolutions in US was adopted in 2012.

When speaking about foreign investments it is also important to mention that the international trade and particularly foreign investments are generally predicated on the security of a region. Companies are more likely to engage in trade with nations who are free of conflict with their neighbors as it guarantees the free-flow of goods and services. However, today Nagorno-Karabakh is involved in the "low-intensity war" with Azerbaijan, which also presupposes a number military diversion on the line of contact. This situation definitely has an adverse impact not only on the economy of Nagorno-Karabakh, but also on the overall development of the country.

On this subject, Aaron Moreno (California) has highlighted that “this resolution is a signal that California and others seek a peaceful resolution to the conflict in the region. If such a resolution can be reached, then it is reasonable to assume that trade will increase” (Interview with Aaron Moreno, April, 2015). In addition, four other interviews have also stressed that the unsecure situation in Nagorno-Karabakh refrain a number of foreign companies from investing more in the NKR.

Finally, all the interviewees from Nagorno-Karabakh including the NKR Foreign Minister and the Head of Parliament mentioned that the investigation of the potential economic implications of the recognition resolutions passed by Australian and US sub-states is still in process. Despite that, they all believe that these recognitions do enlarge and enhance the perspectives of the economic and trade cooperation between these sub-state entities and Nagorno-Karabakh, and that the results would be visible in the near future.

Thus, taken into account the aforementioned points, it can be deduced that the recognition of the NKR by one Australian and five US states has increased the number of bilateral visits, which are the fundamental prerequisites for developing further trade and economic relations. Although today the foreign investments are being implementing at an individual level (not state) in the NKR, they do not have a large-scale format. Nevertheless, these recognition resolutions have resulted in the launch of the dialogue on economic and trade cooperation, which also contributes to the increase of awareness on the NKR’s production potential.

4.2 Prospects for further recognition

Today, the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic has not been recognized by any UN member state (including Armenia). There are several dominant arguments associated with Armenia's decision of not recognizing the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic as a sovereign state. The most widespread of these arguments is that if Armenia would recognize the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic the negotiation process would be ceased and the OSCE Minsk group format of the settlement of the conflict would stop its operation. On the other hand, Armenia also wants to keep the existing "status-quo", which entails the resolution of the NKR conflict under current (OSCE Minsk group) negotiations format (Interview with Sergey Minasyan, April, 2015).

However, not only Armenia but also the US federal government being a co-chair country of the OSCE Minsk group, always refers back to the OSCE Minsk process when tackling the topic of Nagorno-Karabakh recognition. Five interviewees from the US have also highlighted this fact (Minsk process) as a key reason why the US does not recognize Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. With this regard they stated that any recognition of Nagorno-Karabakh by the US Congress and President hinges upon the results of Minsk Group negotiations. On the other hand, the head of Armenian National Committee of Australia (Vache Kahramanian) has stressed that there is nothing in the Minsk group process which restricts sovereign nations from recognizing the NKR (Interview with Vache Kahramanian, April, 2015). Indeed, it should be noted that OSCE Minsk group co-chairs have not ever stated that if Armenia would recognize the independence of Nagorno-Karabakh the OSCE Minsk group format of the negotiations would be stopped. Additionally, there is also not such statement in the OSCE Minsk group mandate (OSCE 1995).

On the other hand, three of the interviewees have argued that Russia and Armenia may recognize the NKR independence only in the case of escalation of full-scale military operations. Armenian officials also have articulated this fact several times. With this regard, the President of Armenia has stated that “in case Azerbaijan resorts to military aggression, Armenia will have no other choice but to recognize the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic de jure and to employ all its capabilities to ensure the security of the people of Artsakh” (President of Armenia, 2010).

Nevertheless, the majority of the interviewees from the US have argued that given the example of the Armenian Genocide recognition by the US states (where 43 states have recognized Armenian Genocide), it seems unlikely at this stage that these sub-states’ recognition will visibly affect the US position on NK. Furthermore, one of the interviewees also added that:

“Although the pursuit of recognition is a standard rhetorical position, any recognition of NK would be a challenge to the current ambiguities in the relationship between Armenia and NK. These ambiguities benefit those in power and would close off the original goal of the Karabakh movement, which was unification with Armenia, and which is more adequately being advanced in the situation as it exists today”

(Interview with Laurence Broers, April, 2015)

However, the interviewees from the NKR had an opposite view on this issue. They argued that although there are a number of difficulties on the path of international recognition of the NKR, which may have made this process longer, the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic will eventually be recognized by UN member states. Furthermore, Karen Mirzoyan (NKR Foreign Minister) has highlighted that the non-recognition of the NKR by any UN member state does not hamper the NKR’s further development, and the creation of friendship cycles, twin cities as well as the recognition of the Australian and US sub-states and Basque Parliament clearly shows that the NKR conducts multi-vector foreign policy (Interview with Karen Mirzoyan, April, 2015).

Finally, the interview results have shown that the recognition of the NKR by one Australian and five US sub-state entities has some good impact on the international recognition of the NKR as it increases the awareness on Nagorno-Karabakh and brings more attention to the NKR conflict. Additionally, all the interviews have highlighted that there is a positive but slow tendency towards potential recognition of the NKR by a UN member state.

Nowadays, when the balance of power is still kept in Nagorno-Karabakh and there are no full-scale military operations between the conflicting sides, the international recognition may bring its positive outcomes for the NKR. Although the NKR is not recognized by any UN member state, the time works for its international recognition and these “sub-state” recognitions are definitely supporting this argument. Undoubtedly, the further recognition will become the powerful chain that keeps Azerbaijan away from attacking an internationally recognized state, forcing it to abide with reality.

Conclusions

Thus, taken into account all the points articulated in this Master's Essay, it can be deduced that the NKR's recognition by Australian and US sub-states' generates a new paradigm in the current international affairs. By these recognition resolutions, the Australian and the US sub-states have shown that they have their own approach towards the de facto state of Nagorno-Karabakh, which at this stage is inconsistent with the foreign policy of their federal governments.

The interview results have shown that the recognition of the Nagorno-Karabakh by Australian and US states may be attributed to the result of combination of the two main factors: the aspirations Nagorno-Karabakh people and their developing democracy as well as to the long-lasting "grass-roots" political activism of Armenians in those states, who were continuously calling on their elected representatives to recognize the NKR. The interviews have also demonstrated that the role of Armenian Community in the process of adoption of the resolutions was slightly bigger in comparison to the role of NKR itself. On the other hand, the recognition by the Basque Parliament cannot be attributed to the activities of Armenian Community.

The NKR recognition resolutions by US and Australian sub-states have created a sound ground for further recognition by the federal level, since there are the succeeded examples of US and Australian policies which were initiated at a state level and had a similar "bottom-up" approach.

The recognition by the US and Australian states also promotes the image of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic as a viable and democratic state entity that deserves international recognition. And due to these recognition resolutions adopted by some Australian and US states the NKR's status as well as NKR's profile has been consolidated and advanced at some

international platforms. However, the interview results have shown that the level of the advancement of the NKR's international standing resulted from these sub-states' recognition is not big enough. The hypothesis of this research project, which says: The recognition resolutions by US and Australian States improve the NKR's international standing, is partially approved, since although all the interviewees have agreed that the NKR's recognition Australian and US states do have positive impact on the overall international standing of Nagorno-Karabakh, the majority of the interviewees (ten out of nineteen) stated that these resolutions have brought middle (neither big, nor little) progress on the NKR's international standing. It can be also concluded that the adoption of the NKR recognition resolutions by the US and Australian Legislative bodies was just the kickoff of the long chain of the possible prospects and opportunities for the both sides.

Nevertheless, the recognition of the NKR by Australian and US legislatures has also increased the number of bilateral visits, which may also bring to launch of the dialogue on economic and trade cooperation with some US and Australian sub-states. If this dialogue succeeds, the NKR producers would have an access to the world's 8th economy (California), or to the market of the most populous state of Australia (New South Wales).

Due to these recognition resolutions adopted by the Australian and US Legislative bodies, the NKR recognition issue is brought to the higher stage, and it is not extraordinary issue anymore. Furthermore, the new trend (creation of friendship groups, twin-cities and Basque Parliament's recognition) in European Continent has been also launched in parallel to the sub-states' recognition resolutions on the NKR.

Finally, with the acceleration of the current “low-intensity war” there is a growing risk of variations in the status-quo in Nagorno-Karabakh, which may also bring to escalation of military operations. Although the recognition of these sub-state entities does not imply direct security guarantees, by bringing more international attention to the conflict, it may have positive impact on Nagorno-Karabakh’s national security.

Interviews

Nagorno-Karabakh Republic:

- Karen Mirzoyan- The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the NKR, 10.04.2015 (phone interview)
- Ashot Ghulian- The Head of the NKR Parliament, 30.04.2015, (audio recording)
- Robert Avetisyan NKR permanent representative in the US, 9.04.2015 (phone interview)
- Ashot Melyan- Head of the Political Department of the NKR permanent representation in Armenia 5.04.2015 (face-to-face interview)
- Artak Beglaryan- Spokesman of NKR prime minister 16.04.2015 (mail interview)

United States:

- Scott Hamann- member of the House of Representative of the State of Maine, South Portland, primary sponsor of the Joint Resolution HP-987, 07.04.2015 (mail interview)
- Aaron Moreno- Legislative Director of the office of Assemblyman Mike Gatto, who authored the resolution AJR 32 on Nagorno-Karabakh, 04.04.2015, (mail interview)
- Anna Astvatsaturian Turcotte Armenian American from Baku, is an attorney, writer and lecturer in Maine, member of Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA), 29.04.2015 (mail interview)
- Christopher A. Bohjalian- writer, a member from Armenian Community of Vermont, 11.04.2015, (mail interview)
- Mark Dietzen - Executive director of the organization "Americans for Artsakh" (AFA), 18.04.2015, (mail interview)

- Ani Haroian- representative of Armenian Community of Rhode Island, Chairmen of Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) of Rhode Island, 5.05.2015 (phone interview)
- Vasken Kaltakdjian- Chairman of Armenian Council of America (ACA) of Louisiana, 25.04.2015 (face-to-face interview)

Australia:

- Vache Kahramanian Executive Director of the Armenian National Committee of Australia (ANCA Australia), 8.04.2015 (phone interview)
- Marie Ficarra – ex-member of the Legislative Council of the New South Wales Parliament, the primary sponsor of the motion on Nagorno-Karabakh, 17.04.2015 (mail interview)

Armenia:

- Alexander Arzumanyan- deputy of the National Assembly of the RA, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the RA, 15.04.2015 (phone interview)
- Arman Akopian- Head of the Department of Americas, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of RA, 16.04.2015 (mail interview)

Experts:

- Sergey Minasyan- Political Scientist (a), Head of Political Studies Department at Caucasus Institute, 14.04.2015 (face-to-face interview)

- Laurence Broers –Political Scientist (b) the author of a number of prominent publications on Nagorno-Karabakh, co-editor-in-chief of Caucasus Survey, 17.04.2015 (mail interview)
- Gabriel Balayan – Law Expert, Senior Legal Advisor – LegalLab | Law Boutique, lecturer at American University of Armenia, 1.04.2015 (face-to-face interview)

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Appendix

Questionnaire for interviewees from the US and Australian

1. What are the major reasons for the recognition of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic by five US states (California, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Maine, Rhode Island) and by one Australian state (New South Wales)?
2. How important was the role of Armenian Community in the process of adoption of the resolutions recognizing the NKR by (particular sub-state)?
3. What were the main challenges during the process of Nagorno-Karabakh recognition by (particular sub-state)?
4. In your opinion, what legal and political results may the Nagorno-Karabakh recognition (by particular sub-state) bring to the both sides?
5. After this recognition, what are the perspectives for economic and trade relations between NKR and (particular sub-state)?
- 5.1 *Can Nagorno-Karabakh people export their goods (made in Nagorno-Karabakh) and import from these sub-states?*
6. There is widespread opinion that this kind of recognition by the sub-states (not by the whole country) does not have legal value and that only states can recognize other states. What is your approach towards this interpretation?
7. In your opinion, what are the perspectives for the recognition of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic by any UN member state in near future

Questionnaire for interviewees from Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia

1. What are the major reasons for the recognition of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic by five US states (California, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Maine, Rhode Island) and by one Australian state (New South Wales)?
2. How important was the role of Armenian Community in the process of adoption of the resolutions recognizing the NKR by these US and Australian states?
3. In your opinion, what legal and political results may the Nagorno-Karabakh recognition (by these US and Australian states) bring to the both sides?
4. There is widespread opinion among some international law experts that this kind of recognition by the sub-states (not by the whole country) does not have legal value and

that only states can recognize other states. What is your approach towards this interpretation?

5. After this recognition, what are the perspectives for economic and trade relations between NKR and one Australian and five US sub-states?

5.1 Can Nagorno-Karabakh people export their goods (made in Nagorno-Karabakh) and import from these sub-states?

6. How do NKR officials use this recognition by one Australian and five US states for increasing its stance in the international community?

7. On which stage is the international recognition of Nagorno-Karabakh today?

Questionnaire for expert interviews

1. What are the major reasons for the recognition of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic by five US states (California, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Maine, Rhode Island) and by one Australian state (New South Wales)?

2. In your opinion, how important was the role of Armenian Community in the process of adoption of the resolutions recognizing the NKR by these US and Australian sub-states?

3. In your opinion, what legal and political results may the Nagorno-Karabakh recognition the above-mentioned US and Australian sub-states?

4. There is widespread opinion among some international law experts that this kind of recognition by the sub-states (not by the whole country) does not have legal value and that only states can recognize other states. What is your approach towards this interpretation?

5. After this recognition, what are the perspectives for economic and trade relations between NKR and the above-mentioned US and Australian states?

6. In your opinion, how can NKR officials use this recognition by US and Australian sub-states for increasing its stance in the international community?

7. In your opinion, on which stage is the international recognition of Nagorno-Karabakh today?

7.1 What are the perspectives for the recognition of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic by any UN member state in near future?