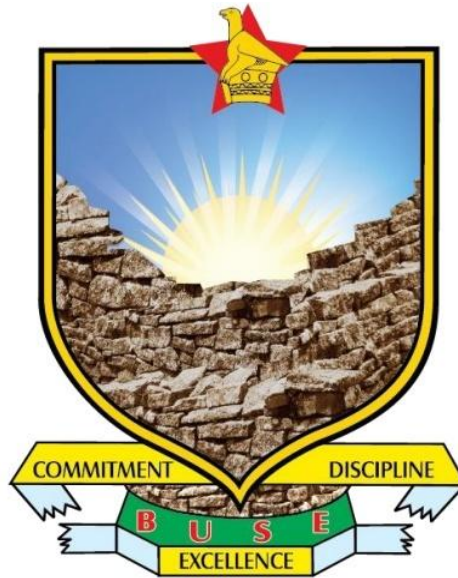


**BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION**  
**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PEACE AND GOVERNANCE**



**THE IMPACT OF TERRITORIAL DISPUTE BETWEEN AZERBAIJAN AND  
ARMENIA. A CASE OF NAGORNO-KARABAKH**

BY

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A Dissertation submitted to the Department of Peace and Governance in partial  
fulfilment of the requirements for a Master of Science in International Relations  
Degree.

**Bindura, Zimbabwe**

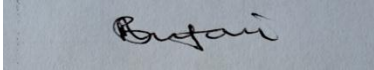
**November, 2023**

## ABSTRACT

*The study focuses on the impact of conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh. From time immemorial, states have been involved in various forms of border conflicts. For some of these conflicts, it can be said to have erupted due to the colonial ties shared by the states, for political motives or as a result of the natural resources found in such a border that will therein improve their economy. The conflict is peculiar in nature because it is not a conflict over waterways or airspace but a conflict over a territorial space that involves a group of people. The reason for their occurrence in the current shape is long term suppression in the Soviet country of mechanisms of articulation and aggregation of social demands as well as channels of communication. The study analysed the impact of the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia using the interpretivism research philosophy in its analysis of the conflict. In its quest to analyse the impact of the conflict the study employed a qualitative methodology and the descriptive research design. The study established that the conflict could not be ended by the mediation of the Minsk group for the peaceful solution while considering the issue as the dilemma and the two parties had not been closer to a resolution and the Nagorno-Karabakh region remained in limbo for 28 years. The study recommends that an International Law informed solution must be applied on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. However, the right to self-determination does not automatically mean the right to secession, or the right to establish one's own state.*

## DECLARATION

I, B224664B hereby declare that this dissertation is my original work and it has not been copied or lifted from another source without acknowledgement



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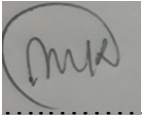
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24/09/2024

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(Date)

## **DEDICATION**

This research is dedicated to my late grandparents Mr and Mrs Mathambo Ngwenya and to my mother, Nondumiso Ngwenya (Booy) for her undying support, love and encouragement throughout my study period.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The researcher recognizes that without the help of key persons, this research would not have been possible. First and foremost, I would like to thank God for seeing me through to the end of my studies.

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- My colleagues and classmates for their support, assistance and encouragement.
- The undying support of my friends and family.

It was because of the financial, material, emotional and physical support of those mentioned that the study was a success. May God richly bless you

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

CSTO	-	Collective Security Treaty Organisation
EPC	-	European Political Community
NATO	-	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NKAO	-	Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast
NKR	-	Nagorno-Karabakh Region
OSCE	-	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
RSR	-	Russian Socialist Republic
UN	-	United Nations
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Program
UNICEF	-	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
USSR	-	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.0 Background of the study.**

The disintegration of the Ottoman Empire following World War 1 triggered widespread atrocities between Armenians and Azerbaijanis. The Armenians' growing aspiration for national, self-determination significantly contributed to the suspicions and hostility held by the Ottoman authorities, laying the groundwork for the massacres in eastern Anatolia. Additionally, nationalism played a pivotal role in the eruption of hostilities between Armenia and Azerbaijan, particularly during the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The ongoing conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh stands as the lengthiest and most brutal among the post-Soviet disputes.

The Armenians and Azerbaijanis resorted to violence and ethnic cleansing in their pursuit of control over the contested territory. Russian backing of the Armenian people heightened the conflict and attracted involvement from various external powers seeking to counterbalance Russian influence in the region. Despite a history of ethnic tension, armed conflicts between the two republics were relatively restrained during Soviet rule. However, with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the subsequent attainment of statehood by Armenia and Azerbaijan, peace in the region unravelled.

In the aftermath of the Soviet dissolution, Nagorno-Karabakh declared independence in 1991, leading to a full-scale war between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The conflict resulted in approximately thirty thousand casualties and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of refugees. By 1993, Armenia had gained control over Nagorno-Karabakh and occupied 20

percent of Azerbaijan's territory. A ceasefire brokered by Russia in 1994, known as the Bishkek Protocol, left Nagorno-Karabakh functionally independent, with a self-proclaimed government in Stepanakert, closely tied to Armenia economically, politically, and militarily.



**Map 1.1 showing the location of Nagorno-Karabakh (source: Aljazeera)**

Since the formal ceasefire in 1994, which held until September 2020, periodic clashes involving the use of attack drones, shelling, and special operations occurred between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces. The most intense fighting since 1994 took place in early April 2016, resulting in hundreds of casualties along the separation line. A temporary cessation of hostilities was announced after four days of fighting, but failed negotiations led to accusations of ceasefire violations, maintaining high tensions. In late September 2020, heavy fighting erupted along the Azerbaijan-Nagorno-Karabakh border, causing over seven thousand casualties and numerous injuries to soldiers and civilians from both Armenia and

Azerbaijan. Initially resisting calls from the United Nations, the United States, and Russia for talks and a ceasefire, both countries pledged to continue the conflict.

Tensions heightened as both sides transitioned from cross-border shelling to employing longer-range artillery and heavier weaponry. Despite multiple unsuccessful attempts by Russia, France, and the United States to facilitate a ceasefire, Russia eventually succeeded in brokering a deal on November 9, 2020, reinforced by the deployment of Russian peacekeepers. This concluded the six-week-long Second Nagorno-Karabakh War, with Azerbaijan regaining most of the territory it had lost two decades earlier, leaving Armenia with only a portion of Karabakh. The agreement also established the Lachin corridor, a monitored strip of land overseen by Russian peacekeepers, serving as a transit route connecting Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh.

As global attention focuses on the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the dynamics of the standoff between Armenia and Azerbaijan are rapidly evolving, leaving Russia and the United States uncertain about their responses. The Russian-brokered ceasefire that concluded the second Karabakh war has not brought complete stability or security to the region. Even before the Ukraine conflict, Moscow's peacekeepers faced challenges in fulfilling their duties. These shifting circumstances underscore how Russia's war against Ukraine is reshaping the Eurasian geopolitical landscape. Despite its significance, the conflict has received limited media and academic coverage, particularly in mainstream sources, and remains poorly understood by many practitioners, analysts, and theorists in the field of international politics (Sienrukos 2006).

## **1.1 Purpose of the study.**

The purpose of the study was to analyse the impact of conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem.**

A contemporary challenge in the international system is the territorial dispute between states, a matter that deeply concerns many due to its multifaceted impacts. Throughout history, human-created lines delineating geographical boundaries have served as limits to a state's extent of sovereignty. These boundaries, commonly known as borders, are at the centre of the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

The Karabakh conflict is characterized by both ethnic and political dimensions. Abrahamian (2006) notes that the Azeris and Armenians each assert their right to govern the disputed territory, relying on historical claims and supposed prior settlements in the region. The Azeris base their argument on the right to maintain territorial integrity, while the Armenians invoke the right of nations to self-determination. Powell (2016,) highlights that from 1918 to 1920, independent Armenia and Azerbaijan engaged in a war over Nagorno-Karabakh, a conflict that weakened both nations and left them vulnerable to the advancing Red Army. The territory of Nagorno-Karabakh underwent multiple transfers between Armenia and Azerbaijan following the Sovietisation of the Caucasus. In 1923, Stalin, as part of his divide and rule strategy, placed the predominantly Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh within Azerbaijan, causing dissatisfaction among Armenians. Additionally, Stalin granted Nagorno-Karabakh autonomous status, leading to discontent among Azerbaijanis. Some accounts suggest that Stalin personally delineated the borders of Nagorno-Karabakh to create a narrow strip of land physically separating it from Armenia (Walker 2015).

### **1.3 Research objectives**

1. To examine the nature of the relationship between Armenia and Azerbaijan.
2. To analyse the impact of conflict resolution endeavours in the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.
3. To discuss factors behind the push for democratisation in Azerbaijan and Armenia.

### **1.4 Research questions**

1. What is the nature of the relationship between Armenia and Azerbaijan?
2. How has the attempt for conflict resolution impact the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan?
3. To what extent has the Western push for democratisation weakened Azerbaijan and Armenia?

### **1.5 Assumptions**

The research is built on a set of assumptions. Initially, citizens in post-conflict societies tend to embrace official nationalist narratives that focus on the opposing side. However, scholars in critical geopolitics emphasize the significance of emotions and localized interactions in influencing perceptions of the political landscape. Secondly, the potential resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute and the likelihood of war are most likely to hinge on the power distribution between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Thirdly, major powers and international organizations view the conflict as an internal matter, acknowledging its intra-state dimension.

### **1.6 Significance of the study**

This study examines the primary factors contributing to the ongoing Armenian-Azerbaijan conflict. It evaluates whether the current peace process adequately deals with these factors and proposes measures to enhance its effectiveness. Historically, the Nagorno-Karabakh (NK) peace process has focused on official negotiations between the Armenian and

Azerbaijani governments concerning the status of Nagorno-Karabakh and the exchange or return of territories, primarily addressing interests. Scholars like Rothman and Olson (2001) argue that an interest-based approach is suitable for conflicts where resources and interests are the sole concerns. However, they emphasize that such an approach may not effectively resolve conflicts involving identity-based issues, such as disparate historical perceptions, which can further polarize parties during negotiations.

Moreover, the study contends that the political process itself has been poorly managed, with numerous stakeholders having interests aligned with achieving lasting peace. Unfortunately, these interests are often not well understood or articulated, and their potential to contribute to conflict resolution remains underutilized. Beyond politics, the conflict has a significant identity component characterized by deep mutual mistrust rooted in hostile historical memories. The study asserts that the current official Nagorno-Karabakh peace process neglects the identity needs of Armenians and Azerbaijanis, with policymakers and negotiators largely disregarding this factor. To pave the way for resolution, it is imperative to address underlying identity fears alongside the interests of the involved parties. The intractability of the Armenian-Azerbaijan conflict does not stem from insurmountable root causes; rather, it arises from a lack of understanding, articulation, and effective addressing of these causes.

From an academic standpoint, this research contributes to the established corpus of literature in the field of international law. Concentrating on a particular case, it delves deeply into the practical implementations and difficulties associated with unresolved territorial disputes, thereby addressing potential voids in current scholarly conversations. Additionally, the examination establishes a framework that can serve as a model for future researchers investigating analogous disputes.

## **1.7 Delimitations of the study**

This study examines the repercussions of the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia. The disputes over Nagorno-Karabakh originated in 1918 when the newly independent republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan both asserted claims to the region. However, the Soviet Union invaded two years later, and despite Nagorno-Karabakh having a predominantly Armenian population, it was placed under the Azerbaijan Socialist Republic. After being part of a single country for approximately 70 years, the two nations became involved in a prolonged war in the final years of the Soviet Union, a conflict that escalated further following the USSR's collapse. The emergence of the concept of national self-determination among the Armenian people significantly contributed to the suspicion and hostility by the Ottoman Empire, laying the groundwork for the massacres of Armenians in eastern Anatolia.

## **1.8 Limitations of the study**

The research quality could be impacted by the biases and idiosyncrasies of the researcher, stemming from a reliance on their skills. Achieving complete objectivity may be challenging since the interpretation of data hinges on the researcher's individual comprehension of the research, guided by the chosen theoretical frameworks. The researcher made efforts to analyse both primary and secondary data objectively and this is possible given the absence of conflict of interests on the subject matter under research.

## **1.9 Definition of terms**

**Territorial dispute:** It refers to a conflict regarding the ownership or authority over a piece of land involving two or more political entities. These disputes frequently revolve around the control of valuable resources like rivers, productive agricultural land, or mineral and petroleum reserves. However, cultural, religious, and ethnic nationalism factors can also drive such disagreements (Taylor 2016).

**Conflict:** According to Maclean (2020), conflict is characterized as an occurrence where conscious beings seek to engage in actions that are mutually incompatible with respect to their desires, needs, and obligations. It represents the intensification of a disagreement, with the presence of a disagreement being a typical precursor to conflict.

**Border dispute:** This pertains to situations in which a confined territory is contested by two or more states. In such cases, each involved state would typically release its own map delineating the same region, which would typically align with or be near the officially recognized borders of the competing states (Taylor 2016).

**Conflict resolution:** It is a process in which parties in conflict come together to address and resolve their differences through peaceful methods. This involves the reduction, elimination, and termination of various forms of conflict, aiming to minimize the adverse consequences of disagreements (Alper et al., 2000).

## **1.10 Dissertation outline**

The research is characterised of five chapters.

Chapter 1: constitutes of the background of the study, purpose of the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, justification of the study, delimitations of the study, limitations of the study and definition of terms. Chapter 2: the chapter covers literature review and the theoretical framework that guides the research. Chapter 3: the chapter constitutes of the research design and methodology used in the research. Chapter 4: constitutes of data presentation and analysis. Chapter 5: summarises the research as well as presentation of recommendations and areas for further study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

Borderlands represent a social and political context where the concerns of the state, its relationships, and issues between neighbouring countries become evident. Familugba and Ojo (2013) define borderlands as the outer part or edge of a surface or area, acting as a dividing line between two adjacent territorial units. Disputes in borderlands refer to lands situated on the outer edge of a larger territory, where conflicting interests arise between two neighbouring states. These disputes embody a tangible representation of people sharing common cultural and historical values, as well as a sense of statehood identity.

#### **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

##### **2.1.1 Democratic peace theory**

Immanuel Kant suggested the concept that nations with established democracies maintain peaceful relations with other democracies and are generally far less prone to engage in warfare compared to non-democratic nations. Kant's proposal for mitigating conflict between states involved three key principles:

1. Democratization
2. Economic interdependence
3. International Organizations.

Since its inception, the democratic peace concept has been a highly debated theory in the field of International Relations. It represents one of the most closely approximated empirical truths about state behaviour, particularly in the twentieth century. Oneal et al. (2001) have conducted extensive studies examining the validity of the democratic peace proposition.

Their analyses strongly support the idea that democratic nations are less inclined to engage in violent behavior with other states. Even after accounting for factors like economic interdependence and shared involvement in international governmental organizations, the researchers discovered that democracies are 33 percent less likely to participate in a militarized dispute than the average pair of states. Moreover, they found that if both states in a pair are democratic, the likelihood of a fatal dispute is 86 percent less compared to situations where at least one of the states is an autocracy.

Dixon (1993) similarly asserts that democracy systematically influences conflict management. He contends that the democratic peace operates because states share a belief in the notion of bounded competition. Dixon et al. (2012) argue that adherence to shared norms enables effective communication between states in a conflict, making it possible to consider dispute settlement. Disputes between democratic states are more prone to lead to some form of procedural accommodation than conflicts involving states operating under different normative frameworks. The consequence of shared norms is an increased likelihood of negotiation and reaching a mutually agreeable solution.

In line with the studies by Oneal, Russett, and Dixon, Werner (2000) also provides evidence supporting the democratic peace theory. While the theory posits that democratic states are less likely to go to war than non-democratic states, Werner concludes that in pairs consisting of two different regime types, the probability of conflict is significantly higher. Werner's hypothesis may be linked to normative theory, suggesting that states with different approaches to managing domestic affairs are more prone to disagreements than those with similar approaches. Her models consistently show robust support, indicating that politically similar states are substantially less likely to experience conflicts with each other. Increasing

the level of political similarity significantly enhances the expected duration of peace, according to her statistically significant results, potentially extending it by as much as 130 years.

Werner's analysis also yielded several noteworthy conclusions. Consistent with other studies supporting the democratic peace theory, Werner found that two democracies are likely to experience up to 64 more years of peace compared to other combinations of state pairs. Her findings align with the consensus among scholars that geographically distant states are more prone to peaceful relations than neighboring states. Additionally, Werner observed that states with a history of past conflicts are significantly more likely to engage in future disputes compared to states without such conflictive histories. A higher rate of past disputes correlates with a shorter duration of peace; for example, if the frequency of past disputes increases to one every three years, the duration of peace is reduced by 33 years. Importantly, Werner also discovered that the distribution of power in a state pair is unrelated to the likelihood of conflict (Werner 2000).

Oneal and Russett (1997) arrived at similar findings. Their results indicate that political differences between two states in a pair contribute to more conflict compared to a pair in which the two states share political similarities. Their logistic regression analysis revealed that the likelihood of a dispute between two democracies, all other factors being equal, is .071, whereas it is .137 for a democracy paired with an autocracy. Research has also delved into the impact of regime type and how a change in regime type influences conflicts between states. Enterline (1998) examined three regime types—democratic, anocratic, and autocratic—and tested the likelihood that states transitioning to these regimes would initiate militarized disputes. He found that a state transitioning to democracy had no effect on its

likelihood of initiating a militarized dispute. However, states transitioning to autocracies had a significantly higher probability of initiating disputes, with a 24 percent increased likelihood of threatening, displaying, or using military force against another state.

ONeal and Russett (2003) reported results like those of Enterline. They found that democratization rapidly reduces the risk of conflict between states. Established democracies are less prone to conflict than newly formed democracies, but even newly established democracies have a much lower risk of conflict compared to non-democracies. Oneal and Russett argue that it takes only seven years of democratic governance to achieve the same reduction in conflict risk as observed in a pair of fully established democratic states. Democratization is often recommended as a preventive measure against conflict because, as Dixon suggests, it can lead to the development of shared norms, including the inclination of states to exhaust all possible avenues for dispute resolution before resorting to violence.

Mitchell (2002) asserts that with the formation of more democracies, international norms will evolve, leading to an increased likelihood of third-party conflict resolution. In cases where the proportion of democracies in the international system is 50%, third-party settlement becomes 16 times more probable for non-democracies than when the proportion is zero. In her 2013 analysis, Mitchell explores the interplay between regime type, the issues under consideration, and the probability of militarized disputes. Her findings indicate that well-established democracies can effectively mitigate territorial disputes when interacting with other similarly well-established democracies. Among the ninety-seven cases examined from the Militarized Interstates Dispute dataset, only two territorial disputes occurred between institutionalized democracies. Conversely, Mitchell discovered that poorly established democracies were more prone to engaging in militarized disputes over territory, with 42% of

such disputes involving less-established democracies. Similar to Mitchell's findings, Mousseau (2000) also produced robust results, indicating that the more developed a democracy is, the lower the probability of conflict.

### **2.1.2 Social constructivism**

In 1989, Nicholas Onuf introduced the term "constructivism," and its conceptual origins can be traced to various disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, and psychology. The intellectual lineage of this theory includes influential figures like Giambattista Vico, Immanuel Kant, Karl Marx, Alexander Wendt, Emanuel Adler, Friedrich Kratochwil, John Gerard Ruggie, and Peter Katzenstein, as noted by Owen (1995), Holsti (n.d.), Robert and Sorenson (2006), and Behravesch (2011). Akwen (2011) compared social constructivism to other theories, suggesting that it is perceived more as an approach than a strict theory. Fundamentally, social constructivism posits that the international system and state interactions are socially constructed, influencing how states perceive themselves and others.

A core tenet of constructivism is the significance of identity and belief in shaping states' behaviour within the international system, as highlighted by Slaughter (2011). States in the international arena are viewed as primarily driven by the pursuit of national interests, resistant to impediments. Constructivism regards the environment as social, ideational, and material. Socially, it ascribes meaning to international relations concepts such as power, anarchy, and national interest, considering them products of social construction rather than outcomes of systemic structures. Ideationally, constructivism sees mental constructions playing a crucial role in shaping state policies. Materially, it draws meaning from the social construction of world affairs in international politics, challenging arguments that international politics is solely defined by the rational behaviour and decisions of state actors pursuing their interests.

Despite the principles of social constructivism, neorealists contend that constructivism places excessive importance on international norms. Neorealists argue that powerful states can disregard these norms if they run counter to their interests (Robert and Sorenson 2006). Additionally, constructivism explores how states perceive each other as friends or enemies in the international system. Neorealists counter this notion, asserting that states cannot easily form friendships due to constant interactions. They argue that the international system is structured in a way that compels states to outshine one another in pursuing and achieving their national interests.

The research opts for the social constructivism theory as it proves most appropriate, given that the theory elucidates state behaviours defined by their identities and interests. States engage within the international system primarily to advance their national interests. Consequently, states formulate strategies to achieve these interests while concurrently preserving their identities. States possess pre-established perceptions of their identity, objectives, and desired interactions with other states on the global stage. This strategic choice aims to provide states with clear direction and focus, particularly in the anarchical international system where powerful and weak states coexist, prompting states to safeguard their identity.

From the constructivist perspective, power is conceived in terms of ideas. According to constructivism, states derive power from their ideas, enabling them to positively alter the identities of other states and the structures of the international system. Unlike other theories that assert states interact primarily for survival-driven needs and interests, constructivism posits that states' interests are shaped by the inherent nature of material resources and the

state's circumstances. Importantly, constructivism rejects the notion of isolating the state from its environment. In the context of this study, social constructivism suggests that actors in the international system develop their identities based on specific roles assigned to them.

## **2.2 Background of the Conflict**

The disintegration of the USSR and the subsequent emergence of new states globally constituted a profound geopolitical upheaval, leading to numerous challenges for inhabitants in the post-Soviet region and the broader international community. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, marked by its internationalization, directly resulted from these transformative processes. Examining the history of Nagorno-Karabakh reveals that the conflict is a consequence and continuation of the decolonization initiated after World War II. The eruption of violence between Armenians and Azerbaijanis, particularly during the Soviet Union's dissolution, had nationalism at its core. The ongoing war over Nagorno-Karabakh stands out as the lengthiest and bloodiest among the post-Soviet conflicts. Both Armenians and Azerbaijanis resorted to violence and ethnic cleansing in their endeavors to assert control over the disputed territory. Russian backing for the Armenian side escalated the conflict, prompting multiple external powers to intervene as a countermeasure against Russian influence in the region.

According to Croissant (2010), the Karabakh war commenced in February 1988 when longstanding tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Karabakh escalated into violence following a regional referendum declaring independence from Azerbaijan. The repercussions have been devastating, with an estimated 20,000 to 30,000 lives lost, and up to 800,000 Azerbaijanis residing in Karabakh displaced from their homes.

Powell (2006) notes that although the actual military combat persisted for nearly four years, the conflict is still considered active. Recent reports from Eurasia Insight indicate daily gunfire exchanges on the Karabakh-Azerbaijan border. The Karabakh dispute mirrors the darker aspects of 21st-century extreme nationalism, the pitfalls of globalization, and ethnic violence. The rapid social changes coupled with the globalization processes in the last decades of the twentieth century have led to substantial instability and a heightened intensity of the conflict.

The persistent frozen conflict in the Caucasus continues to impede development in the region, drawing the involvement of various global actors, both new and traditional, in its political dynamics. The economic toll, as well as the human cost, is significant for both countries involved. Armenia, facing a severe energy shortage due to a blockade imposed by Turkey and Azerbaijan, has arguably borne a heavier burden. Despite Azerbaijan's economic improvement from oil resources, it grapples with economic strain, particularly with an estimated 500,000 to 800,000 displaced Azerbaijanis from the conflict. Presently, Armenian forces occupy twenty percent of Azerbaijan, including Nagorno-Karabakh and key surrounding areas like the Lachin corridor, establishing a continuous land link with Armenia. Control of these territories is crucial to ensure Karabakh's independence from Azerbaijan for external connections. The 1994 Bishkek Protocol, brokered by Russia, established a ceasefire, leaving Nagorno-Karabakh under de facto Armenian control, along with surrounding districts captured from Azerbaijani forces.

The Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has led negotiations since 1994, gaining momentum in 1997 with the involvement of three co-chairs— the U.S., Russia, and France. Notably, the negotiation parties include only Armenia

and Azerbaijan, as Azerbaijan consistently refuses direct talks with representatives of the self-styled Nagorno-Karabakh Republic.

Recognizing the undesirability of maintaining Nagorno-Karabakh as an unrecognized 'state' in the Caucasus, the international community perceives the territory as an ungoverned grey area, offering a means for foreign nations to manipulate South Caucasus politics. Additionally, the current status of Karabakh sets an unfavourable precedent for other breakaway republics seeking independence through violent means.

Although the OSCE negotiators actively seek peace in the region, the three co-chairs are engaged in the negotiations due to their own vested interests. All three countries have investments in the oil and gas industry, aiming to benefit from Caspian oil. Recognizing the vulnerability of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, which transports Caspian oil to the European market, in the event of renewed hostilities, these nations prioritize stability in the region. Despite persistent efforts by the international community to broker an agreement, achieving peace has proven elusive.

Throughout years of negotiations and international pressure, there have been instances when Azerbaijan and Armenia, though at times close to a settlement, failed to reach an agreement. In 1999, during a summit in Washington marking NATO's 50th anniversary, President Heydar Aliyev of Azerbaijan and Robert Kocharian of Armenia privately met, raising hopes for a settlement based on the Goble Plan, which involved a territory exchange. However, peace efforts were disrupted when a former journalist, Nairi Hunanian, attacked the Armenian parliament, resulting in casualties and the loss of a potential peace opportunity.

Subsequently, President Ter-Petrosian of Armenia was ousted in a coup, leading to nationalist leader Robert Kocharian coming to power.

In 2001, at the OSCE-sponsored Key West talks in Florida, optimism for a settlement was high. President Heydar Aliyev's proposed concessions, including allowing Nagorno-Karabakh to join Armenia, faced backlash, especially in Azerbaijan. Aliyev struggled to garner support within the Azerbaijani government, and the window of opportunity closed. The current President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, has since expressed a readiness to resort to war to reclaim lost Azerbaijani lands. Azerbaijan's stance appears to have solidified due to increased oil revenue, the operation of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, and strengthened relations with the West, particularly the U.S.

Despite the extensive literature on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, certain aspects of it have received limited attention. The disputed ownership of the mountainous region in southwestern Azerbaijan has been a longstanding subject of contention between Armenia and Azerbaijan for centuries (Kuburas 2011). The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, an international dispute involving the conflicting principles of self-determination and territorial integrity, has been relatively overlooked in the international media since the ceasefire agreement between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces in May 1994 until September 27, 2020 (Kopecek, Hoch & Baar 2016).

### **2.3 The development of the conflict during Soviet period (1920)**

In the 1920s, the newly established Bolshevik government of the Russian Socialist Republic aimed to revitalize the country's economy, with a particular focus on reclaiming the former borders of the Russian empire. The Transcaucasia region held strategic importance for the Russian Socialist Republic, contributing to its dominance in the Black and Caspian seas and

providing access to valuable natural resources. Azerbaijan was the first South Caucasian state to join the Soviet Union. The overthrow of the previous Azerbaijani government was well-received by Armenians, who sent a delegation to Moscow to establish relations. However, the Soviet leadership in Azerbaijan was not inclined to meet Armenian demands regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh region (Yoshimura, 2007).

After approximately a year of resistance against the Soviet Red Army in Karabakh and Nakhichevan, Armenian forces were defeated. According to the Soviet Armenian Academy of Sciences, there was a belief among Armenian Bolsheviks that the Soviet takeover of these regions could ultimately benefit Armenia. They hoped that the success of Soviet power in Armenia would lead to the return of these territories (Kvashonkin, 1997). In August 1920, Soviet troops gained control over the disputed regions of Nagorno-Karabakh, Zangezur, and Nakhichevan. An agreement with Armenia emphasized that the occupation aimed at peacefully settling territorial issues and did not prejudge the rights of the Republic of Armenia or the Socialist Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan to these territories.

On November 29, 1920, Soviet power was proclaimed in Armenia after the republic's complete occupation. On June 12, 1921, the Caucasian Bureau of the Soviet Union issued a resolution instructing the Armenian government to declare Nagorno-Karabakh a part of Armenia. However, it became apparent that not all Azerbaijani Soviet leaders were aware of Azerbaijan's agreement on Nagorno-Karabakh's inclusion in Armenia (Altstadt, 1992).

During the subsequent meeting of the Caucasian Bureau in July, the decision was reaffirmed, but the Azerbaijani side insisted on transferring the matter to the Central Committee of Moscow. Although there was an initial agreement to postpone the final decision for the Central Committee, it was not implemented. Another meeting of the Caucasian Bureau took place the next day, where the Azerbaijani leadership, through pressure and the threat of halting petroleum gas deliveries to Moscow, succeeded in revisiting the previous decision and resolving the issue in favor of Azerbaijan (Altstadt, 1992). The outcome of the new resolution was the inclusion of Nagorno-Karabakh into Azerbaijan, with a status of regional autonomy.

#### **2.4 The First Nagorno-Karabakh war**

Following the arrival of the last Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, a new era of Soviet politics commenced. In the initial years of his leadership, Gorbachev implemented measures to enhance freedom of speech and press, along with decentralizing the Soviet economy. Later, he shifted towards social democracy, challenging the narrative of a one-party state and the ruling status of the Communist party. This shift raised hope among the local Nagorno-Karabakh population that their concerns could be addressed. Delegations of Karabakh Armenians traveled to Moscow to negotiate the issue with the Central Committee, and Armenian Diasporas in Europe and the USA began lobbying for the annexation of Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia.

In 1987, the first incident between Armenian residents and Azerbaijani authorities occurred in the village of Chardakhli, resulting in assaults and Armenians being forced to flee (De Waal, 2013). These events sparked dissatisfaction and protests in Nagorno-Karabakh. Simultaneously, environmental activism surged in Armenia, initially focusing on pollution

and leading to the closure of two large power plants. However, Ishkanian (2013) asserts that by 1988 environmental demonstrations transformed into a movement advocating political reforms and independence. This period proved crucial for the conflict's development, as environmental concerns later became a tool in online battles and a justification for contemporary humanitarian crises.

The policy of glasnost allowed demonstrations to persist. Abel Aganbekyan, an ethnically Armenian economic adviser to Gorbachev, expressed support for transferring Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia during a speech in Paris, signifying backing from the Soviet Union leadership. Concurrently, incidents of ethnic Azerbaijanis being forced to leave Armenia occurred, and protests in Stepanakert in February 1988 demanded unification with Armenia. The NKR leadership adopted a resolution requesting unification with Armenia, but the Soviet government rejected the demand (Human Rights Watch, 1994).

Despite the Central Committee's decision to maintain the status quo, the ongoing situation fueled nationalism in both Soviet republics. In Azerbaijan, counter-demonstrations escalated into planned attacks on Armenian villages, while in Armenia, the environmental demonstrations evolved into the Karabakh movement. This movement not only strengthened the connection between Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians and Armenia but also marked the reengagement of the Armenian Diaspora, playing a crucial role in the events leading to the first Nagorno-Karabakh war. The Karabakh movement attracted large crowds, with a million people protesting on February 25, 1994, nearly a third of the Republic's population at that time (Zinin & Malashenko, 2012).

Simultaneously, in Azerbaijan, a massacre of Armenians occurred in Sumgait, near Baku, during the same period. The Sumgait pogrom witnessed organized attacks on the Armenian population by armed groups of Azerbaijan residents, resulting in a death toll presented by the Soviet government as 26 Armenians and 6 Azerbaijanis. However, numerous sources dispute this count, suggesting a much higher death toll. The events in Sumgait triggered retaliatory actions from the Armenian side, leading to attacks on Azerbaijani residents in Armenia, particularly in the southern region of Syunik, with 25 confirmed deaths and Azerbaijan disputing a higher figure (Vaserman et al., 2013).

## **2.5 The escalation of the Nagorno-Karabakh war**

The meetings held under the Madrid principles of the OSCE were not helping. According to Fuller (2010) the first violent confrontations happened in 2008 in Martakert<sup>18</sup>. Two years later, the hostilities were reported in a different area. The leadership of Azerbaijan became impatient with the Minsk group's efforts in resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. President Ilham Aliyev threatened to seize the region by force. Over a hundred soldiers from both parties died from 2008 to 2015. With the high rate of border clashes the OSCE Minsk group embarked on investigations and civilian missions at the border, these were for the sole purpose of finding perpetrators of provocations. Whilst Azerbaijan leadership denied the offer, Armenian leadership accepted it, as a result, the clashes continued, with the governments blaming each other for provocation with different reasons and the international community expressing concern in a neutral manner.

A Four-day war erupted due to these clashes. It was the most serious aggravation of the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict; it took place in April 2016. There are multiple theories by both sides and the international community on why this escalation happened

exactly in given time period. Armenian and international scholars suggested the Azerbaijan side was trying to shift the attention from internal economic crisis in the country.

The Russian government had to intervene which brokered the ceasefire to the clashes. With Russia trying to take control of the region and the peace process it showed the weakness of the OSCE Minsk group. However, the ceasefire did not last long as it was violated in less than a year when the two countries went up in arms from 2017-2019 although the clashes were at a low intensity.

The 9 December early parliamentary elections were held with respect for fundamental freedoms and enjoyed broad public trust that needs to be preserved through further electoral reforms. Open political debate, including in the media, contributed to a vibrant campaign". (International Election Observation Mission, 2018). It appears that crucial connection of these events with the escalation in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the reasons to suggest that are many. First, Russia's reaction towards the velvet revolution and the snap elections was negative and somewhat aggressive. The events received big amount of attention from Russia's state sponsored media, where many pro-government experts started talking about the problems that Armenia will face and defining the choice of Armenia's population as pro-European and anti-Russian.

The Russian Armenian community, famous for their pro-government stance also contributed to criticism of new Armenian leadership and the need for Armenia to adopt a political stance closer to Russia. The criticism by the Russian media and high-ranked politicians was

expressing the view of Russia's authoritarian regime, however it became even more clear, when Vladimir Putin himself openly expressed his sympathy to former ruling Republican Party and specifically Robert Kocharyan<sup>19</sup>, who was under arrest and investigation on overthrowing the Constitution during the 2008 protests. Putin called Kocharyan a friend and even asked Armenian authorities to release him. (Jam News, 2020).

In July 2020, the escalation of the conflict started with the clashes on Armenia-Azerbaijan border, none of the clashes involved Nagorno-Karabakh, predominantly happening in Tavush region of Armenia bordering with Tovuz region of Azerbaijan. The clashes started on 12 July and continued until the end of the month with no apparent reason for the escalation being clear. More than 20 soldiers both Armenian and Azerbaijani lost their lives. As it is known, the consequences of those clashes grew to become a much bigger conflict. During those clashes Azerbaijani side also lost 2 generals and more high-ranking officials (BBC, 2020).

## **2.6 The course of the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war**

On September 2020 a full blown war started along the line of contact between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan. According to Jones et al (2022) the fighting was on two main directions, the relatively plain southern regions surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh and the northern side where the terrain is more mountainous. At the southern side the clashes were more intense as it is where Azerbaijan directed its efforts.

The advance of Azerbaijani forces also began in Nagorno-Karabakh proper, in the local populated areas. In Nagorno-Karabakh proper the situation was different. Considering the mountainous nature of the region, it was much more difficult to succeed in the offensive

there. The fighting there continued until the last day before the ceasefire. Here, the Azerbaijani advantage of drone usage could not be benefited to the same extent. Armenian forces were in stable and well protected positions behind forested and mountainous areas. Throughout the course of the war, Artsakh Defense Army improved its resistance techniques against the military drones, used by Azerbaijan, but the damage that was already done, could not be recovered. The Unnamed Aircraft Systems had already played an important role in determining the outcome of the war.

## **2.7 The Consequences of the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict**

The Nagorno-Karabakh War inflicted severe physical, material, and moral consequences on Azerbaijan, resulting in the breach of its territorial integrity by Armenia. Official statistics from Azerbaijan, as noted in a USAN Factsheet (2012), reveal that the territories affected by the war constitute approximately 20% of Azerbaijan's total land area, encompassing the Nagorno-Karabakh region, seven adjacent occupied regions, and territories along the Line of Contact. The conflict led to the displacement of approximately one million Azerbaijanis, with two waves of refugees—the first between 1988 and early 1991, and the second following the escalation of conflict until the 1994 cease-fire agreement.

The war's toll included an estimated 22,000 to 25,000 casualties, with over 4,500 people still missing. The displaced population, mainly ethnic Azerbaijanis, faced socio-economic challenges. The socio-economic damage encompassed the destruction of cities, settlements, hospitals, and infrastructure in the occupied territories, affecting more than 150,000 dwelling houses, 4,366 public and medical service buildings, and cultural institutions. The war also caused significant ecological damage, disrupting the irrigation and water supply system, seizing forests and nature reserves, and polluting water resources.

Cultural heritage suffered extensively, with historical monuments plundered, museums devastated, and natural landmarks damaged. The ecological disaster extended to the loss of mineral resources and the closure of numerous establishments in the occupied regions, contributing to an estimated total material cost and economic damage of USD 53.5 billion. This economic loss resulted in the closure of thousands of establishments responsible for a substantial share of Azerbaijan's grain, liqueur, potato, meat, and milk production.

Beyond the economic impact, the Nagorno-Karabakh war also triggered power politics competition, occasional violence, domestic instability, and a military coup against Azerbaijan's legitimate government. The country redirected a significant portion of its annual revenue towards defence and militarization, diverting resources that could have been allocated to social welfare and societal development (Caspersen, 2012).

### **2.7.1 The Socio-Economic Dimension: Discrimination versus Social Envy**

The assertion, made by some Armenians and supported in certain literature, is that the Azerbaijan SSR systematically discriminated against Karabakh Armenians socioeconomically, leading to a desire for sovereignty transfer to the Armenian SSR. Nagorno-Karabakh, as a peripheral rural region, did indeed face economic underdevelopment, a characteristic shared with other agricultural areas in Azerbaijan experiencing structural weaknesses. While the identification of Karabakh Armenians with the socially advantaged population of Armenia contributed to the conflict, it's noteworthy that this socioeconomic condition was not unique to Karabakh but prevalent in other rural parts of Azerbaijan.

Additional frustration arose due to the significant Armenian minority in Azerbaijan having minimal representation in Baku's political and administrative structure, following the Soviet nationalities policy with a focus on the titular nation. Intriguingly, there are observations suggesting that social envy and economic frustration among the lower classes in Azerbaijan played a role in riots targeting Armenian residents of cities like Baku and Sumgait.

## **2.8 The Mirroring Nationalism**

While extensive literature exists on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, certain aspects remain understudied. The rightful ownership of the mountainous region in southwestern Azerbaijan has been a historical subject of debate between Armenians and Azerbaijanis. Despite being an international conflict involving the right to self-determination and territorial integrity, it received limited international media attention post the May 1994 armistice until September 27, 2020.

A striking aspect of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict is the lack of interaction and dialogue between the leaderships of the two republics from the early stages of the dispute. Remarkably, there was no interest in dialogue and a peaceful resolution through compromise from anyone in a position of power in either republic. This is notable as such an approach has proven effective in similar conflicts, and the two republics were practically part of the same country, which should have discouraged conflict escalation. Despite opportunities for dialogue at various levels within the Soviet Union, leaders failed to capitalize on existing frameworks for peaceful resolutions.

The period saw the rise of opposition movements in the late 1980s, and these movements, despite growing strong, did not attempt dialogue or conflict resolution. Even as the Soviet Union provided the structure for dialogue, the opposition movements in Azerbaijan and

Armenia, influenced by nationalism, failed to engage with each other. The nationalist movements in both republics seemed to be responses to each other, becoming mirrors that exacerbated the conflict. This period, labeled as a nationalist revival, saw Azeri and Armenian nationalism emerging as reflections of one another, each responding to and owing its existence to the other.

The concept of the "Karabakh Syndrome" suggests a pathological nature to the conflict, with both nationalisms developing as mirroring pathologies. The conflict escalated from pogroms and ethnic unrest, distinguishing it from elite-led conflicts in other regions. The atrocities committed by both sides during various stages of the conflict are considered pathological. Azerbaijani pogroms in Sumgait and Baku, though not excusable, were driven by anger and frustration, making them incidental rather than systematic policies. In contrast, Karabakh Armenians engaged in systematic ethnic cleansing, emulating the notorious Bosnian Serbs. The mirroring nationalism syndrome persisted, with no strong force to advocate for reason and peace.

## **2.9 Chapter summary**

This section has illustrated how the dissolution of the USSR was succeeded by numerous ethnic conflicts and increased warfare along its former borders. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, rooted in Armenia's territorial assertions over historical Azerbaijani lands, erupted into an active armed conflict. The aftermath of the war proved challenging for Azerbaijan, marked by disproportionate military engagements and explicit backing from Russian armed forces, enabling Armenians to breach Azerbaijan's territorial integrity by occupying 20% of its lands.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

#### 3.0 Introduction

Research methodological issues play a crucial role in providing guidance to the research process. Methodological issues encompass the articulation of the research philosophy, research methodology, research design, population selection, data collection instruments, ethical considerations, data analysis, and its interpretation. They also serve to elucidate the research process, contributing scientific validity to the study for both the researcher and the reader. This chapter delves into the justification and explanation of the methodology and methods applied in this research.

#### 3.1 Research Philosophy

This research is guided the interpretivism philosophy. A research philosophy is concerned with views about how the world works and, as an academic subject, it focuses, primarily, on reality, knowledge and existence (Cohen etal 2000). According to interpretivism, reality is subjective, multiple and socially constructed. It asserts that one's reality is shaped by their historical or social perspective. Interpretivism bases on questioning and observation in order to generate an understanding of a phenomenon.

Interpretivism philosophy is in sync with how conflicts are interpreted within the international system. International conflicts are subject to different interpretations due to vested interests and this allows subjectivity to interfere with how reality is interpreted and conveyed.

#### 3.2 Research Methodology

Dawon (2019) defines research methodology as the fundamental principle guiding a research endeavor, serving as the overarching approach and determining the specific research methods

to be employed. Petty et al. (2012) elaborate that research methodology encompasses the theoretical, political, and philosophical foundations of social research, influencing both research practice and the choice of specific research methods. It is essentially the systematic study of how research is conducted. It is essential to distinguish between research methodology and research methods, as the latter refers to the tools employed for data collection (Dawson, 2019). Selecting an appropriate methodology requires careful consideration of various factors, including research limitations and ethical challenges that may impact the research's quality.

In this study, a qualitative research approach was employed. According to Dawson (2019), qualitative research methodology explores the behaviours, opinions, and experiences of individuals through examination methods. This approach typically involves fewer participants but allows for more in-depth interactions with each participant. It provides research subjects with the opportunity to express their own perspectives on a given topic. Therefore, the use of qualitative techniques is considered most suitable for this research due to its ability to thoroughly investigate the complex issues surrounding the territorial dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh.

### **3.3 Research Design**

It is crucial for the researcher to clearly define and choose an appropriate research design for the study. Brink and Wood (2012) emphasize that a research design serves the purpose of outlining a plan to address the research question and acts as a "blueprint for action." It constitutes the overall plan detailing the strategies employed by the researcher to generate accurate, objective, and interpretative information. In this study, the researcher opted for the descriptive research design. Holloway (2004) defines descriptive research design as a method that meticulously examines the accuracy of a phenomenon and precisely portrays what the

study has observed. Brink and Wood (2012) suggest that a descriptive survey design can be employed to explore characteristics within a population with the aim of investigating potential solutions to a research problem. While some may perceive descriptive research as merely providing a description, it is fundamental to the research process.

The research design functions as a blueprint for structuring a study, enhancing control over factors that could impact the validity of findings. The control established by the design increases the likelihood that the study's results will faithfully reflect reality (Burns and Grove, 2013). It encompasses all procedures selected by the researcher to devise solutions for the problem under investigation.

Moreover, the descriptive research design and research questions were chosen for their advantages in facilitating the exploration of pertinent answers to the research questions. Trochim (2006) reveals that the descriptive research design centres on the analysis of numerical data and often permits the application of specific scientific methods.

### **3.4 Target Population**

Burns and Grove (2013), claim that the target population refers to the complete group of respondents meeting the specified set of criteria. The target population, also known as the theoretical population, typically exhibits diverse characteristics and comprises members of a group that the researcher aims to investigate. As Peat et al. (2013) suggest, the study's findings are generalized to this population because its members share significant traits. In the context of this study, the target population comprised 40 academic international relations scholars. However, it is essential to note that only 25 scholars were available at the time of the research.

### **3.5 Sampling methods**

Sampling is the process of selecting a subset of a population that is representative of the entire population to gather information about a particular phenomenon. A sample refers to this subset, chosen to participate in a study. There are two sampling methods: one provides probability samples, ensuring a known probability of selecting each respondent, while the other gives non-probability samples with unknown selection probabilities (Polit & Hungler, 2014).

In this study, a sample was drawn from the population for making generalizations. According to Oppenheim (1992), a sample is a part of a whole that can be examined to understand the characteristics of the entire population. Purposive sampling and snowballing methods were employed. This involved intentionally selecting participants known to the researcher with sufficient, reliable, and relevant information for the study. Snowballing ensured that respondents directed the researcher to other suitable participants.

The sampling procedures employed were purposive sampling and snowballing. These approaches allowed the researcher to intentionally select a few individuals, who then identified or referred the researcher to additional well-informed informants. Initially, the first four respondents from the group were identified using simple random sampling.

### **3.6 Data collection methods**

Every research endeavour necessitates the utilization of research instruments to gather data from its participants. In this study, data were obtained using secondary sources and questionnaires. The questionnaire was administered to academic scholars in the field of international relations, who served as the respondents.

### **3.6.1 Questionnaire**

A commonly employed research tool is the questionnaire, and it was utilized in this study. To accommodate the mobility of most respondents during the research period, a specially designed questionnaire with an interview-style format was employed. The questionnaire used a mixed format, incorporating both open-ended and closed questions for participant responses. This combination of question types allowed for the revelation and understanding of participants' opinions. A questionnaire serves as a set of inquiries designed to elicit information from participants, particularly when face-to-face interaction may not be feasible (Tuckman, 2014). It is a tool focused on gathering insights into opinions, perceptions, beliefs, feelings, motivations, and private behaviours (Haralambos and Holborn, 2001). The questionnaire was selected for its various advantages.

### **3.6.2 Advantages of questionnaires**

Posing questions serves as a straightforward approach to gather both qualitative and quantitative information from individuals. Typically, a questionnaire allows the researcher to structure questions and obtain responses without engaging in direct conversations with each participant. As a method of data collection, the questionnaire proves to be a versatile tool but requires careful use to meet research requirements. Yin (2013) asserts that a questionnaire is an economical method, both in terms of cost and time, for gathering data from a large number of people. Administering a questionnaire demands fewer skills compared to conducting interviews. The questionnaire is user-friendly, contributing to time efficiency and keeping participants focused on the topic. Moreover, questionnaires offer high scalability, enabling researchers to distribute them across diverse demographics worldwide. This approach also fosters open and uninhibited responses from participants, free from any fear of intimidation or manipulation of their answers.

### **3.6.3 Disadvantages of questionnaires**

However, a questionnaire is not without its drawbacks. Typically, the response rate from questionnaires tends to be low, making it challenging to establish the representativeness of the sample due to this reduced return rate. Respondents might only be interested in specific questions, resulting in partially filled questionnaires. Some individuals may choose not to respond due to a lack of interest. Additionally, respondents might not always provide truthful answers; some may have hidden agendas, and others might answer based on societal expectations rather than their genuine opinions. To mitigate the risk of inaccurate answers due to inadequate reading, the researcher ensured that the questions were concise and straightforward. In this study, the questionnaires were personally delivered to the respondents and subsequently collected. To address the issue of a lower response rate, the researcher emphasized to the respondents the importance of promptly completing the research questions.

### **3.6.4 Secondary Data**

The researcher also gathered information from secondary data. Secondary data, as defined by Ghauri (2005), refers to data that has already been collected and is readily available from other sources. This type of data is cost-effective and can be obtained more quickly than primary data. Additionally, secondary data may be accessible when primary data cannot be obtained at all.

### **3.6.5 Advantages of Secondary Data**

Secondary data serves as a foundation for comparing the data collected by the researcher. According to Ghauri (2005), it enhances the specificity of primary data collection by identifying gaps, deficiencies, and additional information that may be needed. Additionally, it contributes to a better understanding of the problem. Utilizing secondary data is cost-

effective, saving both effort and expenses. Larger data sets, such as those obtained from government surveys, can be analysed without incurring additional costs.

### **3.6.6 Disadvantages of Secondary Data**

Nonetheless, secondary data has its limitations. Data collected by others is typically gathered with specific research questions or objectives in mind. According to Denscombe (2007), while secondary data sources offer a wealth of information, quantity does not necessarily equate to appropriateness. This is because the data has been collected to address different research questions or objectives. Saunders (2009) further notes that although government and official institutions are often considered reliable sources of data quality, this may not always be the case.

### **3.7 Validity and Reliability**

According to Polit and Hungler (2014), validity pertains to the extent to which the instrument accurately measures what it intends to measure. The primary focus of the researcher was on content validity, which assesses the precision with which an instrument measures the factors under investigation. Therefore, content validity addressed how accurately the questions inquired about the sought information. Regarding validity, extensive discussions with the supervisor allowed the researcher to clearly define the research objectives, leading to specific modifications in the questionnaires to better align with the desired feedback.

Reliability concerns the consistency and precision of the instrument. When applied to a similar group of respondents in a comparable context, the instrument should produce consistent results (Cohen et al., 2000). Ensuring reliability of the tool involved careful and precise phrasing of each question to prevent ambiguity and guide respondents toward a

particular answer. The respondents were also informed about the purpose of the questionnaires and the importance of providing truthful responses.

### **3.8 Data presentation and analysis**

Data analysis involves the methodical organization and synthesis of research data, along with the testing of research hypotheses using that data (Polit & Hungler, 2014). It encompasses categorization, ordering, manipulation, and summarization of the data, presenting it in meaningful terms (Brink, 2010). Thematic analysis is employed in this research for data analysis, combining descriptions and explanations to explore participants' responses. The researcher quantified qualitative data using charts and simple percentages. The pattern of behaviour was scrutinized, and any deviations were elucidated. Relevancy, accuracy, and comprehensiveness were addressed based on the questions asked. Most questions in the questionnaire were closed-ended. The findings are deliberated, and the data is presented in the form of frequency tables and bar graphs in Chapter 4, aligning with the literature reviewed in Chapter 2.

### **3.9 Pilot study**

A pilot study serves as a preliminary run of the main study, aiming to assess various aspects such as the time required to complete the questionnaire, its length, level of difficulty, and the clarity of the questionnaire items. The intention is to identify and address any issues related to the questionnaire, including ambiguities or difficulties in wording (Cohen et al., 2002).

In this research, a pilot study was undertaken to evaluate the reliability of the questionnaire. Questionnaires were administered to individuals with characteristics like the research sample but not involved in the primary study. Based on the feedback from the pilot study, certain

questions were rephrased to enhance clarity, and some questions were eliminated due to their perceived irrelevance.

### **3.10 Ethical Considerations**

Ethics, as defined by Pera and Van Tonder (2013), constitutes a set of principles governing appropriate behaviour. Research ethics is a critical consideration for all researchers, involving an understanding of obligations and responsibilities for those conducting the research and the protection of basic rights for those being researched. The study necessitated a fair and just approach to eliminate potential risks, ensuring that respondents are informed about their rights. Ethical considerations in a study encompass elements such as obtaining informed consent, ensuring the right to anonymity and confidentiality, preserving the right to privacy, upholding principles of justice, beneficence, and demonstrating respect for persons (Brink & Wood, 2012).

#### **3.10.1 Confidentiality and Anonymity**

Confidentiality stands as a fundamental ethical principle, and anonymity serves as a means to uphold this confidentiality. Anonymity involves measures to safeguard an individual's identity by withholding their name when presenting research findings and avoiding the inclusion of identifying details, such as personal characteristics and occupation, that might disclose their identity (Rees, 2010). In this study, anonymity was maintained by refraining from including names on the questionnaire, ensuring that the researcher cannot link any information to a specific participant.

### **3.10.2 Informed Consent**

Obtaining informed consent is a legal prerequisite for study participation (Brink & Wood, 2012). Following a comprehensive explanation of the study's nature, participants were requested to provide verbal consent, indicating their willingness to take part in the research.

### **3.11 Chapter Summary**

The chapter provided a framework for the applied methodology in the study, presenting details on the population, sample, and sampling procedures, with an emphasis on their merits. It also covered the pilot study and discussed the presentation and analysis of the gathered data. The collected data was systematically organized for interpretability, employing tables and graphs. The subsequent chapter will centre on presenting and analysing the collected data

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 4.0 Introduction

The process of presenting, managing, and analysing qualitative data is undoubtedly intricate, involving specialized language and discourse systems. It encompasses a unique set of interpretive practices and narrative techniques, requiring the synthesis and organization of data into manageable units, the identification of patterns, and the determination of significance. In qualitative research, data analysis typically adopts an inductive approach, with critical themes emerging organically from the data.

The results discussion centred on describing the opinions of specific respondents in comparison to the entire sample, revealing distinct trends in respondent views regarding the impact of territorial disputes.

Data analysis in this study involved organizing and breaking down data, synthesizing information, identifying patterns, and determining key insights for presentation. The qualitative approach employed inductive analysis, extracting critical themes from the data. Creativity is essential in qualitative data analysis to transform raw data into logical categories that can be examined holistically and effectively communicated to others.

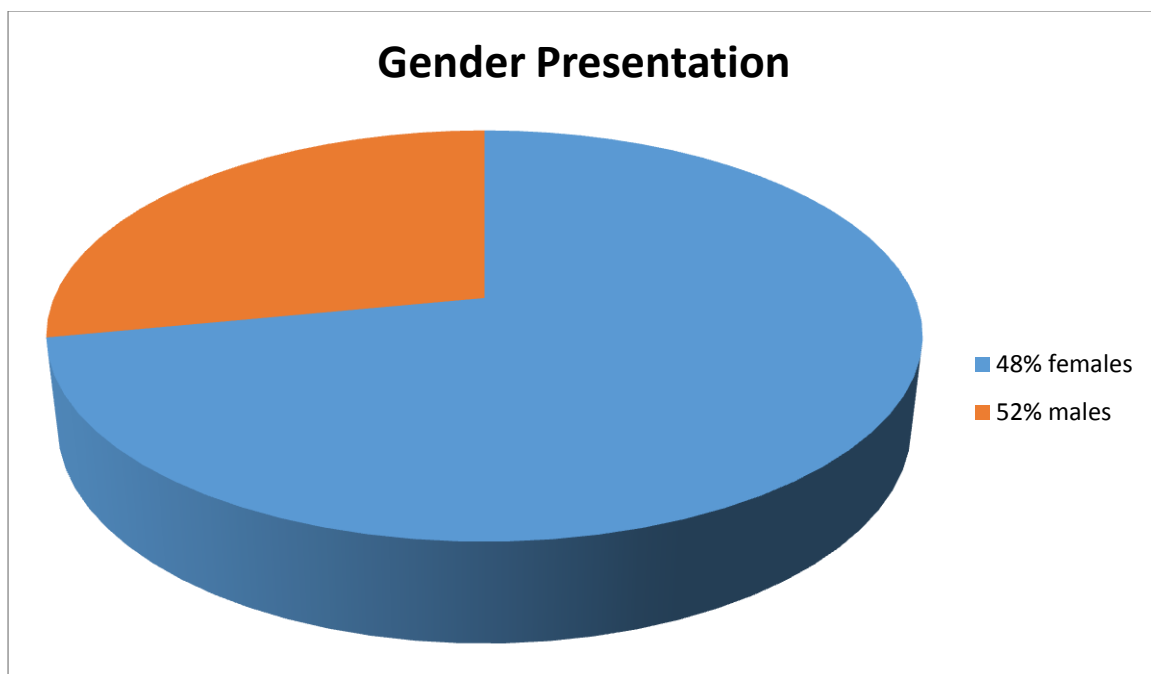
The analysis commenced with identifying themes through open coding, breaking down information into manageable chunks and creating an audit trail for contextual understanding. The qualitative report is characterized by a narrative voice illustrating the described themes, although the presentation also incorporates tables, charts, and other figures. Constant comparative analysis and phenomenological analysis techniques were utilized.

Various data analysis strategies were employed in the study to enhance research rigor, validity, and reliability. While contemporary qualitative studies may utilize computer

programs like SPSS for data storage and organization, the primary emphasis remains on processing and analysing data manually.

Although traditional research often distinguishes between qualitative and quantitative data analysis, this study demonstrated that the two approaches can complement each other. Both qualitative and quantitative data were utilized to explore the key issues raised in the literature review on territorial disputes. Questionnaires were administered to a limited number of international relations academics, and the study's findings were derived from their responses.

#### 4.1 Demographic Data of Participants



**Figure 4.1: Respondents by gender**

As indicated in Figure 1, 13 male participants, constituting 52%, and 12 female participants, making up 48% of the sample, took part in the study. This gender distribution reflects a conscientious consideration of gender in the research process, adding credibility to the findings. In essence, the study uncovered a scarcity of females with substantial expertise in territorial dispute matters.

## 4.2 Age variables of respondents

Age	Number	Percentage
25-30	4	16
31-40	11	44
41-above	10	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 1: Ages of respondents**

Most of the participants belonged to the 31-40 age bracket, with the 25-30 age group having the smallest number of respondents. It is noteworthy that the age category below 31 may not be adequately represented in the current research. Age variables assisted in understanding the respondents response according to their knowledge of the research.

## 4.3 Questionnaires

The questionnaire consisted of eleven specially crafted questions tailored to the nature of the research. These questions delved into the respondents' understanding of the conflict's origins, the process and steps involved in conflict resolution. A crucial element was probing the number of years the respondents had spent in the International Relations profession/field to gauge their knowledge base on the impact of territorial disputes on Nagorno-Karabakh.

Additionally, the questionnaire sought the respondents' perspectives on Armenia's compliance with UNSC resolutions, aiming to discern if Armenia bore responsibility for the dispute. This question aimed to provide a general overview of the conflict, contributing to the understanding of the conflict resolution process.

The questionnaire also inquired about the respondents' opinions on whether the conflict had an impact on Nagorno-Karabakh. Respondents were asked to scale their responses, assessing

the extent of the conflict's influence on Nagorno-Karabakh. This question aimed to explore respondents' perceptions of the conflict's effects, if any.

In the final question, respondents were tasked with identifying who holds authority over Nagorno-Karabakh. The provided options included individuals who played key roles during the 1988-1993 war, business figures, the Armenian Diaspora, foreign entities (USA), Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Russia. Each option was meticulously explained, and examples were provided where necessary to prevent confusion or misunderstanding.

#### **4.4 The origins of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict**

Most respondents, constituting 52%, asserted that the conflict stemmed from ethnic killings. Respondents further highlighted that when initial clashes occurred between Armenians and Tatars, the Russian administration strategically utilized them to divert public attention from anti-imperialist sentiments. Following the Bolshevik rise to power and the onset of the civil war in Russia in autumn 1917, Transcaucasia was politically isolated from the broader Russian state. The Transcaucasian Commissariat assumed control under these circumstances, convening the Transcaucasian parliament in February 1918 to determine government organization and establish regional authorities. However, the parliament's existence was short-lived, and on May 26-28, 1918, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia declared their independence.

After the 1918 independence of Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia, two main principles emerged for addressing border issues: adopting the borders of former Russian administrative divisions and drawing new borders considering local demographics. Only the Armenian side advocated for demarcation based on the ethnic principle, leading to conflicts in Armenian-populated areas like Lori, Javakhk, Nakhichevan, Zangezur, and Karabakh.

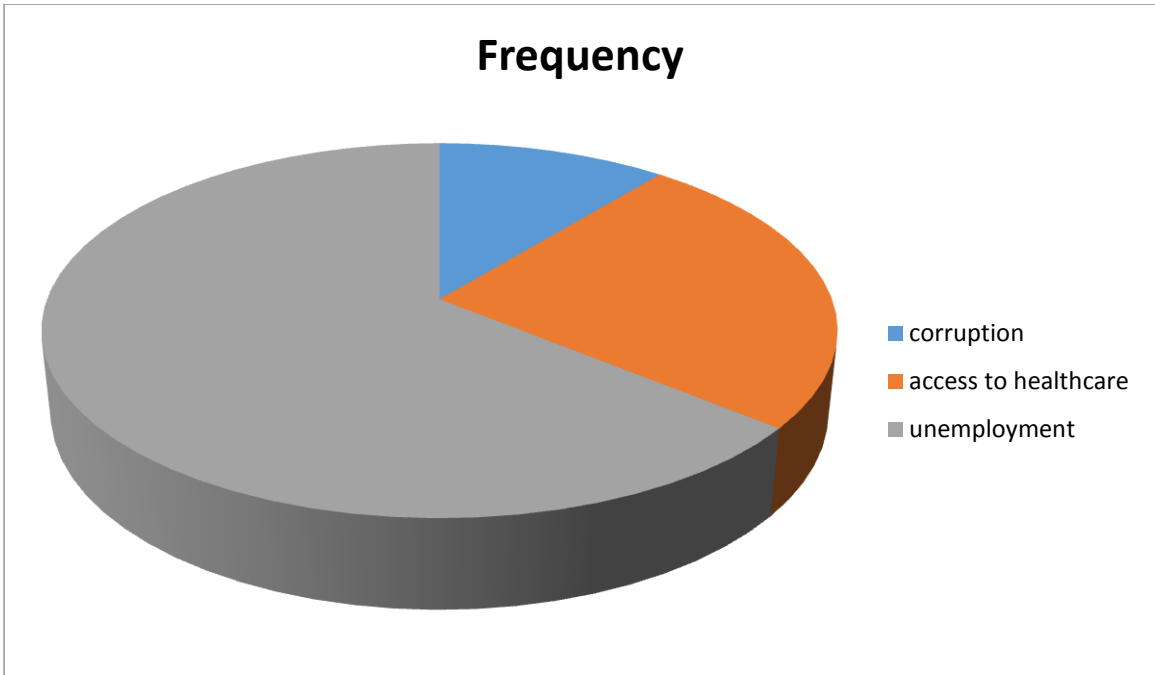
A total of 12 respondents aligned with the secondary data, asserting that the conflict's origins encompassed factors beyond ethnic killings. It is acknowledged that the collapse of the USSR and the emergence of new states globally posed significant geopolitical challenges, impacting people in the post-Soviet area and the international community. Building on existing literature, the conflict is seen as a consequence and continuation of decolonization initiated after World War II. Nationalism played a central role in the outbreak of violence between Armenians and Azerbaijan during the Soviet Union's dissolution.

Historical sources date Nagorno-Karabakh back to the fifth century BC as part of ancient Armenia under the Orontid dynasty. The region was known as Artsakh during this period. Azerbaijani scholars, however, dispute the existence of an Armenian state, referring to tribal associations that later formed early state institutions of Azerbaijan. The very existence and name of the region remain contentious, contributing to the challenging environment for researching the conflict, with disinformation campaigns being a notable aspect.

From the literature review and secondary data, it is evident that, besides ethnic killings, the collapse of the USSR stands out as a major factor contributing to the ongoing conflict, a perspective supported by 48% of the respondents who argued that the conflict resulted from the collapse of the USSR.

#### **4.5 The effects of the conflict on Nagorno-Karabakh**

The research aimed to assess the consequences of the conflict on Nagorno-Karabakh and its impact on the local population. After distributing questionnaires to respondents, the results revealed unanimous agreement among all 25 participants (100%) that the conflict has indeed affected Nagorno-Karabakh and its people significantly. According to the participants, these effects posed a substantial challenge for the people of Nagorno-Karabakh.



**Figure 2: Effects of the conflict on Nagorno-Karabakh**

The results highlight the predominant effects based on respondents' answers to the questionnaire. The findings reveal that the conflict has significantly impacted Nagorno-Karabakh, particularly in terms of access to healthcare, corruption, unemployment, and economic development. Notably, there was a historical event in Azerbaijan known as the Sumgait pogrom, where Armenians were massacred in the city of Sumgait. This incident triggered retaliatory actions from the Armenian side, leading to violence against Azerbaijani residents in Armenia.

The literature review and findings emphasize the extensive repercussions of the conflict on Armenian children, causing the displacement of around 90,000 people from Nagorno-Karabakh in 2020. UNICEF, along with partners, intervened to assist over 30,000 affected children and adolescents, providing supplies, nutritious food packages, COVID-19 prevention kits, healthcare through mobile clinics, and mental health support.

The war has resulted in numerous casualties, displacements, and loss of lives, affecting even the elderly population. Amnesty International reports that older people faced unlawful killings, torture, and forced displacement, leaving a lasting impact on their lives. The conflict's unique risks for older individuals are underscored, as they often bear the long-term consequences of war.

The Nagorno-Karabakh War poses a complex situation for European capitals, considering the region part of Europe but hesitating to engage militarily. Azerbaijan's significant role as a hydrocarbon provider to Europe, especially through the Southern Gas Corridor, complicates the geopolitical dynamics.

For Azerbaijan, the consequences of the war include breaches of territorial integrity by Armenia, resulting in occupied and affected territories, including the Nagorno-Karabakh region. The potential displacement of Nagorno-Karabakh's ethnic Armenian population raises humanitarian concerns reminiscent of the 1990s, and it could impact Armenian democracy. Azerbaijan's decisive victory has weakened public support for Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, potentially creating a challenge to the democratic reforms initiated in 2018.

#### **4.6 Who is responsible for the peace process?**

Based on the findings, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) became involved in the conflict settlement process. In 1997, the OSCE Minsk Group, co-chaired by Russia, France, and the U.S., was established as the exclusive format mandated by the OSCE to mediate activities for the peaceful resolution of the Karabakh conflict. However, respondents expressed concerns that some members of the Minsk Group prioritize their national interests, indicating a need for a neutral body to facilitate the peace process.

The findings suggest dissatisfaction with the role of Russia, Armenia's security guarantor under the CSTO, in protecting Armenian interests in Nagorno-Karabakh. Participants argued that Russia should do more than mediate ceasefires, considering its role as a security guarantor.

The study highlights the indifference of major powers, including Russia, the European Union, and the United States, towards preventing further bloodshed and building sustainable peace in Nagorno-Karabakh. The lack of effective international mediation became evident when Azerbaijan blocked the Lachin Corridor in 2022, lasting over 250 days without significant pushback.

Armenia's quest for new allies and Azerbaijan's dependence on Western investment in hydrocarbon wealth underscore the potential influence of the West. However, the West's inaction is attributed to a flawed understanding of the situation, with Armenia being wrongly perceived as a loyal Russian ally. The recent European Political Community (EPC) initiative, driven by the European Union and hosting direct dialogue between Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders, aims to contribute to stability in border areas.

While past attempts by the European Union faced challenges, the EPC initiative, spearheaded by European Council president Charles Michel, has provided a platform for direct dialogue and a new EU initiative in Armenia. The effectiveness of these initiatives and the potential for resuming EU-led peace talks remain uncertain following recent clashes. The upcoming EPC summit in Granada, Spain, may shed light on the future of EU-led peace efforts in Nagorno-Karabakh.

#### **4.7 The West has a moral responsibility to help build peace in Nagorno-Karabakh**

For the third time in three decades, and the second in the past three years, the international community has once again failed to avert conflict between Azerbaijan and the ethnic

Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh. The recent hostilities, initiated by Azeri forces on September 19 in a renewed effort to reclaim the enclave, concluded relatively swiftly.

Within the first 24 hours of the "anti-terror" operation, the leaders of the self-declared Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (NKR) agreed to surrender, and Azerbaijan declared victory. Subsequently, as Azeri forces advanced, seizing control of various villages, mines, and strategic heights across Nagorno-Karabakh, and positioning themselves near ethnic Armenian population centers, the NKR agreed to disband its army three days later.

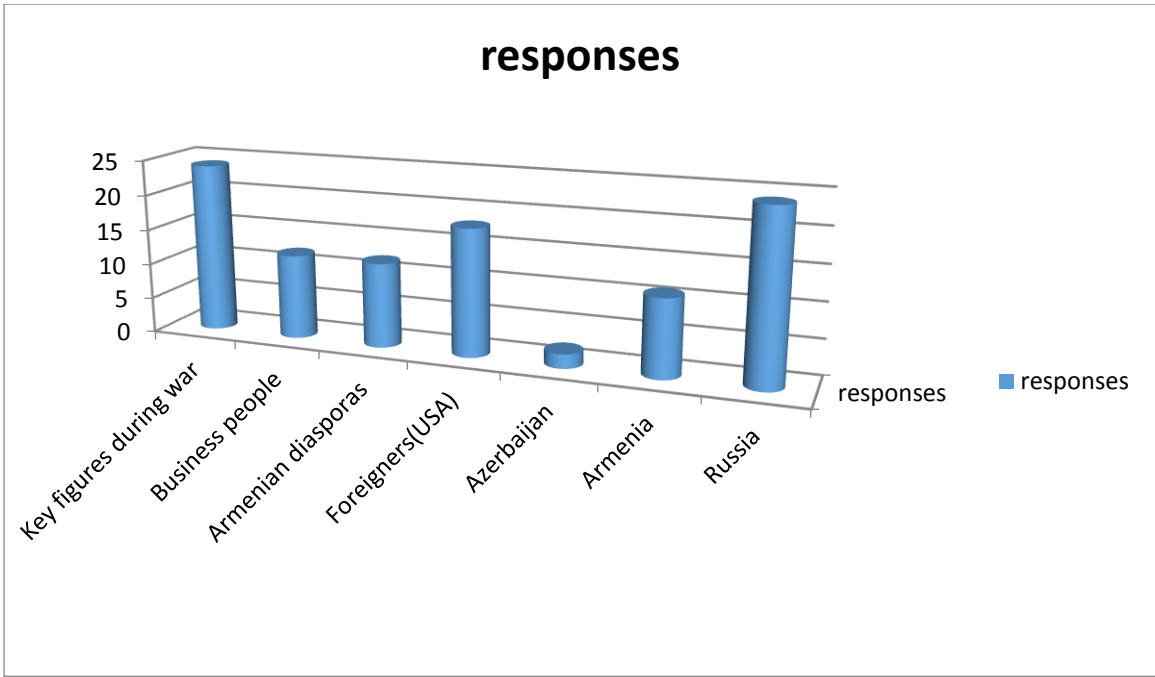
Western powers have cited Azerbaijan's perceived role in Europe's energy security as a rationale for non-intervention, even though it accounted for merely 3% of European natural gas demand in 2022. This is significantly less than the 10% supplied by Russia before the Ukraine invasion and less than half of Russia's current supply.

The international community's track record on this conflict is a cause for shame. Its failure to take timely and meaningful action has resulted in three wars and paved the way for more conflict and bloodshed. It is crucial to cease hiding behind notions of energy security and Russian influence and promptly commit to whatever measures are necessary to prevent further conflict and displacement in the region.

If the West aims to demonstrate its dedication to the international liberal order and the prevention of displacement and ethnic oppression, essential for maintaining support for Ukraine, decisive action must be taken now to ensure that this war marks the last.

#### **4.8 Who is in charge of Nagorno-Karabakh?**

Content analysis was done on some of the responses collected from the respondents that were sampled as shown in figure 3.



**Figure 3: Who is in charge of Nagorno-Karabakh.**

The findings underscore that Russia (96%) and key figures from the 1988-1993 war (96%) are the entities effectively in control of Nagorno-Karabakh. This is evident in the context of the Russia-Ukraine war, where Armenia and Azerbaijan became embroiled in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict with little global attention amid the focus on the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

On June 12, 1921, the Caucasian Bureau of the Soviet Union resolved to declare Nagorno Karabakh as part of Armenia. However, the Azerbaijani Soviet leadership was not universally informed of Azerbaijan's agreement on Nagorno-Karabakh's inclusion in Armenia (Altstadt, 1992). Subsequently, during the next Caucasian Bureau meeting in July, the decision was reconfirmed, but the Azerbaijani side requested that the matter be transferred to the Central Committee of Moscow. Despite the initial agreement to postpone the final decision-making for the Central Committee, another meeting of the Caucasian Bureau was convened the following day. During this meeting, the Azerbaijan leadership successfully negotiated by applying pressure, leveraging the threat of disrupting petroleum gas deliveries to Moscow. They urged a reconsideration of the prior decision, leading to a resolution stating the

necessity of incorporating Nagorno-Karabakh into Azerbaijan, granting it regional autonomy (Altstadt, 1992).

Various opinions exist regarding the reasons for this change in decision. One officially stated reason was the economic ties between the region and neighbouring Azerbaijani regions, emphasizing the facilitation of the free movement of Azerbaijani nomads between the Karabakh mountains and the Azerbaijani plains. However, this rationale has sparked controversy, as the physical borders between Soviet Republics would only have a formal significance. Another official reason provided by the Caucasian Bureau was the perceived need for national peace between Muslims and Armenians in the region. It is commonly believed that the decision was influenced by the famous principle of "divide and rule," considering the historical context of the conflict and Russia's role and interests in it.

In 1923, the Soviet Union established the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast, which housed a predominantly Armenian population of 95% within the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic. Despite its official placement within Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh's regional legislature passed a resolution in 1988 expressing its intention to join the Republic of Armenia. During Soviet rule, armed conflicts between the two republics, characterized by longstanding ethnic tensions, were relatively controlled. However, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, peace in the region deteriorated. In 1991, as Armenia and Azerbaijan gained statehood, Nagorno-Karabakh declared independence, sparking a war between the two nations that resulted in approximately thirty thousand casualties and displaced hundreds of thousands of people. By 1993, Armenia had gained control of Nagorno-Karabakh and occupied 20% of Azerbaijan's territory. In 1994, a ceasefire known as the Bishkek Protocol was brokered by Russia, leaving Nagorno-Karabakh de facto independent with a self-

proclaimed government in Stepanakert, heavily reliant on close economic, political, and military ties with Armenia.

Since the bilateral acceptance of the ceasefire in 1994, which formally held until September 2020, intermittent clashes have occurred, involving the use of attack drones, shelling, and special operations by Armenian and Azerbaijani forces. The most intense fighting since 1994 took place in early April 2016, resulting in hundreds of casualties along the separation line. After four days of fighting, both sides announced a cessation of hostilities, but talks broke down, leading to accusations of ceasefire violations and sustained tensions.

Following Azerbaijan's rapid offensive and occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh on September 19, separatist authorities declared that the ethnic Armenian enclave would dissolve on January 1, 2024. Faced with the prospect of Azerbaijani rule, over one hundred thousand people, constituting 80% of Nagorno-Karabakh's population, fled to Armenia within one week. Baku intends to "reintegrate" the region and its remaining population into Azerbaijan, pledging economic development. Attention has now shifted to the Zangezur corridor, Armenian territory separating Azerbaijan from its exclave, Nakhchivan; Azerbaijan's president has emphasized the priority of opening this corridor.



**Map 4.2** Showing the proposed border line according to Armenia (source: [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org))

#### 4.9 Chapter Summary

This section has scrutinized, explained, and showcased the data through both qualitative and quantitative means, involving descriptive explanations and numerical statistics. Throughout this analysis, efforts were made to align with the literature that influenced the study. The chapter also explored the historical and contemporary context of the dispute. Furthermore the chapter analysed the peacekeeping mechanisms that have been thus far implored to call a ceasefire to the conflict. It critically analyses the mechanisms that have been used in the dispute. The chapter also analysed the key players involved in the conflict who are Russia, USA and Turkey who then benefit from the dispute. Overall the chapter provides a comprehensive analysis of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND AREAS FOR FURTHER STUDY**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This section offers an overview of the research discoveries, concluding insights drawn from the entire study, and recommendations based on the research findings. It also proposes potential areas for additional investigation in line with the study's conclusions and findings.

#### **5.1 Summary of the Study**

The research summary offers a concise reiteration of the presented materials, providing readers with an overarching perspective. The research report serves as a written or spoken communication conveying research findings and methodologies, with summaries highlighting key study outcomes.

Chapter one of the study, presented the introduction, which gave the study's background and the basis of the research. A brief background of the conflict was presented in this chapter. The problem statement was given, outlining the main concerns that the research sought to resolve. Research parameters, the research objectives, questions, reason for the study, and its restrictions and delimitations were also discussed.

Chapter two reviewed work that has been written about the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. An account of the historical background of the conflict provided the basis of the study as well as the effects of the conflict as presented by different scholars. The chapter also discussed the theoretical framework.

Chapter three focussed on broader methodological issues, the research philosophy, methodology and design were clearly explained in the methodology chapter, which provided a guide on how the study was carried out. Data collection involved both secondary and primary sources, presenting information on socio-economic and geo-political effects through these techniques, shedding light on the Nagorno-Karabakh claim and ownership conflict. The chapter also covered the criteria for selecting data and sampling strategies. There was also a discussion of ethical issues.

Chapter four presented the summary, conclusions and gave the final recommendations. This chapter was essential because it gave an analytical interpretation of the research findings. The organised presentation of data was in sync with the research questions provided in the introduction.

Chapter five being the final chapter of the study summarises the research as well as presentation of recommendations and areas for further study. The findings were organized based on their sources, ensuring the accuracy of the gathered information. The study revealed that the conflict zone lacks peacekeepers, and the existing ceasefire relies on a delicate balance of forces, with both parties maintaining maximal demands for a peaceful resolution. The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs, France, Russia, and the United States, lack coercive instruments, and despite the ceasefire, violent incidents persist along the Line of Contact in Nagorno-Karabakh and the recognized border between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

## **5.2 Conclusions**

This study has examined the repercussions of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which, despite a cease-fire since 1994, shows no indication of a lasting resolution between Karabakh Armenians and Azeri co-nationals. The cease-fire hasn't led to noticeable progress on key issues, hindering the situation of approximately 600,000 refugees in Azerbaijan. The

economic challenges facing both countries complicate the refugees' transition from humanitarian assistance to income generation.

The research concluded that the South Caucasus' political situation, overshadowed by crises in Russia and Ukraine, remains strategically important for Moscow. The Nagorno-Karabakh issue aligns Russia and the West's stances, with no Russian claim to reconsider interstate borders and a valued role in ceasefires. The trilateral negotiation format is viewed as an additional diplomatic platform, fostering trust between President Putin and the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan. Any attempt to diminish Moscow's role would be contrary to American and European interests, limiting diplomatic channels.

The lack of a settlement also hampers economic transition and political reform in Azerbaijan and Armenia, impeding the development of the region's energy resources. Despite hopes that resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict would enhance the OSCE's role as a regional security organization, the organization's mediating efforts have yielded little success. The OSCE's effectiveness relies heavily on key member states, which, as mentioned earlier, have been absent. Additionally, Russian support for the OSCE's role is tempered by concerns that an effective multilateral presence may complicate its foreign policy agenda in the Transcaucasus.

During this period, there was no comprehensive intergovernmental assessment of the Nagorno-Karabakh crisis, and substantial assistance was not provided. External aid came mainly from Armenian and Armenian diaspora sources, a few NGOs, and the ICRC. The limited humanitarian aid, despite stabilization in the military situation, underscores the politicization of such assistance. Governments and intergovernmental agencies faced challenges in addressing humanitarian emergencies in insurgent regions.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

- A crucial foundation for effective humanitarian programs lies in an impartial needs assessment conducted by qualified international personnel. In situations like Nagorno-Karabakh, measures should be implemented to establish and safeguard the United Nations and its organizations' capacity to carry out such assessments.
- Drawing insights from experiences such as Nagorno-Karabakh, policymakers and other stakeholders should gain greater clarity regarding the evident trade-offs linked to the politicization of humanitarian action. Efforts should be made to preserve the integrity of humanitarian initiatives.
- Political constraints on assistance, prevalent in aid provided to those affected by the conflict, are likely to diminish the effectiveness and efficiency of meeting humanitarian needs. Politically motivated discrimination against specific recipient categories not only violates humanitarian principles but may also complicate mediation efforts and erode the parties' confidence in the settlement process.
- The timeline for deploying peacekeeping forces by the OSCE is currently unrealistically short, considering the unresolved issues faced by force planners. It is advisable to engage in more sustained efforts to finalize command procedures, force composition, financial arrangements, and mandate details before achieving a partial or complete agreement allowing deployment.

### **5.4 Suggestions for further Research**

Potential areas for additional research include:

- Investigating the efficacy of the OSCE Minsk Group in addressing the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in future studies.
- Examining the stance of the United States regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in future research.

- Exploring the geopolitical consequences arising from the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

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**Appendix one**

**Questionnaire**

I am a Bindura University of Science Education student studying for a Master of Science in International Relations and carrying out a study on THE IMPACT OF TERRITORIAL DISPUTE BETWEEN AZERBAIJAN AND ARMENIA. A CASE OF NARGONO-KARABHAK. Kindly respond in all honesty and your response will be treated with all confidentiality. Tick in the boxes provided to indicate your response and/or make comments where applicable.

**SECTION A**

Sex: Male

Female

Age: 25-30

31-40

41-above

How long have you been an IR academia? .....

**SECTION B**

What are the origins of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict?.....  
.....  
.....

How did Nagorno-Karabakh fall under Soviet Azerbaijani rule?.....

.....  
.....

Which organization has the legal mandate to facilitate the peace process?.....  
.....

What tangible steps did the OSCE Minsk Group undertake to reconcile the disagreements between Armenia and Azerbaijan?.....  
.....  
.....

What is Russia's role in the conflict resolution process?.....  
.....  
.....

What caused the escalation of the conflict in 2020?.....  
.....  
.....

**SECTION C**

Is it really the case that Armenia does not comply with four UNSC resolutions which were adopted in 1993, as Azerbaijan frequently claims?

Yes

No

How big of a problem is each of these now for Nagorno-Karabakh?

	Very much	Quite a lot	Somewhat of a problem	Not a problem	Don't know	Refuse to answer
Unemployment and lack of economic development						
Corruption, corrupt authorities						
Absence of democracy						
Military build up in Azerbaijan						
Crime						
Lack of international recognition of the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh						
Casualties on the Line of Contact						
Access to good health care						
Access to education opportunities						
Restrictions on freedom of expression						

Who, in your view, is really in charge in Nagorno-Karabakh?

	Definitely yes	Mostly yes	Mostly no	Definitely no	Don't know	Refuse to answer
People who were key figures during the 1988-1993 war						
Business people						
The Armenian diasporas						
Foreigners (USA)						
Azerbaijan						
Armenia						
Russia						

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION**