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THE ROLE OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY IN CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION AND PEACEBUILDING:
THE CASE OF THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT

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Abstract

The purpose of the present Master’s essay is to study the role of the civil society in conflict transformation and peacebuilding processes, as well as identify and highlight the role of the civil society for Nagorno-Karabakh conflict settlement case and see whether there is a need for more civil society engagement in the settlement process. The research also reviews what has so far been done by the civil societies to this end and what is lacking in the meantime.

The essay provides theoretical background on the conflict transformation, peacebuilding and the inclusion of civil society in these processes, which has gained much attention recently accompanied by several success stories on the international arena. The research also studies the history and the general situation of the civil society in all the three countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh) to understand to what extent they were active in this field. The study also makes an attempt to apply the theory of the conflict transformation to the reality of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict settlement process and concludes by stating the need for more civil society engagement in the process due to several important factors, as well as its possible positive influence on the process.

Introduction

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the conflict between the two South Caucasian republics, i. e. Armenia and Azerbaijan has escalated into a full-scale war, resulting in high costs for all the sides to the conflict. The latter has been persisting for more than 20 years, increasing the tense and hostile atmosphere and relations in the region, also increasing insecurity and being a threat to regional integration. Some conflicts, among them also the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, grow out of inequalities in economics and governance, reflect struggles for the preservation of identity and social justice and find expression in hatred, prejudice and dehumanization. The cost of Karabakh conflict, in terms of death and suffering, during the war as well as nowadays, and wasted resources together with the current stalemate make it crucial to seek improved and new approaches to conflict resolution. A successful negotiation between the parties is very important, which, in the case of the Karabakh conflict is ongoing during nearly 20 years, yet it does not give any tangible results, not being built on mutual trust and understanding. Though the OSCE Minsk Group has been a mediator to the conflict since 1992 and great powers like the United States, the European Union and the Russian Federation, have, on different occasions, expressed their willingness to assist reaching a peaceful settlement to the conflict, so far no visible progress could be observed in the process, which demonstrates the fact that alternatives to the conflict resolution process should be developed. This paper will try to argue that a wider inclusion of the civil society in the conflict settlement process has a great potential to change the flow of the process towards a lasting settlement to the conflict by peaceful means, especially when its inclusion is accompanied by also changing the approach to the conflict settlement and replacing the process of “conflict resolution” with that of a “conflict transformation” with it being wider and encompassing number of components which the “conflict resolution” lacks. Many books and articles have tried to identify the role and functions of civil society in general and very few of them exist as to what role it can play in conflict settlement, most

of which is concentrated on intra-ethnic rather than inter-ethnic conflict resolution/transformation. This research will try to identify and highlight the role of the civil society for Nagorno-Karabakh conflict settlement and for this purpose the following research questions will be addressed: What is the role of official negotiations in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict peacebuilding process? What has so far been done by the civil society? Is there a need for more civil society engagement in the conflict settlement process? What might be the (potential) role of the civil society in this process?

The hypothesis of the following research, borne from the research questions is: There is a need for more civil society engagement in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict settlement process.

Methodology: For addressing this issue and finding answers to the questions raised above, the research methodology used for the following study is a qualitative one with 3 methods having been used: expert interviews, content analysis and meta-analysis.

Expert interviews were conducted by eight NGO representatives with five being from Nagorno-Karabakh and two from Yerevan and also one public officer from Nagorno-Karabakh. The NGO representatives from both countries provided more in-depth information about the civil sector activities in the conflict settlement process, expressed their professional stands and viewpoints concerning certain issues, which helped to gain more constructive and comprehensive knowledge and information about the issue of the research. Meanwhile, the public officer from Nagorno-Karabakh helped to gain an insight of the public-private relationship in the country, which is essential for understanding what contribution the civil sector can have in the peacebuilding process.

Content analysis of the documents and press releases containing OSCE statements about the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, taken from the official website of the OSCE, was conducted to find out the official viewpoint of the chief mediator to the conflict and see the dynamics of change (if any) in these statements. 200 official press releases and 100 documents containing the statements and viewpoints of the Minsk Group and its separate representatives

concerning the peaceful resolution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict were observed and examined in the search for key words, which would shed a light on the Minsk Group's perspective and stance on the issue (the years begin from 1995 and even though before that there were statements as well, however they were not accessible on the official website).

Finally, meta-analysis of the studies of both Armenian and Azerbaijani academicians was conducted, and the fact that the authors from both countries were incorporated helped to maintain the objectivity of the research. This was an essential method for the present research, conditioned by the fact that there are very few such studies on this issue. However, the existing had their huge contribution to the research by exploring and providing important data and information.

Terms and definitions: As the term “civil society” is frequently mentioned and will be used intensively throughout the study, it has to be framed for the purposes of this research, given the fact that it has many definitions and can mean different things to different people. Civil society is mainly referred to as “the sector of voluntary action within institutional forms that are distinct from those of the state/political sphere, family and economy/market (keeping in mind that in practice the boundaries between these sectors are often complex and blurred; it consists of a large and diverse set of voluntary organizations, competing with each other and oriented to specific interests).”¹.

Besides civil society, there are also several other terms that may have multiple meanings and need to be defined. In the frames of this research, the term conflict refers to an instance “when two or more parties have real or perceived differences in interests that result in violence that is sustained and collective”².

Peace is defined as representing both negative peace “which is based on an absence of armed conflict and direct violence, where there is an emphasis on the preservation of the status quo and on negotiations between major actors, and positive peace which goes beyond the absence of direct

¹Christoph Spurk, *Understanding Civil Society - History, debates, and contemporary approaches*, 2008, 5

²*Strategies for Peace :Transforming Conflict in a Diverse World*, (Georgetown University: Washington, DC: Berkley Centre for Religion, Peace and World Affairs, 2011-2012), 6.

violence, and includes addressing the needs of all levels of civil society in terms of economic, social, and political justice and respect for human rights”³.

Conflict transformation is viewed as a combination of “short-term conflict management with a long-term relationship building, and the resolution of the underlying causes of conflict”⁴. It “represents a comprehensive set of lenses for describing how conflict emerges from, evolves within and brings about changes in the personal, relational, structural and cultural dimensions, and for developing creative responses that promote peaceful change within those dimensions”⁵.

Peacebuilding, closely associated with conflict transformation, is referred to as “activities aimed at preventing and managing armed conflict, and sustaining peace after large-scale organized violence has ended”⁶.

With this in mind, two more definitions are needed in order to apply all the mentioned ones to their activities: Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). NGOs are referred to as “a legally constituted entity created by private organizations or people with no participation in or representation of any government”⁷, as well as a self-governing, non-profit organization, voluntary both in the sense of being non-compulsory and in the sense of voluntary involvement in governance or operations⁸.

³*Strategies for Peace :Transforming Conflict in a Diverse World*, (Georgetown University: Washington, DC: Berkley Centre for Religion, Peace and World Affairs, 2011-2012), 6.

⁴ *Conflict Transformation:Three Lenses in One Frame*. New Routes, (Uppsala, Sweden: Life and Peace Institute, 2009), 4

⁵ Lederach, 1983 as quoted in “Conflict transformation Theory and European Practice”, Hugh Mial, paper prepared for the e Sixth Pan-European Conference on International Relations, ECPR Standing Group on International Relations, Turin 12-15 September 2007

⁶ Reiner Forster , Mark Mattner, *Civil Society and Peacebuilding:Potential, Limitations and Critical Factors*, (Word Bank, 2006), 5-6

⁷ Lynn Lawry (ed.), *Guide for the Nongovernmental Organization for the Military*, (CDHAM, USUHS, International Health Division, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, U.S. Department of Defense, 2009), 25.

⁸ Non-Governmental Organizations, (University of Colorado Boulder: Career Planning Guide, 2011), 1

While including also NGOs, CSOs are broader, consisting also of charities, trusts, foundations, advocacy groups, national and international non-state associations, which are, again, as in the case of NGOs, autonomous and independent from the state⁹.

After the introduction and the clarification of the terms, the literature review follows which will deliver brief information about the role of the civil society in conflict transformation and peacebuilding as well as the international experience of the civil society engagement in the peace process with some remarks also on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. This part of the essay will be followed by, first, some information about conflict transformation and peacebuilding as well as about Armenian, Azerbaijani and Nagorno-Karabakh civil societies, after which the reasons for the need for more civil society inclusion in the peace process, civil society initiatives of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh as well as by international organizations encompassing this sector of the three countries on the peacebuilding path, will be presented. Lederach's theory of conflict transformation and peacebuilding and its possible application to the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process will be presented afterwards, followed by conclusions, which will end the paper.

⁹ Bridget Hutter, Joan Mahony, *The Role of Civil Society Organizations in Regulating Business*, (London School of Economic and Political Science: London, ESRC Centre for Analysis of Risk and Regulation, 2004), 1-2

Literature Review

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is one of the most important factors “shaping the political map of the South Caucasus and the fate of Armenians and Azerbaijanis inhabiting this region”¹⁰. Since fighting ended between the two countries in 1994 over the disputed territory, there has been a situation of “no war, no peace” between Armenians and Azerbaijanis. There is no major bloodshed, but fundamental problems of the conflict remain unresolved¹¹. The parties to the conflict try to bring different types of evidence, from historical to legal ones, to strengthen their positions. At the same time, “the public and elites of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh do not show any readiness to accept a compromise settlement; rather, they only blame their opponents, accusing them of escalating the conflict and lacking the determination to promote peace”¹². During the meetings with mediators, the representatives of both Armenia and Azerbaijan express their willingness to resolve the issue and finalize the Basic principles proposed by the mediator to the conflict, but the implementation stage is absent so far¹³. Each international actor involved, in its turn, chases its interests in the conflict settlement process, so that everyone has its contribution to the present stalemate. And the fact that the official negotiations for more than twenty years have not given any tangible results and the thought that the present situation may continue for another twenty or more years, pushes for the search for a different approach for resolving the conflict. Moreover, when delving deeper in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict dynamics, the term “conflict resolution” proves to be not the most appropriate process which, assumes that “conflict is a short term phenomenon that

¹⁰ Sergey Minasyan, *Nagorno Karabakh After Two Decades: Is Prolongation of Status-Quo Inevitable?* (Yerevan: Caucasus Institute, 2010), 5

¹¹ Shain Abbasov et. al., *Karabakh 2014: Six analysts on the future of the Nagorny Karabakh peace process*, (United Kingdom: Conciliation Resources, 2009), 7

¹² Sergey Minasyan, 5

¹³ Ibid, 5-6

can be resolved permanently through mediation or other intervention processes”¹⁴. Instead conflict transformation, which does not simply suggest to eliminate or control conflict, but to “constructively change relationships, attitudes, behaviors, interests and discourses in violence-prone conflict settings”¹⁵, should be used in the case of this conflict, the reason for which is that this conflict is a very sensitive and emotional one, and simply ending a conflict, without building any relationship will not guarantee a lasting solution to the problem. Rather, “conflict transformation is about transforming the very systems, structures and relationships which give rise to violence and injustice”, which is needed in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict case¹⁶.

However, the “new, different” approach includes not only a shift from resolution to transformation but also the more active involvement of a key player in the issue, which is the civil society, whose potential is growing day by day on national as well as global levels. In Nagorno-Karabakh conflict case the engagement of the civil society has been researched very little and a lack of information and knowledge on the issue makes it difficult to do any estimations. However, as it will be seen, the role of the civil society is crucial and can be detrimental in conflict transformation and peacebuilding and it should be considered as a possible option for the Nagorno-Karabakh case.

This part of the paper will concentrate on the role of the civil society in peacebuilding in general, as well as in several countries which had/have conflicts, with some reflections also on the Nagorno-Karabakh case.

While there is a difference in each of the articles concerning the role of the civil society in conflict resolution/management/transformation, the authors who wrote about it, Paffenholz and Spurk, Forster and Mattne, Poskit and Dufanc, Barnes and Fishcher, all agree and stress the important role the civil society can play in peacebuilding with its potentials identified and

¹⁴ *Conflict Transformation and Peacemaking*. (1997). Retrieved October 28, 2012, <http://www.colorado.edu/conflict/transform/jplall.htm>

¹⁵ *Berghof Glossary on Conflict Transformation*, (Berlin: Berghof Foundation Operations GmbH, 2012), 23

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 23

developed. However, while this is the point of coincidence, Poskit and Dufranc also stress the negative effects of civil society in conflict situations by providing with a different insight and perspective on the issue. Moreover, even being identical in the important role of the civil society on the path of the peacebuilding, the articles differ, with each exploring different dimensions and angles of the civil society engagement in building peace.

Thania Paffenholz and Christoph Spurk in their work explore the role of the civil society in peacebuilding, frame the civil society functions and apply them to the context of peacebuilding. Talking about the latter, the authors mention four schools of thought - conflict management school, conflict resolution school, complementary school and conflict transformation school - that can be distinguished within the research on peacebuilding. “They use different terminologies and have different conceptual understandings, approaches and actors, and the history of these schools of thought is closely linked to the history and evolution of the field of peacebuilding”¹⁷. The research then goes on by demonstrating the role of the civil society in peacebuilding theory and practice. The results of the research show that the existence of civil society does not automatically lead to conflict resolution and peacebuilding, and for it civil society’s roles and potential are to be explored. A functionalist analytical framework is emphasized as being of utmost importance and some recommendations are given to remove obstacles on the road to civil society engagement in peacebuilding¹⁸.

With the idea of building an analytical framework rather than an actor-oriented one, Reiner Forster and Mark Mattne, as Thania Paffenholz and Christoph Spurk, also agree and emphasize the need for better analysis of existing and potential forms of civil society engagement in peacebuilding. In their report the authors also explore the role of civil society in peacebuilding, assuming that

¹⁷ Thania Paffenholz., Christoph Spurk, *Civil Society, Civic Engagement and Peacebuilding*, (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2006), 20

¹⁸ Ibid

“nowadays the main question is no longer whether civil society has a role to play in peacebuilding, but how it can realize its potential”¹⁹, what the pre-conditions for its effectiveness are and related questions. The authors also present the seven civil society functions, and argue that they “encompass the core roles of civil society and that taken together offer a suitable framework to better understand the potential contribution of civil society to peacebuilding”²⁰. This research, as well as the previous one, stresses the crucial point that the mere existence of civil society cannot be equated with the existence of peacebuilding actors, and that strengthening civil society does not automatically contribute to peacebuilding, therefore giving some recommendations for future actions²¹.

Thania Paffenholz conducted another research together with the Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding, which reported 7 key findings concerning the civil society’s functions, effectiveness, context and related issues. The research presents three major policy implications which are later elaborated on. The author conducted an in-depth analysis of concepts and also provided a comprehensive framework for the analysis of civil society’s role in peacebuilding²²

Next authors, who examined the role of the civil society in peacebuilding, are Poskit and Dufanc, who also agree and stress the important role of the civil society and present the dynamics of civil society in situations of conflict and look at how the international community and donors can empower citizens and civil society in all stages of peacebuilding and development. The authors also highlight why CSOs fail to participate in conflict situations, as well as the negative effects of civil society in conflict situations. The role of the international community is also explored, which has to be context-specific and must be understood within the history of the country. The authors then go on

¹⁹ Reiner Forster , Mark Mattner, *Civil Society and Peacebuilding: Potential, Limitations and Critical Factors*, (Word Bank, 2006), 7

²⁰ Ibid, 19

²¹ Ibid

²² Thania Paffenholz, *Civil Society and Peacebuilding* ,(The Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding, 2006).

by describing the Balkans', Philippines' and Zimbabwe's civil societies in the context of the conflict, and list some challenges for CSOs working in situations of conflict in the respective regions. They conclude by giving recommendations to governments, donors and CSOs on how to improve their activities to be able to efficiently deal with any conflict situation²³.

By integrating some points from the above-mentioned works, Barnes in her book gives in-depth information about civil society, its roles and functions in general, as well as elaborates on the reasons of civil society engagement in peacebuilding and identifies the challenges it faces during the process of peacebuilding. The book also highlights the notion of cooperation between different civil society groups inside one country, or between different countries, or even between a local civil society group and an international NGO, which is useful, among other things, to provide a diversity of focus and skills through their membership, to address all violence-inducing factors in a conflict²⁴.

Martina Fishcher in her work also elaborates on the potential contributions of civil society actors in conflict transformation and peacebuilding, but what is different from the above studies is that the main focus is on the NGOs by emphasizing their important roles, their activities in preventive diplomacy and "in maintaining or improving relationships by fostering action across conflict lines and ethnic divides through informal exchanges and joint projects". As an example, the author touches upon the case of the former Yugoslavia, where the NGOs working on regional levels have played a significant role in maintaining relationships across the front lines and newly-established borders during and after the wars. The positive attitude towards the increased levels of NGO engagement in conflict prevention and peacebuilding was also mentioned in the article, one of them being the opportunity for NGO cooperation with international organizations, which can help highlighting formerly under-represented or marginalized issues, as well as make decision-making

²³ Adele Poskit, Mathilde Dufranc, *Civil Society Organisations in Situations of Conflict*. (Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness, 2011).

²⁴ Catherine Barnes, *Agents for Change: Civil Society Roles in Preventing War & Building Peace*, (Amsterdam: European Centre for Conflict Prevention, 2006).

processes more transparent. The author also mentions the capacity of civil society in contributing both to democratization processes and conflict transformation, as well as civil society's being "one of the crucial underpinnings for strengthening the capacity of societies to manage conflict peacefully"²⁵.

So far, the articles have provided the concern and need for engaging civil society in the peacebuilding process by stressing its importance, by identifying the main functions the civil society can have and also by presenting some challenges which these groups face in the process. For clearly seeing the concepts mentioned above, afterwards the experiences of several countries will be presented and how civil society and CSOs managed to deal/not deal with the conflict situations. As it will be seen, all the authors try to show that civil society faces some challenges when trying to operate as a conflict dealing actor while at the same time possessing strong potential to help building peace in a conflict situation. Moreover, Nikolov and Semcesen, Hromkova, and to some extent also Solomon and Mathews raise the issue of coordinating actions between state and civil society with this important interrelationship, if being successful, having the potential to foster peacebuilding.

To delve deeper in the issue and present in more details, Hussein Solomon and Sally Mathews in their paper elaborate on the roles of the state and the civil society in overcoming African conflicts, showing how difficult it was for Africa to go through multiple conflicts. Similar to the above-mentioned works, this paper also stresses the importance of civil society, mainly emphasizing the crucial role of NGOs, assuming that they are important actors in conflict resolution and management. The research reveals that NGOs are already playing a vital role in the development of early warning systems and in making and building peace in Africa and that this role needs to be

²⁵ Martina Fischer, *Civil Society in Conflict Transformation: Ambivalence, Potentials and Challenge*, (Berghof Research Centre for Constructive Conflict Management, 2006).

affirmed and strengthened, and co-ordination between the role of the state and civil society in Africa must be improved, which will help achieving peace there²⁶.

Another author, Sisay Gebre-Egziabher, in his paper also agrees on the important role of the civil society and presents some information about Ethiopia and provides detailed facts about Ethiopian conflicts, also exploring their causes. The author goes on by stating the role of CSOs in conflict management in Ethiopia, describing their activities, at the same time insisting that CSOs should play a proactive role in ethnic conflict management and bringing sustainable peace to the society. The writer believes that conflict settlement is the duty of everyone within the society and gives some very useful recommendations as to how CSOs should operate to reach success²⁷.

Another country where the relationship between conflicts and civil society may be observed is Kyrgyzstan, which is familiar with both external and internal conflicts, and where both the Government and the local NGO sector possess mechanisms to prevent conflict. What is more important is that while the government has not been using its conflict management instruments effectively during the last decades, some of local NGOs have been more successful (this author also stresses the role of NGOs, as one of the theoretical works presented above). The author, Lucie Hromkova, also focuses on the possible significant role of the civil society in opening up the channels for the dialogue between the parties of conflicts, i.e. Dungan and Kyrgyz communities; and among the possible instruments of the civil society mentions the negotiation and facilitation of conflicts, influencing the local authorities or government policies, technical support, monitoring the situation, analysis, research etc. While talking about civil society, the author raises another, new issue: the extent and ways of how civil society works, largely depends on the will of state, and the author continues by, again, emphasizing that the effort of any prevention or resolution always

²⁶ Hussein Solomon, Sally Mathews, *Civil Society, the State and Conflicts in Africa*, (Ethiopia: Development Policy Management Forum (DPMF), 2002).

²⁷ Sisay Gebre-Egziabher, *The Role of Civil Society Organizations in Democratisation Process in Ethiopia*, (Cape Town: University Of Cape Town, 2002).

requires certain cooperation with state structures, and assumes that civil society can give recommendations but also has to lobby for its assertion, and this is the part, when the state will be playing the main role²⁸.

Yet, another 2 authors, Nikolov and Semcesen present the role of the civil society in relation to ethnic conflicts in Thailand and Malaysia, by revealing the fact that civil society can also contain features of incivility. By presenting Varshney's differentiation between two opposite forms of civil society: interethnic and intra-ethnic associational forms of engagement, the authors explain that while inter-ethnic engagement is perceived as peacebuilding and fostering tolerance, intra-ethnic forms of association are less successful in breaking down negative stereotypes between ethnic groups. According to the authors, it therefore follows that the probability of ethnic peace increases if civil society is composed of inter-ethnic interactions and engagements. Moreover, concerning the cases of Thailand and Malaysia, the authors state that the influence of the global civil society is quite limited in the two authoritarian democracy cases and that civil societies in both cases are weak and divided due to the centralized government which considerably weakens the civil society domain. However, although civil society is weakened in both cases, government policies have secured ethnic peace over five decades in Malaysia, whereas the absence of similar policies has prolonged ethnic violence in Thailand, which proves that the role and impact of government is detrimental in the activities of civil society²⁹.

All these works confirmed the diversity of cases of civil society engagement in peacebuilding in general and also in several countries, with different focuses on the role of the government, NGOs and civil society. As it was observed, the situation was different in all the four

²⁸ Lucie Hromková, *The Role of the Civil Society in the Inter-Ethnic Conflicts Prevention*, (American University of Central Asia, 2010)

²⁹ Pierre Nikolov, Daniel Semcesen, *Civil Society and Ethnic Conflict - A Comparative Case Analysis of Civil Society & Ethnic Conflict in Thailand & Malaysia*, (Lund University, 2008).

cases, and the issue is expected to be different, or perhaps in some dimensions similar in the Nagorno-Karabakh case. However, the latter is different from any case in the world, with its unique history and patterns, as well as the current negotiation process, when the two parties to the negotiation, i.e. Armenia and Azerbaijan, with the help of the OSCE Minsk Group mediation try to find some solution to the conflict without taking into account the perspective and opinion of the third party, i.e. Nagorno-Karabakh. Although nowadays there is no systematic research done on the issue of the possible role of the civil society in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict settlement process, some works do exist which can somehow contribute to the research on the topic.

Hasanov and Ishkanian in their work elaborate on the number of factors which hindered the effective functioning of Armenian and Azerbaijani NGOs, among which are “the capacity, the political environment and the nature of the societies of which civil society itself forms part”³⁰, as well as the politicization of NGOs. The work demonstrates that in Nagorno-Karabakh NGOs are weak because they “reach a small segment of the population, while the larger public remains unaware of their work and is cynical towards the very notion of civil society. There is consequently a limited level of participation in the peace process and a very low sense of ownership of it”³¹. The authors go on by mentioning some initiatives organized by local NGOs in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Nagorno-Karabakh, also emphasizing an active involvement of women through NGO³².

The other study is conducted by Mikhelidze and Pirozzi who, while touching upon the conflicts of Abkhazia, Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Karabakh and Transistria, emphasize the weakness of the civil society sector and the inefficiency of NGOs in achieving their objectives because of financial and technical problems. The authors mention that NGOs “have limited impact on the promotion of democratic values such as tolerance, non-violence, transparency, freedom of the

³⁰ Avaz Hasanov and Armine Ishkanian, “Bridging Divides: Civil Society Peacebuilding Initiatives” in *The Limits of Leadership: Elites and Societies in Nagorny Karabakh Peace Process*, L. Broers (ed.), (London: Conciliation Resources, 2005), 44

³¹ Ibid, 45

³² Ibid, 44-47

media, in holding the state accountable and informing and educating citizens”³³, although “local NGOs have carried out some projects on public awareness, community development, empowerment, conflict resolution, youth work, etc, but many of these activities have not yielded substantial results”³⁴.

Licinia Simão’s paper also states the weak role of the civil society in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict peacebuilding process. The work looks at how the EU has tried to improve the role of CSOs as peace-builders in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict settlement process. The author also presents the EU engagement with the civil society in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh “where civil society engagement with the EU in the framework of the ENP has mainly been conceived as a way of democratizing and making governments more accountable”³⁵. But the conclusion of the author is that the EU prioritizes ties with state actors and recognizes their important role in handling the conflict³⁶.

To continue with the role of the EU in the peace process, the next article, the European Partnership for the Peaceful Settlement of the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh (EPNK), reports about its activities, particularly of “being able to maintain a dynamic dialogue between a wide range of Armenian and Azerbaijani policymakers, media and civil society actors, including also relevant activists from Nagorno-Karabakh itself, which has contributed to mutual understanding and confidence building, essential for any sustainable settlement of the conflict”³⁷. Moreover, the EPNK report presents several programs, in the frames of which youth, women and other civic activists are able to get to know each other better, which makes them more tolerant and less hostile, which, in its

³³ Nona Mikhelidze, Nicoletta Pirozzi, *Civil Society and Conflict Transformation in Abkhazia, Israel/Palestine, Nagorno-Karabakh, Transnistria and Western Sahara*, (Brighton: MICROCON Policy Working Paper 3, 2008), 30

³⁴ *Ibid*, 57

³⁵ Licinia Simão, *Engaging Civil Society in the Nagorno Karabakh Conflict: What Role for the EU and its Neighbourhood Policy*, (Brighton: MICROCON Policy Working Paper 11, 2010), 11

³⁶ *Ibid*

³⁷ *The European Partnership for the Peaceful Settlement of the Conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh*. EPNK, 2011, 4

turn, emphasizes the need and importance of engaging the civil society in the peacebuilding process³⁸.

The role of the EU, mainly the one of the European Neighborhood Policy is also emphasized in Tevan Poghosyan's research, where the author presents the ENP as well as Action Plan implementation in Armenia, further elaborating also on the assessment of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and on the international responses on it. In his research the author emphasizes that in the Action Plans of both Armenia and Azerbaijan the engagement of civil society is presented as a separate point but so far the EU has failed to define a clear and common line of engagement with regard to the stimulation of people-to-people contacts and the involvement of the civil society from all the sides to the conflict. In addition, the article criticizes the failure to involve Nagorno-Karabakh people in different initiatives, adding that national elites have monopolized most conflict resolution processes. The author also gives some recommendations for the EU, regarding the civic engagement in the Karabakh conflict settlement process throughout the work, keeping the attention on the fact that people-to-people contacts must come true³⁹.

Moving the attention from the EU initiatives, the next research is the sole work done one on the topic. Irina Ghaplanyan in her study explores the concept of civil society and its role in peacebuilding. The author found out that in the case of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, elites of Armenia and Azerbaijan hinder civic participation in the conflict resolution process, the reason for which is also a "government-controlled media, a weak NGO sector, government-controlled education, widespread corruption, and violation of human and other fundamental rights"⁴⁰. But the

³⁸ *The European Partnership for the Peaceful Settlement of the Conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh*. EPNK, 2011

³⁹ Tevan Poghosyan, *The Armenian ENP and Conflict Resolution in Nagorno-Karabakh*, (Yerevan: Crisis Management Initiative, 2009)

⁴⁰ Irina Ghaplanyan, "Empowering and Engaging Civil Society in Conflict Resolution: The Case of Nagorno-Karabakh", *International Negotiation 15 (2010)*, 100

research also reveals that the civil societies in both Armenia and Azerbaijan are aware and know the opportunities available to them, and that in the future the civic engagement will take place⁴¹.

As it could be inferred from the studies presented above, all the works point out to the weak civil society sector both in Armenia and Azerbaijan due to some factors among which are elites of Armenia and Azerbaijan, the political environment, the nature of the society the civil society is part of, as well as the EU prioritization of contacts with state actors and recognizes their importance in the conflict settlement, etc. Moreover, regarding the civil society in Nagorno-Karabakh, the situation is even worse, because NGOs there reach a small segment of the population, and also because of the fact that Karabakh is an unrecognized land and international organizations rarely pay attention or allocate some funds for the development of the civil society sector. Furthermore, in many projects only Armenian and Azerbaijani civil societies are involved while the Nagorno-Karabakh one is left out. One of the proofs of this might be the research conducted by the International Centre for Human Development from Armenia, and Youth for Development from Azerbaijan for the purposes of making Armenian and Azerbaijani civil societies' words heard, and to find out the positions of both sides, the reasons for the stalemate, and understand what could be done to achieve a peaceful resolution to the conflict. The research methodology consisted of two parts: discussion and analysis. The sides spoke about all the issues connected with the conflict also providing information about the opinions and perspectives of the societies of both countries⁴². The shortcoming of the initiative was that it left out the Karabakh people, as it was mentioned, which is important for making further progress in the conflict settlement process.

Karabakh people were also left out from another research conducted by the London Information Network on Conflicts and State-building, which included face-to-face interviews with

⁴¹ Ibid, 81-106

⁴² *The Resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh Issue: What Societies Say*, (Yerevan: International Center for Human Development, 2010)

the leaders of political parties and public organizations from Yerevan and Baku, to find out their vision of the future of the conflict resolution by the help of face-to-face interviews. The interviews conducted in Armenia showed support for the Minsk Process as the best available format for negotiations of the conflict settlement and saw no alternative to it, while in Azerbaijan the Minsk Process was considered more pro-Armenian and was not encouraged. The Karabakh people, whose opinions and positions are vital for the conflict transformation and peacebuilding, were again left out⁴³.

Concluding from the analysis provided above, the existing literature on the issue identifies two major problems concerning the civil society sector and its engagement in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict transformation: (1) civil society sector is weak in both Armenia and Azerbaijan, and even weaker in Nagorno-Karabakh, and (2) even if it is weak in the two countries to the negotiation, but they do take part in the joint initiatives, the one in Nagorno-Karabakh in most cases is left out. The rest of the paper will try to elaborate also on these two issues, by finding out the civil society situation in all the three countries and by attempting to observe the extent to which the civil society of Nagorno-Karabakh is engaged in the conflict settlement process.

⁴³ *Karabakh: The Big Debate*, (United Kingdom: The London Information Network on Conflicts and State-building, 2010)

CHAPTER 1: Civil Society and Peacebuilding: Civil Society in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh and their Engagement in Peacebuilding

1.1. Civil society and Its Role in Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding

Civil society is unique as it is in a position where it can move the culture into a place in which political rapprochement becomes easier⁴⁴. - Prof. J. Sugden

The term and phenomenon of “conflict transformation” is not unanimously used and accepted by everyone, with conflicting opinions existing on conflict resolution being more quick and effective and on conflict transformation being limited in many areas and costing high in terms of the spent time. In “disputes where parties need a quick and final solution to a problem and do not have a significant relationship”⁴⁵, they restore to solve their problems by negotiation or mediation.

However, when “parties share an extensive past and have the potential for significant future relationships, simple resolution approaches may be too narrow. Though they may solve the immediate problems, they miss the greater potential for constructive change”⁴⁶ (Appendix 1 shows the difference between conflict resolution and transformation). Furthermore, in cases where there are deep-rooted cycles of conflict episodes, which have resulted in the creation of destructive and violent patterns, transformational change is highly preferred to any other conflict settlement method⁴⁷.

The aim of the conflict transformation is not to eliminate the conflict, but to work with it and transform it constructively. “It works toward reducing violence, increasing justice, and transforming

⁴⁴Jack Sugden, *Civil Society and Peacebuilding in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Football for peace and the view from the bottom*, 2011, 15

⁴⁵ John Paul Lederach, Michelle Maiese, *Conflict Transformation*, 12

⁴⁶ Ibid, 12

⁴⁷Ibid, 12

human relationships. Behaviors, perceptions, relationships, and the culture of violence all get transformed”⁴⁸.

Within the tradition of conflict transformation, the role of civil society is of primary importance. “It can provide the necessary support for peace, ensuring that any agreement negotiated by political leaders is ultimately accepted and implemented”⁴⁹. Also, civil society can push for peaceful social change, “especially when the top echelons within a conflict context are unwilling or unable to budge on the fundamental conflict issues”⁵⁰. But this is not to say that civil society serves only good purposes, there are cases when “uncivil society” also exists and contributes to the polarization within/ between communities, “to the reinforcement of horizontal inequalities and the legitimization or actual use of violence in the name of nationalism, exclusionary ideologies and at times even democracy, human rights and self-determination”. To put it another way, “civil society is both an agent for change and a reflection of the conflict structure”⁵¹.

But as the international practice shows, in most cases civil society only promotes conflict management, resolution or transformation and not hinders them, and there are many examples proving it, among which are women in Kashmir, organizing dialogue across ethnic divides; NGOs documenting human rights violations in Nepal, international peace brigades protecting trade union leaders in Colombia, a religious community facilitating peace negotiations in Mozambique, a Rwandan NGO “organizing peace camps and soccer games for mixed Hutu and Tutsi teams”⁵². At present, the main question on the international level is no longer whether civil society plays a role in conflict transformation and peacebuilding but “how it can best realize its potential”⁵³.

⁴⁸*Strategies for Peace :Transforming Conflict in a Diverse World*, (Georgetown University: Washington, DC: Berkley Centre for Religion, Peace and World Affairs, 2011-2012), 7

⁴⁹ Nathalie Tocci, "The European Union, Civil Society and Conflict Transformation, (Brighton:MICROCON Policy Working Paper 1, 2008), 4.

⁵⁰ Ibid

⁵¹ Ibid, 5

⁵² Reiner Forster , Mark Mattner, *Civil Society and Peacebuilding: Potential, Limitations and Critical Factors*, (Word Bank, 2006), 1

⁵³ Ibid

While conflict transformation and peacebuilding are interrelated and the civil society engagement in both of them is pivotal, the term “peacebuilding” like the “conflict transformation”, it is also much debated among different scholars. It is a relatively new label put on an old idea, which refers to the long-term project of building peaceful, stable communities and societies⁵⁴.

Many sources “insist that the term peacebuilding must include efforts to address the root causes of violent conflict”⁵⁵. The Carnegie Endowment’s Commission on the Prevention of Deadly Conflict defines peacebuilding as “structural prevention” consisting of certain strategies to address a conflict’s root causes⁵⁶. Similarly, the Joint Utstein study of peacebuilding concludes that “peacebuilding attempts to encourage the development of the structural conditions, attitudes, and modes of political behavior that may permit peaceful, stable and ultimately prosperous social and economic development”. It identifies four main headings related to peacebuilding: “to provide security, to establish the socioeconomic foundations of long-term peace, to establish the political framework of long-term peace, and to generate reconciliation, a healing of the wounds of war and justice”. Along with these definitions, the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy states that there are three types of peacebuilding: (1) Political peacebuilding concerning agreement, legal issues, formal negotiations, diplomacy, etc, (2) structural peacebuilding related to building economic, military, social and cultural systems promoting peace through such activities such as voter education, police training, schools building, and good governance, and (3) social peacebuilding, including relationships, feelings, attitudes, opinions, beliefs, and values through dialogue processes, as well as community-building activities and trainings⁵⁷.

⁵⁴ Peacebuilding: Caritas Training Manual, (Caritas International, 2002), 3

⁵⁵ Lisa Schirch, Strategic Peacebuilding: State of the Field”, Prints: South Asian Journal of Peacebuilding, 2008), 5

⁵⁶ Ibid

⁵⁷ Ibid

As in the case of conflict transformation, civil society occupies a key role in organizing and facilitating progressive efforts to bandage the wounds created by conflict, in peacebuilding as well⁵⁸. For a peacebuilding strategy and implementation to be effective and sustainable, it must be the result of a dialogue among all actors involved rather than the sole decision of governments. Not including civil society in developing strategies for sustainable peace leads to a process that is not owned by the people affected by a conflict, who feel it as externally imposed, which further results in problems in the implementation stage. It is vital that peacebuilding strategies and initiatives are locally derived and internationally supported. Therefore it follows that “civil society should have input at all stages of the process”⁵⁹. This is also confirmed by the United Nations, who has recognized the importance of constructive and strategic engagement with civil society in carrying out its tasks, as well as the former UN Secretary General Kofi Anan who stated that the “engagement with civil society is not an end in itself, nor is it a panacea, but it is vital to our efforts to turn ... peace agreements into ... peaceful societies and viable States. The engagement of civil society in peacebuilding is therefore not an option; it is a necessity”⁶⁰.

1.2. Civil society in Azerbaijan, Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh

NGOs are the most important players on behalf of a civil society and are considered to be its nucleus, which is also confirmed by the interviews conducted for the purposes of this research. Although there is no universally agreed-upon definition of NGOs, there exist characteristic features that are typical for all NGOs, among which are their voluntarism and independence from the state, members’ common vision for the future and the formal structure of the organizations. Basically, one

⁵⁸Sugden, Jack, *Civil Society and Peacebuilding in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Football for peace and the view from the bottom*, 2011, 15

⁵⁹Heemskerk Renske, *The UN Peacebuilding Commission and civil society engagement*, (The Peacebuilding Commission, 2012), 18

⁶⁰Ibid, 5

of the most important features of NGOs is that they are non-profit but they serve the well-being of the society⁶¹.

Because of the above-mentioned argument, that NGOs are the core of civil society and are its main representatives, and because the notion of a civil society is too wide, while looking for civil society in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh mainly NGOs will be considered, with little reference also to CSOs only in the case of Armenia, because as compared to Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh, where there no research existing on CSOs (but only NGOs), in the case of Armenia there is also research done in the overall CSO sector not only the NGO one. Although the borderline between NGOs and CSOs is very often blurred, with both being non-state, not for-profit, voluntary organizations, but the difference exists and it is that NGOs usually have a formal structure, offer services to people other than their members and are, in most cases, registered with national authorities⁶².

Civil Society in Azerbaijan: Civil society in Azerbaijan has been developing since the country gained independence in 1991. According to Azerbaijan NGO Law Monitor there are 2,600 registered NGOs and 1,000 unregistered groups in the country⁶³. Another source, Black Sea International Sea International Fund report on Mission to Azerbaijan in 2011, indicates that there were approximately 3553 NGOs in 2010, with this figure expected to rise to over 4000 by the end of 2011⁶⁴.

The development of NGO sector was slow in Azerbaijan as in the other countries of the former Soviet Union, but it started to develop more intensively when the 1992 Law on Non-Governmental Organizations was replaced by a much more progressive law in 2000.

⁶¹ *The role of NGOs in the Public Policy Making Process (Hasarakakan Nazmakerputyunneri dere hanrayin qaghaqakanutyayn dzevavorman gotsentatsum)*, (Counterpart International:Yerevan, Conference, 2007), 89.

⁶²WHO's interactions with Civil Society and Nongovernmental Organizations, Civil Society Initiative, 2002, 6

⁶³*NGO Law Monitor: Azerbaijan*, The International Centre for Non-for-Profit Law, 2012

⁶⁴ Marius-Eugen Opran et al., *The Role of Civil Society in Modern Azerbaijan*, (Black Sea-Caspian Sea International Fund: Brussels – Baku - Bucharest – London, Black Sea-Caspian Sea International Fund, 2011), 6.

NGOs are engaged in diverse spheres of activity, including human rights, education, culture, health, social protection, environmental protection, etc. In 2007, the Government of Azerbaijan established the NGO Support Council, which should provide financial and informational support to Azerbaijani NGOs, as well as facilitate NGO-government cooperation. The NGO Support Council has provided financial assistance based on the principle of transparent and competitive grant procedures to more than 500 NGOs, and at present also continues to initiate legislation to improve the regulatory environment for NGOs, and engage them in the legislative drafting process⁶⁵. And although the financial assistance is provided by tenders and individual applications from NGOs, the Council prioritizes some areas, including human rights, Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), environment, etc. Continuing the trend of successful developments, it is worth mentioning that Azerbaijani NGOs are part of EU's Civil Society Platform, still some part of these NGOs did not receive any financial support from the State Fund⁶⁶.

But in spite of these developments, NGOs face a challenge for registration, as it is very difficult to register as either a domestic or a foreign NGO in Azerbaijan. The Government of Azerbaijan has lost at least five cases before the European Court of Human Rights, which has found denials of registration to violate the freedom of association. Other difficulties facing NGO community in Azerbaijan include the non-compliance of NGOs with financial reporting requirements ⁶⁷and not a clear vision of the role of NGOs both on government and local levels, which has had an impact on the level of support these organizations receive. Also, the overall financial resources for NGOs are limited and this constitutes another problem hindering the effectiveness of NGO activities in Azerbaijan⁶⁸.

⁶⁵*NGO Law Monitor: Azerbaijan*, The International Centre for Non-for-Profit Law, 2012

⁶⁶ Marius-Eugen Opran et al., *The Role of Civil Society in Modern Azerbaijan*, 6

⁶⁷*NGO Law Monitor: Azerbaijan*, The International Centre for Non-for-Profit Law, 2012

⁶⁸ Marius-Eugen Opran et al., *The Role of Civil Society in Modern Azerbaijan*, 7

However, in spite of these hardships and challenges, number of steps are being taken to overcome them, among which are the programs with the goals of NGO sector development, raise of allocation of funds, an example of which is the establishment of the Fund for providing financial support to NGOs. And although the available budget for financing the projects remains low, the Fund supports the development and participation of diverse range of NGOs in state politics and policy making processes⁶⁹.

Civil Society in Armenia: Public organizations of the Soviet system mostly served the State and the Party with their mission being sustaining Communist ideology instead of addressing public needs through voluntary initiatives. But the role of these organizations has been transformed in contemporary Armenia, with them having become more self-aware and self-confident, having great potential of becoming a viable player in Armenian Civil Society.

Armenian civil society has three primary categories: informal voluntary groups, advocacy groups and formal organizations, i.e. NGOs, which include broad types of organizations and were often established for a certain purpose⁷⁰.

The emergence of NGO sector in Armenia was affected by several external factors, including historical background of Soviet organizations and new developments in the social, political and economic arenas. NGOs established after the breakup of the Soviet Union lacked pre-defined missions, strategic plans and organizational structure, with a main focus on ecology, the mitigation of the consequences of the 1988 earthquake, “refugee influx, and the dislocations and misery resulting from the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict”. These NGOs were mainly involved in the

⁶⁹ Ibid

⁷⁰ Svetlana Aslanyan et al., *Civil Society in Armenia: From a Theoretical Perspective to Reality*, (CIVICUS Civil Society Index Report for Armenia: Yerevan, Center for the Development of Civil Society, 2005-2006), 20

programs providing humanitarian aid distribution and support of victims of war and earthquake of 1988. Afterwards, while these needs decreased, some of these organizations disappeared⁷¹.

As compared to this period, the NGOs created following the cease-fire were more goal-oriented, with the mission to address societal needs and concerns (unemployment, social and health needs). Some of these organizations became the earliest recipients of international aid and technical support for development and advocacy oriented research⁷².

NGOs established at the beginning of 2000s, resulted from the actions of Armenia's donor community, and were primarily located in the regions, as it was the donors' strategy to expand the NGO base through a special emphasis on the non-governmental sector there⁷³.

Interestingly, all these NGO development phases were closely related to the foreign missions' objectives and strategies for , initially, providing needed assistance to the victims of natural disaster and war, and later, for promoting Civil Society and a democratic political culture in Armenia⁷⁴.

As in the case of Azerbaijan, Armenian civil society also faced/faces challenges one of which is that some authorities and ruling political parties tried to create their NGOs to secure funding and to be able to launder money and use the organization for their own political purposes⁷⁵. Another challenge is the funding for sustaining the activities for NGOs. With the main support coming from foreign donors, the fear is always present that they will withdraw their financial assistance. Although this issue was addressed at the National Workshop of the Civil Society Index project and a task force “was established to work on a bill allowing the allocation of one percent of people's taxes to be directed towards civil society, as a consequence of limited funding and severe

⁷¹Richard Blue, Yulia Ghazaryan, *Armenia: NGO Sector Assessment*, (World Learning for International Development: Yerevan, A Comparative Study, 2004), 17

⁷² Ibid, 16

⁷³ Ibid, 17

⁷⁴Ibid, 16-17

⁷⁵Svetlana Aslanyan et al., *Civil Society in Armenia: From a Theoretical Perspective to Reality*, 22

competition, the majority of NGOs competing for funds apply to grants that are actually often irrelevant to their overall mission”⁷⁶, which, in its turn, hinders the effectiveness of NGO activities.

Concerning the CSO sector in Armenia, it possesses both strengths and weaknesses. The strengths include infrastructure, which is favorable, institutional basis with number of local laws and international conventions guaranteeing CSO and citizens’ participation in the decision-making processes concerning the governance of the country, human resources with more people getting involved in community issues, its impact which, though not being substantial on actions of the state bodies, at least managed to react to the state decisions against their interests. Among the weaknesses of CSOs is the waste of resources, and the lack of external support, public and corporate transparency⁷⁷.

In addition to the strengths and weaknesses, CSOs also, like NGOs, face challenges in terms of their organizational capacity, internal governance, ability to effectively self-organize, as well as because of the unfavorable environment, legal and regulatory framework in which they are bound to operate. In addition to this, one of the issues that should be addressed is the public consultation and cooperation with state bodies⁷⁸.

Civil Society in Nagorno-Karabakh: Civil Society in Nagorno-Karabakh constitutes a completely different story since the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh is an unrecognized one and due to this fact it has experienced a lot of difficulties on its development path. Even the birth of the Nagorno-Karabakh civil society was not given much attention because it coincided with the movements and mass demonstrations in Armenia. The main thread underlying the movements was the Karabakh question that was represented by two major streams, one reflecting the movement in Karabakh and the other in Armenia. During the first stage of the movement, from February to May

⁷⁶ Ibid, 22-23

⁷⁷ Ibid, 71-72

⁷⁸ *Strengthening Civil Society and its Interaction with State Institutions*, European Union Advisory Group to the Republic of Armenia, 2012, 40

1988, both streams reflected fundamental differences, but despite this, political scientists usually consider the Karabakh movement to be a single and unified phenomenon. However, the difference was present and it was based on the different models of societies and social struggle in Karabakh and Armenia. While in Karabakh the movement was typologically close to the national liberation struggle of the Armenians of Karabakh, which had fought against Turkic Muslim invaders since late medieval times, in Armenia the Karabakh issue was used as a base for further social changes to achieve democratization, glasnost and perestroika declared by Gorbachev. Communist and Soviet leaders were seen by the movement as conservative representatives of the old regime and Moscow's pro-Azerbaijani policy and thus, Armenia's wing of movement was fighting against local "feudal lords", while the Karabakh wing was led by such "lords"⁷⁹. Furthermore, while the Karabakh nationalist model developed into a social one in Armenia, with the Karabakh issue appearing constantly, ranging from a main to a secondary theme on the political agenda, in Karabakh the aforementioned model never changed⁸⁰.

However, although the Armenian "Karabakh movement" was more popular to the extent that the movement in Karabakh itself was identified with the Armenian one, Karabakh was further along the road to civil society, given the fact that the people there organized a de facto referendum by collecting signatures approving secession from Azerbaijan and unification with Armenia, in 1987. But this democratic event was argued not to reflect the civil society in Karabakh, as long as the above-mentioned referendum was planned and carried out from the above, by all levels of hierarchical Karabakh society, in order to fit in with the new Soviet "democracy". But the spirit of petitions was not over at this point and was followed by an unprecedented petition by the Karabakh Armenians to the two envoys sent by Gorbachev to settle the unrest. People were gathered in front of the building where the "tsar's" envoys were staying, and these people were mainly women,

⁷⁹ Levon Abrahamian, "*Civil Society Born in the Square: the Karabakh Movement in Perspective*", in *The Making of Nagorno-Karabakh*, ed. Levon Chorbajian, (New York:PALGRAVE, 2001), 117

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 118

attempting to show the “tsar” how greatly they needed his support. This was a true collective petition to the Russian “tsar” which was reinforced by a corresponding collective action. Symbolically the birth of the civil society in Karabakh and Yerevan was characterized by political posters and banners, which were also used during the aforementioned petition by Karabakh Armenians⁸¹. And although it was claimed that these demonstrations were not indicating the birth of the civil society in Karabakh, as they were reinforced and coordinated by elites, the counter argument can be that, nevertheless, people mobilized for a certain aim, claimed and reached it, which is the way many works present the civil society actions.

Unfortunately, the hardships this sector experienced from the birth, being exposed to ignorance and doubts whether it existed at all, continued and although today there is no doubt it exists, the Nagorno-Karabakh civil society has various problems connected with its low-level engagement in peacebuilding efforts, funding, legitimacy, etc. Realizing that democracy building and strengthening of the civil society are essential to ensuring local and regional stability, Nagorno-Karabakh has already begun a judicial reforms program. The government encourages and works to protect the security of foreign investments and new business development. However, Nagorno-Karabakh needs assistance in training specialists and legal counseling, as well as local non-governmental organizations need grants and training to better manage their financial challenges⁸².

In addition, the information on the NGOs registered in Nagorno-Karabakh is very little and not easily accessible, with only a list existing on the website of the Office of Nagorno-Karabakh in Washington (the list is provided in Appendix 3). Moreover, the list of the NGOs registered in Nagorno-Karabakh Republic is all that is available concerning this sector, and there is no delineation which of them deals with conflict related issues and which doesn't and no such information can be found in books and articles, which is not the case in the case of Armenian and Azerbaijani NGOs,

⁸¹ Ibid, 118

⁸² *Civil Society Development*, Office of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, Washington D.C., http://www.nkrusa.org/humanitarian_needs/society_development.shtml

when at least some basic information exists and is attainable. Furthermore, there is no elaboration on the activities of these NGOs so that the ones dealing with the conflict resolution/transformation/peacebuilding can be identified. However, the provided details about the representatives of these NGOs give an opportunity to contact them and elaborate on the issues of interest.

Overall, as it could be concluded from the analysis provided above, the civil society sector in the three countries, i.e. Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh faced challenges after becoming independent as well as they continue facing them today, and although this sector is a bit more underdeveloped in Nagorno-Karabakh, as compared to the other two countries to the conflict, and with all the hardships the civil society is faced in these countries, there are certain organizations which proceed and try to address one of the most sensitive and complicated issues in the region, i.e. the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict settlement process and peacebuilding initiatives. Though information is not symmetric for these organizations in all the three countries, there are some names and activities of NGOs and peacebuilding organizations, which allow creating a general notion of the approximate level of the engagement of Armenian, Azerbaijani and Nagorno-Karabakh civil societies in the peacebuilding process.

From the small study conducted with the help of a book from the year of 2009 (there is not a recent update of the book) and current websites of civil society organizations (the information on these websites is updated and is of 2013) for Armenia and Azerbaijan (because there was no such data available for Nagorno-Karabakh), it can be inferred that there are nearly 31 peacebuilding organizations in Armenia and 10 in Azerbaijan. Whenever one looks at the activities, aims and objectives of different organizations in both countries, it could be observed that in both countries the peacebuilding organizations address several issues like building peace in the region, creating

relations between conflicting parties, assistance to displaced persons, helping the conflict resolution process, etc. (the lists of these organizations in both countries is provided in the Appendix 2).

As for Nagorno-Karabakh, the organizations dealing with the Karabakh conflict have been identified through expert interviews, and there are approximately 12 out of 40 such institutions dealing with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which address various issues from the exchanges of hostages and prisoners of war⁸³ to the organizations of different workshops, lectures and trainings⁸⁴, as well as joint music festivals⁸⁵.

⁸³ Interview with Mr. Albert Voskanyan, Civil Society Initiative, 2013

⁸⁴ Interview with Mr. Sarasar Saryan, NKR Refugees, 2013

⁸⁵ Interview with Mr. Karen Ohanjanyan, Helsinki-Initiative 92, 2013

CHAPTER 2: The Nagorno-Karabakh Peace Process: More Need for the Civil Society

2.1 Conflict Dynamics

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is enduring between the republics of Azerbaijan and Armenia since the beginning of 1988⁸⁶. The Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is the main mediator to the conflict since 1992. The Minsk Group was formed in the time of Russian weakness and predominance of the then CSCE (Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe) mediation over unilateral mediation attempts by other countries⁸⁷, which resulted in a number of disagreements with Russia, although the latter was the member of the Minsk Group⁸⁸. And it was Russia that brokered a ceasefire between Armenia and Azerbaijan, which is still in force nowadays and is monitored by the Minsk Group, under the auspices of which the two countries to the conflict are engaged in negotiations towards a peaceful settlement of the conflict⁸⁹.

One of the first and most important summits of the negotiation process took place in Lisbon, in 1996, where a draft statement prepared by the Minsk Group was presented, which called for a settlement of the conflict based on Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, a legal status for Karabakh giving it the highest degree of self-government within Azerbaijan, and security guarantees for Karabakh's population. It was accepted by Azerbaijan, but was not by Armenia, which stated that the resolution proposed in the document "would have prejudiced the negotiations by predetermining their outcome"⁹⁰.

⁸⁶Svante Cornell, "Undeclared War: Nagorno-Karabakh conflict reconsidered", *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, (1997)

⁸⁷Svante Cornell, *Small Nations and Great Powers*, (London: RoutledgeCurzo, 2001), 97

⁸⁸Tongeren, Veen and Verhoeven (ed.), *Searching for Peace in Europe and Eurasia*, (London: LyneeReinner, 2002), 450

⁸⁹ Chanda Allana Leckie, "The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: Obstacles and Opportunities for a Settlement", (Blacksburg, 2005), 3

⁹⁰ Svante Cornell, *Small Nations and Great Powers*, 101

This was followed by 3 proposals of the Minsk Group from May 1997 to November 1998, each suggesting a scenario for the conflict settlement. They include the package solution, the step-by-step solution and the creation of the “common state”. The package deal, consisting of 2 Agreements, which were to be implemented simultaneously, proposed finding solutions to all the issues of dispute at once, including the final status of Nagorno-Karabakh as well, which resulted in the rejection of this type of solution by Stepanakert, while having been accepted by Yerevan and Baku⁹¹.

A few month after the package deal, the Minsk Group presented another solution, the step-by-step solution, the rationale behind which was the implementation of the 2 above-mentioned Agreements sequentially: on the first stage the troops would be withdrawn from territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh, and the return of refugees together with the lifting of blockades and deployment of peacekeepers would take place, while the issue of the status of Nagorno-Karabakh would be left until the second stage. This proposal was again rejected by Nagorno-Karabakh, while having been accepted by both Armenia and Azerbaijan⁹².

The third proposal was made in 1998, when the Minsk Group presented the model of the “common state”, which envisaged horizontal relations between Karabakh and Azerbaijan, and de facto independence for Nagorno-Karabakh, without the right for secession from it. This time, while the plan was conditionally accepted by Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, Azerbaijan rejected it with the justification that this suggestion violated the principle of its territorial integrity⁹³.

The next year, 1999, was active in terms of the meetings of the two presidents, i.e. Presidents Kocharyan and Aliev, which was said to have brought them close to an agreement based on the

⁹¹ *Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh: Process of State Building at the Crossroad of Centuries*, (Yerevan: Institute of Political Research SNCO, 2009), 38

⁹² Isak Svensson, “The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: lesson from the mediation Efforts”, (Initiative for Peacebuilding 2009), 10

⁹³ *Republic of Nagorno-Katabakh: Process of State Building at the Crossroad of Centuries*, 38-39

renamed and modified versions of 1997 and 1998 proposals, but assassination in the Armenian parliament on October 27, 1999, hindered this process⁹⁴.

Although the negotiation process lost its activeness after the shootings in the Armenian Parliament, the two parties went on with conducting talks, which continued in March-April 2001 in Paris and Key-West, Florida, after which both sides presented contradictory versions of what they have talked, although there were rumors that they had discussed a territorial swap according to the Goble Plan of exchanging territories. However, under the criticism of their countries, both presidents denied to have agreed to such exchange of territories. The failure of these negotiations marked a pause in the process, which were again restored in 2004 by a series of meetings between Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers in Prague, which was followed by 2005 CIS Kazan summit, during which the OSCE Minsk Group presented the Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents the first draft of the basic principles⁹⁵, which were consolidated and formally presented in November 2007, during the OSCE ministerial council in Madrid, and became known as “Madrid Principles”⁹⁶.

Although the Madrid Principles had advantages of avoiding the dilemma of choosing between the step-by-step and the package proposals, and although both countries had agreed that the final status of Nagorno-Karabakh should be determined at the last stage after all the confidence-building measures had been implemented, one of the major issues remaining unresolved concerns the referendum and who is going to vote, on what, when and how. While the Armenian party demands that the voting takes place in Nagorno-Karabakh and by a majority vote, Azerbaijan insists on the referendum to take place throughout Azerbaijan, arguing that its constitution does not allow for a referendum only in a part of its territory, as well as claims that the Karabakh Azerbaijanis should return and participate in the voting on an equal basis with Karabakh Armenians. Besides, as long as the basic principles require majority-based voting, the parties will not be able to come to an

⁹⁴Tatul Hakobyan, Karabakh Diary, *Green and Black: Neither War nor Peace*, (Lebanon: Antelias, 2001), 256-57

⁹⁵Tabib Huseynov, “*Mountainous Karabakh: New Paradigms for Peace and Development in the 21st Century*”, 16

⁹⁶*Republic of Nagorno-Katabakh: Process of State Building at the Crossroad of Centuries*, 40

agreement. A shift away from a majority voting (no matter how it would be defined) is essential for the Madrid principles to bring tangible results⁹⁷.

The following negotiations, starting from the Moscow meeting on November 2, 2008, initiated by the Russian Federation, received a new impetus, whereby the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan reaffirmed their commitment to the Basic Principles for peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which was also repeated during the subsequent key meetings such as the ones in L'Aquila, Moskoka and Deauville and in several other countries, with the last meeting having taken place in Dublin, in 2012, with the same statements as during all the previous ones⁹⁸.

However, the fact is that more than two decades of negotiations and the search for a solution through compromises proved that they are not the best alternatives for both sides to the conflict. Azerbaijan hopes that with time and a growing economy through oil revenues, its military will become strong enough to win back all its lost territory by force. Armenia, in its turn, is confident with its military's ability to hold off an Azerbaijani victory through the support of Russia and Iran. If the peace deal has not been achieved yet, it means that something should be changed in the process and one thing the OSCE Minsk Group should have considered is not the full focus on the signing of a document between the parties, and the negotiations only with the top leadership level, but also the implementation of confidence-building measures between the authorities on both sides as well as the three societies involved – Armenians, Azerbaijanis and Karabakhis, as, due to several reasons, this has a great potential of transforming the conflict and building peace⁹⁹.

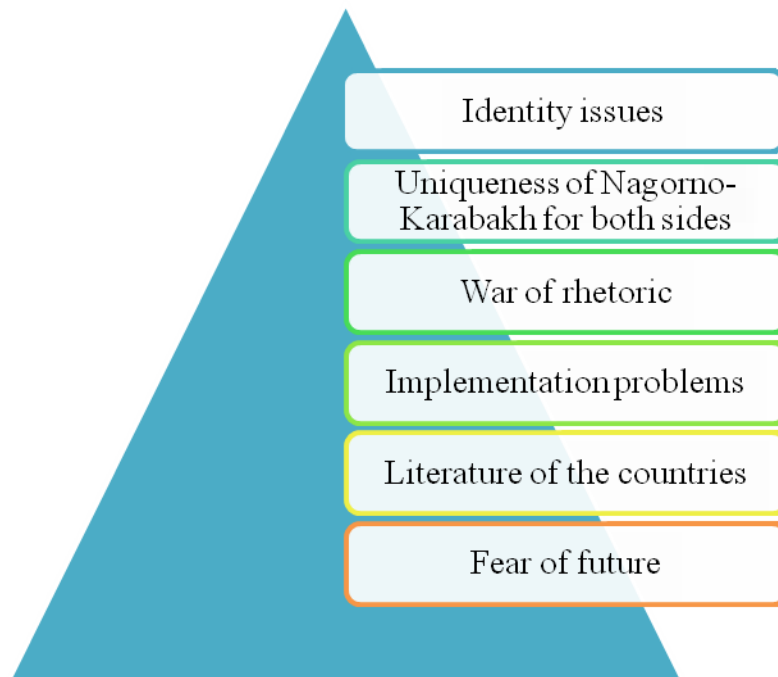
⁹⁷Ibid, 20

⁹⁸ *Republic of Nagorno-Katabakh: Process of State Building at the Crossroad of Centuries*, 40-41

⁹⁹ Ruben Harutunian, "The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: Moving from Power Brokerage to Relationship Restructuring", *International Negotiation* 15 (2010), 78

2.2 The Need for More Civil Society Engagement in Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict Peacebuilding

The years following the ceasefire, as well as the whole dynamics of the conflict proved that a serious shift is needed in the peace process, for, there are several factors, which the negotiation process haven't addressed, but which have had their impact on the current situation by widening the gap between the two countries, in that way hindering any progress in the conflict settlement path. The above-mentioned factors have been classified as follows:



One of the factors concerns the identity component, as the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict encompasses identity-based causes, which require more than formal political conflict settlement by top level leaders. It requires the engagement of the broader civil society to target attitudes and stereotypes¹⁰⁰.

The “formation of the present day Armenian identity is an important contributing factor to the conflict”¹⁰¹. Armenians trace their ancestry to the sixth century BC, and while for some brief

¹⁰⁰Aytan Gahramanova, “Paradigms of Political Mythologies and Perspectives of reconciliation in the case of Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict”, *International Negotiations* 13 (2010), 134

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 145

periods of its history it was an independent state, it was mostly dominated by such empires as Roman, Persian, Byzantine, Arab, Mongol, Ottoman, Russian, as well as the Soviet Union. “The Armenian narrative often refuses to acknowledge Azerbaijanis as a distinct ethnic group”¹⁰², by closely associating them with Turks, who, according to the Armenian narrative, played a devastating role in the Armenian history, by invading the region along with other Turkic tribes in the tenth through twelfth centuries and were responsible for the massacres of Armenians. The negative image of Turks culminated in the Armenian Genocide of 1915 in the Ottoman Turkey, where an entire Armenian population of Anatolia was destroyed, and until today Armenians consider the memory of the genocide to be a part of their Armenian national identity. In the Armenian collective memory Azerbaijanis are considered to be a part of the Turkish nation, who bears the primary responsibility for ethnic cleansings and the destruction of the Armenian culture¹⁰³.

Likewise, the formation of the Azerbaijani identity is another factor contributing to the continuation of the conflict. “Azerbaijanis trace their ancestry to the aboriginal Caucasian Albanians and the Turks”¹⁰⁴. According to the Azerbaijani narrative, Armenians played a destructive role in the history of Azerbaijan, and when Tsarist Russia employed assimilation policies, at the same time relocating large number of Christians, it were mostly Armenians that went to the region populated by Azerbaijanis, simultaneously deporting Muslims from the same areas. The Azerbaijani collective memory also contains examples of 1918 Russian massacres of Azerbaijanis, where Armenians also participated. For Azerbaijanis, Armenians are aggressors, who with the help of their good relationship with Russia, tried to expand into Azerbaijani territories in the east¹⁰⁵.

In addition to the ancestral narratives, according to the Armenian perception, Azerbaijani authorities operated a deliberate policy of socio-economic and cultural discrimination aimed at

¹⁰² Ibid, 145

¹⁰³ Ibid, 145

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 145

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 145

expelling Armenian people from Nagorno-Karabakh. Armenians believed that financial resources were put into the development of villages with predominantly Azerbaijani population, very few books were published in the Armenian language, no Armenian language TV channels existed in the region and the history of Armenia was not taught in Armenian-language schools. Armenians concluded that with Nagorno-Karabakh included in Azerbaijan, an ethnic cleansing of Armenians would take place.

In contrast, for Azerbaijan the ethnic factor cannot be a sufficient motive for changing its borders, moreover, there is no reason to suspect the existence of a discriminatory policy against Armenians, as the region had access to all the required cultural and economic infrastructure with Azerbaijanis claiming their villages to be poorest in Nagorno-Karabakh and requiring more support in comparison to the Armenian populated towns there. Concerning the ethnic violence of 1988, Azerbaijanis point to a manipulation of external actors, including the Armenian Diaspora and the radical party ARF-Dashnaktsutyun, with its aspirations for territorial expansion¹⁰⁶.

These narratives are accompanied also by the fact that Nagorno-Karabakh has a particular importance for both the Armenian and the Azerbaijani collective memories. “According to some Armenian historians, Nagorno-Karabakh, unlike the rest of Armenia, has always remained autonomous or independent despite the invasions of different empires”¹⁰⁷. In addition, Armenians were never assimilated in Nagorno-Karabakh, as it was the case in other regions of Armenia. This notion has been the major component of the Armenian collective memory in the last two decades, contributing to the perception of Nagorno-Karabakh as the “last Armenian stronghold”, the loss of which will not only be a territorial but also a spiritual one, as the Armenians will lose a big part of their Armenian identity¹⁰⁸.

¹⁰⁶Ibid, 145

¹⁰⁷ Phil Gamaghelyan, “*Rethinking the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: Identity, Politics, Scholarship*”, 38

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 38

Nagorno-Karabakh is also perceived to be unique for Azerbaijan, since it is remembered as the birthplace of the Azerbaijani identity, the center for Azerbaijani culture and the home to many Azerbaijani poets and musicians. Just as in the Armenian case, in Azerbaijan also, the loss of Nagorno-Karabakh is equated to the loss of a big part of national identity¹⁰⁹.

And “because national identity is based on selective narratives of national history, those narratives can nurture hatred”¹¹⁰. After the war, such institutions as education, art, mass media and churches have propagated these narratives, to which the Armenian and Azerbaijani leaderships also had their contribution, by using radical nationalist slogans with mutually exclusive claims over Nagorno-Karabakh in their statements and addresses. As one of the experts mentioned during an interview, “If the governments change the war of rhetoric, if they say that Armenians/Azerbaijanis are not bad, and instead, they are good, many things will change”¹¹¹. Currently, if any politician takes a moderate stand on the issue and tries to improve relations, he/she will be labeled as a traitor. This dynamic has created the situation in which politicians are forced to take more radical positions so as not to appear unpatriotic compared to the opposition. This war of rhetoric increases the gap between the two parties and leaves little room for any compromise, by also penetrating into the media and educational institutions, which are gradually transformed into propaganda machines as well. The study of mass media in Armenia and Azerbaijan shows that in both countries stable negative images of each other are being spread¹¹².

“Entire generations have been raised on this propaganda”¹¹³, which has intensified the feeling of mutual hatred and mistrust”. If the elder generation somehow maintains the memory of the co-existence of Armenians and Azerbaijanis with each other and has not only negative but also positive image of the opposite side, the generation of independence, who has never seen this, only

¹⁰⁹ Phil Gamaghelyan, “*Rethinking the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: Identity, Politics, Scholarship*”, 38-39

¹¹⁰ Aytan Gahramanova, 148

¹¹¹ Interview with Mrs. Karine Ohanyan, European Integration NGO, 2013

¹¹² Aytan Gahramanova, 148

¹¹³ Ruben Harutunian, 75

knows that there was a war, there is no agreement, etc., and it's natural that the gap widens and has its impact on the conflict settlement path¹¹⁴.

The polarization of public opinion is so deep that it creates an implementation problem: even if the leaders of the parties to the conflict could reach an agreement; they would most likely fail in its implementation process, one of the proofs of which is the 1998 resignation of the Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan and the 2001 pressure on the Azerbaijani President Heydar Aliyev. While Armenia's first post-independence president was forced by his ministers to step down in 1998, after publicly advocating an attempt to concession to Azerbaijan, in 2001 Azerbaijani President came under pressure when he returned home from talks with Kocharyan at Key West, as a result of which the breakthrough achieved in Florida diminished in the face of domestic criticism. These developments raised fundamental doubts regarding the sustainability of agreements reached by the leaders in isolation from their societies¹¹⁵. For the implementation of the agreement to be successful post-conflict transformation of trust and norms should take place, and here the efforts and attempts of the government is too little, and the civil society should work, who by its activities, should reach this transformation¹¹⁶.

One more factor contributing to the hostile attitude towards each other in Armenia and Azerbaijan is the literature of both countries. The authors in both countries use rhetorically charged language, with attributing every positive feature to their side and every negative one to the other one. The parties blame each other for the failure of the negotiation process. What unites them is their critique of the international community's inability to deliver a solution, the Armenian version of which, however, being the opposite of the Azerbaijani one. The identity analysis also followed this path with the anthropological literature being subjective and focusing on the needs' of one's own

¹¹⁴ Interview with Mr. Karen Bekaryan, European Integration NGO, 2013

¹¹⁵ Ruben Harutunian, 75

¹¹⁶ Interview with Mr. Karen Bekaryan, 2013

identity, exploring the myths and confirming the role of the other as a historical enemy and a challenge to its own identity¹¹⁷.

In such a situation, where the collective memories and identities of Armenians and Azerbaijanis have developed in opposition to each other, the development of a long-term comprehensive strategy to promote reconciliation between the two societies is needed¹¹⁸. While it is accepted that reconciliation follows conflict resolution, in the case of “frozen conflicts”, where the negotiation process is in a stalemate for years, negative transformation takes root. For reconciliation to take place it is important that all the societies of the countries to the conflict start to accept the legitimacy of each others’ grievances, which is vital for attitude transformation. The conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh requires such an approach which transforms discourse and the whole political mythology frame. The fear of future, present in the conflict resolution process, can facilitate the outbreak of future violence and reduce the opportunity for reconciliation-oriented peacebuilding, so it should be seriously addressed, and used “to create opportunities for people to see it in terms of shared suffering”¹¹⁹. This is very important, since the way of dealing with the past, the way it is framed and understood in the domestic public sphere is one of the indicators for the potential positive or negative transformation. Therefore, in the case of this conflict, the whole discourse infrastructure should be transformed, which involves a process of changing attitudes and shaping new beliefs, motivations, and images of themselves and others, and this could be done by launching transformation-oriented projects, even if the peace process will continue over years¹²⁰.

Besides, greater public awareness on the issues, options and their implications can diminish the insecurity connected to a fear of being cheated, leading to more flexibility in talks. As one of the experts from Nagorno-Karabakh stated, various workshops and trainings conducted “significantly

¹¹⁷ Phil Gamaghelyan, *“Rethinking the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: Identity, Politics, Scholarship”*, 50

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 40

¹¹⁹ Aytan Gahramanova, 149

¹²⁰ Ibid, 149

changed the atmosphere in the society, people changed their minds on the issue of the image of the enemy and it is now possible to quietly talk about the meetings with the citizens of the other side”¹²¹. But it should be noted that this dimension also has its challenges, for example, the debate on the conflict limited only to its internal audience will not produce the results needed since it will focus only on the arguments and positions of each side to the conflict. Instead, the best way for the parties to educate each other about the conflict is to interact with each other and not to refrain from discussing the most sensitive topics. Such open dialogue is the most efficient way to get exposed to the competing framework for understanding and analyzing the conflict and learning about each other’s needs and interests. The counter-argument to this perspective can be that when faced with competing discourses and interests and failing to reconcile them, participants in the people-to-people dialogue might feel frustrated and further complicate the peace process, but this should not be the reason to stop the public engagement, because by avoiding these contacts gap between the societies will continue to increase. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to constantly organize initiatives for dialogue, so that the citizens will be better informed which will lead to better understanding of the options and interests of the other party, as well as of the peace process in general, which will reduce the populist manipulations and will make better decisions for themselves¹²². Only when the negative stereotypes will be broken down, decreasing the sense of insecurity and mutual trust between the parties will be established, the suggested options on the table, like the return of the territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh, the return of IDPs, as well as the status of Nagorno-Karabakh will cease to be “political suicide”¹²³.

In addition to this, media and literature on both sides should also be transformed from being factors contributing to a conflict into tools of conflict settlement¹²⁴, and fortunately for the literature

¹²¹ Interview with Mr. Sarasar Saryan, NKR Refugees NGO, 2013

¹²² Tabib Huseynov, 21-22

¹²³ Phil Gamaghelyan, 42

¹²⁴ Ibid, 47

this process has already begun, as there already exists research that meets high academic standards, whose mere presence is a progress in understanding the conflict dynamics, the relations between the Armenian and Azerbaijani societies and sets ground for the further development of this sphere and an increase in the quality and quantity of research in both countries¹²⁵.

Besides, a newly emerging trend in the literature on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict shows a new perspective of the issue, with the authors focusing not on the outcome, but on the process, and identifying the settlement of the conflict as a long journey during which an improvement of relations should take place. The representatives of this new kind of literature break with the tradition of looking for a quick solution to the conflict and try to look beyond the conventional approaches, by emphasizing the importance of understanding the needs of all the parties involved in the conflict and looking for a sustainable solution which will take all the needs into consideration. What this literature suggests as a conflict resolution tool is the development of a long-term peace process and transformation of relations between the societies, in that way also making the co-existence of Azerbaijanis and Armenians possible¹²⁶.

This is a progress in this field, as the existing literature was divided into two parts, with one side being the proponents of ‘lose-lose’ approach, considering the cooperative approach naïve and neglecting its advantages, and the other one being the proponents of ‘win-win’ approach, refusing to see the objective threats of cooperation. Moreover, the whole literature was extremely biased; the conflict resolution with the engagement of the civil society and public at large was virtually nonexistent until recently¹²⁷.

Given this achievement, as the relationship-building process moves forward, people will fear less, will feel more secure, as a result of which a political agreement will be accepted and the

¹²⁵ Ibid, 50

¹²⁶ Ibid, 52

¹²⁷ Ibid, 53

implementation will be successful, if endorsed by the societies¹²⁸. For this reason, an exchange among civil societies, media representatives, and youth is essential, since it has the potential of humanizing the conflict, breaking down existing stereotypes, making the further co-existence of the two populations possible.

It is also important to mention that the OSCE Minsk Group has also recently identified the need for more people-to-people contacts and the inclusion of the civil society in the peace process¹²⁹. While the work of the Minsk Process since its inception has been focused on peacemaking – achieving an agreement rather than inventing a comprehensive solution or a change in attitudes¹³⁰, as time passed the need for public engagement in a debate about the conflict, the existing options on the table, and increasing people-to-people contacts between Armenians and Azerbaijanis was also identified in the Minsk Group co-chairmen’s statement, in June 2006, in their joint statement that any popular vote on Nagorno-Karabakh’s final status should take place in a “non-coercive” environment in which well informed citizens have ample opportunity to consider their positions after a debate in the public arena”¹³¹. This statement was the important recognition that coercion cannot produce a lasting peace and that even if Armenian and Azerbaijani leadership sign a formal peace document it would be doomed to failure if not understood and supported by people, with the lasting peace being possible only if people give their consent to a peace agreement signed by their leadership¹³².

Moreover, during the last 2-3 years, the Co-Chairs have more extensively mentioned the vitality of the communication between the peoples of the parties to the conflict:

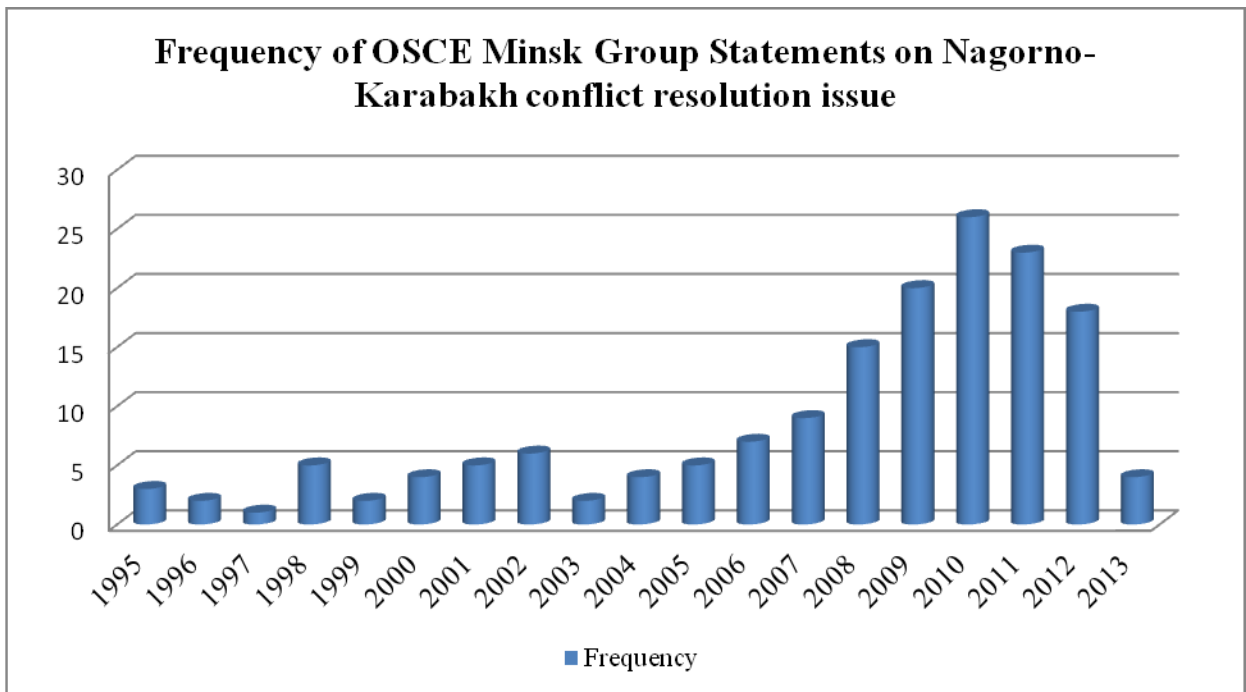
¹²⁸Ibid, 48

¹²⁹ osce.org

¹³⁰ Ruben Harutunian, “*The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: Moving from Power Brokerage to Relationship Restructuring*”, 75

¹³¹ Tabib Huseynov, “*Mountainous Karabakh: New Paradigms for Peace and Development in the 21st Century*”, *International Negotiations* 15 (2010), 21

¹³² Ibid, 21



As it can be inferred from the graph, the frequency of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs’ statements has increased after 2007 and the calls for bridging the remaining differences between the two populations and implementing confidence-building measures have also done so. Starting from 2011 the Co-Chairs were constantly discussing the issue of the public involvement.

When?	Who?	What?
25 June 2011	OSCE CO-Chairmen	The need for strengthening the ceasefire regime and for further confidence-building measures with the involvement of the civil society
12 July, 2011	OSCE CO-Chairmen	More civil society involvement in the implementation of confidence-building measures, saying: “It will contribute to the resolution of the conflict, and will strengthen confidence among the societies.”
30 November, 2011	OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs	Enhancement of confidence through people-to-people exchanges and efforts to preserve places of worship, cultural sites, and cemeteries.

6 March, 2012	OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs	Humanitarian and people-to-people contacts, which should be used to promote mutual understanding among peoples of the region, and not be politicized or manipulated to the detriment of the peace process.
22 March 2012	OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs	The peoples of the region have suffered most from the consequences of war, and any delay in reaching a settlement will only prolong their hardships. A new generation has come of age in the region with no first-hand memory of Armenians and Azerbaijanis living side by side, and prolonging these artificial divisions only deepens the wounds of war.

Source: *osce.org*

The table demonstrates the calls of the Co-chairs in enhancing the contacts between the people, and the recognition of the importance of these contacts, which will promote mutual understanding based on which a lasting solution to the conflict will be sought. The mediators also came to realize that the true merit of an eventual Armenian-Azerbaijani rapprochement will not be predicated by the signing of an agreement or the mere passing of time; only a permanent change in attitudes will achieve this goal¹³³. In addition, the civil society of Nagorno-Karabakh, not just the Armenian and the Azerbaijani ones, should be more engaged in this process as well, because any settlement of the conflict will also require their consent, as these people are, eventually, going to have one of the main impacts on the success of the implementation of the final result of the peacebuilding process with them being the ones to inhabit the territory after any outcome. As one of the experts mentioned during the interview, without the direct participation of the Karabakh civil society, peace process cannot be a success; because they will be unable to come to an agreement on

¹³³Ruben Harutunian, “*The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: Moving from Power Brokerage to Relationship Restructuring*”, 77

the issue that is not lying in the area of jurisprudence of Armenia and Azerbaijan¹³⁴. In addition, according to another expert without the participation of the Karabakh side the dialogue between the Armenians and Azerbaijanis over the Nagorno-Karabakh issue is senseless. No side can represent Karabakh, nor do they have moral right for that, as Karabakh has different perspectives on the issue and the Karabakh civil society sector haven't delegated that right to anybody¹³⁵.

The inclusion of the Karabakh civil society is also important given the fact that the only platform for the Karabakh side participation is provided through civil society initiatives, and this is one of the possibilities to express their position on the settlement of the conflict¹³⁶, which constitutes one of the most important reasons their more active engagement in the peace process should be accomplished.

2.3 Multi-Track Diplomacy

The capacity of the civil society to influence the Karabakh peace process has seen both opportunities and constraints, conditioned by internal political developments in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh. In the meantime it may appear that civil society faces more obstacles than opportunities, and in some senses the conflict is no closer to its settlement and in most cases society actors do not appear able to influence the decision-makers¹³⁷. According to an expert, when even the officials are passive, civil society cannot have serious potential/significant role in the conflict settlement process¹³⁸. Yet, another expert insisted that concerning Nagorno-Karabakh, from 1992 - 1998, civil society played a key role in the conflict resolution process and reconciliation between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan. Since 1998, with the strengthening of the role of the

¹³⁴ Interview with Mr. Sarasar Saryan, 2013

¹³⁵ Interview with Mr. Karen Bekaryan, 2013

¹³⁶ Interview with Mrs. Irina Grigoryan, Artsakh Institute for Popular Diplomacy, April 26, 2013

¹³⁷ Ruben Harutunian, 73

¹³⁸ Interview with Mr. Kim Gabrielyan, Artsakh Journalists Union, April 24, 2013

government agencies in the negotiation process and the intention of intermediaries to negotiate on a confidential level, the role of the civil society has decreased significantly¹³⁹.

In contrast to this picture, since 1994 ceasefire NGOs, the nucleus of civil society, have played a fundamental role through dialogue maintenance, promotion of a culture of peace and human rights, work towards the release of the prisoners of war and facilitation of the meetings of representatives from the conflicting sides. Over the years, NGOs have gained experience and developed new skills and capacities, leading even the most conservative circles of government to recognize the potential of the civil society action¹⁴⁰. Meanwhile, “Western aid targeted towards the development of the third sector, the presence of the international humanitarian organizations, and periodic threats to democracy created new impetus for local groups to develop”, but few of them dealt with the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, although there was the development of NGOs present in Armenia, to a lesser extent in Azerbaijan and also in Nagorno-Karabakh itself, the approximate number of which raised there till 60 those times, which now increased to approximately 150 NGOs being present in Nagorno-Karabakh¹⁴¹.

In the early and mid-1990s, most of the projects Armenian and Azerbaijani NGOs launched were successful, especially those that dealt with the exchange of the prisoners of war, providing help to refugees and organizing youth meetings and camps. However, the number of such projects gradually declined, the reasons for which were several, for instance, “as the NGOs acquired more knowledge as to what kind of projects international organizations/foreign governments were willing to sponsor, and as they gained more skills in writing project proposals, they began to draw up projects which suited the needs of these organizations or governments and not the realities and necessities of their respective societies”¹⁴². Another reason was the post-ceasefire situation, which

¹³⁹ Interview with Mr. Karen Ohanjanyan, Helsinki Initiative-92 NGO, April 28, 2013

¹⁴⁰ Ruben Harutunian, 73

¹⁴¹ Interview with Mr. Vahram Poghosyan, Free Motherland Party Youth Union, April 27, 2013

¹⁴² Irina Ghaplanyan, 95

evolved into a stalemate, since both the governments and societies questioned the intentions and interests of the mediator to the conflict, as a consequence of which the foreign funding of NGO activities started to be considered as direct intrusions by foreign parties into the process. The last reason is that when the ceasefire was signed in 1994, “the generations of both ethnic groups who lived side-by-side for decades, despite the atrocities of war, still perceived each other as nations with substantive historical, cultural and territorial ties”¹⁴³. Nearly twenty years of virtually no communication, hateful propaganda and a new generation absorbing these hostile ideologies has resulted in a new mentality, which gives room for dehumanization of the enemy. In this context, the work of NGOs aimed at reconciliation is extremely difficult, if not impossible¹⁴⁴.

However, despite these difficulties, the civil society cooperation was present and the following main patterns of the cooperation can be identified:

Media	Unique Success Stories	Academic Cooperation	European Union Initiatives	Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eurasia Foundation's South Caucasus Cooperation Program (SCCP) • Swiss-based Caucasus Media Support project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press Clubs of Yerevan, Baku and Stepananakert • HCA in Armenia (Helsinki Citizens Assembly) • UK-based Consortium Initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre for International Development and Conflict Management at the University of Maryland • Development and the Peace Foundation • OSCE representative on freedom. • Eurasia Partnership Foundation (EPF) • London-based peacebuilding organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Breaking down barriers through film" • "Youth building peace through dialogue" • "Pushing the limits" • "Staying the course" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CRINGO - the Caucasian Refugee and IDP NGO network • German foundations, Friedrich Naumann Stiftung and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung • Norwegian Refugee Council

Media played an important role on the peacebuilding path, having had both positive and negative roles. While it has served as a primary source of streaming information, which was often

¹⁴³ Ibid, 95

¹⁴⁴ Ibid95

distorted or exaggerated, aggravating hatred and hostilities between parties, the media also promoted mutual tolerance and understanding¹⁴⁵.

One of the international organizations having initiated media cooperation was Eurasia Foundation's South Caucasus Cooperation Program (SCCP), “which supported cross border cooperation between the region's leading media outlets, advocacy organizations and university journalism department through a targeted grants competition”¹⁴⁶. One of its recent grants was for the trilateral partnerships between media organizations from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. The objective of such types of partnerships is the strengthening of linkages between the journalism departments of the universities, as well as the exploitation of its potential to engage people from Nagorno-Karabakh, Armenia and Azerbaijan.¹⁴⁷

The next organization, which promoted the bilateral relations in the sphere of media between Armenia and Azerbaijan, was the Swiss-based Caucasus Media Support project, one of whose important accomplishments were the trips of Azerbaijani journalists to Armenia in October 1997, and Karabakh in September 1998, and of Armenians to Azerbaijan in July 1999. These journalists had meetings with leading politicians, which made the fact of such contacts more acceptable in the societies to the conflict¹⁴⁸.

Together with these projects, the civil society peacebuilding initiatives which were a success and had/have an outstanding role in enhancing the contacts between the peoples of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh were initiated mostly by the Press Clubs of Yerevan, Baku and

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, 99

¹⁴⁶ Areg Bagdasarian, “*Civil Society in NKR*”, accessed 22 November, 2012, <http://www.ichd.org/?laid=1&com=module&module=static&id=386>

¹⁴⁷ Areg Bagdasarian, 2012

¹⁴⁸ Paul van Tongeren, *Searching for Peace in Europe and Eurasia: An Overview of Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities*, 455

Stepanakert, the HCA in Armenia (Helsinki Citizens Assembly), and the UK-based Consortium Initiative¹⁴⁹.

The Yerevan and Baku Press clubs made strong cooperation efforts and implemented various projects. Being provided by the support of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, both press clubs have worked towards creating mutual understanding between their respective nations with the publishing of the book "The Karabakh Conflict: To Understand Each Other" in 2006. "The book proves that civil society actors, as represented by Azerbaijani and Armenian authors of the book, have the potential to engage in constructive dialogue. It also shows the role that objective NGOs can play in bringing both sides together as evidenced by the financing and publishing of this book by Germany's Friedrich Ebert Stiftung"¹⁵⁰.

Moreover, the Yerevan Press Club in cooperation with the Press Clubs of Baku and Stepanakert has conducted several research projects, conferences and surveys concerning public perceptions of the Karabakh conflict, one of the most important of which was the "Karabakh Conflict in the Mirror of Media and Public Opinion in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Mountainous Karabakh", conducted in 2001¹⁵¹. Furthermore, according to one of the experts, who worked at the Stepanakert Press club for many years, the Stepanakert press club itself was also initiating different projects, one of which was the release of a free newspaper through donors, which didn't obey Karabakh government¹⁵².

Another organization with a vital role in fostering the civil society cooperation ties is the Helsinki Citizens Assembly (HCA), whose role in the Caucasus began in December of 1991, on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border in the Kazakh-Ijevan region, "where the representatives from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia, supported by Georgian activists, issued a joint appeal for peace

¹⁴⁹ Areg Bagdasarian, 2012

¹⁵⁰ Ibid

¹⁵¹ Licinia Simão, 19

¹⁵² Mrs. Karine Ohanyan, European Integration NGO, 2013

("Peace Caravan"). During March of the following year, the "Transcaucasus Dialogue" was formally authorized by the international HCA movement at the Second General Congress in Bratislava, Slovakia, and the already existing HCA committees in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia and in the conflict zone of NKR officially began their activities"¹⁵³.

The HCA, having a strong background in conflict resolution and experience of mediation issues in the Caucasus, managed to secure the release of 500 hostages and prisoners of war from the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. This was a success, demonstrating the power of what civil society can achieve, when even in the face of war, "with the government of Armenia and Azerbaijan ceasing to have diplomatic relations, a peace initiative was able to release political prisoners and bring hope to their families and the region at large"¹⁵⁴.

The Transcaucasian Dialogue movement of the HCA also initiated a project, in the sphere of community mobilization, which was one of the first ones that pursued multilateral initiatives in the Caucasus. It has been supporting HCA local branches in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Karabakh starting from 1992. In addition, their programs help to build trust between the civil society representatives from the sides to the conflict, as well as protect local activities from domestic political pressures¹⁵⁵.

In November 2000, the HCA General Assembly held in Baku brought together six hundred participants (one of the few initiatives which also included the Nagorno-Karabakh population representatives), including over forty Armenians, twelve of which were from Karabakh, who were guaranteed personal security by the President Aliiev. Another initiative was organized by Arzu Abdualayeva, a new co-chair of HCA International, called "an appeal for dialogue between Cultures and Civilizations was launched"¹⁵⁶, the purpose of which was the development of civil society in the

¹⁵³ Areg Bagdasarian, 2012

¹⁵⁴ Ibid

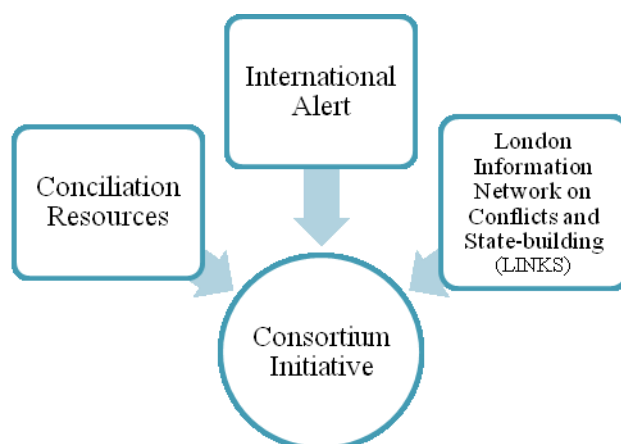
¹⁵⁵ Paul van Tongeren, 455

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 455-56

South Caucasus. Till today, the HCA continues its collaboration with local committees founded throughout Azerbaijan and Armenia¹⁵⁷.

The last in this list of success stories is the UK-based Consortium Initiative (CI), which promotes civil society and comprises several members each working in their sphere, including media and public awareness, civil society, political dialogue and conflict sensitivity.

The members are:



One example of the CI success stories has been in the "Media and Public Awareness Strand" headed by consortium member Conciliation Resources, which has helped creating "Radio Diaries", where everyday stories, about ordinary people's lives, collected by journalists across the South Caucasus, have been published on twenty radio stations throughout Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. With these radio programs people gained an opportunity to learn about ordinary citizens in other countries, which is very important provided the fact that this opportunity may otherwise have never given to them, taking into account the lingering divisions between people in the region. Consequently, these Radio Diaries helped to break down stereotypes¹⁵⁸.

Another initiative of the CI for bilateral ties was the "Dialogue Through Film" project launched in 2006 involving 5 young journalists from Azerbaijan and 5 from NKR. The goal is to show the films to Azerbaijani and Armenian Audiences, which, however hasn't happened yet.

¹⁵⁷Areg Bagdasarian, 2012,

¹⁵⁸ Ibid

Several meetings were held among Azerbaijanis, Armenians, and Nagorno-Karabakh journalists in the framework of the project “Karabakh conflict in the mirror of media and public opinion in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Mountainous Karabakh”, but without any concrete results. In addition, the Conciliation Resources supports Nagorno-Karabakh’s widely read newspaper “Demo” and “provides an exchange of articles by Azerbaijani and Armenian journalists about the conflict and the peace process, published in each country’s press”¹⁵⁹.

Another member of the Consortium Initiative, the International Alert (IA), has been active in the Caucasus since 1993, as well as has been somewhat effective at the grassroots level, through its work with communities affected by the fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh and through the facilitation of meetings between Armenian and Azerbaijani communities to engage in dialogue¹⁶⁰.

International Alert has also been involved in the Karabakh conflict peace talks through a network of Caucasian NGOs active in conflict resolution, called the Caucasus Forum, the aim of which was the provision of a space for dialogue on conflict resolution and the incorporation of the broader Caucasian context into particular peace efforts. “The forum also gave a chance to civil society representatives from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Karabakh to maintain contacts and discuss their situation in a more relaxed atmosphere of pan-Caucasian dialogue. The latest of the events of the Caucasus Forum took place in Tsaghkadzor, Armenia, where the participants decided to proceed with the projects in the core dimensions of the forum’s peacebuilding activities, such as women, youth, journalists, and ex-combatants’ programs”¹⁶¹.

IA has proven that it understands the importance of the link between Nagorno-Karabakh and regional economic cooperation in the South Caucasus and that the promotion of greater regional cooperation may be one way of finding a solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict¹⁶².

¹⁵⁹ Nona Mikhelidze, Nicoletta Pirozzi, 35

¹⁶⁰ Areg Bagdasarian, 2012,

¹⁶¹ Paul van Tongeren, 455-456

¹⁶² Areg Bagdasarian, 2012,

Finally, the London Information Network on Conflicts and State-building (LINKS) undertook a project to gain an insight on the positions of important stakeholders in the conflict settlement process. Face-to-face interviews were conducted “with the leaders and senior officials of 46 political parties in Armenia and Azerbaijan, with important political and social leaders in and from Nagorno-Karabakh, and with a range of other stakeholders. The results of these interviews with the political leaders were discussed in policy seminars held in December 2010 in Baku (Azerbaijan) and Yerevan (Armenia)”¹⁶³.

Another block of initiatives were aimed at the provision of trainings and academic cooperation, the main actors of which were:



Much international initiatives were aimed at the provision of conflict-resolution training, in the frameworks of which participants from Armenia and Azerbaijan had attended trainings where the participants of other conflict zones from around the world were also present. These trainings were the ground also for academic cooperation. This bears great importance, because even if training alone is not a sufficient method to settle the conflict, but it is a necessary and essential element of peacebuilding, because, the development of expertise within countries is often limited to a restricted circle of practitioners and mostly focused on specialized units, neglecting important front-line actors, while the exchange and dissemination of information among greater public is key to achieving success for building peace between the populations.

For these efforts, in 1995 individuals from each of the areas in the South Caucasus having conflicts were gathered at the Centre for International Development and Conflict Management at the

¹⁶³ Paul van Tongeren, *Searching for Peace in Europe and Eurasia: An Overview of Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities*, 455

University of Maryland, for a four-month program of NGO training. The 2001 Development and the Peace Foundation's workshop at the Evangelische Akademie Loccum, entitled "Stability and Peace in the Caucasus: The Case of Nagorno-Karabakh" was the next one in this field, which aimed to bring together the official and civil society representatives of all sides, as well as international mediators and NGOs. "the conference discussed the interrelationship between confidentiality of the peace process on the one hand and the isolation of civil societies and the general public from high level peace initiatives on the other"¹⁶⁴.

In 2000, a book project was also launched, when the personal representative of the Austrian OSCE chairperson-in-office for missions in the Caucasus, and the OSCE representative on freedom of the media, launched a project *Caucasus: Defense of the Future*, containing essays by Caucasian writers, was aimed at the promotion of dialogue between representatives of the intelligentsia in the Caucasus¹⁶⁵.

Yet, another partner in helping to connect the civil society ties was the Eurasia Partnership Foundation (EPF), which, with the support of the UK government, initiated a programme including young writers of Armenia and Azerbaijan, named "Writers against Conflicts", within the framework of which five Armenian and five Azerbaijani writers participate in the project. The aim of the project was to bring together young people from Armenia and Azerbaijan through new media and to enable them to cooperate. Furthermore, an electronic literary magazine, which publishes the works of the project participants, was established¹⁶⁶.

As the efforts to strengthen the ties between the societies, one of the latest initiatives undertaken in 2012 was the new multimedia handbook published in September 2012 by a London-based peacebuilding organization, which showed that different visions are possible. It has been

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, 456

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, 457

¹⁶⁶ Armine Martirosyan, "Young writers from Armenia and Azerbaijan implement project to bring conflicting parties together", accessed 14 February, 2013, <http://www.eng.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/20401/>

written to accompany the film-making initiative “1”, where over 30 young film-makers have taken part, and initiated a series of film showings carried out over the last two years across Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh¹⁶⁷.

When talking about the civil society sector involvement in the conflict transformation process, the European Union’s (EU) activities in this field should also be paid sufficient attention. Having had limited ties with Armenian and Azerbaijani civil societies, the EU strengthened its cooperation with the two countries after the European Neighborhood Policy was established in 2004, in the framework of which individual Action Plans were negotiated with each country, where the peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict were incorporated as a separate priority area. Among the points specified in this priority area, in the Action Plans of both countries the inclusion of the civil society was mentioned, namely, in the Armenian document, the OSCE called for the encouragement of people-to people-contacts¹⁶⁸, while in the Azerbaijani one it called for the promotion of the active civil society involvement¹⁶⁹.

EU policies towards the engagement of civil society in the conflict resolution process were mainly regional such as the “Black Sea Synergy”, “which supported the development of networks of NGOs dealing with conflict issues around the Black Sea. Black Sea basin (CBC-BS), which is directed at improving economic and social development in the region, with a focus on local actors and the Black Sea Forum (BSF) or the Community of Democratic Choice (CDC), which all are important in terms of being initiatives with civil society dimensions”¹⁷⁰.

Finally, one important project was the European Partnership for the Peaceful Settlement of the Conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh (EPNK), which is a European civil society initiative aimed at

¹⁶⁷ Laurence Broers, “Armenia and Azerbaijan: What Can Societies Do When Political Judgment Errs?”, accessed 1 March, 2013, <http://www.opendemocracy.net/opensecurity/laurence-broers/armenia-and-azerbaijan-what-can-societies-do-when-political-judgement-e>

¹⁶⁸ EU/Armenia Action Plan, europa.eu, 9

¹⁶⁹ EU/Azerbaijan Action Plan, europa.eu, 14

¹⁷⁰ Lúcia Simão, 14

working with local partners in the South Caucasus in the frames of different initiatives and projects in order to have positive impact on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict settlement process.

EPNK activities, started in June 2010 and “has been able to maintain a dynamic dialogue between a wide range of Armenian and Azerbaijani policymakers, media and civil society actors, including relevant activists from Nagorno-Karabakh itself, which has contributed to mutual understanding and confidence building – essential ingredients for any sustainable peaceful resolution of the conflict”¹⁷¹.

ENPK’s activities implemented so far include:



All these initiatives by the EU help to strengthen the ties between the societies, by providing ground to discuss issues and share experiences, which further changes their attitudes, reflected in the interviews given afterwards. And as the series of roundtable discussions organized by the International Alert between prominent political figures and experts from the Northern Ireland and Cyprus conflicts, as well as politicians and public figures from the region raised: “however intractable a conflict is, however long it has continued, however many times negotiations have failed in the past, it is still possible to find a solution if leaders and societies believe they can achieve peace and demonstrate the patience and endurance necessary to get there”¹⁷².

¹⁷¹ *The European Partnership for the Peaceful Settlement of the Conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh*. EPNK, 2011, 4

¹⁷² EPNK, 2011, 12

Finally, the last three organizations dealing/having dealt with the peacebuilding of Nagorno-Karabakh are:



CRINGO (Caucasian Refugee and IDP NGO network) was one of the active NGOs in the sphere of refugees, and supported local initiatives in maintaining cross border communication between the women of Azerbaijan and Armenia since 2004. The CRINGO has aimed at building trust in the South Caucasus and “it has, so far, focused on Azerbaijani women IDPs from NKR with the intention of adding Armenian women from NKR in the future”¹⁷³.

Two German foundations, i.e. the Friedrich Naumann Stiftung and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, organized a meeting of representatives from the South Caucasus in Sofia and Istanbul, which was attended mainly by politicians from both sides. Subsequent meetings were also held both in Armenia and Azerbaijan to facilitate dialogue between journalists¹⁷⁴.

The last of the three organizations involved in the peacebuilding efforts of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was the Norwegian Refugee Council, involved in a regional project the aim of which was the networking and strengthening of regional capacities to deal with conflicts¹⁷⁵.

To sum up, as it was shown above, since 1995 various initiatives have been carried out to establish contacts among the populations to the conflict, and if not in all, at least in several ones, the society of Nagorno-Karabakh was also included, which is a great step forward. Besides, according to the experts, much work was also done by Karabakh NGOs. Helsinki Initiative 92, the first NGO

¹⁷³Areg Bgdasarian, “*Civil Society in NKR*”, accessed 22 November, 2012,

¹⁷⁴ Paul van Tongeren, 455

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, 456

in Karabakh since the peace process with Azerbaijan started and the first to start the process of reconciliation with Azerbaijan, organized thematic cross-border initiatives, mutual visits in Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan of the representatives of civil society and political leaders, international conferences devoted to finding a solution to the conflict¹⁷⁶. In 1994 and 1995, it organized meetings by bringing ethnic Azerbaijanis to Stepanakert, and also in 2000, the organization's head Karen Ohanjanyan visited Baku to participate in the preparations for the next International Helsinki Citizen's Assembly planned to be held in Baku¹⁷⁷. It has also implemented projects under the title: House of Peace, Seeds of Peace, Strengthening the capacity of the World, Building Trust, the independent Minsk Process, etc, etc, and reached the release of more than 500 prisoners of war and hostages from Armenian and Azerbaijanis, as well as organized joint music festivals dedicated to the world¹⁷⁸.

Also, in the frames of the activities of the Resource Centers of Karabakh, Yerevan and Baku many meetings and activities on peacebuilding have been carried out. Most part was on the implementation of peacebuilding through workshops, focus groups, lectures, and others, and these initiatives significantly changed the atmosphere in the society, with people changing their minds on the issue of the image of the enemy¹⁷⁹. The Civil Society Initiative NGO participated in programs to search for the missing, the exchange of hostages and prisoners of war, dispelling the image of the enemy, which was documented in their reports to international organizations, as well as in recent years, the NGO has been addressing the gender issues and realizing the potential of women in building peace in the South Caucasus. In addition, representatives of our NGOs have participated in

¹⁷⁶ Interview with Mr. Karen Ohanjanyan, 2013

¹⁷⁷ Paul van Tongeren, 454

¹⁷⁸ Interview with Mr. Karen Ohanjanyan, 2013

¹⁷⁹ Interview with Mr. Sarasar Saryan, 2013

regional and international conferences and seminars on peacebuilding¹⁸⁰. Artsakh Union of Journalists has also regularly participates in the NGO projects of Karabakh.

All these initiatives helped to build some positive relationship between the parties, but distrust and gap between them continue to exist, one of the proofs of which is the Minsk Group Co-Chairs' ongoing calls to bridge the differences between the societies, to implement confidence-building measures and to make the societies ready for peace and not war¹⁸¹.

This means that this multi-track diplomacy should be more extensive and cover wider layers of society, so that the transformation of attitudes takes place not only among certain NGOs and individuals, but the entire society, which, as have been mentioned above, is one of the main actors of the peaceful and successful conflict settlement, including also the one of Nagorno-Karabakh.

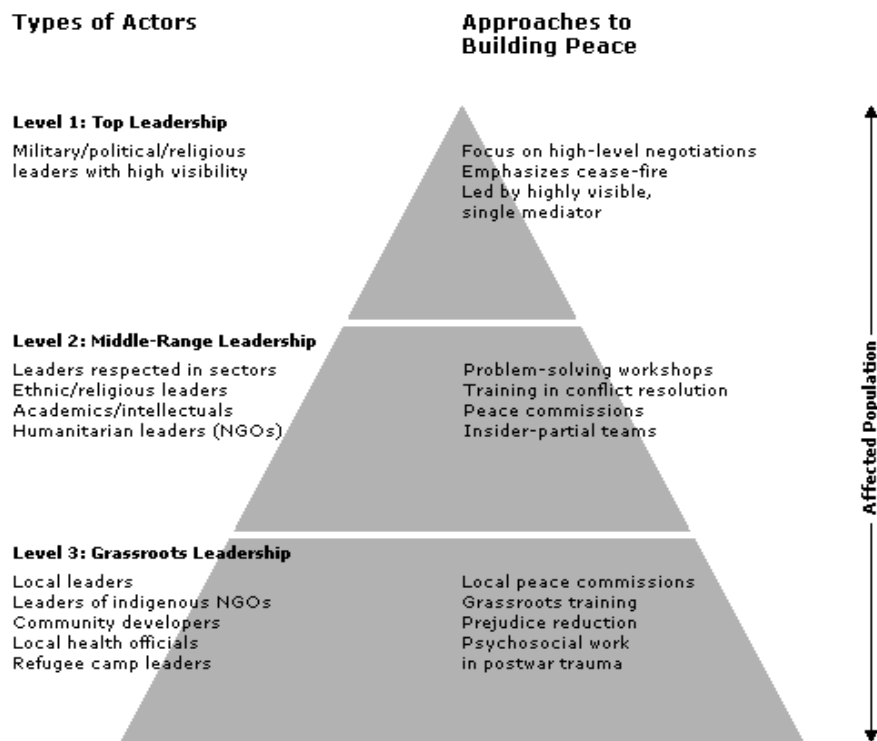
¹⁸⁰ Interview with Mr. Albert Voskanyan, Civil Society Initiative at Nagorno-Karabakh, April 23, 2013

¹⁸¹ osce.org

2.4 Integrating Theory and Practice: Lederach’s Model and Its Possible Application to Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict

The need for a conflict settlement, which will change the attitudes and structure of the conflict, and not just end the hostilities, has been recognized in the Nagorno-Karabakh case (as demonstrated above), as well as in general, while resolving conflicts. A prominent scholar in the conflict transformation field, John Lederach, also points out to this method of conflict settlement and its effectiveness.

John Lederach’s peacebuilding model framework is the one used most for explaining the conflict transformation process. According to the author, there are three levels of actors in the peacebuilding process, with each level engaging in different peace-building tasks.



Derived from John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997), 39.

Source: Becky Nesbit, “*The Role of NGOs in Conflict Resolution in Africa: An institutional Analysis*”, Indiana University: Bloomington, Indiana, 2003, 27

As it could be inferred from the figure, “level 1 is the top leadership, including military, religious, and political leaders who have high visibility, and at this level the leaders engage in high-level negotiations and mediations. Level 2 includes the middle range leaders, such as ethnic and religious leaders, leaders of humanitarian NGOs, academics and intellectuals, and other respected leaders. The task of these middle range leaders is to provide problem-solving workshops, training in conflict resolution, peace commissions, and insiders-partials teams. Lastly, Level 3 is comprised of the grassroots leaders, such as local leaders, leaders of local, indigenous NGOs, community developers, and local health officials. These leaders focus on local peace commissions, grassroots training, prejudice reduction, and psycho-social work in post-war trauma. Those grassroots leaders at the bottom of the pyramid affect many populations of people. However, leaders higher up in the pyramid affect fewer populations, despite the fact that their actions become increasingly more visible”¹⁸². Along with this classification, Lederarch also argues that the most effective peace-building stresses the transformation of the attitudes and institutions of the parties to the conflict¹⁸³.

The logic behind this model is that the relationship building between the conflicting parties would take place from the bottom of society with the hope that the repairing or ‘transforming’ relationships will lead towards building peace between them. Lederarch states that “The single most important aspect of encouraging an organic perspective is in creating a sense of participation, responsibility and ownership in the process across a broad spectrum of the population”¹⁸⁴.

In the Nagorno-Karabakh case, while the top leadership is fully engaged in the peace process, with the main focus on the OSCE Minsk Group as a single mediator to the conflict, and continuous calls for the maintenance of the ceasefire; the middle range leaders encounter difficulties, which could be seen from the inception of the conflict until today. As it was clear from

¹⁸² Becky Nesbit, “*The Role of NGOs in Conflict Resolution in Africa: An institutional Analysis*”, (Indiana University: Bloomington, Indiana, 2003), 5-6

¹⁸³ Ibid, 5-6

¹⁸⁴ Jack Sugden, 13-14

the analysis above, while initially the NGOs in Armenia and Azerbaijan themselves initiated projects, gradually this trend declined due to the reasons pointed out above, by giving way to international organizations, which have implemented and continue to implement various programs to reconcile the societies of Armenia and Azerbaijan, and in some cases also the one of Nagorno-Karabakh, with which comes another problem of this sector: while in almost all the cases the societies of Armenia and Azerbaijan are engaged, the one of Nagorno-Karabakh itself is mostly left out from these initiatives, while it should have been engaged, since in addition to Armenian and Azerbaijani sides, any implementation success depends also upon these people and their commitment to carry out what has been decided. This is complimented by the fact that Nagorno-Karabakh prioritizes the conflict settlement, because the society aims to live in a fully recognized country and to stop being so much dependent on the external funding and on foreign donors' priorities¹⁸⁵. In connection with this, NGOs from Nagorno-Karabakh criticized the approach of the Minsk Group and its attempt to impose the Madrid principles on their country without taking their views into consideration. Recognizing these constraints, the Minsk Group has widened its activities to include people from Nagorno-Karabakh; both from civil society and the administration, but still, very little projects incorporate them together with the ones from Armenia and Azerbaijan¹⁸⁶.

Ledearch's model places particular emphasis on the civil society sector, as the latter links the three levels of Lederarch's pyramid. On the one hand, "civil society actors, in this case, middle level actors of the pyramid, for instance NGO leaders, are closely tied to top-level policy-making through their interactions with parliaments, executives, big business, foundations and major media holdings. Through their advocacy, policy research and negotiation support activities, the mid-level can both ease the conflict settlement process and press top echelons to modify the structural features of governance that gave rise to conflict in the first place. These mid-level actors build personal and

¹⁸⁵ Lúcia Simão, 20

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, 23-24

professional relations with the top echelons and provide a pivotal function because of their unofficial nature”¹⁸⁷. One advantage of this level is, also, that compared to the top level, they normally enjoy more political independence¹⁸⁸.

On the other hand, mid-level actors are also linked to grassroots level, who mobilize the public to tackle and react to the underlying conditions of structural or open violence through education, training, capacity-building and awareness rising. Numbers of social movements are comprised by networks of NGOs operating at grassroots and mid-levels.

Grassroots, in their turn, may reach wider public through service delivery, for example, by relief and rehabilitation, or post-war trauma therapy. “Local civil society interactions with the public are of the essence to ensure that the voice of the people is not swamped in the evolution of both conflict and peace”¹⁸⁹.

This model can, indeed, be useful and important when applying to the Nagorno-Karabakh case, although it will be a little bit different since the base of the model does not fully exist, while the higher level, i.e. leadership negotiations, is present. While the official negotiations are currently going on, the other two levels, i.e. the middle and the grassroots levels, as it has been seen above, encounter some difficulties. But as these levels constitute the base of the pyramid, and as it is known, nothing can be built, nor can it have success, without a strong basis, therefore the wider engagement of the civil society sector, which is the establishment of a powerful base, is the main point that should be considered. And even if the whole reconciliation process will not fully coincide with what should take place according to Lederach’s model, and because of the presence of the last level of pyramid before the first two are fully present, the relationship building will not start from the very bottom, it is not an obstacle to start constructing the base, that is empowering the grassroots

¹⁸⁷ Nathalie Tocci, *The European Union, Civil Society and Conflict Transformation*, (Brighton: MICROCON Policy Working Paper 3, 2008), 9

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, 9

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, 10

and the middle level to carry out their tasks and activates. Moreover, no visible results yet from the official negotiation process provide with more floor for the consideration of this model: as a building constructed in such a way as having nothing to lean on will not last and will not be able to serve its purpose, the official negotiations will not give results, having been built on no basis, and like the building, they will have the same fate, and will not be able to serve their objectives. Presumably, this can be one version why no tangible results in the official negotiation process have been achieved yet.

Besides, the civil society sector consideration will also give an opportunity to engage the Nagorno-Karabakh side, which, even if is not represented in official negotiations and cannot express its perspective there, can fully express itself through the civil society sector, which doesn't encounter any barriers and has ordinary communication and the dialogue between Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh, which is currently witnessed in the second track, is a great step forward¹⁹⁰.

Another point in the model is that the three levels of the pyramid are interconnected, and for the model to work a smooth coordination is needed between all the levels and this need for greater cooperation was also identified by the experts from Karabakh. According to one of them, the settlement of the conflict is a priority issue, and here not only cooperation, but also unity is needed¹⁹¹. This is the case when it is necessary to consolidate the efforts of NGOs and the authorities. Yet, another one insisted that particularly in Nagorno-Karabakh, without government structures, it will jeopardize the basic aim of their society to establish an independent state, but at this stage, NGOs can more efficiently communicate information about the activities carried out at a young unrecognized state¹⁹². The head of the first NGO in Karabakh stated that, again, specifically in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict case, the mutual desire of the authorities and civil society in the

¹⁹⁰ Interview with Mrs. Karine Ohanyan, 2013

¹⁹¹ Interview with Mr. Kim Gabrielyan, 2013

¹⁹² Interview with Mr. Sarasar Saryan, 2013

search for a peaceful solution to the conflict should be present¹⁹³. These perspectives of the civil society representatives were also confirmed by the state representative who said that for finding effective solutions to all the questions, the cooperation between the state and the civil society is needed, as, in this case one is often the one who suggests and the other is the one who resolves. As for the state or national issues, such as the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the cooperation and partnership is required¹⁹⁴. All this exists also in the cases of Armenia and Azerbaijan, because they are also parties to the conflict, whose peaceful settlement is currently pursued by both of them. Not only will this be effective in terms of unity and strength of a country, but it will also eliminate the implementation stage problem, which may arise if the perspectives of the government and society diverge.

The next thing, for the model to work, is the establishment of trust between the societies, which is one obstacle to civil society sector cooperation. The importance of trust is conditioned by the fact that when the governments of the parties do not have contacts or are only have them in the framework of official negotiations, the gap is widening between the 3 societies. But it is very difficult to settle the conflict when there is no trust between the parties¹⁹⁵. The elimination of mistrust, denial of promotion and creation of an image of enemy, and negative stereotypes that hamper the establishment of normal human relationships and the establishment of direct contacts between the parties is key in the conflict settlement process¹⁹⁶, and in this arena the civil society is the main actor in the states. Besides, it also prevents the aggression of opponents and peace sentiments in their society¹⁹⁷. Furthermore, their potential is greater and activities can and should include the delivery of success stories of mutual contacts between the societies to the greater public,

¹⁹³ Interview with Mr. Karen Ohanjanyan, 2013

¹⁹⁴ Interview with Mr. Vahram Poghosyan, 2013

¹⁹⁵ Interview with Mr. Karen Bekaryan, 2013

¹⁹⁶ Interview with Mr. Albert Voskanyan, 2013

¹⁹⁷ Interview with Mr. Sarasar Saryan, 2013

the facts that the opposite side is the people like theirs, with their problems, etc, and of course there are differences between the societies but the similarities are not little too¹⁹⁸.

For all these reasons, the Lederach's model of building a base for the official negotiations should be considered, for them to be successful, as well as for the creation of a sense of participation, responsibility and ownership by people, and even if there are lots of missing points and flaws when trying to project the model on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict case, all the obstacles could be overcome by identifying the issues and working on them. And even if it cannot be said that the consideration of this model and the civil society sector in the conflict settlement process can end the conflict, it, at least, will have its impact on the background of the conflict settlement and on the negotiator who will see that his/her population is prepared for peace and not war¹⁹⁹, in that way also decreasing the probability of the implementation stage problems.

¹⁹⁸ Interview with Mr. Karen Bekaryan, 2013

¹⁹⁹ Interview with Mr. Karen Bekaryan, 2013

Conclusion

The conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh still continues to shape the tense situation in the South Caucasus. After a ceasefire has been brokered between Armenia and Azerbaijan, nearly twenty years have passed, with several solutions having been proposed by the main mediator to the conflict, OSCE Minsk Group, but none of them was accepted by all the parties to the conflict and was implemented. In this time period, while the official negotiations have been/are carried out, the gap between the societies of the countries to the conflict continues to remain, which was created and influenced by several factors such as the identity issues, media and literature and their negative propaganda of the other side, war of rhetoric, etc. Generations have been raised on the negative images of the other side, perceiving it as an enemy and blaming it for every bad thing that happened in the past, like mass slaughters and that happens today, for instance, the deaths on the Line of the Contact. This has led to the situation where any compromise is unacceptable to either side. But while all this debate goes on, one more gap present is the ignorance of the perspective of Nagorno-Karabakh side, which is one of the main actors but is deprived of voice concerning its future.

And here comes one of the points, when the need and necessity of the civil society sector is crucial: while the Nagorno-Karabakh side is not present around the official negotiation table, the civil society, while participating in initiatives, can express the stand of their country and make the country's voice heard. But the role of the civil society in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict settlement process is not limited only to this function and is much greater. The gap has been created between the societies and any agreement which will be the result of official negotiations has a great risk of not having success when the implementation stage comes, because it is these societies, which, not having trust towards each other, are going to implement the agreement. For this purpose, first and foremost, the aim of the conflict settlement should not be the signing of a paper and officially resolving the conflict, but transforming the roots of the conflict, as well as relationships, attitudes

and perceptions, which could be done by, at the initial stage, building trust between the parties, which is a prerequisite of any agreement being successfully implemented.

As it has been seen, for this purpose different initiatives have been launched by local as well as international organizations, for the increase of bi-/tri-lateral contacts between the societies, to give them an opportunity to communicate and build confidence. But these separate occasions of contacts do not create the impetus for the conflict settlement, because even if some attitude changes during the communication, it is still not enough in the sense that only a small number of people participate and there is a need for the dissemination of any information obtained during these contacts. In addition to these regular meetings, more active steps should also be taken inside the societies themselves, for enabling trust towards the other side, for instance by gradually taking out the parts of the history books which present the other side as an enemy; try inform and educate the population with the facts joint and peaceful coexistence as well as any success stories of the populations to the conflict, in the past.

Last but not least, the civil society of Nagorno-Karabakh should also be incorporated to a greater extent into this process, as, firstly, there is no right to talk on behalf of a side which can itself express its viewpoints. Secondly, the republic has its own perspective which is not known either to Armenia or to Azerbaijan, and finally the Karabakh society is the nucleus of the population which is going to live with the decision made during the process and one of the main actors determining the success of the implementation and the future of the conflict settlement outcome.

With the official negotiations being important, for a number of reasons outlined above, the incorporation and more floor for the civil sector is very important, which will try to build the peace process from the bottom, from the society, on which rests the most important thing, i.e. the commitment to live with the outcomes of the process and it is precisely this society that will decide whether the conflict will last or will be settled.

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Appendix 1

Table 1	Conflict Resolution Perspective	Conflict Transformation Perspective
The key question	How do we end something not desired?	How to end something destructive and build something desired?
The focus	Content-centered.	Relationship-centered.
The purpose	To achieve an agreement and solution to the present problem creating the crisis.	To promote constructive change processes inclusive of but not limited to immediate solutions.
The development of the process	Embedded and built around the immediacy of the relationship where the present problem appears.	It is concerned with responding to symptoms and engaging the systems within which relationships are embedded.
The frame	The horizon is short-term.	The horizon is mod- and long-term.
View of conflict	Envisions the need to de-escalate conflict processes	Envisions conflict as a dynamic of ebbs (conflict de-escalation to pursue constructive change) and flow (conflict escalation to pursue constructive change).

Source: John Paul Lederach, Michelle Maiese, "*Conflict Transformation*".

Appendix 2

Armenian NGOs dealing with conflict resolution/transformation and peacebuilding are

Peacebuilding organization	Main Objectives
Caucasus Institute (think tank)	To bring the societies of the South Caucasus together develop a pluralistic discourse on key issues that concern their futures. Promotion of public discourse based on free debate, balanced analysis and competent journalism.
International Centre for Human Development (ICHHD) (think tank)	Promotion of regional integration, sustainable peacebuilding, cooperation and economic development strategies of the South Caucasus.
Region Research centre (investigative centre)	Support to wide information exchange between the South Caucasus countries, create a common informational field and effective collaboration in the region.
Women for Development (WFD)	Implementation of democratic reforms, protection of human rights and establishment of peace in the region.
Institute for War and Peace reporting (IPWR) Armenian Branch	Build peace and democracy through free and fair media, establish a sustainable network of journalists in the country and in the region.
Caucasian Centre for proposing Non Traditional Conflict Resolution Methods (CC) (NGO)	Promotion of regional cooperation and security in the Caucasus region; cooperation with the worldwide institutes working for democracy and peace.
Youth Centre for Democratic Initiatives	Development of peace-making initiatives of youth in the national and regional levels.
Goris Youth Union	Strengthening civil society in Armenia, and promoting peace in the region through conferences, seminars, round tables, raising public awareness.
World Council of Churches Armenia Inter-Church Charitable Round Table Foundation	Promotion of regional dialogue, mutual understanding, conflict resolution, and peace-building to encourage ecumenical initiatives, both locally and internationally
International Committee of the Red Cross Armenia	ICRC has been working in Armenia in the context of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict since 1992 and continues to monitor the situation of civilians living along the international border with Azerbaijan. It focuses on the issue of missing persons and the problems of people held in connection with the conflict as well as other

	vulnerable detainees.
Analytical Center on Globalization and Regional Cooperation (ACGRC)	Studies the regional cooperation problems within the framework of global integration processes; assists the formation of a climate of trust and strengthening of stable peace in the South Caucasus; peacebuilding in the Caucasus.
Caucasus Centre for Peacemaking Initiatives	Promotes the development of citizens in peacemaking through civil dialogue and restoration of neighborhood relations. It works in the context of collaboration of South Caucasus countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia.
Center for Strategic Analysis «SPECTRUM»	Works out models for and concepts for the resolution of ethno-political conflicts of the South Caucasus on the basis of both international law and experience of conflict resolution
CRINGO Network – Yerevan Coordination Point	Supports and assists the displaced population and promotes peace and stability in the Caucasus.
The National Citizens' Initiative	Assistance to regional peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and establishment of mutual trust among peoples.
Eurasia Partnership - Armenia	Empowers people to effect change for social justice and economic prosperity through hands-on programs, helping them to improve their communities and their own lives.
Armenian Centre for National and International Studies (ACNIS)	Civil education, democratic development, conflict resolution. The Centre focuses its research activity on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and Armenia and Turkey.
Foundation Against Violation of Law (FAVL)	Peace-building and regional cooperation on developing of democratic values and the rule of law, as well as conflict resolution
Helsinki Citizens Assembly Armenian National Committee (hCa)	Peacemaking processes in the areas of conflict, particularly Nagorno-Karabakh issue.
Caucasian Institute for Peace Problems research (CIPPR)	Preventing and resolving conflicts in the South Caucasus, promotion of cultural understanding and diversity, tolerance and cross border cultural cooperation among the nations of the region.
Conflict Resolution and Peace-Building Resource Centre	Advance the process of addressing conflict resolution by organizing members within the civil society community, through joint actions, declarations and various activities; start the process off bringing civil

	society leaders together on a weekly basis for regular discussions regarding conflict resolution; promote dialogue across borders among leaders of civil society in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagotno-Karabakh.
Aravni NGO	Enhancement of Artsakh's relationships with the outside, stimulating and structuring of Artsakh's civil society promoting humanitarian, cultural and economic projects that facilitate the autonomous development of our country.
Armenian UN Association	To spread ideals of non-violence and peace-building, to promote world peace and cooperation; to participate in global problem-solving/
Civil Society Institute	The activities of CSI are geared towards increasing the efficacy of governmental bodies as well as non-governmental organizations while simultaneously supporting the development of civil society. It seeks to accomplish its goals and tasks within the framework of two departments - Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution and Human Rights.
DEMPROS	The promotion of the strengthening of regional cooperation, the activation of the society's participation in the affair of conflict prevention and regulation
HrayrMaroukhian Foundation	To contribute to and actively promote a comprehensive national, regional and international dialogue focusing on current political, economic and social developments and challenges, with a primary concentration on Armenia and the South Caucasus.
LIGHT FOR ARTSAKH Charitable Compatriot Union	Strengthening and further development of economic relations between Armenian Republic and Karabakh, promotion of investment in the Karabakh economy, assistance to the families of killed and injured freedom fighters of Karabakh.
Nagorno-Karabakh Committee of "Helsinki Initiative- 92"	To contribute to peace and human security in the South Caucasus region, human rights protection, development of civil society in Nagorno-Karabakh, and the integration of Nagorno-Karabakh into process of globalization. NKC "HI-92" has separate commissions on conflict transformation and peace-building.

Peace Dialogue NGO	To promote peaceful transformation of conflicts, reconciliation between societies and prevention of further conflicts in the South Caucasus, to encourage formation of dialogue between conflicting countries and regions of the South Caucasus, to promote the empowerment of civil potential for peaceful conflict resolution, to promote capacity building of participants of peaceful conflict resolution processes, To support civil initiatives directed towards conflict transformation.
Political Developments Research Centre	To assist to the peaceful resolution of the regional conflicts, and promote the Armenia's integration to the Regional projects.

Sources: *Directory of Peacebuilding Organizations in the Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States*, United Nations, 2009, 162-185.

The Civiltas Foundation, *A Guide to Civil Society Activity in Armenia*,

http://civil.am/index.php?option=com_comprofiler&task=userslist&listid=5&Itemid=61

Websites of the organizations

The peacebuilding organizations of Azerbaijan are:

YUVA Humanitarian Centre	To develop educational initiatives to foster civil society development, conflict resolution, human rights and peace-building.
ICRC Delegation	The ICRC has been working in Azerbaijan, in the context of Nagorny-Karabakh conflict since 1992 and continues to monitor the situation of civilians living along the "Line of Contact" with Nagorny-Karabakh and the international border with Armenia.. It focuses on the issue of missing persons and the problems of people held in connection with the conflict as well as other vulnerable detainees.
Migration Resource Centre	Reintegration of displaced people from Nagorny-Karabakh multilateral dialogue intervention.
Institute for Peace and Democracy (IPD)	Development of a market economy, reforms, promoting fair elections, conflict resolution and research.
Azerbaijani National Committee of Helsinki Citizens' Assembly (ANC HCA)	Participation in peace-building processes. Promotion of peace-building ideas, promotion of constructive solutions to the conflicts surrounding Karabakh and Abkhazia, active participation in the processes of reconciliation between conflicting sides in the above

	mentioned conflicts; prevention of ethnic conflicts.
Inam Centre for Pluralism	To address the common challenges facing the democratic activists in all post-communist countries by bringing together the civil society across the geographical, national, ethnic, and religious borders in an effort to share experiences, creating common programs, and to foster pluralistic and democratic values across the region.
Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) Azerbaijan Branch	To build journalistic connections across the Caucasus, share information, and from collaborations across the borders. Trainings on issues of conflict resolution as well as reporting national minorities.
International Eurasia Press Fund (IEPF)	IEFP works primarily in three areas: Media and Civil Society Development; Peacemaking Actions and Conflictology; Refugees/IDPs problems and Community Development.
South Caucasus Centre of Culture of Peace and Dialogue of Civilizations	To contribute to the resolution of conflicts in Southern Caucasus.

Sources:

Directory of Peacebuilding Organizations in the Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, United Nations, 2009, 186-201

NGOs and International Organizations in Azerbaijan, azerb.com,

<http://www.azerb.com/az-ngos.html>

Websites of the organizations

Appendix 3

Names of the NGOs in Nagorno-Karabakh						
Artsakh Institute of Popular Diplomacy. Peace-building Resource Center.	“Nairi-Spirit” Art Center	“Revived Motherland” NGO	“Tradition” Cultural Center	“Kachar” Scientific Center in Shushi	Artsakh Youth Union of Armenian Apostolic Church	Artsakh Democratic Party Youth Union
“Pedagogue” NGO	Artsakh Veterans Union	“Alpha & Omega” NGO	NKR Russian-speaking Citizens Union	Harmony NGO	“Defender of Motherland” Artsakh Soldiers Union	“Hanganak” NGO
Artsakh Journalists Union	“Open Society” NGO	“Artsakh Women” NGO	Civil Initiative Center	Shushi Educational Sport NGO	NKR Missing Soldiers’ Relatives Union	“Zepyur” NGO
Stepanakert Press Club	“Art for Peace and Development” NGO	“Helsinki Initiative-92” NGO	Karabakh Medical Union	MesropMashots Union (Shushi)	NKR Helsinki Initiative-92 NGO Youth Branch	Human Rights Defense Artsakh Association
Stepanakertis World Club	“Vachagan Barepasht” NGO	“Artsakh Intellectuals Union”	Human Rights Defense Artsakh Association	Generation of Hayk Youth NGO	ARF Dashnaksutyun Youth Union	“Contact” Blind Persons Union
“Vita” Artsakh War Wounded Veterans Relief Fund	League of Military Journalists	“Promised Land” NGO	“Russian Community” NGO	Youth People Christian Association	“Aram Manukyan” ARF Dashnaksutyun Student Union	
NKR Fallen Soldiers’ Relatives Union	“Dialogue” Art Studies Center	Armenian Relief Society Artsakh Branch	NKR Refugees NGO	Armenian Youth Club NGO (Berdzor)	Free Motherland Party Youth Union	

Source: Office of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic in Washington in Washington DC

Appendix 4 - Interviews conducted:

Karen Bekaryan, (Head of the European Integration NGO), Yerevan, 17 April, 2013

Karine Ohanyan, (Nagorno-Karabakh programs coordinator, European Integration NGO), Yerevan, 30 April, 2013

Sarasar Saryan, (Head of the NKR Refugees NGO), Yerevan, 23 April, 2013

Irina Grigoryan, (Head of the Artsakh Institute for Popular Diplomacy), 26 April, 2013

Kim Gabrielyan, (Head of the Artsakh Journalists Union), 24 April, 2013

Karen Ohanjanyan, (Coordinator of the Nagorno-Karabakh branch of Helsinki Initiative-92 NGO), 28 April, 2013

Albert Voskanyan, (Head of the Civil Society Initiative at Nagorno-Karabakh), 23 April, 2013

Vahram Poghosyan, (Member of the Free Motherland Party Youth Union), 27 April, 2013

Appendix 5 – Interview Questionnaire

1. What is the name of your NGO?
2. What do you understand by saying “civil society”? Whether the “civil society” you described exists in Nagorno-Karabakh?
3. Do you agree that NGOs are the nucleus of “civil society”? Why yes, or why no?
4. In Your opinion, what is the role/potential of the Nagorno-Karabakh civil society in the peace process of the conflict?
5. How do you think, what’s the role of Armenian and Azerbaijani civil societies in the peace process? Is their presence necessary? Why so?
6. In your opinion, what are the ways the Nagorno-Karabakh civil society can be (more actively) engaged in the peace process?
7. How do you think, civil society in isolation or in cooperation with a Government can have a positive impact on the peacebuilding path? And in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict case?
8. Till now, what projects have been implemented by the Nagorno-Karabakh NGOs in the framework of the peace process? Have Your NGO participated? Why so?