THE KARABAKH QUESTION

by

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ABSTRACT

For over a decade the Nagorno Karabakh conflict has been unresolved. The battle existing between Armenia, Karabakh and Azerbaijan in the South Caucasus is only one example of the numerous ethnic conflicts occurring in this post-Soviet bloc. Not only are these conflicts a risk to international security, but also a hindrance to democratization in the region. No settlement has been found based on the status of Karabakh being unexamined, or more rightly put, the failure of negotiators to answer the Karabakh question. This paper is an attempt to answer the Karabakh question through examining the effectiveness of using historical factors, international law and conflict resolution models to solve the conflict at hand.

This abstract accurately represents the content of the candidate's thesis. I recommend its publication.

Signed

Christoph Stefes
DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to the freedom fighters and peacemakers in the world.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank my family for putting up with me while working on a project that has consumed all of our lives for over a year. Thank you mom and dad for watching my daughter while I traveled throughout Nagorno Karabakh, and thank you Hauncy for daring to adventure with me. I would also like to thank my crazy landlady in Yerevan, Armenia, Ms. Anahit Avetisian, for regularly calling the Armenian government to report us as American spies during our stay in the South Caucasus. Without her help we would not have received such a warm welcome by Armenian foreign ministry officials. Most of all I would like to thank Dr. Christoph Stefes for directing me to study the Karabakh conflict, Dr. Gerard Libaridian for kindly helping me with my research, and Mr. Devon Barclay for nightly philosophical discussions of the problem.
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INTRODUCTION

February 20, 1988, the government of Nagorno Karabakh – an autonomous enian enclave within Azerbaijan, known locally as Artsakh – voted to leave oviet Socialist Republic of Azerbaijan and formally unify with Armenia, the n’s ethnic and historical brother. In part this was a political decision, vated by impending Azerbaijani plans to secede from the USSR and
incorporate Nagorno-Karabakh into its new state structure. Such a move would have removed the autonomous status Nagorno-Karabakh had enjoyed under Soviet rule. After Karabakh's vote, however, Azeris waged an ethnically based attack against several Armenian villages within Azerbaijan. These attacks led Armenia to send forces into the conflict on Karabakh's side, and the beginnings of an ethnic conflict that has lasted for over a decade.

When I began my research I wanted to explore the Karabakh problem—the question of Karabakh's status, which has hindered peace negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan. But as I spoke with people during my adventures in Stepanakert and Yerevan, I soon realized that a durable peace could only occur if all parties are satisfied, something unlikely at this time due to the unwillingness of the warring parties to compromise. In turn, I determined it was only proper to look more closely at Karabakhtsi claims in order to determine not only the legality and legitimacy of their movement, but also which possible
status would be beneficial to all involved. I came to understand that the only way the problem could be resolved peacefully is through Karabakh's independence.

This paper is an examination of the status of Karabakh – the Karabakh question – and how it is directly related to the continuation of the conflict in spite of the relevant international law, the availability of numerous settlement models, and the intervention of negotiating organizations. From an examination of these factors, I will suggest that the only way to successfully resolve the conflict and bring stability to the South Caucasus region is through Karabakh sovereignty.

There are many valuable reasons to analyze the Karabakh question. First, the only way to resolve the conflict at hand is to address what Karabakh's status will be. Second, as long as the conflict remains unresolved, the dangers of a failure of democratization in the region are heightened. Third, the conflict itself threatens international security: according to Michael P. Croissant, the Karabakh problem "poses the greatest threat to peace and security throughout the entire
Caucasus.’ Along with these, there have been severe costs for many in the Southern Caucasus. Internal security problems have arisen in Azerbaijan because of the state’s inability to competently handle the humanitarian crisis created by the conflict’s hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons and refugees. Thousands of people have flooded Baku and surrounding villages, straining Azerbaijan’s already tattered economy and, in turn, the leadership’s political legitimacy. Armenia and Karabakh have had drastic sanctions levied on them by Turkey and Azerbaijan, effectively closing them off from the outside world. Only the Georgian and Iranian borders remain open.

Turkey may have strategically decided to stand in solidarity with Azerbaijan because they are ethnically linked to Azeris. But, because of the legacy of the 1915 Armenian Genocide carried out by Ottoman Turks, most Armenians and Karabakhtsies see the sanctions as an attempt to further the ideology of pan-Turkism and remove Armenians from the region for good. Regardless of the rhetoric behind Turkey’s motives, these sanctions have
damaged Armenian and Karabakhtsi trade and international relations, effectively hurting not only state development, but also hindering humanitarian transports.

Both Turkey and Azerbaijan remain steadfast that these sanctions can lift on the condition that occupying Armenian forces leave Azeri territory and Nagorno Karabakh demilitarizes. But to know the likelihood and practicality of this, it is important to seriously investigate all possible resolutions for the Karabakh question – one of them being Karabakhi statehood.

I have been able to construct this project only after reading and examining numerous government documents from the former USSR, international laws enshrined in the United Nations, and conflict resolution theories. But most importantly, this study is informed by observations I made while traveling throughout Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh. There are several descriptions of, and prescriptions for solving, the Karabakh conflict. These range from explanations of the conflict as an intractable, age-old ethnic war, rooted in the evils of ethno-nationalism (for which there may be no resolution), to its being a
legitimate self-determination movement (resolvable by international law, resolve, and cooperation). Prescribed solutions range from creating a federalist system between Karabakh and Azerbaijan to land exchange between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Yet solutions aside, a statement of the problem and question has not yet achieved consensus between the parties involved.

In all the documents I have read on resolving the conflict I have been disappointed that no one has explicitly addressed the fact that Karabakhtsies will not settle with or compromise to any solution that would lead to something other than status fully independent from Azerbaijan – whether through unification with Armenia, or sovereignty. Beyond this, there is a tendency amongst scholars to overlook the cultural differences that exist between Armenia and Karabakh. These flaws combine the agendas of the two distinct entities and remove Karabakh as an active participant in the conflict. As a result, they tend to limit their analyses of the situation to Armenian and Azerbaijani interests. I argue, as Khjell-Ake Nordquist does, that in order for ethnic conflicts to be
honesty resolved, all parties must be satisfied. He writes, "A solution is likely to be durable, that is, an operative political situation, when it reflects and meets the needs and interests of the parties." Such durability can only be sought with the inclusion of Karabakh as a member of the conflict and an acknowledgement of its unique interests.

The primary documents I have read and will use to examine the legitimacy of the NKR's self-determination movement include the USSR constitution, the 1990 USSR Law on Secession (otherwise known as "On the Procedures for a Union Republic to secede from the USSR"), and UN charter chapters and articles referring to self-determination and territorial integrity. While there are not many secondary sources that strongly support my investigation, I have been able to synthesize analyses of the Karabakh problem and question for support. Other literature that has assisted my research comes from topics in ethnic conflict theory, geopolitical strategies and historical analyses of Karabakh's political life.
The data I have collected for this paper include not only my personal experience in the region, but also numerous reviews of scholarly reports and critical analyses of USSR and international policies on self-determination, secession and state formation. I have also used several documents presented to me by international organizations, the Armenian and Karabakhti foreign ministries, and various regional universities. The materials I have included in this research are a combination of the perspectives of Armenians, Karabakhties, and Azerbaijani nationalists, the United States, France, and Russia, and ethnic conflict scholars. I specifically used materials recommended by Armenian and Azerbaijani officials, citizens, and scholars in order to have a clear understanding of their perspectives on the Karabakh conflict.

This investigation is a case study. I believe this strategy has helped me gain a profound understanding of Karabakh’s dilemma, as well as assisted me with synthesizing several challenging explanations of the conflict and the debates over the political status of Nagorno Karabakh. Through this method I have
been able to address these questions and lessen problems that could arise from a quantitative analysis of the Karabakh situation.

In this paper I evaluated international norms and their relationship to Karabakh in hopes of demonstrating and promoting a conflict solution based on Nagorno Karabakh's independence. In Chapter 1 I will discuss the history of the Nagorno Karabakh region from the perspective of the international community and the warring parties. From this I show how the region always had an autonomous structure, hence, the history of the territory cannot be useful in determining rightful ownership from the perspectives of Azerbaijan or Armenia.

The discussion in Chapter 2 explores the inability of actors involved to use international law to resolve the Karabakh conflict. Under the precepts of realpolitik, international law has been deemed as a tool of the political elite to achieve their self-interests, rather than to establish social justice in the Karabakh case. Chapter 3 focuses on the improbability of solving the conflict through international intervention and the implementation of a power-sharing
arrangement. In conclusion, Chapter 4 examines a solution to the Karabakh conflict realized through Karabakhi sovereignty under the aegis of a quasi union between the South Caucasus states, a forward move in democratization, and normalized relations between the states.

The option of Karabakhi sovereignty has not been sincerely considered and is generally mentioned only in passing by scholars as a kind of “wishful” thinking. In fact, former US ambassador to the OSCE Minsk Group John Maresca noted that the conflict has remained unresolved due to the unwillingness of the parties to compromise...They [hold] out for impossible conditions in the hopes of winning the conflict, either militarily or by out waiting their opponents. Each of these parties has a weak government, and lacks a sophisticated political establishment which might be able to consider broader interests rationally.⁴

Are either statehood or integration impossible conditions? If so, why? Maresca fails to answer these questions, resorting to a pessimistic attitude that reflects an “unwillingness” to understand the situation completely.
Conflicts between states and peoples are disturbing and leave us with a feeling of being powerless. They arise swiftly, are extremely violent, and last for indefinite durations. The last thing negotiators should do is getting wrapped into their own ideologies on how to resolve the conflict. Each conflict is different, not only because of the history between the parties involved, but also because of special circumstances. In the case of Karabakh, the negotiators have failed to obtain a consensus on every single proposal, mainly because they continuously fail to acknowledge the status of Karabakh. Kofi Annan once stated that:

> Crises and conflicts are the product of human folly and human evil...[but] they can be solved by human wisdom and human effort... Any peace, and every prosperity depend on legitimate, responsive politics... and differences that can be resolved peacefully, but must be resolved politically.

Owing to this account, the responsible thing is to search for alternative solutions to the Karabakh conflict, to be optimistic that a moral and just remedy will be found, and that new relationships can be formed.
CHAPTER II

Sigmund Freud once argued that group identity is actualized through enemy, because adversaries need one another to remind themselves of who they really are. Groups fixating on their minor differences are able to establish themselves as enemies, and consequently, lose sight of the commonalities that may actually unite them. Freud named this fixation the "narcissism of minor differences."
differences" — a narcissism that arguably exists between Armenians and Azerbaijanis and has assisted them in denying each other's claims over Karabakh.

The ethnic conflict occurring over the status of Karabakh is unique in the South Caucasus because it is the only ethnic conflict that has resulted in a war between states. An explanation to why these ethnic disputes are occurring is related to ethnic policies, or, more specifically, Stalin's divide and rule strategies of the 1920s; without an empire to guarantee minority rights, insecurities have fostered tensions. Stalin implemented these policies to separate strong ethnic groups in an effort to develop a common Soviet identity. These divisive policies were used by the Soviets to suppress ethnic nationalism in hopes of establishing an allegiance towards common communist goals. To execute this method of rule, Michael Klare writes that "the Soviet leadership created interrepublic borders that often bore little relationship to the actual distribution of ethnic groups." At face value, such politics were ingenious and helped make a multi-ethnic empire easier to control by diffusing nationalist impulses and promoting
Soviet interests. But they have had dire consequences for the post-Soviet Southern Caucasus of today.9

The suppression of deeply rooted ethnic rivalries, the fall of a strong center that guaranteed minority rights, and patterns of migration and immigration in the Caucasus because of political and economic instability, are thought to be at the foundation for these current conflicts. As such, it is argued by scholars that these conflicts could be directly related to the democratization process. Jack Snyder writes in *From Voting to Violence* that:

> Before democratization begins, nationalism is usually weak or absent among the broad masses of the population. Popular nationalism typically arises during the earliest stages of democratization, when elites use nationalist appeals to compete for popular support. Democratization produces nationalism when powerful groups within the nation not only need to harness popular energies to the tasks of war and economic development, but also want to avoid surrendering real political authority to the average citizen.10

This trend arises because of fears of the future, whether due to a predicted lack of resources or by elites reincarnating myths of historic enemies coming to destroy given ethnic groups. According to David A. Lake and Donald Rothchild:
Ethnic conflict is not caused directly by inter-group differences, 'ancient hatreds' and centuries-old feuds, or the stresses of modern life within a global economy. Nor were ethnic passions, long bottled up by repressive communist regimes, simply uncorked by the end of the Cold War... intense ethnic conflict is most often caused by collective fears of the future.  

When these groups gain statehood, old insecurities can be restored and are direct products of a misconceived historical story joined to the dilemmas of having sovereign control of given territory for the first time in modern history.  

Such currents find their illustration in Karabakh. Determining which side in the Karabakh conflict has an inherent right to the territory is difficult, if not impossible. The difficulty resides in the fact that all actors involved have a passion for the region and a perceived cause for obtaining it. The Armenians attach the preservation of their culture to the territory of Karabakh, while the Azerbaijanis “consider Nagorno Karabakh to be the very place where their modern identity emerged under the Muslim khans.” As ethnologists argue, the struggle over Karabakh “has itself been the most important factor in stimulating the growth of Azerbaijani national consciousness in the 20th century.” Hence,
the debate between scholars and politicians in the region has been improperly
drawn down to what ethnic group historically ruled the territory, causing each
side to collect evidence that reaches far back into time – as far as 300 B.C. – in an
attempt to deny that the other group ever developed in, or ruled, the region.

In War is a Force that Gives Us Meaning, Chris Hedges writes that

"Nationalist and ethnic conflicts are fratricides that turn on absurdities. They can
only be sustained by myth." It is known that contriving history is a difficult
task, but it is especially true in the Southern Caucasus where history itself consists
of myths, a fixation on differences, and influence by the numerous empires that
have ruled the region as a whole. The history of the Southern Caucasus, along
with the relations that existed between ethnicities, has been lost over time due to
elite interests and the components of nationalism that followed the hopes of
obtaining independence from imperial rule. Thomas Goltz argues that:

The historical claims and counterclaims in the Karabakh conflict are so complex and contradictory that the writer will
take the radical step and leap over more than two thousand
years of disputed history and start in our present century. It
does not seem productive to analyze dialectical differences
and establish the construction of dates of ancient monasteries, as Armenian scholars and their foreign parrots do in order to 'prove' almost eternal ownership of the region. Nor does it seem productive to deconstruct the inhabitants and pour them into a different ethnic mold, as Azerbaijan scholars attempt to do.\textsuperscript{15} Nevertheless, as scholar Michael Croissant writes, "The willingness of Armenian and Azerbaijani scholars to depict a clear ethnic history of the region, where none exists, is indicative of the passion attached to the Karabakh issue by both sides."\textsuperscript{16}

The Armenian and Azerbaijani arguments do not validate their claim to mountainous Karabakh, but simply reveal their fixation on being different from one another. Armenian scholars will agree in general that Armenia directly ruled Karabakh from the 4\textsuperscript{th} century BC until it was conquered and ruled by the Persians in 424 AD. Meanwhile, Azerbaijani intellectuals argue that mountainous Karabakh has been historically part of the kingdom of the Caucasian Albanians, and more importantly, that Azerbaijanis are direct descendants of these people.\textsuperscript{17}

In addition to claiming mountainous Karabakh, Christopher Walker writes that
“Historians of the Baku school have attempted to show that in ancient and medieval times, the territory between Lake Sevan and the Kura (which are Armenian territories) belonged not to Armenia but to Caucasian Albania,” extending Azeri territorial claims deep within Armenian territory.\(^\text{18}\) By and large, Armenian scholars respond to the Azeri argument that Caucasian Albanians ruled the region through detailed archeological examinations of ancient church architecture in Karabakh -clearly Armenian by design - to declare the region as being culturally and ethnically linked to Armenia.

Azerbaijanis do not deny that Karabakh holds an affinity to Armenia; however, they believe this is due to the region being Armenified during the 4\(^{th}\) century, at a time when Karabakhtsies’ ancestors converted to Christianity and aligned themselves with Armenia – rather than a truly Armenian ethnic identity. Azerbaijani scholars thus argue that when these ancestors aligned themselves with Armenia in the 4\(^{th}\) century, the “upper classes were effectively Armenized”\(^\text{19}\) and the remainder of the population was assimilated.
The Armenians first deconstructed the Caucasian Albanian language, and what subsequently followed was the death of that culture. For the time being, there exists a school of Armenian intellectuals that do not shy away from admitting that Caucasian Albanians occupied the region of Karabakh, but they insist that Azerbaijanis are not their direct descendents and that Armenians governed the region for a longer period.

Although Karabakh shared its Christian roots with Armenia, what was to occur in the 11th century would split the Karabakhi plains and mountains. During the 11th century the Seljuks (a Turkish tribe) invaded the Southern Caucasus and transformed the plains region of Karabakh. As Armenian scholar Ronald Suny writes, this invasion consequently began “a process of Islamization that resulted in the conversion of the peoples of the plain to the east of Karabakh to Islam.” 20 It was these people, of the Karabakhtsi plains, who are now the direct ancestors of Azerbaijanis. They learned to speak a Turkic language and adopted the Shi’i brand of Islam dominant in neighboring Iran.
They also aligned themselves with their Turkic brothers in the west. Although this occurred, the mountains still remained Christian and the Caucasian Albanians in the mountains further joined in solidarity with Armenia, in an attempt to protect their culture from Islam. This unification effectively transformed the region into a power struggle between Christianity and Islam, a struggle that continues today.

During this period of Islamification the Armenian Catholicos (similar to the Catholic Pope) was born and “semi-independent Armenian princes governed Karabakh...until the 19th century when the Russian empire annexed the region from Iran.” But, prior to Russian annexation in 1750, the Seljuks gained considerable influence in mountainous Karabakh, mainly because the Armenian princes were spread throughout and carried different agendas in the region. Such disunion amongst the five princes allowed the Seljuks to establish a foothold in the mountains. As a result, the Karabakhtsies requested to be unified with their brothers in Armenia, but the Azeris – supported by their brothers in Turkey –
disallowed unification in fears that Christianity was becoming stronger and would threaten their Islamic regime. This request for unification was Karabakh's first attempt to join Armenia. However, it was not the last.

In 1805, 1918, 1921 and 1988, the people of Karabakh appealed to other administrative powers (the Russian Empire, Great Britain, Stalinist Russia and later Gorbachev's USSR) to have their territory incorporated into Armenia.

When the communists gained political control over Baku and established the Soviet republic of Azerbaijan in 1920, the new government promised that Karabakh would be integrated into the Soviet republic of Armenia. After Armenia was Sovietized in December 1920, Dr. Nariman Narimanov, the president of Soviet Azerbaijan, "in a gesture of fraternalism, renounced all Azerbaijani claims to Mountainous Karabakh… a declaration that was broadcast throughout the world as evidence that only the Soviet order could resolve such complex national questions." On July 3, 1921, the Caucasian Bureau of the Communist Party attached Mountainous Karabakh to Soviet Armenia, but "two
days later the bureau reversed itself considering the necessity of national
harmony between Muslims and Armenians.” 26 The Soviet Central Government
believed that the Christian Armenians, “to whom fate had never been kind in the
past and who had been preserved from further extermination by the Russians,”
would be content with whatever they were offered by the Russians, while “a
Moslem people, like the Azerbaijani Turks, had to be won over by
concessions.” 27 Moreover, from a geopolitical standpoint, it was simple: Russia
needed oil and territorial control to keep Turkey from expanding. This could
only be accomplished by satisfying the Azeris.

Christopher Walker writes that in order for the Soviets “To wipe out local
patriotism in Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan, Stalin merged several territories
into a single Trans-Caucasian federation. This arrangement continued until the
local leadership had been thoroughly purged by firing squads and Siberian
exile.” 28 Having accomplished this, further efforts by Stalin focused on turning
Armenia into a model region in an effort to attract attention from the Armenian
diaspora – a group that, since the genocide in 1915, had become one of the largest and most developed in the world. Stalin’s constitution in 1936 later made Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan into separate Soviet Socialist Republics, with borders drawn in such a way as to relegate specific economic sectors to the control of separate, interdependent regions. These decisions were also made with the intent of appeasing – and therefore bringing under the control of Moscow – prominent regional elites.

History cannot be a moral determinate of who should gain control of Karabakh. This fact alone appears to submerge the conflict and the peace settlement into a realm of subjectivity. In the next chapter I will explore whether or not international law can be used to resolve the Karabakh conflict. If history cannot help resolve the conflict, perhaps legal norms can.
CHAPTER III

Figure 1.2 March 2003 Demonstration in Yerevan, Armenia.

LEGALISM VS. REALISM

The right to self-determination and territorial integrity are enshrined in the UN Charter. However, in reality they rarely matter, and are only to under the political will of the stronger. Due to these apparent rig contradictions, when the Soviet Union began to fragment in the late rights became a serious topic of debate. Under the hierarchical struc
USSR, consisting of union republics, autonomous republics and autonomous regions (in terms of the self-determination literature, regions occupied by enclave peoples), the questions quickly became: Who has legitimacy to break free from the union, and How should it occur? In this chapter I will briefly discuss the international norms of self-determination and territorial integrity, the Soviets' conception of self-determination (as enshrined in its constitution), as well as the Soviet law that sought to remedy the dilemmas of territorial integrity brought on by the fragmentation of the union. The following discussion will demonstrate that neither international nor domestic laws provide realistic solutions to the Karabakh question.

Certainly the controversial issue of legitimacy did not begin (nor end) with the fragmentation of the USSR. During the mid 20th century Belgium and France jointly argued that enclave colonies or peoples have the legitimate right to seek self-determination. In response, the international community (led mainly by the United States and Britain) argued for the "blue water thesis," which was
implemented into international law under UN Resolution 1541. Under this policy, only colonized peoples separated geographically from their administering state could practice self-determination. According to S. James Anaya, Resolution 1541 was "developed effectively to preclude decolonization procedures consideration to enclaves of indigenous or tribal peoples living within the external boundaries of independent states." Today those who believe enclave self-determination movements (like those in Karabakh) are illegal use this resolution for justification.

In international law the principle of self-determination is specifically laid out within articles 1, 55, 73 and 76 in the United Nations (UN) Charter, as well as under UN Resolutions 1514 and 1541. Under article 1, the purpose of the United Nations is specifically laid out:

The Purposes of the United Nations are: To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace.
Through honoring the principle of self-determination, it was hoped by many that a peaceful international community would flourish, ridding the world of the threat of devastation like that seen in the world wars.

Though these laws appear ironclad – protecting the right for people to determine their own political destiny – some believe “these provisions are vague and it is doubtful whether they lend themselves to establishing specific rights and duties.”30 The UN Charter specifically announces peoples as having the right to self-determination, but “the Charter leaves us ignorant on what is a ‘people’,”31 leaving it to a heated debate of semantics. Nevertheless, the laws establishing the principle of self-determination are in fact accepted by the international community, but are often ignored in place for a more valued right in the eyes of states – that of territorial integrity.

The principle of territorial integrity is most often the victor because it aims to secure state power and its legitimacy. From a realpolitik perspective, it is in the interest – as well as in the political will – of states involved to examine each
case of conflict between peoples and states to determine which principle they will promote, either self-determination or territorial integrity. In the case of Karabakh, it was determined by powers in the international community – particularly the United States, France and Russia – that Azerbaijan had acted according to the principle of territorial integrity and had the right to protect its newly formed state. This made the Karabakhtsies’ claim for self-determination illegal.32

The principle of territorial integrity, or sovereignty, is also internationally established in the UN Charter. The principle and its definition can be observed under article 2, paragraphs 1, 4 and 7. Peter Malanczuk posits that “the control of territory is the essence of the state. This is the basis of the central notion of territorial sovereignty,”33 and, hence, the reason why territorial integrity is an international norm in our current state system. Because control of territory is the basis for the existence of states, secession is deemed unlawful in the UN Charter.
What becomes an issue is whether or not self-determination violates the principle of territorial integrity, and in turn threatens the existence of the state system.

Many believe that self-determination leads to a chaotic international system, but this is more often than not based on misconceptions of self-determination. These misunderstandings are generally due to confusion to what options are available under the principle itself. S. James Anaya believes the misconception is “that self-determination in its fullest sense means a right to independent statehood,” rather than acknowledging it as being a necessary component of the decolonization process. The self-determination movement that gave rise to the Karabakh problem is not necessarily based on “a territorial, religious, or ethnic conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan (as many would assert to), but a quest for freedom and self-government,” which is a fundamental precedent and “the last step[] in the Soviet Union’s decolonization process.” In the Karabakh case, self-determination is a prescription to remedy mass injustices developed by colonialism. Self-determination is not a process of creating
disorder and chaos in the international community, which is thought by those who misidentify secession with legitimate self-determination movements.

The USSR had a rather unique conception of self-determination, one that appeared to take precedence over the principle of territorial integrity. For Lenin, self-determination was a right associated with the liberation of oppressed peoples and was to "contribute to the success of the socialist revolution." While Lenin believed that self-determination was to be used as a means to achieve the ends of communism, Joseph Stalin had a more elaborate, broad definition of this right.

In 1913, Joseph Stalin wrote

The right of self-determination means that a nation can arrange its life according to its own will. It has the right to arrange its life on the basis of autonomy. It has the right to enter into federal relations with other nations. It has the right to complete secession. Nations are sovereign and all nations are equal.

Consequently, communist conceptions of self-determination eliminated the claims any government had against peoples who were seeking self-determination.

But what Lenin had intended in order to spread the communist movement
would lay the groundwork for the destruction of all state loyalties – even those to the Soviet Union by dissidents who sought to destroy it. Anatoly M. Khazanov posits that “self-determination promulgated by the Bolsheviks was a tactical maneuver [but], Lenin understood the danger of Russian chauvinism for the future of the Soviet Union; his successors [i.e. Joseph Stalin] neglected his warning.”

Aryeh Unger writes that the Soviet Union was “the first state to have transformed such an impressive catalogue of international norms into its domestic fundamental law.” Accordingly, the Soviets gravitated to the principles of territorial integrity and self-determination, ratifying both these principles into its constitution to bolster the appeal of states to join the Soviet Union. To create peaceful relations amongst states, it was imperative to establish the principle of territorial integrity. Under article 78 of the USSR Constitution, the Soviets captured this principle by writing:

The territory of a Union Republic (SSR) may not be altered without its consent. The boundaries between Union Republics may be altered by mutual agreement of the
Republics concerned, subject to ratification by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

On the other hand, to encourage states to join the union, the principle of self-determination was necessary, so it was written into article 72, saying each Union Republic shall retain the right freely to secede from the USSR. The Soviets believed that the mere essence of sovereignty rested upon the premise of self-determination. Moreover, Professor Unger argues that, "Soviet spokesmen regarded the right of secession as the very hallmark of what they described as the 'sovereignty' of a member republic." However, it was a right granted unto members in the "knowledge that it would not have to be honored." Member states could in fact use declaratory measures to practice the right of secession or self-determination, but whether the right would ever have legislative character would essentially be a matter decided by the center. While the common folk believed the Soviet regime had captured the essence of self-determination in their constitution, it was a known fact by all elites in the union that territorial integrity was never a guarantee
for anyone, most importantly for the autonomous regimes and republics in the
USSR.42

Since the beginning of the Karabakh conflict in the late 1980s the
Kremlin's position reflected Article 78 of the Soviet Constitution, which stated
that the "territory of a Union republic may not be altered without its consent.
The boundaries between union republics may be altered by mutual
agreement...subject to confirmation by the USSR." This constitutional provision
apparently tied the hands of the Moscow government, allowing the Karabakh
situation to deteriorate and eventually outlast the Soviet system itself. There was,
however, one attempt by the Soviet Union to deal with the problem of
autonomous republics and regions within the SSRs. It took the form of a law
ratified on April 3, 1990, properly named "On the Procedures for a Union
Republic to secede from the USSR". Article 3 specifically relates to autonomous
republics and regions. The article states that:

In a union republic in its turn comprising autonomous republics, regions and districts, the referendum is held in each of the autonomous districts and regions. It is the right of the
population of the given autonomous republic, region, regions and districts, to vote either for or against secession from the USSR, as well as claim the legal status of the given republic.

In a union republic on the territory of which there are areas of concentrated population of ethnic groups comprising the majority of the population, the referendum results for those territories are calculated separately.\textsuperscript{43}

The USSR law on secession was a quest to reconcile the principles of self-determination and territorial integrity. This policy would make SSRs divest themselves from any autonomous republics and/or regions granted unto them during their membership in the union – unless a popular referendum in these autonomous republics and/or regions demonstrated that the people residing within them wanted to remain as an integral part of the seceding SSR.

Simultaneously, the law represented a decision by the Soviet government to give power back to its dissenting populous, as well as a move to remove itself as a responsible agent for any trouble, i.e. conflicts, caused by the collapse of the communist regime. Such a collapse was thought to inevitably give rise to ethnic conflict due to “commitment problems that arise[] when two groups find
Table 1.0 The Arguments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conflicting Parties</th>
<th>Armenia &amp; NK</th>
<th>Azerbaijan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Territory</td>
<td>N.K. has always been controlled by Armenian princes; has always had autonomy; the territory itself has kept Armenian culture from ruin for over 1,000 years.</td>
<td>N.K. was unjustly ruled by Armenian princes after the cultural genocide of their ancestors, the Caucasian Albanians; N.K. was the place of the Azerbaijani cultural renaissance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The People</td>
<td>Ethnic Armenians has always lived and controlled the territory.</td>
<td>The people of N.K. are not Armenians, but rather Armenified Caucasian Albanians.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Law</td>
<td>Under international law, Karabakhties have the legitimate right of self-determination. Under Soviet law, they acted lawfully when they voted for reunification with Armenia. They believe that their right of self-determination is being denied and undermined due to post Cold War games.</td>
<td>Under international law, Azerbaijani feel justified in defending the borders of their newly formed state. They believe that Armenia is the agitator of the war and that terrorism was used to acquire N.K. They believe that Armenia is seeking justice for the Armenian genocide through expansion and their destruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Forces</td>
<td>The UN and OSCE Minsk group are unable to resolve the conflict because of the imperialistic motives of the member states. There are too many outside interests involved trying to solve the problem, leading to a huge mistrust of international involvement.</td>
<td>Same Belief</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
themselves without a third party that can credibly guarantee agreements between them." While this policy on secession was enacted under mixed intentions, it unfortunately did not prevent conflict from exploding between Armenia, Nagorno Karabakh, and Azerbaijan.

It is difficult to determine which right takes precedence, self-determination or territorial integrity, in the Karabakh problem. What is clear is that the referendum held on February 20, 1988 by the government of Nagorno Karabakh to be unified with Armenia was lawful according to Soviet law. What is also understood is that Azerbaijan failed to abide by Soviet law when it deemed it necessary to take control of Karabakh by removing its autonomous structure.

Under Article 7 of the USSR law on secession, it is written:

The following issues must be settled in the transition period by the seceding republic on the one hand and the USSR (as well as other union and autonomous republics and ethnic groups mentioned in the second part of the Article 3 of the present law) on the other: (7) determine the status of territories not belonging to a seceding republic as of the date of its accession to the USSR.
Mountainous Karabakh was not an integral part of Azerbaijan at the time of accession to the union; it was an undefined region that belonged to several ethnic groups. As a result, Karabakh should have been returned to its autonomous structure as it was deemed prior to the region's Sovietization in the 1920s.

Scholars, as well as politicians, who study the Karabakh problem, fail to mention the fact that the Karabakhtsies acted in accordance with the Soviet law on secession and international law. Perhaps elites chose to ignore this issue fearing that it would legitimize other ethnic conflicts occurring in places such as Georgia and Chechnya, or because the laws are irrelevant, believing that Karabakh is strictly an issue of politics, not law.

Although political will does not change the fact that Karabakhtsies acted lawfully by not using force or violence when practicing self-determination, it does demonstrate how political realism generally takes precedence over legalism. E.H. Carr once wrote that there is a "strong inclination to treat law as something independent of, and ethically superior to politics," but in all actuality, the law is a
function of political will,"46 transforming the law into "the weapon of the stronger."47

The Karabakh conflict continues in part because Karabakh's political status - the Karabakh question - remains unclear and is unacknowledged in the numerous peace proposals arranged by the leading negotiating organization. An answer to the Karabakh question remains uncertain arguably due to the contradictory principles of self-determination and territorial integrity. Unfortunately both of these principles appear to be applicable in the Karabakh case, regardless of the efforts made by the Soviets to reconcile the contradictions through the 1990 law on the procedures for secession. For this reason negotiators have avoided discussing Karabakh's status, effectively allowing the conflict to continue.
The insecurity, or distrust that has historically dominated Armenian and Azerbaijani relations was one factor that led to infringing Karabakh’s autonomy, and consequently to war. In 1992 the Karabakh dispute drastically escalated from a low intensity conflict to full scale war, resulting in enormous numbers of refugees, internally displaced persons, and thousands of casualties. Fortunately for the well being of civilians subjected to the horrors of this conflict, a ceasefire...
has been successful since May 1994. In the meantime the parties involved have been able to fulfill a majority of the obligations established under this treaty - largely because the balance of power established at this time. Nevertheless, the dispute remains unresolved in spite of numerous resolution models available for solving ethnic conflict. In this chapter I will explain why the most popular conflict resolution models do not have implementation value for resolving this conflict under the current political conditions in the Southern Caucasus.

There are several conflict resolution theories I have reviewed in an attempt to find a feasible solution for the Karabakh problem and question - most notable among these, the power sharing arrangements constructed under the consociational and integrative democratization models. None have addressed the passion involved, perhaps because “passion” is an immeasurable variable. Beyond this, none of the theories take into account the unwillingness of parties to act in anyway that would compromise their self-determination movements – compromises which of course would lead only to peace for a limited time. Nor
have these theories been able to remedy the fact that any settlement for unification/reunification would create an imbalance of power in the region, which would further hinder the possibility for healthy interstate relations in the Southern Caucasus. As Barbara F. Walters writes "the decision to go to war or remain at peace is strongly affected by the relative balance of power between adversaries.\(^{48}\)

Barbara F. Walters believes that internal conflicts can successfully end when a third party is involved to assure the resolution design is actualized. This is accomplished when a third party actively works to develop a relationship of trust between parties involved, and disallows the parties from taking advantage of one another during demilitarization.\(^{49}\) However, in the case of Karabakh, peacekeeping forces are impractical due to former Azeri President Heidar Aliyev's heavy-handed oil politics, which tied many Western states' interests to Azerbaijan's fate due to the stakes of their oil investments – arrangements made on unbelievably favorable terms to Western companies. Because of this,
Azerbaijan created a strict policy of allowing no more than 30% of the peacekeeping forces from any one given state. Consequently, the parties involved have been unable to come to an agreement on who could or should perform a peacekeeping operation in Nagorno Karabakh.

Alilyev's oil politics aren't the only factor that has transformed the structure of power within the South Caucasus: so have the militarizations of Armenia and Karabakh. These factors, for the meantime, have helped to create something of a balance of power between Armenian and Azerbaijan. In line with this, I believe no settlement has yet been reached out of fear it would establish an imbalance of power in the region and have dire consequences.

If Karabakh was to unify with Armenia, this could lead to Azerbaijan seeking stronger political and military ties with Turkey to offset the strength Armenia would acquire from unification. On the other hand, if Azerbaijan were to reunite with Karabakh, this would bring Azerbaijan one step closer to their stated goal of unifying with Turkey. Not only would this unification threaten the
sovereignty of states in the South Caucasus, but also threaten politically unstable Russia. The Karabakh conflict has already demonstrated a need to balance powers between the two states militarily and politically, first through Heidar’s oil politics, and second by the fact that Azerbaijan had to seek Russian mercenaries and Afghan mujahadeen in order to fight for Karabakh.51

There is a belief among ethnic conflict scholars that political engineering can not only prevent the outbreak of deadly conflict, but also restore peace and stability between ethnically divided societies. In ethnically heterogeneous states that are democratizing, simple majoritarian democracy inherently threatens weaker ethnic groups and can result in violence. The question becomes, as Timothy Sisk writes, “In deeply divided societies, which kinds of institutions and practices create an incentive structure for ethnic groups to mediate their differences through the legitimate institutions of a common democratic state?”52

Along the same lines, and possibility more importantly, how can political
institutions help maintain a balance of power between states to ensure peaceful relations?

The two pivotal theories on institutionalism are the consociational and integrative approaches to democracy. The founder of the consociational approach to democracy is Arend Lijphart. This model is a parliamentary government that is premised on four principles, grand parliamentary coalitions, minority veto, high proportionality and segmental group autonomy. According to Lijphardt, consociational democracy is the only way to govern ethnically divided societies; however, many have criticized Lijphardt for optimistically believing that "elites can effectively regulate conflict in divided societies." Lijphardt's power-sharing strategy, advocated by scholars such as Samuel Huntington, involves creating homogenous societies by distributing political power amongst ethnic groups through shared institutions. By having an electoral system that involves proportionality, minorities are guaranteed to have their voices heard, although it hinders the possibility of producing moderate leadership.
that is a component of durable peace. This system of democratization could have severe consequences in the case of Karabakh, because separation into homogenous units within Armenia and Azerbaijan has perpetuated the nationalism that can lead to high intensity conflicts.

Donald Horowitz believes that the consociational model is idealistic and does not work often because it is difficult to gain consensus in weak states: this consensus is needed in order to undermine the public support of elites in opposing ethnic groups that seek to spoil resolutions. Under Horowitz’s theory of democratization, known as the integrative approach, power sharing is based on a presidential system of governance and functions from the premise of developing a unitary state that has ethnically blind politicians and public policies. According to Timothy Sisk, this approach “provides politicians with incentives for moderation and coalitions of commitment,” because they are elected from a preference voting system that is semi-proportional. However, there is slim empirical evidence that suggests people would vote for parties or politicians
outside of their own ethnic group. In the Karabakh case ethnic hatred fueled by nationalism, coupled with the lack of political institutions in Azerbaijan, make it unlikely that the common Karabakhti would vote for a politician outside her own ethnic group.

In *Power Sharing and International Mediation in Ethnic Conflicts*, Timothy Sisk writes:

Power sharing arrangements are a potential means of solving self-determination disputes. They aim to promote practices and institutions, which, in one way or another, aim to satisfy all major ethnic groups in society. In this way such arrangements attempt to reconcile the potentially divisive principles of self-determination and democracy in ethnically divided societies. However, Sisk argues that the consociational and integrative power sharing models are not applicable in every case of ethnically divided societies. Therefore, he does believe that “power sharing, if broadly defined to encompass a wide range of practices that promote meaningful inclusivity and balanced influence for all major groups in a multiethnic society, is a potential answer to ethnic conflict management.” Sisk also argues that both the consociational and integrative systems fundamentally lack implementation value. There is a gap between the
Table 1.1 Approaches to Power Sharing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approaches</th>
<th>Consociational</th>
<th>Integrative</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics</td>
<td>Elites cooperate after elections to form multiethnic coalitions and manage conflict; groups are autonomous; minorities are protected.</td>
<td>Parties are encouraged to create coalitions before elections, creating broadly inclusive but majoritarian governments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principles</td>
<td>Broad-based or “grand” coalitions, minority veto, proportionality in allocation of civil service positions and public funds, group autonomy.</td>
<td>Dispersion and devolution of power, promotion of intraethnic competition, inducements for interethnic cooperation, policies to encourage alternative social alignments, managed distribution of resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutions</td>
<td>Parliamentary government, proportional reservation of seats, proportional representation of electoral system.</td>
<td>Federalism, vote pooling, electoral systems, president elected by “supermajority”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengths</td>
<td>Provides groups firm guarantees for the protection of their interests.</td>
<td>Provides politicians with incentives for moderation – “coalitions of commitment.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaknesses</td>
<td>“Coalitions of convenience.” Elites may pursue conflict rather than try to reduce it; communal groups may not defer to their leaders; system relies on constraints against immoderate politics.</td>
<td>Lack of whole-country empirical examples of working systems; assumption that politicians respond to incentives and citizens will vote for parties not based on their own group.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
theoretical frameworks of these democratization approaches and the derivation of policies that would actualize them in real political institutions. Moreover, Sisk believes that the international community must encourage multi-ethnic states in conflict to design power-sharing regimes, effectively establishing what is known as complex power sharing.61

Complex power sharing arrangements do not depend solely on the consociational or integrative approaches, but rather they focus on the particular needs of the state at any given time. However, in order for Sisk’s model to be successful, there must be moderate leaders who are supported by their groups and accept the strategies involved in power sharing arrangements (something which does not exist in either Armenia, Azerbaijan or Nagorno-Karabakh at this time). Compromise between these states is necessary for complex power-sharing arrangements to be successful, simply because power sharing systems cannot be externally imposed by the international community – however, the international community can endorse and help implement these systems. Finally, Sisk strongly
believes that the elements of the initial complex power sharing arrangements cannot remain static; they must be malleable and replaced with more liberal democratic structures in the future.

Even though Sisk's complex power-sharing arrangements aim to create one cohesive, democratic multi-ethnic state, I believe his model can be extended to the international relations paradigm. In today's international structure where the very notion of sovereignty is continuously under scrutiny due to the evolution of the European Union, I believe that conflict resolution theories need to be examined inside the scope of state building, as well as inside the realm of democratizing regions. I see no reasons why Sisk's argument for complex power sharing cannot work within this scope. In fact, I believe that in order for states to implement and maintain their democratic institutions, neighboring states must be able to do the same. Only through a joint effort can the states within the South Caucasus achieve stable democratic governments and produce regional peace.
Russell Hardin writes in *One for All: The Logic of Group Conflict*, that

"Destabilized governments, brought to weakness by war, economic failure, or fights over secession" – such as Azerbaijan – “cannot maintain adequate barriers to violence.” Since the 1994 ceasefire, Azerbaijan has been unable to regain the political and economic stability and growth that may have existed prior to the conflict. This is shown by the lack of democratically elected leaders in Azerbaijan, as well as oil investors shying from their commitments due to skepticism about the size of the oil reserves in the Caspian. These political and economic failures have not only weakened the possibility of democratization in Azerbaijan (and certainly haven’t allowed it to occur at the rate seen in Nagorno Karabakh) but have also prevented Azerbaijanis from effectively running their state, lessening their prospects for regaining active control of Karabakh.

Consequently, I believe it is in the best interest of the Southern Caucasus that Karabakh be recognized as a separate, *de jure* republic, and begins representing itself at regional forums and summits. As I demonstrate in the next
chapter, this would, at least, allow the present reality to be reflected in law,

providing a more objective set of relationships on which to build future regional

coeexistence along economic and trade lines. Through this separation, I believe

the beginnings of a strong, unified region can be accomplished, leading to a

complex power-sharing regional regime amongst all the Southern Caucasus

states. Given the region’s troubled history, and the inapplicability of conflict

resolution theories, this may be the only hope for gaining peaceful relations and

economic prosperity.
CHAPTER V

Figure 1.4 Nagorno Karabakh Parliament Building

THE NAGORNO KARABAKH REPUBLIC: A VIABLE STATE?

A well understood principle in the study of international law is

“possessing the right of self-determination is a legal question, while

accomplishing self-determination is a question of power and diplomacy.”

“The case for independence,” Professor Scharf argues, “is stronger only when a group

has achieved a measure of de facto independence... Nagorno Karabakh has

52
achieved a measure of de facto independence through its military successes and its popularly elected government.”

In earlier chapters I discussed how the history of the region has not helped negotiators determine who has the right to N.K.; how resolving the conflict is a matter of politics, not law, by demonstrating how the involved actors are unwilling to consider international law as a means to find a peaceful solution to their conflict; and that some of the principles of international law are contradictory in themselves. Moreover, I discussed how the power-sharing models, such as the consociational and integrative approaches to democracy, are inapplicable in the Karabakh case unless they are extended into the realm of international relations, establishing and maintaining a balance of power in the Southern Caucasus. In this chapter I will discuss the benefits of Karabakh sovereignty and whether or not it would be a viable solution to the decade old conflict.
There is an assumption in international relations that size matters. Yet state building and recognition are by no means correlated with the size of territory, or population. Valerie Epps argues that there is absolutely "no evidence that large states are more stable or morally better than small states," and argument borne out by the most cursory examination through modern Western history. Moreover, Karabakh's size has proven irrelevant to their ability to field a highly effective military and be the most stable and democratic region within the Southern Caucasus: their mountainous seclusion has allowed them to build institutions without interference from Azerbaijan and others. In a report given by the OSCE after the 2000 Nagorno Karabakh parliamentary elections, they stated:

Leaving aside the rights and wrongs associated with the war fought over the territory, Karabakh today is an oasis of good governance, respect for the law and decency by comparison with most of the rest of the post-Soviet Union.66

More importantly, this trend of democracy followed in the 2002 presidential elections. The OSCE writes in its report that "the 2002 presidential election in
Nagorno-Karabakh was properly conducted, and the result accurately respected the will of the people." Along the same lines, the Independent American Monitoring Delegation, attended by two U.S. congresspeople, wrote in their report that "The NK presidential election was conducted freely and transparently." Unfortunately, neither of these organizations have been able to conclude that elections have been democratic in Georgia, Armenia, or Azerbaijan.

The territorial separatists that emerged in the early 1990s throughout the Southern Caucasus have become the state builders of the twenty first century and have, as Charles King writes,

creat[ed] de facto countries whose ability to field armed forces, control their own territory, educate their children, and maintain local economies is about as well developed as that of the recognized states of which they are still notionally a part.

The Karabakh people have been able to create and maintain institutions that are now giving them the ability fulfill abovementioned goals, still a challenge for many recognized states. Prior to the new regime, the standard of living was
negatively impacted by the poor economic conditions in Azerbaijan and the policies that followed. In the time since, Azerbaijan's general state of weakness has been of obvious benefit to the unrecognized regime of Karabakh. Since gaining its quasi independence from Azerbaijan, the people of Karabakh have acquired “a level of social and economic development that is somewhat higher than that of the general population of Azerbaijan,” giving credence to the Karabakh movement, while not alleviating the sense of loss and shame felt by Azerbaijanis.

Leonidas Chrysanthopoulos, former Greek Ambassador to Armenia, argues that not only has Karabakh become self-sufficient in energy by taking control of Azerbaijani power plants, but that “the Karabakh defense force has become strong enough to easily take over Yerevan and overthrow the Armenian government if necessary.” Not that such a need is likely to arise – while traveling through Armenia and Karabakh, I learnt from various military sources that young Armenian boys, who must fulfill a military service requirement, are
enrolled directly into the Karabakhi armed forces and serve under Karabakh's command. Karabakh's power is largely due to aid provided by international organizations, and its emotive appeal to large Armenian diaspora that continues to support Karabakh through strong lobbying in the United States (amounting to millions in aid and policies that punish Azerbaijan).

The same emotive appeal is rapidly losing credence in Armenia itself. Karabakh has become so strong politically and militarily that they have extended their power into Armenian politics. For this reason, I quickly learned from my discussions with the citizens of Yerevan that the political discourse in Armenia has drastically changed from being primarily focused on reunification with Karabakh to political legitimacy issues. Today, people of Armenia are more concerned about the faltering economic conditions of their state and the Karabakhification of Yerevan, rather than unification with Karabakh.

This new mindset is directly related to the current makeup of the Armenian government. Armenian president Robert Kocharian was a former
Karabakh president and the majority of his advisors, which include officials in the Armenian ministry of defense, are Karabakhi. When I visited Yerevan in February 2003, Kocharian was illegally reelected as president. The international community deemed the election as fraudulent, resulting in a massive outcry. I had the opportunity to observe numerous protests against the reelection of Kocharian with hundreds of thousands of Armenian protestors. These protests were broken up by Karabakhi soldiers, bussed from Stepanakert the morning after the election results were revealed (my own taxi happened to be driving behind the military convoy).

The current Armenian political leadership have transposed Karabakhi nationalism into the mainstream of Armenian political dialogue, something many elite Yerevansis blame for Armenia’s loss of momentum in modernizing, normalizing international relations, and democratizing.

No matter how one observes the Karabakh problem, two things are undeniable – first, both Armenians and Azerbaijanis are ethnically linked to the
region, and second, Karabakh has never been unified with either recognized state in modern or ancient times. Accordingly, it appears to be more logical to grant a level of sovereignty to Karabakh without linking it to either state and to make it part of a bigger union within the Southern Caucasus. From this structure it may be possible to minimize the so called "winner/loser syndrome" felt by both parties through the implementation of specific institutions that could change the balance of economic opportunities for all in the Southern Caucasus, in turn helping to normalize relations between these states. I believe that new relations can begin with the concept of Europeanization, which can be viewed as a complex power sharing mechanism. I believe the EU and its philosophy could help create a foundation for healthy relationships to prosper in the Southern Caucasus -- something, in fact, they are now attempting under the aegis of Partnership and Cooperation Agreements with the recognized states.73

Sadly the EU, so far, has played only an ambivalent role in the South Caucasus. In March 2003 a report was issued by the European Commission on
the duties of the EU to neighboring states, but unfortunately excluded the Southern Caucasus states. Because Brussels wanted to see political reform in these states first, EU involvement has been on the standstill, regardless of the partnership and cooperation agreements signed with all three Southern Caucasus states. However, since Georgia’s rose revolution, the EU has expressed new interest in spreading its influence. On January 26, 2004, the EU decided to reverse the exclusion of the Southern Caucasus states from their initiative. For the mean time, these states are now included in the “Wider Europe” program. The survival of the EU’s interest in this post Soviet block drastically depends on the ability for reform to continue in these states and the ability to construct institutions to properly manage aid funds.

In political discourse we often refer to the South Caucasus as being a region; however, I believe that it currently has no political-structural characteristics of one. Eurasian historian Thomas de Waal argues that “in any real political or economic sense, [the Southern Caucasus] is not a proper region at
Isolationist policies are one contributing factor to the Southern Caucasus not having a linked market, which is negatively effecting the standard of living in the region. The current situation in the Southern Caucasus requires external forces, such as the EU, to play an integral part to help them resolve their historical clashes, which can only be done through initiating a common destiny.

Generally those who study state building processes first look at the feasibility of economic independence for a territory in question, because it is believed that if a territory is not economically self-sufficient, or self-reliant, it will more often than not be absorbed by a neighboring state that is stronger. For this reason alone politicians and scholars have asserted that the likelihood of a functional Karabakhi state is slim. On the other hand, states that strategize solely on economic independence are susceptible to authoritarian regimes. Michael Ward once wrote in a 1967 journal article on the state of Lesotho—a mountainous enclave in South Africa similar to that of Karabakh—that

The prospect for small states to have economic independence is as opportune as large states. But, the question becomes, what is economic independence and dependence in the
current context of globalization? The terms themselves run ambiguously. 77

A more important question to ask is whether or not economic independence should be a criterion for sovereignty in today's international structure that seeks to democratize states. Ward finished his argument against Lesotho by stating that "The economic prospects for Lesotho...are dim and in the short run it has virtually no hope of becoming economically viable or independent of South Africa and foreign aid," 78 strongly believing that Lesotho would be absorbed by South Africa in due time. But in 2004, Lesotho exists and has found its niche in producing a strong labor force for South Africa and mining, establishing a collective self-reliance between the two states.

Whereas the South Caucasus states' history of independent self-reliance (seen as economic self-determination) has lead to dysfunctional international relations through fueling nationalism and isolationism, resulting in authoritarianism, with the aid of economic expertise like that from the EU, a common destiny can be established through a collective self-reliance strategy.
Moreover, I believe that self-sustainability, under the current structure of globalized economies, in fact requires collective self-reliance: as Johan Galtung argues, "independence with inter-dependence, autonomy with equity... it is this combination that is... self-reliance." At stake is the ability to have meaningful relationships with others in the international community, while not sacrificing the basic principles of the state; real self-reliance is not, as many would assert, the ability to successfully practice isolationism. "The key to the politics of self-reliance," as Galtung writes, "is to regain control over resources – over capital, raw materials, labor, and the most precious of all – human creativity... the necessary conditions for self-reliance are local power control and mass participation."

Although size doesn't dictate the ability for a state to be successful, there are political consequences of being both economically dependent and small. A nation that has great economic resources, writes Adrienne Armstrong, "has more influence on events in the international system and greater security against
pressure from other nations than does a nation with few economic resources.”

Small states may face harmful economic limitations, such as limited institutional capacity, limited ability to cope with natural disasters, limited diversification in domestic markets, limited access to global markets, limited access to commercial borrowing, and limited independence from foreign investment. Not only are these characteristics common in small states, but also are true of the democratizing states in the Southern Caucasus. For this reason, the Southern Caucasus states should join their markets to forge a more prosperous and economically influential region under the scheme of collective self-reliance.

Since the deconstruction of the USSR the Southern Caucasus has fallen victim to the geopolitical games of the post Cold War. As Bruno Coppieters writes,

for the time being, Russia is not willing to abandon all of its bases in its near abroad; the EU does not yet have sufficient political energy and cohesion to offer strong Europeanization incentives; and the US willingly engages in competitive games in the [Southern Caucasus].
Without any strength in bargaining these states will have to submit themselves to the will of stronger states. Collective self-reliance can offer strength to a collection of weaker states by allowing them to combine their bargaining capabilities. This can give the entire region a higher level of economic and political self-determination, lessen the victimization of the region, and promote growth rather than stagnation.

According to Kenneth Hall, the conceptual level of collective self-reliance

denotes the desire of countries to rely collectively on their own resources in the attainment of their development objectives...at the policy level it implies a dynamic interrelationship between one group of countries and the rest of the international community in the areas of trade and the transfer of technology.\textsuperscript{84}

Moreover, Hall continues his support of collective self-reliance by writing

At the internal level collective self-reliance implies structural transformation designed to promote social justice and effective utilization of local resources, to satisfy the basic needs of the population and to engender public participation and democratization in the development process.\textsuperscript{85}
On the other hand, at the international level, regional governance seeks strong economic policies to strengthen the deficiencies in specific union states. The implementation of these policies is a balancing act that can help speed the process of industrialization and democratization, rather than a single state having to pull themselves up by their boot straps when there are no straps available.

Some would argue that the current disputes throughout the Southern Caucasus have escalated to the point that communities cannot live together, but separation is clearly not a practical solution. Because of the risk of future conflicts, proactive measures must be taken to ensure that they will not arise. Prevention needs to be centered on interdependency between all actors in the Southern Caucasus.

Many believe that the future resolution model for Karabakh will be actualized through Europeanization—"the cultural, legal, institutional and economic impact of European integration on domestic structures."
A level of dependency can be easily established through trade policies and linking markets under the structure of regional governance, but this can only be accomplished through trust.

"Peace comes with trust," Robert Solomon writes, "which will [only] grow from continuing efforts toward mutual understanding and trade, conversations, negotiations, and individual commitments." There are two things that can make the restoration of trust possible: "the mood of hope and the complex act of forgiveness." The factors of hope and forgiveness are not unrealistic and plainly sentimental, they are necessary ingredients for solving conflicts and remedying betrayal. Hope is having optimism to what the future may hold. Solomon states that hope is the opening up of possibilities. The process of opening up possibilities for peoples in the Southern Caucasus is a multifaceted feat that involves reaching out to the betrayer, transforming social practices and social equity. But what is more important to understand is that
"the solutions to the problem of endemic distrust and betrayal depend on factors that are out of our hands, on the involvement of a third force, on the slow passing of time."91

Time is on Karabakh's side. Since the ceasefire in 1994, Karabakh has been able to create a democratic government, maintain security of its territory, and has began to enter into relations with other states through establishing representative embassies throughout the world. The Nagorno Karabakh Republic (NKR) government has already been unofficially legitimized by several states through the hosting of representations, including France, Australia, and the United States and is clearly on its way to becoming a legally recognized state under the conditions of regional stalemate. Peter Malanczuk argues that "the existence of a state or government is a question of pure fact, and recognition is merely an acknowledgement of the facts."92 Armenian scholar, Richard Giragosian, writes that "the longer the status quo continues, complete with the
security of the Lachin corridor which connects Armenia with Karabagh, the stronger the geopolitical situation of Karabagh."\textsuperscript{93}

Yet not enough time has yet passed to for ethnic rivalries to clear and for South Caucasians to remember how much more prosperous their societies were when they worked together during the USSR – something which might assist these states in uniting under a common destiny. At this time negotiations between Azerbaijan and Armenia are bleak, in large measure due to politicians on all sides of the conflict using the Karabakh question as a political platform to mobilize voters through nationalist agitation. When coupled with the fact that Azerbaijan still refuses to recognize Karabakh as a legitimate member in the conflict (removing it as an active participant in peace talks), the lack of progress is understandable. More troublesome is Azerbaijan’s refusal to hold any sort of dialogue with the Karabakhtsies, out of fear that doing so would legitimize Karabakhi interests.
Worrisome as well is the fact that international organizations (IOs) have not displayed any ability to settle the dispute peacefully. As Gerard Libaridian, former senior advisor to Armenia’s first president Levon Ter-Petrossian argues, IOs involved in the Karabakh conflict, specifically the OSCE Minsk Group, have worked “willfully to misunderstand the Karabakhtsies” and their agenda, perhaps prolonging the talks in order to bring legitimacy to their organization. This has further worsened matters.94

I acknowledge that my proposal to resolve the Karabakh problem is overly simplified. Some might ask, Would the people of the South Caucasus actually recognize such a regime? Yet, I believe that a Southern Caucasus community, carrying with it the possibility of someday joining the EU, can provide economic advantage and enhanced regional representation that would render moot many of the tensions now associated with secession and intergroup insecurity. Nationalists would no longer be able to invoke fear or the passion of inequity, because issues could be addressed and resolved through properly
established institutions. This would be a welcome relief from the vulnerabilities
and rife corruption of the South Caucasus of today – where, so far, the most
stable institutions are the ones that go "unrecognized" in Karabakh.

ENDNOTES

1 http://www.armenianholocaust.com/caucasus.htm


3 Nordquist, Khjell-Ake. p. 66


9 Ibid. p. 106

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13 Ibid.


17 Suny, Ronald Grigor Looking Toward Ararat: Armenia in Modern History. p. 193


19 Suny, p. 193

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid

22 Ibid.

23 Croissant. 11
24 Suny, p. 194


26 Suny, p. 194


28 Walker, p. 61


31 Ibid.


33 Ibid. p. 75


40 Ibid. p. 54

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid. p. 91


47 Ibid. p. 176

49 Ibid.

50 Conversation with Ashot Melian, Permanent Representative of the NKR in Yerevan. 02 March 2003.

51 Conversation with Gerard Libaridian.


53 Ibid. p. 36-37

54 Ibid. p. 38


58 Ibid. p. vii.

59 Ibid. p. 87

60 Ibid. p. 35

61 Ibid. p. 996.


70 Ibid. p. 536


76
76 Ibid.


78 Ibid.


80 Ibid. p. 175


83 Ibid. 18


85 Ibid. p. 199


89 Ibid. p. 138

90 Ibid.

91 Ibid. p. 137


94 Conversation with Gerard Libaridian, former senior advisor to President Ter-Petrossian of Armenia, in Yerevan, 24 February 2003.

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