UNDERSTANDING SUCCESS IN INTERNATIONAL MEDIATION: COMPARING RUSSIAN AND TURKISH MEDIATION ATTEMPTS IN THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT

by

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ABSTRACT

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International mediation has been used extensively to manage international conflicts. The literature on international mediation has focused extensively on success of mediation and how and why international mediation offers are accepted by conflicting parties. This thesis aims to dwell on both discussions by developing a two-pillar approach to success in international mediation. The thesis argues that the first pillar of mediation is the acceptance of mediation offers, related to the characteristics of mediators, and the second pillar of mediation is either the reduction in conflict behaviour or the achievement of national goals of mediators. This is because the thesis sees mediation not only as a conflict resolution method but also as a foreign policy tool. Since these two approaches will require different outcomes in the evaluation of the post-mediation environment but both of them require the fulfilment of the first pillar of mediation success, the focus of this thesis is on the first pillar. While revealing this, the thesis argues that the more resources a mediator has, the more likely its mediation offers will be accepted. In this line, the thesis rests specifically on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, as both approaches to mediation can be observed in that conflict, and compares the mediation attempts of Russia and Turkey with a focus on their leverages. In addition to this theoretical objective, the thesis also aims to put forth some recommendations for Turkey to increase its likelihood of success in mediating the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

ÖZET

ULUSLARARASI ARABULUCULUKTA BAŞARIYI ANLAMAK: RUSYA VE TÜRKİYE'NİN DAĞLIK-KARABAĞ SORUNUNA YÖNELİK ARABULUCULUK GİRİŞİMLERİNİN KARŞILAŞTIRILMASI

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Anahtar Kelimeler: Uluslararası Arabuluculuk, Çift Katman, Başarı, Taraflılık, Baskı Gücü, Dağlık-Karabağ Sorunu, Rusya, Türkiye

Uluslararası arabuluculuk uluslararası çatışmaları çözmek noktasında oldukça fazla kullanılmıştır. Arabuluculuk literatüründe en çok tartışılan konulardan ikisi arabuluculuk faaliyetlerinde başarı ve çatışan tarafların nasıl ve niçin arabuluculuk tekliflerini kabul ettiği olmuştur. Bu tez, bu iki tartışmaya da uluslararası arabuluculukta başarı üzerine çift katmanlı bir yaklaşım geliştirerek değinmektedir. Bu tez ilk katmanın arabuluculuk teklifinin arabulucuların özelliklerine bağlı olarak kabul edilmesi, ve ikinci katmanınsa ya çatışma davranışlarında azalma ya da arabulucuların milli hedeflerinin gerçekleştirilmesi olduğunu savunmaktadır. Bunun sebebi bu tezin arabuluculuğu sadece çatışma çözümü yöntemi olarak değil, aynı zamanda bir dış politika aracı olarak görmesinden kaynaklanmaktadır. Bu iki yaklaşım arabuluculuk sonrası durumun değerlendirilmesinde farklı sonuçlara gereksinim duyacağı ama her iki yaklaşımda da ilk katmanın başarılı olması gerektiği için, bu tezdeki odak noktası ilk katmandır. Bunu gösterirken bu tez daha fazla güce sahip olan arabulucuların arabuluculuk tekliflerinin daha fazla kabul edileceğini savunmaktadır. Bu doğrultuda bu tez arabuluculuğa dair bu iki yaklaşımın gözlemlenebilmesinden ötürü özel olarak Dağlık-Karabağ sorununa odaklanmakta ve sahip oldukları güçlerin odağında Rusya ve Türkiye'nin arabuluculuk faaliyetlerini karşılaştırmaktadır. Bu teorik hedefe ek olarak da bu tez aynı zamanda Türkiye'ye yönelik Türkiye'nin Dağlık-Karabağ sorununda arabuluculuk başarısını artırabilecek önerilerde bulunmaktadır.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BBC   British Broadcasting Corporation

CIS   Commonwealth of Independent States

CSTO   Collective Security Organisation Treaty

EAEU   Eurasian Economic Union

EU   European Union

JDP   Justice and Development Party

NATO   North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

OSCE   Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe

SES   Single Economic Space

SSR   Soviet Socialist Republic

TMFA   Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs

UNSC   United Nations Security Council

US   United States

USSR   Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

INTRODUCTION

Conflicts are prevalent, and they constitute an integral feature of human societies, no matter where they live. They stem, at a basic level, from the perceived incompatibility of needs, interests, goals of human groups, and 'may entail a variety of criteria and meanings from political quarrels and struggles, economic differences, large-scale wars with fatality criteria, to small wars and skirmishes' (Bercovitch and Fretter, 2007, p. 153). Just like conflicts, the attempts to manage conflicts are as common and diversified some of the most-known types of which are facilitation, negotiation, peacekeeping, problem-solving workshops, arbitration, adjudication and mediation. Mediation, as a 'chosen strategy' (Mitchell, 1998, p. 48), is going to be the focus of this thesis. This is the case due to two reasons.

The first reason is that as a conflict management method, reflecting a strategy, mediation has been one of the most practiced methods. It is utilised at both domestic and international levels to manage conflicts, mostly 'in the later phases of a conflict' and in line with other conflict management methods (Bercovitch and Fretter, 2007, p. 159). This approach to mediation, seeing it as a method of conflict resolution, is the first approach that is used when discussing mediation.

Mediation is also seen as a foreign policy tool (Touval, 2003), which constitutes the second reason why studying mediation is crucial because although mediation is at its core a conflict resolution mechanism, it is also utilised by states to meet their goals in addition to and/or at the expense of the resolution of the conflict. As the author of this thesis, I am of belief that both approaches are valid, and they should be incorporated. As a result, this thesis assumes that mediation both as a conflict resolution method and as a foreign policy tool used to meet national interests constitute the pillars of international mediation.

Hence, when a discussion on mediation success, which is an important aspect of the scholarship on international mediation and one of the ultimate goals of this thesis, is held, both approaches to mediation should be kept in mind because how to measure success will be different in both cases, which will be analysed in detail at a later stage of this thesis. Since

the aim of this thesis is to understand success in international mediation with a particular focus on the two-dimensionality of the utilisation of mediation, this thesis will be specifically about understanding success in international mediation in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict as the conflict provides a concrete case study where success in international mediation can be understood where two approaches to mediation do exist.

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which has witnessed continuous Russian mediation (for the manipulation of the conflict) and a continuous interest of Turkey to mediate the conflict (for the resolution of the conflict), is a telling case when we aim to understand mediation success. Since in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, no positive post-mediation environment, the one discussed by Bercovitch and Houston (1996), because Russia, the main mediator of the conflict has been using mediation as a foreign policy tool to control Armenia and Azerbaijan and the conflict is still protracted (no resolution), and Turkey, with intentions to resolve the conflict, has not been accepted as a mediator to the conflict so far, this thesis, while analysing success in international mediation, will focus on the first pillar of mediation success which is the acceptance of mediation offers/acceptability of mediators -determined by the degree of resourcefulness of mediators (see below), as this constitutes a point of discussion for both Russian and Turkish mediation. Due to its insights into both understanding mediation success and the role of resources in determining mediation success instead of concerns of neutrality, bias and impartiality, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is quite crucial to analyse.

Although the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh can be traced back to centuries ago, the conflict in its current form started in 1988 in what was then the Soviet Union. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the conflict turned into a bloody international war pitting Armenians and Azerbaijanis against each other. The 1994 mediation of the conflict, initiated by Russia, ceased the conflict, managing it but not resolving it. Following this initial mediation, the so-called Minsk Group, with the co-chairmanship of Russia, the US, and France, under the auspices of the OSCE, was formed to mediate the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

This development has an important implication for the study of international mediation and created an impetus for this thesis. As we shall see in a detailed manner in the next chapter

on the theoretical discussions about international mediation, the notions of bias, neutrality and impartiality occupy a significant place in discussions on the characteristics of mediators as determinants of the likelihood of mediation success, especially the first pillar of mediation success defined as defined as the acceptance of mediation offers in this thesis (see below). Many, mostly those who support pure mediation, argue that mediation offers will more likely be accepted when both disputants see the mediator as an unbiased, neutral and impartial actor. However, given the current international system, this is such an unrealistic expectation that it should be scrutinised. This is because both the working of the international system and the national interests of states make it extremely difficult to have a totally unbiased, neutral and impartial mediator. Therefore, many scholars, mostly those whose who support power mediation, stress the importance of resources (or power/leverages[1]) that a mediator possesses as the determinant of the acceptance (success) and/or rejection (failure) of mediation. When we examine composition of the Minsk Group, and specifically Russia, this situation becomes clearer.

Although the US is trying to follow a balanced policy towards Armenia and Azerbaijan, the direction of support from Russia and France favours Armenia over Azerbaijan (Hirose and Jasutis, 2014, p. 13). This is mostly because there are strong Armenian diasporas in these three states lobbying for support in Armenia in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (de Waal, 2010a, p. 173). This situation diminishes the balance in American policies towards the conflict as well, which Azerbaijan has continuously criticised. Nevertheless, despite this apparent bias, the mediation of these three states, under the Minsk Group and through Russia's single-handed mediation, have so far been accepted by both disputants. This has been the case especially with Russian mediation.

Russia has dominated the mediation process in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict to the extent that other players play either a minimal role (like France and the US) or nearly no role at all (like Turkey). That Turkish mediation attempts have not been accepted by both disputants at the same time and Turkey's interest in mediating the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has remained as an interest falling short of being realised deserve a detailed analysis

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[1] In this thesis, the terms "resource", "power" and "leverage" are used interchangeably.

that should say more than that Turkey's apparent bias in the conflict hinders any prospect of Turkey being accepted as a mediator, the first pillar of success in international mediation.

This is because when we examine our case, as we shall see in the rest of this study, even though its mediation proposals have so far been accepted by both Armenia and Azerbaijan, Russia is a biased, unneutral and partial actor in the conflict, favouring Armenia. Therefore, claims revolving around the idea that since Turkey is positively biased towards Azerbaijan, its mediation will not be accepted by both Armenia and Azerbaijan are not logical. This, to a great extent, stems from the fact that as the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is an inter-ethnic, inter-cultural and international protracted conflict, just like similar conflicts, it requires a more 'manipulative', or more powerful as used in this thesis, mediation as such a mediation will include a certain level of coerciveness, a resource that will be discussed in full detail later in this chapter, required in the mediation of protracted and intercultural conflicts (see Salmon et al., 2013) instead of being totally unbiased, neutral and impartial.

Hence, the logical argument to understand Russia's mediation success and Turkey's mediation failure should be based on another criterion: resources. Although Russia and Turkey are similar in terms of bias, neutrality and impartiality, when we examine Russia and Turkey with a focus on resources (leverages), we have a totally different picture. As a result, evaluating the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, taking into account the characteristics of Russia and Turkey as mediators with a focus on the role of resources, is quite telling as it helps answer the research question that created the impetus for this thesis: *how do resources influence the likelihood of acceptance of mediation offers of states towards protracted international conflicts*? Therefore, in this thesis, based on the focus on the role of leverages in the acceptance of mediation offers, the fist pillar of mediation success, the author will compare Russian and Turkish mediation attempts in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict to develop a pattern of understanding for mediation success, and to come up with several suggestions to turn what is just an interest of Turkey to mediate the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict into a realised objective of Turkish foreign policy.

As the main aim of this thesis is to understand the factors of success in international mediation, what success means should be stated in advance. In this thesis, mediation success is seen as a two-pillar phenomenon. The first one is the acceptance of mediation offers in line

with the definition of mediation success proposed by Frei (1976) and the second pillar is the post-mediation conflict environment determined by the resolution or continuation of the conflict as discussed by Bercovitch and Houston (1996) (see the details in the following chapter). When discussing mediation success, the focus of this thesis will be on the acceptance of mediation offers, the first pillar of mediation success[2], stemming from the definition of Frei (1976). Although his definition is about mediation success as a whole, in this thesis, the definition will be used to understand the acceptance of mediation success, a part of mediation success.

Frei (1976), while conceptualising his definition of mediation success, suggests that there are five important criteria to take into account which are 'the identity and characteristic of the parties, the interrelations among the parties, the characteristics of the conflict, the identity and characteristic of the mediator, and the relationship between the mediator and the parties' (as cited in Fisher, 1995, p. 44). The first three criteria are constant no matter who the mediator, and therefore, they do not say much for understanding why and how mediation offers are accepted by disputants. However, the last two criteria, which are intertwined, are crucial to analyse. The last two criteria will constitute the backbone of the approach to the first pillar of success in this thesis because they are strictly related to the main argument that will be tested in this study. As the author of this thesis argues that rather than being highly unbiased, neutral and impartial, the most important characteristic of a mediator (Frei's fourth criterion) that determines mediation success is the availability and making use of resources, the main argument developed here is '*the more resourceful a mediator is, the more likely its mediation efforts will be accepted/successful in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict*'.

While testing this main argument, that is the leverages of mediators, the author will rely on the 'six bases of power' concept of Rubin (1992) which include 'reward power, coercive power, expert power, legitimate power, referent power, and informational power' as resource (power/leverage) categories while comparing the characteristics of Russia and Turkey as mediators and combine this concept with the ideas of Frei (1976). And to find out about the characteristics of the mediators, Russia and Turkey, the relations between the

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[2] Throughout the thesis, the term mediation success will refer to the first pillar of mediation success, the acceptance of mediation offers, unless otherwise stated and specified.

disputants and the mediator (Frei's fifth criterion) will be examined because they tell a lot about the characteristics of the mediator (Frei's fourth criterion). For the same aim, although the third criterion of Frei (1976), the character of the conflict, is constant for each mediator, since it will reveal important insights into the characteristics of the mediators, this criterion will be briefly discussed in the form of the history of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

In what follows, the author will touch upon (1) the theoretical discussions in the field of mediation in general and international mediation specifically, where the concepts used in this thesis will be examined in detail, (2) the history of the conflict to better comprehend the historical aspect of the interrelated web of relations of Turkey and Russia with the conflicting parties, and (3) the relations of Russia and Turkey with the conflicting parties separately. Based on the data gathered from these four chapters, the author will initiate a discussion in which the aforementioned six categories of power proposed by Rubin, in conjunction with the fourth and fifth criteria of Frei (1976), constituting the first pillar of mediation success, will be evaluated to test the main argument of this study. The general findings of the thesis will then be put forth in the conclusion chapter which will also include sections dedicated to policy recommendations, a critique of the 'six bases of power' concept of Rubin to discuss its merits in international mediation, weaknesses of this thesis, and potential suggestions for future studies on international mediation.

CHAPTER 2

UNDERSTANDING INTERNATIONAL MEDIATION: MAJOR ISSUES

2.1. Defining Mediation

In the literature, there is a plethora of definitions pertaining to mediation, as a conflict resolution method, underlining its characteristics and scope with different aspects of it being the focal point. One of the very first definitions ever made for mediation was that of Doob who saw mediation as the attempts to influence disputing people when there is an issue that needs to be dealt with (1993, p. 1 as cited in Bercovitch and Houston, 1996, p. 13). The problem with this definition is that it dwells on a highly broad and vague ground skipping important details of the characteristics of mediation as a distinct practice.

Some scholars tend to view mediation to be not distinct from negotiation. For instance, Stephens, one of those scholars, argues that the only difference between mediation and negotiation is the coming into picture of a third party to help disputants reach a solution (1988, p. 52). Nevertheless, this definition falls short of grabbing the fundamental aspects of mediation that distinguish itself from other third-party initiatives because of its over-simplification.

To develop a more comprehensive definition of mediation, Moore categorises mediation as a third-party intervention method where the intervener who possesses neutrality and impartiality and lacks compelling authority over the disputants helps the conflicting sides conclude an agreement satisfying the needs of both sides (1986, p. 14 as cited in Kolb and Babbitt, 1995, p. 64). Though this definition is comprehensive, it suffers from a certain weakness that can be observed in the initial definitions suggested by some scholars interested in the field: extensive reliance on the neutrality and impartiality of mediators as prerequisites. As we will discuss at a later stage in this chapter, the notions of neutrality and impartiality should not be as valued as such definitions do due to the changes in the context in which international mediation takes place.

In this thesis, to avoid the shortcomings of the abovementioned definitions and other similar definitions which were not dealt with specifically here, the author will refer to the proposed definition of Bercovitch. For Bercovitch, mediation is;

> 'a process of conflict management, related to but distinct from the parties' own efforts, where the disputing parties or their representatives seek the assistance of, or accept an offer of help, from an individual, group, state or organisation to change, affect or influence their perceptions or behaviour, without resorting to physical force or invoking the authority of law' (1992, p. 7).

This definition will be used in this thesis because it (1) is, to the date, the most comprehensive yet cohesive definition ever proposed, (2) captures the voluntary, non-violent, non-binding and reciprocal features of the act of mediation, (3) avoids relying on neutrality and impartiality which are constantly and unnecessarily portrayed as prerequisites for a mediator, (4) points out to the fact that mediation is more appropriate for conflict management than resolution, and (5) illustrates who can serve as mediators.

An important notice, which will be clarified and detailed in the following sections of this chapter, should also be made here. The idea that mediation is a non-coercive process does mean that mediators cannot rely on the direct usage of their physical force. However, it does not imply that mediators lack and cannot use resources, including the implications of their military might, available to them (see Kolb and Babbitt, 1995) because they can make use of the implications of their physical force. In other words, although mediators cannot forcefully compel the disputants to agree to a specific term as stressed in the definition to be used in this chapter, they can utilise their resources to change the mindset of the disputants to move them towards agreement. However, it is still up to the disputants to accept or decline a specific agreement because even a mediator's leverage depends on the acceptance by disputants (Zartman, 2008a, p. 167). It should also be noted that this definition tilts more towards international mediation than domestic mediation, a distinction we will dive into in the next section to better understand the two phenomena and conceptualise the need for mediation at the international level, which is related to the subject dealt with in this thesis.

2.2. Positioning Mediation as a Practice in Domestic and International Arenas

Mediation has so far been conducted both at the domestic and international arenas, albeit under obviously different circumstances. These differences stem from the fact that the prevailing structures in both arenas are utterly contradictory.

When it comes to the domestic level, what we observe is a highly hierarchical order consolidated by state-controlled security and legal forces. Such a system provides disputants with opportunities of binding conflict resolution tools through judicial means. Although individuals can attempt to manage their own conflicts without resorting to legal options, a binding solution is available should their individual efforts fail to produce any positive results. With an allegoric language, as Kolb and Babbitt underline, at the domestic level mediation is the side dish whereas the binding options offered by the legal system are the main dishes (1995, p. 76). What can be inferred from this situation is that mediation is an alternative for the disputants should they prefer avoiding a legal verdict.

In the international arena, nevertheless, the structural circumstances are totally reversed: no hierarchy exists, and no enforcement mechanisms, legal or police, can be found. This is what Hedley Bull (1995) once famously referred to as the 'anarchical international system'. Therefore, when a conflict arises at the international level, there will not be any automatic mechanism to deal with the conflict in question in a legal and binding manner. Even the binding conflict resolution mechanisms like arbitration and adjudication are at the mercy of states, which can opt out of such procedures. What is left for managing conflicts in such a setting is either a total military victory for one of the conflicting parties, negotiating a solution, or a third-party initiative. Since achieving total military victory is a rare accomplishment in the current international system and conflicts negatively affect the relations between disputants hindering negotiations, third-party initiatives are more likely to be a viable option to disentangle conflicting parties and usher in a more peaceful environment and relationship between the former contestants.

The problem that we need to shed light on here is that this 'anarchical' system is comprised of independent states which value their survival, territorial integrity, national interests and most importantly sovereignty more than anything else. Any third party believed to violate sovereignty of another state through a direct and coercive intervention without the

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consent of the recipient will be condemned, rejected, and fought against if necessary. Therefore, we can easily claim that any third-party initiative should consider the realities of the international system and respect the needs, interests and values of individual states.

Given that mediation, as discussed in the section dedicated to its definition above, is fundamentally voluntary, non-binding and non-coercive (free of direct physical force), it suits well not only the current international system but also the demands of independent and sovereign states (Bercovitch, 1991, p. 4; Bercovitch, 1996, p. 2; Bercovitch and Houston, 1996, p. 12-13; Bercovitch and Fretter, 2007, p. 146; Vukovic, 2011, p. 113). This takes us to our next, related subject: the initiation and acceptance of international mediation. In other words, it is time to start dealing with the *why* and *how* of international mediation.

2.3. The *Why* and *How* of International Mediation

Mediation is merely an option from a wide array of options. In line with this argument, Zartman and Touval view 'mediation as a foreign policy instrument' (1996, p. 446; also see Rubin, 1992, p. 249). This is the case both for the mediator and the mediated. So, when a third-party is encouraging disputing parties to accept its mediation services, it is generally a reflection of the wider policy decisions of that third-party vis-à-vis the conflicting parties or the environment where the conflict in question takes place. Hence, it is a very accurate point of view when Mitchell puts forth that mediation should be regarded as 'a *chosen* strategy or response' that will be implemented when a third party concludes that the gains from the implementation of it will be more than the losses (1988, p. 48) (stress original). Why then do third-parties choose the strategy of mediation and conflicting parties choose the strategy of accepting mediation offers? Let us first discuss the first half of this question.

Firstly, states may opt for offering mediation out of altruistic reasons suggesting that they are advocates of peace desiring to help manage as many conflicts as possible. Nonetheless, the author of this thesis is of the belief that mediation entails possible gains and can never stem fully from altruistic considerations (Bercovitch, 1996, p. 9). Even Switzerland, famous for being a 'neutral' state and mediating conflicts all over the globe, cannot be thought of as totally altruistic because even if Switzerland is mediating conflicts

out of hopes of managing them peacefully, it is doing so to cement its name as a natural mediator, a prestige-oriented goal, or gain. As Mitchell stresses, while offering its mediation services, every third party imaginable will have certain objectives to realise apart from settling the conflict itself peacefully (1988, p. 31).

One of these motivations is that states may decide to mediate out of fears that the conflict may endanger their own national interests (Bercovitch, 2011, p. 20). This is also called a 'defensive goal' (Zartman, 2008a, p. 156; Zartman and Touval, 1996, p. 446). Another reason why states may be willing to mediate is that they may feel obliged to protect the unity of an international organisation to which they are a party, which explains the rationale behind the mediation efforts of the US in the Greek-Turkish dispute since all three countries are valuable members of NATO (Bercovitch, 2011, p. 21). Yet another interest of third-parties in offering mediation may be related to their 'offensive goals' (Zartman, 2008a., p. 156; Zartman and Touval, 1996, p. 446). The idea behind this 'offensiveness' is that third-parties may consider mediation as a tool to extend their influence over the conflicting parties, the region the conflict in question takes place in, and/or gain something out of the resolution of the conflict (Bercovitch, 2011, p. 74).

This list should not be thought as mutually exclusive because all these basic motivations can be intertwined at times just as they can constitute the rationale behind initiating a mediation offer separately. Moreover, it should be noted that further motivations can be identified; however, for efficiency, the author in this thesis will rely on these four types of motivations for mediation. In short, along with the peaceful considerations that states might possess, as Bercovitch points out when mediation takes place, the third party offering it to the disputants will not only attempt to alter the conflict positively either 'passively or assertively', but it will also try to realise and/or secure its interests (1996, p. 4).

Just as offering mediation is a choice, so is accepting it. Like third-parties offering mediation, conflicting parties have compelling reasons for accepting a mediation offer or ask for mediation on their own, with the latter being less common. Conflicting parties may proceed with the strategy of accepting a mediation offer because it may be the best possible policy alternative available to them in their situation. When conflicting parties calculate the costs of accepting or rejecting mediation, the result of the calculation determines the policy

that they will embrace. Stephens illustrates that mediation is preferred provided the disputants realise that it will be more harmful for them to reject a mediation offer than to accept it (1988, p. 58). This situation clearly demonstrates both the reciprocal and political natures of the process of mediation as encapsulated by the definition accepted in this thesis. There are other possible explanations behind the acceptance of a mediation offer.

As I have outlined earlier in this chapter, it is not easy to emerge totally victorious in any conflict. When conflicting parties get stuck, they need an acceptable outsider to intervene and change the course of the conflict for the better. The point at which conflicting parties become stuck is referred to as the 'mutually hurting stalemate' (Zartman, n.d., p. 232). The first reason why conflicting parties may be willing to be mediated is to overcome such a stalemate.

Secondly, the literature on international mediation illustrates that conflicting parties may accept a mediation offer on the ground that 'mediator will actually nudge, influence, or 'deliver' the other' (Bercovitch, 2011, p. 21; see also Zartman and Touval, 1985) (the issue of 'delivery' will be dealt with extensively at a later stage in this chapter). Thirdly, conflicting states can believe that the result they will achieve will be more beneficial than the one that would be achieved through negotiating directly with each other (Zartman and Touval, 1996, p. 450). Fourthly, Bercovitch asserts that conflicting parties may consider the interested mediator the scapegoat should the process fail, and violence erupt again (2011, p. 21).

Having explained why mediation is offered and accepted, the next notion that we ought to touch upon is the *how* of mediation. By how, I refer to how mediators operate once their mediation offer is accepted after a process of detailed calculation. The spectrum on which mediators conduct their services range from highly passive to completely assertive (Kriesberg, 1998, p. 238). This range was conceptualised as 'communication-facilitation, procedural (formulative) and directive strategies' (Bercovitch, 2011). In a similar vein but with a different wording, Zartman identifies this spectrum as 'communication, formulation and manipulation' which he refers to as 'the modes of mediation' (2008a, p. 165). To better understand what these 'modes' include, Beardsley offers that the range of functions available to and utilised by mediators include 'the mere hosting of talks, substantive participation in the negotiation process, shuttle diplomacy, or heavy-handed involvement' where the

mediator affects the disputants' motivation to conclude a settlement of the conflict (2013, p. 57).

When discussing this spectrum, the literature proposes two broad forms which mediation can take: pure mediation and power mediation. Claiming that regardless of the form it takes, mediation is a crucial contributor to peace, Svensson insists on his idea that rather than praising one and excommunicating the other, mediators should be willing to see the good in both types and combine them accordingly to meet the needs of their tasks (2007, p. 234-239). Despite the proposal made by Svensson, the debate between pure and power mediation is still lively and set to be continuing for a certain while until a definitive quantitative study illustrates which one prevails over the other; no matter how unlikely this is. The author of this thesis is more inclined towards those endorsing power mediation due to the issue of leverage discussed below, which will be reflected in the subsequent chapters of this thesis. However, it is necessary to shed light on both approaches to better understand them, and why power mediation is favoured in this thesis.

In a pure mediation, what mediator does and how he/she does it is totally power-free, and the act of mediation itself renders the mediator solely a facilitator in the sense that the reins are introduced by the mediator but are given to the hands of the conflicting parties. Rubin et al. (1994) argue that when a third-party opts for pure mediation, he/she attempts to create trust from the disputants, to protect the disputants' face, improve dialogue and social connections between the disputants (as cited in Svensson, 2007, p. 229). In pure mediation, mediation resembles good offices since there is an apparent lack of coercive mechanisms available to mediators. Beber underscores that the lack of coercion in mediation means that the third party will not 'promise rewards, threaten punishment, or deliver payments or goods to the antagonists' (2012, p. 400). For some scholars, this is the only acceptable form that mediation should take. Nonetheless, there are instances where the act of mediation took on a more assertive role with positive outcomes.

As the literature shows, when mediators tend to become more assertive, they deliberately and concisely make use of their existing leverage(s) to alter the process of mediation, which is called power mediation. When employing power mediation, a mediator 'uses its economic, military, and political resources' to alter the conflict and mediation

processes (Kleiboer, 2002 as cited in Svensson, 2007, p. 230). Power mediation, with the basic characteristics of pure mediation intact, relies on the availability and utilisation of leverages 'in the form of promised rewards or threatened punishments' (Kocadal, 2016, p. 174). This form of mediation does still not entail any direct usage of physical force. It is not an example of forcing physically but of convincing indirectly through the available resources. Using the previous analogy that I introduced, in power mediation, a mediator is providing conflicting parties with the reins of conflict and mediation, but he/she keeps holding the rein enabling him/her to have a direct say in the process itself and the outcome of it. Here, it should be noted that even when mediators are assertive, it is always up to the mediated conflicting parties to accept or decline the outcome of mediation, or to opt out of mediation altogether because it 'is at the mercy of the disputants, and it is the ultimate challenge of the mediator to cultivate' the need for mediation among the disputants (Zartman, 2008b, p. 309). What is it that enables a mediator to cultivate such a need?

One group, associated mostly with the early scholars of international mediation and those supporting pure mediation, asserts that to cultivate such a need, a mediator should be neutral, unbiased, and impartial. The other group, associated mostly with the realist school of International Relations and those supporting power mediation – including the author of this thesis – puts forth that only when a mediator has enough leverage can such a need be cultivated. Let us evaluate each line of argumentation in a bit more detailed fashion.

2.4. Neutrality, Bias and Impartiality in International Mediation

When an inquiry into the literature on international mediation is conducted, one of the conclusions would be that one of the most debated and dividing topics within the context of international mediation is based on the concepts like neutrality, bias and impartiality both as required characteristics of any prospective mediator since they will help cultivate the need to be mediated among disputants, and as the determinants of the first pillar of mediation success.

Similar to the discussions held over the dichotomy between pure mediation and power mediation as illustrated above, this debate has two distinct lines of argumentation. Nevertheless, contrary to the debate between pure mediation and power mediation, this

debate has so far not produced any scholar or practitioner favouring a mid-point between the two opposing sides. In what follows next, I will lay down the points raised by those who claim a mediator should be neutral, unbiased and impartial to (1) convince disputing parties to accept his/her mediation offer, and (2) to successfully navigate through the mediation process once his/her offer is accepted, and those who claim being neutral, unbiased and impartial do not necessarily yield positive outcomes and in fact they can result in an opposite situation. The argument of the author of this thesis is that this discussion should focus not on the existence/absence of neutrality, bias and impartiality and/or resources, but the degree of them (see below).

Jackson (1952), Ott (1972), and Wehr (1979) were three of the forefathers of the scholars who argue that a mediator should be neutral, unbiased and impartial (as cited in Wallensteen and Svensson, 2014, p. 320). For these and similar scholars, these three concepts are the pinnacles of the acceptance of any mediation initiative. They ruled out the possibility of a biased and partial mediator being accepted let alone managing a particular conflict. For Bercovitch and Houston, the root of these traditional arguments derives from 'the failure to recognise mediation as a reciprocal process of social interaction in which the mediator is a major participant' (1996, p. 26). This interaction is crucial because it ushers in a 'conflictual relationship' where certain interests, benefits, costs are at stake (Bercovitch, 1992, p. 9; Bercovitch, 2011, p. 74). When scholars ignore this relationship and the impossibility of any neutral, unbiased, or impartial mediator stemming from the existence of such a relationship, especially at the international level, their arguments fail to correspond with and meet the needs of the realities that shape the backbone of the current international system.

Earlier in this chapter, I have argued that the very chaotic nature of the international system affects the act of international mediation. The international arena is a scene to many different interests that may eventually lead to conflicts, and political, economic and military arrangements that bring certain states together while alienating the others. As Kriesberg underlines, the more integrated the world has become, the more likely it has been for conflicts to encompass a wide array of 'shared interests' (1995, p. 89). Therefore, no matter where a conflict occurs, it will entail interests and costs pertaining not only to the disputants themselves but also to the wider regional and/or international community. In fact, I am of the belief that this situation helps explain the link between a conflict and a mediator. When costs

and interests are at stake for a third party, it serves as a catalyst for choosing the strategy of mediation. The question that follows this argument is to what extent under such circumstances a third party may be totally neutral, impartial and unbiased.

We now know that mediation is solely a strategy, either of conflict resolution or for foreign policy objectives of states, out of many available to the interested third party, chosen to serve the interests of the third party initiating it. As a result, when interests are involved, altruism cannot determine the initiation and continuation of mediation at the international level. Since neutrality in mediation is mostly about the lack of interest a mediator might have in the outcome of mediation process, and as we have just pointed out, mediation, either as a conflict management tool or foreign policy tool, is a strategy initiated to meet the goals of the mediator, it is accurate when Webb clearly illustrates that 'mediation is not a neutral act' (1988, p. 16). As Zartman underscores, owing to the fact that mediators are rarely 'indifferent to the terms being negotiated', they will attempt to prevent any term jeopardising their national interests from being accepted by the disputants, which eliminate any neutrality in a mediation setting on the part of the mediator (2008a, p. 156). Hence, in any mediation attempt, it is obvious that a mediator is trying to resolve a conflict in a manner that would be conducive to meeting its interests as much as possible. It is the existence of this web of interests that leads Bercovitch to rule out the possibility of a neutral mediator once and for all (1992, p. 6). When we examine mediation cases, neutrality can be understood in a better fashion.

The US has always lacked neutrality as it has interconnected web of relations everywhere in the world, especially in the Middle East. Therefore, the US mediation in the protracted conflicts of the Middle East will be characterised by a lack of neutrality. However, when we examine the US mediation in the Israeli-Egyptian conflict, despite its neutrality -as the US has a very powerful Jewish interest group making Israel the most important ally of the US in the Middle East – Carter was accepted as a mediator, fulfilling the first pillar of mediation success which is the focus of this thesis. This happened because the resources available to the US as the two sides knew the US would alter the dynamics of the conflict and use its leverages to move both sides. The US did so using its reward power (see below). For instance, Carter promised Israelis and Egyptians two billion dollars for cooperation (Bercovitch, 2004, para 18). This issue is related more to the idea of resources than neutrality.

There are those cases where neutrality is sought after in mediators by disputants. However, as it is not likely to have too many neutral states in the international arena, such cases are limited, and they are mediated by specific countries, which I refer to as the deviant cases in neutrality, such as Switzerland. As a small country that is not a party to any military and/or political alliance that would render it unneutral, Switzerland has carved out a statue for itself as a neutral mediator. However, its mediation is accepted in less protracted conflicts where the two disputants are still able to maintain a certain level of relationship even without a mediator. Since in protracted conflicts, the states which can be manipulative, are more likely to succeed, in terms of both pillars of success, and since manipulation requires resources, neutral countries, such as Switzerland, are not likely to mediate protracted international/intercultural conflicts, an example of which is the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the focus of this thesis.

An argument similar to that for neutrality can be made for the concept of bias in international mediation. When a mediator is biased, he/she 'has something at stake and is closer to one side than the other – politically, economically, and culturally' (Carnevale and Arad, 1996, p. 40). To criticise those who render being unbiased as a focal point of international mediation, Kolb and Babbitt focus on the fact that the configuration of the current international system compels each and every single actor of that system to ally itself with one actor or the other reducing the likelihood of achieving a total absence of bias towards other actors, and hence towards disputants in a conflict that third party is offering its mediation for (1995, p. 77). In addition to ruling out the possibility of finding any unbiased third party at the international level, we can also endorse the notion that a biased mediator helps tilt a conflict more towards its resolution, through what is coined as delivery based on the idea that 'the mediator will influence the opponent into concessions leading to an agreement acceptable to the first party' (Stephens, 1988, p. 61). When a mediator is biased towards one of the conflicting parties, he/she is expected to deliver the party he/she is biased towards to an agreement with the other party in the conflict (Zartman, 2008a, p. 162; Zartman and Touval, 1996, p. 451). Although Beber (2012), in his qualitative study, attempted to disprove this point, the experimental studies conducted by Carnevale and Arad (1996), and the qualitative study of Kocadal (2016) on kin-state biased mediation clearly prove the practicality of having a biased mediator in terms of managing a conflict. Additionally, when

the terms neutrality and bias are considered as opposing elements in mediation, the quantitative study of Svensson (2009) becomes much more important and telling as the study shows that when it comes to the longevity of peace agreements in civil wars, biased mediation leads to more durable peace agreements than neutral mediation, revealing that being neutral is not of high importance in mediation. However, it should be noted that although being biased is not a detrimental factor to the acceptance of a mediation offer, the first pillar of mediation success, too much bias can be problematic as well. For instance, when the Trump administration announced that the US recognises Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, stated that the US would not be accepted as a mediator in the conflict (Beaumont, 2017). Therefore, it can be stated that the discussion may be more valid if the focus is not on the existence of bias and its negative impact on the acceptance of mediation offers, but on the degree of bias and its negative impact on the acceptance of mediation offers. Nonetheless, such a level of bias is not so common in international mediation and it is not the case among any potential mediator in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

The third term discussed extensively in the literature is impartiality. This term is not to be confused with neutrality and is defined as 'an even-handedness, objectivity and fairness towards the parties' (Boulle, 1996, p. 19 as cited in Field, 2002, para 7). However, Field (2002) also states that '[t]he idea of redressing power imbalances' is against the basic components of the term impartiality. Bercovitch, pointing to the fact that a mediator should first be acceptable to both disputants, asserts that what determines this acceptance is not the (perceived) impartiality of a mediator but the conclusion that the mediator offering his/her services is capable of managing the conflict he/she intends to mediate which is related to the possession of required skills and resources (1996, p. 5). Hence, if a mediator is seen as acceptable because he/she can resolve a particular conflict owing to its resources, the fact that he/she is biased, unneutral and partial does not create further obstacles as claimed by certain scholars. Additionally, Zartman puts forth that rather than impartiality, disputants consider the possible outcomes of the acceptance or rejection of any mediation attempt by a third party taking into account the likely impact of accepting or rejecting a mediation attempt on the outcome of their conflicts and on the relationship between them and the interested mediator in the years to come (2008a, p. 161; see also Zartman and Touval, 1996, p. 451).

For instance, although the US was a partial actor in the Bosnian conflict favouring Bosnians over Serbians to create a 'balance of power', or 'redressing power imbalances' as Field (2002, para 9) puts it, its mediation was still accepted because it stood out as a party that could impact both sides, and the post-mediation environment can also be seen as successful owing to the fact that the involvement of the US and other international forces implied the continuation of military use against Serbians and overturned the military successes of the Serbian side (Cousens, 1997, pp. 789, 792-797 as cited in Austermiller, 2006, p. 134). This is important because even impartiality, hailed as one of the most important factors determining the acceptance of mediation offers, the first pillar of mediation success, can be ignored by mediators under certain circumstances when it is deemed necessary to do so. Additionally, to ignore impartiality, it is necessary for mediators to have resources to be utilised, showing the importance of resources.

Thus, it can be claimed that along with the ability of a mediator to bring about a peaceful management of a conflict, the cost-benefit analysis conducted by disputants also determine the likelihood of a mediation offer being accepted and leading to a peaceful management. Such a cost-benefit analysis has got more to do with the leverage of a mediator than with the considerations pertaining to neutrality, bias and impartiality (see Touval, 1982 as cited in Touval and Zartman, 1996, p. 451).

In short, as Bercovitch puts it whether a mediator is partial or not does not have any impact on the way mediation is understood and/or concluded successfully (1996, p. 6). This is the case especially in protracted international conflicts where one side is better off than the other. On the contrary, success and/or failure of mediation is a broader concept not to be restricted to neutrality, absence of bias, and impartiality. So, if it is resources available to a mediator that determines the acceptance of international mediation proposals, how does leverage function in international mediation? This is the question we now turn to.

2.5. Leverage in International Mediation: A Key to Success?

Zartman and Touval (1996) describe leverage as 'the ability to move a party in an intended direction' (p. 455). The intended direction can favour the mediator, one of the

conflicting parties, all the conflicting parties, or all the conflicting parties along with the mediator himself/herself. The intended direction can be shaped by a wide variety of interests pertaining to prospective mediators. Why and how a certain leverage is employed also reflects the position of the mediator vis-à-vis the conflicting parties that he/she mediates. As Bercovitch articulates, leverage is based on the resources possessed by a particular mediator (1992, p. 19). When mediators reveal that they have resources and can make use of their resources to manage a conflict, they can cultivate the need to be mediated among the disputants of that conflict. How does this work then?

At a very basic level, more resourceful, and hence assertive, mediators are more successful and more able to cultivate the need for mediation among disputants because their leverages will have a direct impact on calculations made by disputants to accept or reject a mediation offer, a major point we have already covered. To better understand this process, it is necessary to put forth the way resources function in international mediation. Although there are different arguments on resources of a mediator that affect the success or failure of any mediation attempt, the one that will be employed in this thesis is that of Jeffrey Rubin who developed his argument relying on the idea of 'social influence proposed originally by French and Raven and modified by Raven more than thirty years later' (Bercovitch, 1992, p. 19). Rubin underscores that '*six* different bases of power exist for influencing another person's behaviour: reward, coercion, expertise, legitimacy, reference, and information' (1992, p. 255). Since these 'six bases of power' will constitute the core of evaluating the role of resources in the first pillar of success of Russian and Turkish mediation attempts over the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in this thesis, it is critical to elaborate on each form of power/resources.

'Reward power' refers to the idea of mediator providing disputants with positive incentives once they choose to cooperate (Rubin, 1992, p. 255). The logic behind 'coercive power' is based on mediator employing 'the language of threat' to ensure compliance (Rubin, 1992, p. 255). In short, while 'reward power' represents carrots, 'coercive power' reflects sticks. 'Expert power' entails the idea that a mediator will rely on crafting an image of itself as a party with the necessary 'information or expertise that justifies a particular interest' (Rubin, 1992, p. 255). In other words, expertise is a leverage aimed at improving the standing of a particular mediator among disputants in terms of the ability to deal with the issues

pertaining to a conflict with ease due to the level of experience on the matters of the conflict. The other resource related to 'expert power' is 'informational power' that can be seen as the next step of 'expert power' as 'informational power' relies on what information implied through 'expert power' has really been delivered to the conflicting parties (Rubin, 1992, p. 256). This means that while a mediator with expertise relies on the impressions on the part of the mediated, a mediator who has 'informational power' delivers the very knowledge that the aforementioned impression relies on to the disputants to be considered.

The other resource that a mediator possess is the 'legitimate power' which is based on the idea of 'having the *right* to make a request' (Rubin, 1992, p. 255). If a mediator has a right to act as a mediator, then the accompanying assumption will be that the disputants will be more likely to accept and cooperate with such a mediator. With regards to this, Bercovitch claims that as a third-party interested in mediating a conflict is going to offer its services to alter the negative impact of a specific conflict, this motive justifies the third-party's mediation as a legitimate move (1996, p. 3). A similar argument is laid down by Zartman and Touval who claim that the interest in resolving a conflict provides any third party with an opportunity to legitimise their actions as a third party (1996, p. 446). Rubin asserts that it is a common expectation that any third-party interested in mediating a conflict will attempt to justify its intervention in the form of mediation as a legit action using the 'legitimate power' (1992, p. 269).

The last resource that may be at the disposal of a mediator is the 'referent power' which revolves around the point that in any given mediation setting, both the mediator and the mediated will respect and care about their relationship with each other (Rubin, 1992, p. 256). So, if there is a valuable relationship between the mediator and the mediated, this kind of a resource will be highly respected and effective. Additionally, the author of the thesis takes this view forward and claims that 'referent power' by the virtue of foreseeing a valuable relationship, includes the idea that if a mediator can 'refer' the disputants to mediation thanks to the concerns pertaining to the valued relationship between all the parties involved, he/she will have further leverage over the disputants, a literal approach to the 'referent power' in the sense of delivery.

What the preceding section on the *how* of mediation reveals is that mediation is not a simple third-party initiative that can be restricted to facilitation or good offices. It incorporates a variety of strategies and forms of leverage, which mediators, when they are able to do so, are more than willing to make use of. These resources are integral, and indeed determining, factors of any mediation procedure, especially the first pillar of success and/or failure, which is one of the core pillars of this thesis. So, how can we evaluate success in international mediation?

2.6. Success in International Mediation

Success is a highly subjective element. This is the case in international mediation as well. Scholars interested in international mediation have so far provided various definitions of and criteria for success in international mediation. Just like the definitions of mediation itself, approaches to mediation success has ranged from narrow to broad. The spectrum is determined by the number and type of criteria associated with success in each approach.

One of the most detailed accounts of success has been provided by Bercovitch and Houston who include a wide array of independent variables and conclude that mediation is deemed successful provided the process contributed thoroughly 'to the management of a conflict and the subsequent interaction between the parties' (1996, p. 19). Additionally, these two scholars introduced additional types of success which are 'partially successful' leading to 'negotiations and a dialogue between the parties' and 'limited success' resulting in solely a cessation of hostilities (1996, p. 19).

Bringing the different elements discussed by Bercovitch and Houston together, Kriesberg contends that 'mediation is successful insofar as it contributes significantly to a de-escalating movement, to mutually acceptable agreement, or to reconciliation, and is responsive to the prevailing conditions' (1996, p. 220). Focusing more on the substantive issues, Fisher and Keashly assert that '[a] successful outcome for mediation is a *settlement* on specific substantive issues which balances losses and gains, and which is satisfactory to all parties' (1988, p. 390)

The earlier, narrower but still useful definition of mediation success was provided by Frei (1976). His definition of success revolved around the idea of the acceptance of mediation offers by both disputants (as cited in Kleiboer, 1996, p. 361; Wallensteen and Svensson, 2014, p. 322). For Frei, when a mediation initiative is accepted, it is deemed as a successful mediation. Nevertheless, unlike Frei (1976) who sees the acceptance of mediation offers as tantamount to mediation success, this thesis will take the definition of success proposed by Frei (1976) not as the evaluation of mediation success as a whole, but as one portion of it, the first-pillar of mediation success as it is coined in this work. This is because the definition of mediation success offered by Frei (1976) is quite limited in scope and not entirely applicable to the realities of today's world. Since that pillar provides a common ground for a comparison of Russian and Turkish mediation attempts in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the definition of Frei (1976) will be used in this thesis while analysing the first pillar of mediation success. It is important to state why.

When mediation is seen as a conflict resolution method, success will have two pillars. The first one will be the acceptance of mediation as put forth by Frei (1976), and the post-mediation environment, that is resolution or no-resolution as proposed by Bercovitch and Houston (1996). When mediation is regarded as a foreign policy tool carrying the aim of achieving national interests by those that offer their mediation services, success will have the same two pillars with an important difference. Since the reason behind offering mediation will be meeting national interests of mediators, although the importance of the acceptance of mediation by both disputants of will be quite the same, the post-mediation environment will not have a high impact on determining the success of mediation. States that see mediation as a foreign policy tool may just focus on managing conflicts that they mediate and/or keeping the conflict under control to be able to manipulate disputants. An example of such a country is Russia. It is known that Russia, especially when dealing with the conflicts taking place in the post-Soviet zone, aims at manipulating conflicts to have disputants within its reach and at meeting its national interests rather than resolving those conflicts. An example of a state viewing mediation both as a foreign policy tool and as a method of conflict management is Turkey. Turkey has been using mediation to increase its standing in the international system and to contribute to the peaceful resolution of the conflicts it tries to mediate rather than manipulating the disputants of those conflicts for its own gains. However, for both countries,

being acceptable to the both disputants of a given conflict will be quite important as it will be the first step, or pillar, of their mediation success and/or failure.

When Fisher elaborates on Frei's conceptualisation of success, he underlines the five criteria that Frei made use of which are 'the identity and characteristic of the parties, the interrelations among the parties, the characteristics of the conflict, the identity and characteristic of the mediator, and the relationship between the mediator and the parties' (1995, p. 44). In this thesis, the first two criteria will be ignored because they are constant no matter who the mediator is. Although the third criterion – the characteristics of the conflict – is also constant, it will be discussed in this thesis through the history of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict because it will give certain ideas as to 'the identity and characteristic of the mediator' and 'the relationship between the mediator and the parties', the remaining two criteria of Frei (1976).

In what follows, the author will first provide a brief historical account of the conflict discussing the actors of the conflict (criterion 3). The author will then proceed with the bilateral relations of Turkey and Russia with the conflicting parties (criteria 4 and 5). Having analysed these three criteria, the author will initiate a discussion using the 'six bases of power' concept of Rubin (1992) to better understand the criteria 4 and 5, and hence the success of mediation, and test the hypothesis put forth in the previous chapter.

CHAPTER 3

HISTORY OF THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT: TIME, GEOGRAPHY AND ACTORS

The South Caucasus is a region shaped by various conflicts within and between the states inhabiting the region. There is a plethora of conflicts involving Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan as main actors, the ethnic, religious and/or linguistic minority groups living in these countries, and the states that surround or have interests in the region such as Turkey, Russia and Iran. Of these conflicts, those between Armenia(ns) and Azerbaijan(is) are quite important not only because they linger on waiting to be resolved but also because they are rooted in history and draw in two major regional powers supporting one side, i.e. Turkey supporting Azerbaijan and Russia supporting Armenia.

As Tokluoğlu (2011, p. 1228) asserts, the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh is not the conflict but one of the conflicts between Armenians and Azerbaijanis with the others being about the disputed territories of Nakhichevan and Zangezur. Nevertheless, the conflicts over the two latter territories have so far not been as fatal as the one over Nagorno-Karabakh. It is crucial to understand why.

Nagorno-Karabakh is a land-locked region (Figure 1) which is, according to the international community, a part of the Azerbaijani jurisdiction, further supported by various UNSC Resolutions (Uzer, 2012, p. 247). Contrary to its geographic size, the region played a central and large role in the relations between Armenians and Azerbaijanis along with their supporters at both the intra-state (minority groups) and inter-state (regional powers) levels for centuries.

Figure 1: The map of Nagorno-Karabakh along with the other contested territories following the start of the current phase of the conflict in 1988. The geographical reading of the map reveals why Turkey and Russia have interests in the region and can play a vital role as a promoter of both peace and conflict

The first period of the conflict, or the earliest time the disputants refer to while shaping their policies towards Nagorno-Karabakh, can be traced back to the early 11th century. As Rasizade (2011) discusses in his article, the region was inhabited by Armenian and Azerbaijani people, and invaded by Turkic, Russian and Persian empires changing hands occasionally until the early eleventh and twentieth centuries. While the Turks had tensions with the Armenians due to ethnic and religious differences and favoured Muslim Azerbaijani people, the tsarist rule under the Russian Empire followed an exact opposite pattern (Gamaghelyan, 2010, p. 38-39). As Harutinian (2010, pp. 58-59) illustrates, the religious affiliation between Russians and Armenians made it easier for the former to maintain the control over different ethnic groups within the empire and the latter to rise in the social and political life leading to a class-based struggle in which Armenians outweighed Azeris[3] in the South Caucasus. These two historical facts are crucial because it reveals that it is so natural to observe references to Turks and Russians both in narratives of the disputants for Nagorno-Karabakh and the foreign policy attitudes of the disputants towards the conflict, which makes Turks and Russians two inseparable actors of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, in terms of both its prolongation and its resolution.

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[3] In this thesis, the terms "Azerbaijani" and "Azeri" are used interchangeably.

Although Azerbaijan and Armenia became independent in the early 21st century, it did not last long as the region saw an annexation by the USSR destroying any claims over Nagorno-Karabakh between the two states. As Uzer and Baguirov (2012, p. 134) reveal, the Soviet regime placed Nagorno-Karabakh within the Azeri SSR as an autonomous region. Even though the early decision of the USSR was to include Nagorno-Karabakh in the Armenian state, the decision was reversed with the suggestion of Stalin and the region was handed in to the Azeri state with the hopes of enabling the Soviets to keep the area under control through manipulation (Mkrtchyan, n.d., p. 3).Additionally, such a decision was necessary to be made due to the provisions of the Moscow Treaty signed between Turkey and the USSR, and this was deemed to be a favour of Moscow for Turkey (Cornell, 1998, p. 53). This region was to be a thorny issue for the Soviet administration: despite being a region of 1,700 square miles with a population of 186,100 people according to a Soviet census conducted in 1989 (Gamaghelyan, 2010, p. 35), the ethnic division of the population did not match the political decision of the Soviets because the Azerbaijani population constituted just one-fourth of the population of Nagorno-Karabakh (BBC, 2016, para. 13).

The oppressive regime of the USSR aimed at mitigating the impact of nationalist/ethnic thoughts and the results of them that led to conflicts instead of dealing with them properly. This approach worked for some time until Gorbachev came to power in Moscow. His policies, "glasnost" and "perestroika", with the hopes of increasing the level of democracy and freedom in the Soviet Union, resulted in a so-called democratic atmosphere lacking the required tools to manage and enjoy democracy. To illustrate, the citizens of the USSR started discussing their problems, which were coped with by force by the state apparatus in Moscow, openly and publicly as a result of "glasnost" (Gamaghelyan, 2010, p. 36; Ambrosio, 2011, p. 95).

This 'democratic' turn marked the third and continuing phase of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Basing their arguments on the 'thriving' democracy within the USSR, Armenians living in Nagorno-Karabakh petitioned for a transfer of the region from Azerbaijan to Armenia, getting the support of the latter and criticism of the former (Carley, 1998, p. 1). In addition to the political reaction in these two states, popular reactions were similar leading to clashes which brought about the death of tens of people among both sides. These clashes mostly stemmed from the lack of democratic mechanisms within the region despite the

democratisation led by Gorbachev as this democratisation was incomplete and lacked ripe institutions and mechanisms required to deal with the region (Mkrtchyan, n.d., p. 3).

Within time, the clashes intensified and evolved into a total war between Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh, which received continuing support from Yerevan (Gamaghelyan, n.d., p. 4), 'including the direct involvement of the Armenian army' (Gamaghelyan, 2010, p. 36). As Uzer and Baguirov (2012, p. 135) assert, without the required military equipment and support from a strong regional power, Azerbaijan could not emerge victorious out of the war which created a country recognised by no state including Armenia. The only support Azerbaijan received was from Turkey which sent military instructors whereas Armenia had the full support of Russia which provided Armenians with military equipment (Rasizade, 2011, p. 219). Given that Turkey was going through a problematic domestic phase in the 1990s and Russia was trying to surge as a regional and global power and able to provide more support than Turkey, Armenians got the upper hand.

Despite Russia's involvement in the war by supporting Armenia over Azerbaijan, the war, which lasted for three years and claimed thousands of lives, was ended with a ceasefire brokered unilaterally by Russia in 1994 (Croissant, 1998 as cited in Gamaghelyan, 2010, p. 37; Hedenskog and Korkmaz, 2016, p. 1; Hopmann and Zartman, 2010, p. 2; Hirose and Jasutis, 2014, p. 2). The ceasefire left around 20% of the territories of Azerbaijan under the control of Armenians (Lindenstrauss, 2015, p. 98) and the conflict 'entered its "frozen" phase' (Ambrosio, 2011, p. 58). In short, Broers (2015, p. 556) summarises the 'metamorphosis' or phases of the conflict, by revealing that:

'the Karabakh conflict featured a wider scope and variety of violence, encompassing communal violence and pogroms in 1988–1990; a small-scale Soviet civil war involving opposed army and irregular units in 1991; an all-out war between two newly established sovereign states in 1992–1994; the massive forced displacement of hundreds of thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons; and the extensive occupation of territories far beyond those originally under dispute'

The conflict, with its unresolved repercussions, has so far attracted many actors both from and outside the region, and remains as one of the 'frozen' conflicts waiting to be

resolved. However, it is also the case that the involvement of such actors has made the conflict and efforts to resolve it much more complex and difficult to handle (Hirose and Jasutis, 2014, p. 11). This stagnation has a potential of turning the conflict into a full-fledged war bringing in regional powers, most probably Russia and Turkey, in the form of a proxy war (Hedenskog and Korkmaz, 2016, p. 1). As German (2012, p. 216) underlines, the possibility of such a war is heightened by the Russian military presence in Armenia and continuing Turkish support for Azerbaijan. This point is quite crucial because it means that there are interests of Russia and Turkey towards the conflict which make the two countries biased towards one of the conflicting parties (This topic is beyond the scope of this chapter and will be covered extensively in the following chapters while discussing the relations of Russia and Turkey with the disputants). In other words, Russia and Turkey are two secondary actors with direct ties and stakes at the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and who are willing to act as the mediator of the conflict.

Clarifying the actors (especially primary and secondary actors) is necessary here because it will enable us to better understand why, in this thesis, it is the acceptance and/or rejection of a mediation offer by Armenia and Azerbaijan, but not Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians, that is accepted as an indicator of the first pillar of success and failure of mediation, and why the mediation of Russia (success) and Turkey (failure) has been chosen to refute those viewing neutrality and related characteristics as prerequisites to be accepted as a mediator and to support those who claim that it is the resources available to a prospective mediator that determines the likelihood of acceptance (success) of its mediation offer rather than its being neutral.

While discussing the success and failure of mediation offers by Russia and Turkey respectively Armenia and Azerbaijan are going to be used as the two reference actors because these two states were accepted as the primary actors in the conflict and given the authority to carry out the negotiations in what is known as the 'Baker Rules' (Ambrosio, 2011, p. 98). Even though following the advances of Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians along with the Armenian military in 1994, which cost Azerbaijan one fifth of its territory, Azerbaijan accepted Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians as a primary actor to the conflict, this was soon overturned (Rasizade, 2011, p. 222). Even though Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians

participated in in the peace process in 1997, it did not last long (Carley, 1998, p. 2). There are two explanations of that.

Firstly, Azeris aimed at saving their face through an international conflict, especially when the support of Moscow to Yerevan became visible (Carley, 1998, p. 10). If the Azeri state accepted the war as an intrastate war, it would admit that it lost the war to a small part of it. Secondly, it would be easier for to have one party to discuss the conflict with rather than dealing with two parties that support each other in peace talks (Lindenstrauss, 2015, p. 104).

Since no state, including Armenia, does not recognise the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh as an independent state, the negotiations are taking place only between Baku and Yerevan (de Waal, 2010, p. 159). Such a situation is acceptable to Armenia as well since it enables the Armenian ruling elite to have a direct control over Nagorno-Karabakh to use the conflict in the internal affairs of Armenia as a political leverage against the opposition and to follow their own agenda toward the conflict. To illustrate, the skirmishes in 2008 in Nagorno-Karabakh were manipulated by the Armenian ruling elite to eliminate the focus on rigged elections (Valiyev, 2012, p. 198). Additionally, it is also known that Robert Kocharyan and Serzh Sargsyan, who served as presidents of the Republic of Armenia, are originally from Stepanakert, Nagorno-Karabakh, making Armenia a natural representative of Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict an inseparable aspect of Armenian foreign policy.

To sum up, due to the historical facts referred to above which clearly support the argument that Armenia and Azerbaijan have so far acted and been regarded as the primary actors especially in the current phase of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (1988 onwards), which is the main focus of this thesis, while determining the firs pillar of success and failure of mediation offers towards the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, this thesis will rely on the decisions made by Armenia and Azerbaijan for mediation offers by Russians and Turks. Additionally, as shown above, since Turkey and Russia, as secondary actors with vested interests in the region, cannot be regarded as unbiased, impartial and neutral actors, claiming that neutrality of a mediator determines the acceptance (the first pillar of success) of a mediation initiative will not help understand why the mediation offers of one of the two

biased actors have so far been accepted whereas those of the other have been rejected, especially by Armenia. To solve this puzzle, we need to go beyond neutrality discussions and rely on the Realist International Relations School with its emphasis on power, leverage and resources available to a state as the determinant(s) of its mediation offers being accepted as the author of this thesis has already outlined in the previous chapter. To do so, it is necessary to evaluate, along with the characteristics of Russia and Turkey as possible mediators in the conflict, the relations of Russia and Turkey with the primary actors of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict so that we can reveal the characteristics of the two interested mediators (Russia and Turkey) and their relations with the conflicting parties, which are significant determinants of mediation success (Frei, 1976). These two chapters on the foreign policy patterns of Russia and Turkey will be followed by an analysis chapter where the 'six bases of power' concept of Jeffrey Rubin (1992), discussed in the previous chapter, will be employed to better comprehend the link between foreign policy and resources available to potential mediators, Russia and Turkey in our case study, and the impact of such resources on the likelihood of the first pillar of success of their mediation initiatives.

CHAPTER 4

THE FIRST TRIANGLE: TURKEY-ARMENIA-AZERBAIJAN

4.1. Turkey and the South Caucasus

Due to historical ties and geographical considerations in the sense that the South Caucasus connects Turkey to the Central Asia, Southern Caucasus has a special place for Turkey, and hence, in Turkish foreign policy (TMFA, n.d.a, para. 1). Given that Turkey is neighbouring the South Caucasus, it has been preoccupied with the developments taking place in its neighbourhood, especially after the post-Soviet era. As Aras (2005, p. 112) argues, the widespread nationalist sentiments in Turkish foreign policy back in the years following the dissolution of the Soviet Union made the policy makers pay a specific attention to the emerging reality in the Central Asia and South Caucasus, 'a new safe zone of Turkish identity'.

Azerbaijan stands out as the biggest ally that Turkey has acquired from the ruins of the USSR, especially its aforementioned Turkish zone. This, I believe, resulted initially from the fact that following its independence, Azerbaijan favoured Turkey in its policies under Elchibey who was too determined to follow a pro-Turkish, secular and anti-Iranian policies (Cornell, 1998, p. 59). The two states are historically, culturally, linguistically and ethnically so close to each other that the relations are highly positive not only at the state level but also at the societal level. For instance, when the entry representing Azerbaijan at the 2011 Eurovision Song Contest, in which Turkey did not participate, won the contest, the singers hit the stage to re-perform their winning song with both Azeri and Turkish flags (Habertürk, 2011). Similarly, at the state level, following the assumption of office, the first official visits of the leaders of both countries are traditionally made to each other which has a symbolic meaning (Ibrahimov, 2011, p. 15, TMFA, n.d.b, para. 2).

As Ismailzade clearly illustrates, the relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan are highly advanced which have so far seen overt Turkish support for Azerbaijan in military, economic and political terms (2005, p. 107). For instance, since the outbreak of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, at the international level, Turkey has advocated for the approach to the

conflict endorsed by Azeris (Cornell, 1998, p. 51). Contrary to the fact that Turkey has highly positive relations with Azerbaijan, related but not restricted to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the Turkish-Armenian relations have been ill-fated which have so far been characterised by a long-sustained hostility, closed borders, absence of diplomatic relations, and a trade embargo imposed on Armenia by Turkey and Azerbaijan.

These closed borders stemming originally from the Nagorno-Karabakh war have negatively affected not only the bilateral relations between Turkey and Armenia, and Armenia and Azerbaijan but also the wider South Caucasus region preventing it from evolving into a stable region (Broers, 2015, pp. 556-557). Though Turkey and Armenia embarked on a recent rapprochement journey in 2009, the process failed in 2010 which increased the gap between Turkey and Armenia, while bringing Turkey and Azerbaijan even closer as Turkey utilised this period to strengthen its bilateral ties with Azerbaijan (Aras & Akpınar, 2011, p. 62).

Due to a variety of reasons, with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict being only one of them – indeed one of the most significant ones – Turkish-Armenian relations have not evolved into a friendly and neighbourly nature as opposed to the highly positive bilateral relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan. To better understand these opposing patterns of relations between Turkey and the two disputants in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and the impact of these patterns on Turkish mediation in the conflict, it is required to lay down the historical and current situation between Turkey and these two conflicting states separately. This chapter will present one of the foundations of the discussion chapter of this thesis in which the author will evaluate the impact of the role of resources of Turkey on Turkish mediation attempts over the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict because this chapter will give clues about those resources.

4.2. Turkish-Armenian Relations

Turkish-Armenian relations, ever since the independence of the latter, have revolved around notions of uneasiness, historical enmity, mistrust, and national interests. When the Soviet Union dissolved in 1991, paving the way for the establishment of new states in the

Caucasus and Central Asia, the relations between Turkey and Armenia proved to be promising, if not friendly. In fact, Turkey was one of the countries that recognised the independence of Armenia earliest, seconded only by the United States (Alipour, 2015, p. 195). As Aras and Özbay note, Turkey invited Armenia to the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organisation although Armenia is not a country bordering the Black Sea (2008, p. 2). Such a positive attitude was initially embraced and reciprocated by the Armenian side as well. The then president of Armenia, Ter-Petrosyan, relying on a highly pragmatic approach, attempted to reconcile the grievances surrounding the relations between Turkey and Armenia so that Armenia would be able to have a wide door opening to the West (Kirişçi and Moffatt, 2015, p. 76), and show its total independence from Russia in the international sphere (Hill, Kirişçi and Moffatt, 2015, p. 132; Petros, 2003, p. 4).

Nevertheless, these initial opportunities proved to be futile due to two main reasons. The first one is the ousting of Ter-Petrosyan by Kocharyan, a former Nagorno-Karabakh leader and a hardliner politician with strong ties to the Armenian Diaspora (Hill, Kirişçi and Moffatt, 2015, p. 133). The more hard-liner the Armenian state evolved specifically towards Nagorno-Karabakh, the events of 1915, and Turkey, the more difficult it became for Turkey to develop relations with Armenia. The second one is related to the escalation of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict from an intra-state to an inter-state war between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Following the apparent involvement of Armenia proper in the war, Turkey condemned the Armenian side as the aggressor state in the region and cut the diplomatic ties with it (Ismailzade, 2005, p. 107).

In addition to the closure of the border, Süleyman Demirel, who was the Turkish president in 1993, asked for a business embargo on the Armenian state; which was taken as a proof of the solidarity between Turkey and Azerbaijan (Goshgarian, 2005, p. 3). The closure of the border between the two countries prohibiting any possibility of trade and tourism between the two sides (Oskanian, 2011, p. 24), persists today limiting economic possibilities to be realised by two societies (Valiyev, 2012, p. 200). Moreover, seeing the troubles encountered by the Azeris in the war, Ankara initiated troop-deployment on Armenian border and warned the Armenian side 'to desist from invading the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic', whose existence was guaranteed by Turkey as stated in the Treaty of Kars, signed in 1921 by Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey (Rasizade, 2011, p. 222).

There are certain, and highly interrelated, causes of the hostility that shaped Turkish-Armenian relations. To start with, the events of 1915 in the Ottoman Empire created tensions which had (continuing) repercussions not only at the state level but also at the societal level between the two countries. The opinion of Turkey and Armenia regarding the events differ from each other too much that it makes it even harder for any reconciliation to succeed before proper preparations at the communal level. It is known that taking into account 'Article 2 of the 1948 Genocide Convention', Ankara has so far acknowledged the events of 1915 avoiding the term genocide (Görgülü, Iskandaryan & Minasyan, 2010, p. 1), a policy that has commonly been referred to as outright denial. When we take a look at the official position of the Armenian state vis-a-vis the events of 1915, we can see that Armenia is not just regarding the events as genocide, but it also endeavours to seek international recognition in line with its official stance. The 11th clause of the Armenian Declaration of Independence (1990) obliges Armenia to seek 'international recognition of the 1915 Genocide in Ottoman Turkey and Western Armenia'. For the achievement of this goal, Armenia relies heavily on the efforts of Armenian Diaspora, the objectives and methods of which increased the already existing gap between the two states/peoples. This is because the activities of the diaspora in this regard has led to a backlash rendering Turkey more rigid on recognising the claims of genocide (Giragosian, 2009, p. 3). As Gamaghelyan (2010, p. 44) underlines, such efforts, with the expected demands of territorial and monetary reparations by the Armenian side, were deemed virulent and regarded as moves with the aim of deteriorating the image of Turkey, which has further alienated the two nations and states from each other.

A related issue that has proved to be thorny regarding and jeopardised Turkish-Armenian relations is the Moscow Treaty of 1921 that determined the eastern borders of Turkey. As Cornell mentions, the decision of Armenia to reject the Moscow Treaty, and hence the determined borders between the two countries, hindered 'the establishment of future diplomatic relations' (1998, p. 65-66). This is related to the Armenian genocide issue because should Turkey accept genocide and to pay compensations to the victims of it, it might be possible to see a change-over demand by Armenians regarding the eastern territories of Turkey, referred to as Western Armenia by the Armenian state. These issues surfaced in the latest rapprochement between Turkey and Armenia as well. It is crucial to deal with the latest rapprochement here specifically because not only does it clearly illustrate the current states

of affair in bilateral relations between Turkey and Armenia, but it also tells a lot about the reasons beyond the bias argument as to why Turkish mediation attempts over the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict have been a failure so far

When the Justice and Development Party assumed power in 2002, it embarked on a journey of democratisation and reformation, which was successfully managed for quite some time (see Keyman & Gümüşçü, 2014). This reformation manifested itself also in Turkish foreign policy. Under the JDP rule, Turkish foreign policy evolved from the Kemalist understanding which over-emphasised the West and neglected the rest (Taşpınar, 2012) to a proactive foreign policy the architecture of which was Davutoğlu who 'largely changed the rhetoric and practice of Turkish foreign policy, bringing it to a dynamic and multi-dimensional orientation' (Aras, 2009, p. 3).

This 'constructive, solution-orientated foreign policy' (Görgülü & Krikorian, 2012) and the societal impact of Turkish democratisation (de Waal, 2010a, p. 169) were the main triggers of the rapprochement between Turkey and Armenia, creating a possible venue to overcome the burden of their disputed history on bilateral relations of the two sides. This rapprochement can be traced back to what has been termed as football diplomacy, which refers to the invitations from Sargsyan and Gül to each other to watch the matches of the national football teams of Armenia and Turkey held in Yerevan and Bursa respectively (Görgülü, Iskandaryan & Minasyan, 2010).

Turkish-Armenian rapprochement was a two-pillar process. One of them was to improve the relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia through dialogue that Turkey endeavoured to achieve after a Turkish president visited Armenia for the first time, revealing the Turkish interest in playing the role of a mediator between Armenia and Azerbaijan (Gamaghelyan, 2010, p. 44). Knowing that to improve relations between the two disputants would not be possible without improving its own relations with Armenia, Turkey attempted to bring the Turkish and Armenian states closer to each other, constituting the second pillar of the rapprochement. Attempting to leave the historical wrongs behind, Turkey initiated dialogues with the Armenian state hoping that Turkish-Armenian relations can take the turn for the better in future which would be favourable to both sides and would increase the

likelihood of a resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, possibly through Turkish mediation.

It is known that the negative relations between Turkey and Armenia, moving Turkey much closer to Azerbaijan while distancing these two Turkic states from Armenia, is the underlying reason why Armenia, while formulating its foreign policy, relies extensively on Russian support to balance the power dynamics (Aras and Özbay, 2008, p. 3; German, 2012, p. 222; Gamaghelyan, 2010, p. 45). Hence, this rapprochement was to serve the dual purpose of eliminating hostilities between Turkey/Azerbaijan and Armenia and contributing to the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict through Turkish channels. Additionally, since Turkey wants to become a full-member to the EU, normalisation of Turkish-Armenian relations would be beneficial to Turkey, which, in fact, was one of the reasons why Turkey opted for normalisation in the first place (Alipour, 2015, p. 196).

The normalisation process started highly positively. The fact that the two sides were able to reach a conclusion in Zurich was a great success taking into account the previous years which did not see any attempts of reconciliation between the two states with the sole exception of the first years of the independent Armenian state. The support the US gave to the process acted as a further catalyst in this round of rapprochement, though it was severely criticised by Baku because of the implications of the American support to the Turkish-Armenian rapprochement for the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict as this, Baku thought, would make the Armenian position on the conflict much more rigid (Mammadov, 2015, p. 32). The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was crucial in this process in the sense that it led both to the initial success and ultimate failure of the normalisation process.

Although it was highly debated and found controversial in Turkey, throughout the normalisation process, Turkey did not make any reference to the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh (Görgülü, Iskandaryan & Minasyan, 2010, p. 11). This was of significant importance because ever since Armenia and Azerbaijan got embroiled in their conflict, Turkey singled out any possibility of border opening with Armenia unless a peaceful settlement of the conflict is reached. Therefore, there was always an issue linkage between the Turkish-Armenian relations and the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (Ismailzade, 2005, p. 107). Nevertheless, for the first time in its diplomatic history, Turkey

abstained from this stance. With hindsight, this was the result of a miscalculation on the part of Turkey because Turkey assumed the bilateral talks between the disputants of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict were on a highly positive note (de Waal, 2010, p. 173), showing the lack of information among Turkish policy makers regarding the conflict as Turkey was kept out of the peace process. This made the rapprochement process in Turkish-Armenian relations an initially successful but ultimately short-lived one because of the concerns in Ankara towards its relations with Baku.

However, as Göksel underlines, Turkey's attempts to improve its relations with Armenia deteriorated Ankara's relations with Baku (2011, p. 6). That Turkey refrained from making its normalisation of relations with Armenia dependent on the peace process between Armenia and Azerbaijan created further tensions between Turkey and Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan relied on 'Turkish public opinion as well as its own energy card' in order to derail Turkish-Armenian rapprochement (Valiyev, 2010, p. 1). When Azerbaijan condemned the protocols and the process, and Aliyev announced that the price Turkey was paying for the Azeri natural gas was to be increased from 120 dollar per a thousand cubic metres to 300 dollars per a thousand cubic metres (Yesevi & Tiftikçigil, 2015, p. 30), and that it would find new transit routes for its oil and natural gas favouring Russia rather than Turkey (Alipour, 2015, p. 199), the Turkish-Armenian normalisation process entered a deadlock, which became null after Turkey and Armenia did not ratify the protocols due to the growing nationalist opposition to the normalisation process in both countries. The failure of the normalisation process once again proved that for Turkey, Azerbaijan was more important than Armenia in the South Caucasus, the reasons of which will be dealt with in detail in the remaining of this chapter.

4.3. Turkish-Azerbaijani Relations

When the USSR evaporated from the world map ending the Cold War, a new world system was emerging. The geography-wise significance of Turkey for the Western bloc during the Cold War was no longer available to be used as a foreign policy tool (Davutoğlu, 2013). Therefore, Turkey had to develop a new paradigm to alter its foreign policy both in terms of objectives and patterns to follow through these objectives.

The power vacuum in the post-Soviet territories provided Turkey with a new incentive. Given that the majority of the former Soviet republics were Turkic, especially those in the Central Asia, Turkey attempted to lead them. The country was not alone in this quest. The West was supporting this endeavour of Turkey: Turkey, with its secular regime and Western-outlook, would be a model for the new republics in the post-Soviet land (Cornell, 1998, p. 69). These model country aspirations and the amusement among Turkish policy makers went so far in Turkey that, as Aras (2005) notes it, Süleyman Demirel, who was Turkish Prime Minister back then, argued the dissolution of the USSR made it possible for a massive Turkic zone 'stretching from the Balkans to the Great Wall of China' (p. 112).

Turkey's objectives in the Central Asia and South Caucasus were too optimistic but highly difficult to achieve. Owing to the limited economic power and political instability (Aras & Akpınar, 2011, p. 54), the rising levels of violence stemming from the Kurdish issue (Kirişçi and Moffatt, 2015, p. 71), and 'the inconsistencies and contradictions of the Turkish model' which was to be spread to the Turkic republics of the former USSR (Erşen, 2013, p. 30), Turkey could not realise its objectives pertaining to the region. For instance, when the Soviet Union dissolved, and the Nagorno-Karabakh war turned into inter-state war between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the Cyprus problem and the domestic Kurdish insurgency along with the fears of confronting Russia in the South Caucasus to avoid another 'Cyprus' in the region, made Turkish presence in the region and conflict, and Turkish support for Azerbaijan highly limited (Uzer, 2012, pp. 249, 248). As a result, the void was filled by the Russian Federation, which was attempting to reclaim the tight hold over the region it used to have.

Compared to other countries in the South Caucasus, Azerbaijan was always given a priority by Turkish policy makers which was reflected in the recognition of the independence of Azerbaijan well before the recognition was granted to other post-Soviet countries by Turkey (German, 2012, p. 222). In this context, it is natural to see that it was only Azerbaijan that followed a pattern similar to Turkey and had very positive relations with Turkey. In fact, as has already been stated, Elchibey, who was the president of the newly independent Azerbaijan accepted Turkey as a model country for Azerbaijan in line with his anti-Russian policies (Cornell, 1998, p. 58-59), making the model country discussions reciprocal. Nonetheless, there was more to Turkish foreign policy towards Azerbaijan than this model country discussion.

The way the bilateral relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan has been formulated can be divided into two parts. The first one is related to the kinship between the Turks and the Azeris. The second category is energy. These two categories also define certain periods in the relations between the two states. While the initial stages of the relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan were shaped by the kin-based ties between the two states (Görgülü & Krikorian, 2012, p. 1), from the mid-1990s onwards, the energy policies occupied the relations between the two countries. Let us now examine the two categories in a bit more detailed way to better understand their implications for the Turkish-Azeri relations, and for the Turkish mediation attempts vis-à-vis the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which will be made clear in the discussion chapter of this thesis.

As we mentioned in the previous section of this chapter, the incursion of the Armenian forces, both local and from Armenia proper itself, into the Azerbaijani territory to preserve the "Armenian nature" of Nagorno-Karabakh, while occupying the adjacent regions, angered Turkey. The Armenian occupation of Kelbajar in 1993 was an important turning point here because it interrupted 'the direct trade from Turkey to Armenia, highway/railway and air connections' (TMFA, n.d.c, para. 2) because only after this occupation did Turkey decide to shut down the Turkish-Armenian border (Ibrahimov, 2011, p. 17). This has had important ramifications. For example, this decision of Turkey consolidated the embargo imposed on Yerevan by Baku as there was no possibility of goods passing from Turkey to Armenia (Cornell, 1998, p. 61). These were all based on the kinship between the two states which derived mostly from the demands of the societies in each state. In Turkey, to illustrate, the pro-Azeri sentiments have been widespread both among the ruling elite and the public (Gamaghelyan, 2010, p. 44). Such feelings have been reciprocal among Azeris as well. In fact, when Turkey and Armenia agreed for an electricity deal in the late 1990s, it was regarded by the Azeris as 'a stab in the back', leading to the termination of the deal before it saw the daylight (Cornell, 1998, p. 62).

The kin-based relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan started to lose importance when Elchibey was ousted by a coup resulting in the advent of Haydar Aliyev as the new head of the Azeri state. Although he regarded Turkey and Azerbaijan as "one nation, two countries", Aliyev terminated all the deals signed between the two countries under the previous government which granted special rights to Turkey and Turkish citizens (Yesevi &

Tiftikçigil, 2015, p. 28). The "Aliyev tradition" continued in 2003 when Ilham Aliyev was elected the new president of Azerbaijan. The major focus on Azeri foreign policy was the utilisation of oil and natural gas projects as a foreign policy tool and to increase the leverage of the country in the international sphere (Aras, 2013 as cited in Aras, 2014, p. 2). This understanding coincided with the new Turkish foreign policy understanding which was being shaped by the ruling JDP government(s) because the party had a wider vision for Turkey also in the (South) Caucasus.

Energy turned out to be one of the most significant aspects of this vision. As Kardaş (2011) asserts, making use of its geopolitical importance, Turkey has tried to move from a transit route to an 'energy hub' (p. 58). In this regard, Turkey focused on '[t]he transportation of the Caspian gas to the West' (Görgülü & Krikorian, 2012, p. 2). This convergence between the Azeri demand for marketing its hydrocarbons to the Western market and having a say in the energy market (Aras, 2014), and the Turkish demand for playing the transit country to assume the role of an energy hub intensified the alliance forged between the two states. As Aras notes, regarding the energy-dictated side of the diplomatic ties between Turkey and Azerbaijan, the two countries have so far been able to conclude two projects, the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline and the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum Natural Gas Pipeline, while a major third project, the Trans Anatolia Natural Gas Pipeline, is under way (2014, p. 3-4). These developments were supported by the US and the EU to decrease the leverage of Moscow over the Caspian natural gas and oil (Balakishi, 2016, p. 13), and sealed the fact that energy-based interests took the precedence over kinship-based interests.

The mutual satisfaction between the Turkish and Azeri states vis-a-vis their respective energy policies has strengthened the relations between the two countries. Although Georgia also enjoys a certain level of profit, both in tangible and intangible means, Armenia is not part of any project, cementing the isolation of the country in the region. However, this proves to be an obstacle for the entire region. As Aras & Akpınar (2011, p. 59) stress, the internal economic problems of Armenians and the overreliance of Armenia on the ports of Georgia bombed during the Five-Day War[4] between Georgia and Russia added and continue to add to the troubles Armenia is facing, deriving from its isolation in the region. Although the war

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[4] In this thesis, the terms Five-Day War and Russian-Georgian War (of 2008) are used interchangeably.

created a sudden impetus for Armenia to develop its relations with Turkey (Kakachia, 2011, p. 17), as we have already seen, the rapprochement process failed. This resulted in intensifying Russian involvement in the region on the side of Armenia, consolidating the status quo in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. However, although the status quo does not contribute positively to the interests of either Armenia as it consolidates its isolation, or Azerbaijan as the status quo consolidates the occupation of its territories, neither Turkey and Armenia, or Armenia and Azerbaijan have been able to thaw their animosity which would lead to a breakthrough in the bilateral relations of these three countries along with the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. So why is this the case?

Keeping in mind what we covered in the previous section, and the high compatibility of the Turkish-Azeri relations even in the absence of Armenia in the picture, we can find the answer to the question posed above. With regards to their relations with each other, in addition to the kin-based considerations, Turkey and Azerbaijan favour a more Realpolitik-based understanding of international relations. For Azerbaijan, what is important is its economic improvement and its ascension to a powerful player through energy policies (Aras, 2014). Similarly, for Turkey, it has been more crucial to obtain the energy hub status it has long sought to have and to keep the nationalist sentiments at home under control, than to normalise its relations with Armenia. Therefore, as Göksel (2011, p. 6) observes, the JDP has observed that the benefits of positive relations with Azerbaijan outweighed those of positive relations with Armenia. In addition to the interest-based considerations, there is also the role played by Russia in the conflict which is necessary to be touched upon because it illustrates the dynamics of the conflict while at the very same time revealing why and how Russian mediation attempts in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict have been successful. This is what we turn to now.

CHAPTER 5

THE SECOND TRIANGLE: RUSSIA-ARMENIA-AZERBAIJAN

5.2. Russia and the South Caucasus

Russia, ever since the Tsarist era, has been a dominant actor in the South Caucasus. As Rasizade illustrates, the Treaty of Turkmenchay (1828) helped the Tsarist regime incorporate the entire Transcaucasia into the empire for the first time (2011, p. 217). Following the treaty, the Russian hold in the region remained undisputed for nearly a century. In the early 1910s, the three states of the South Caucasus, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, broke the Russian presence as they capitalised on the existing power vacuum in the region (Gafarlı et al., 2016, p. 3). Nevertheless, the sovereignty enjoyed by these three states turned out to be a short-lived one as in the early 1920s, the Soviet Union incorporated all three South Caucasus states. This development is quite important because it laid the foundation for a near omnipotent Soviet, and hence Russian, presence in the region that created 'the existing knowledge of the Russian elite on the Eurasian affairs, the sociocultural affinity with the region, its economic complementarity and political connections' (Tüysüzoğlu, 2017, p. 187), which was utilised by Russia even after the USSR collapsed in the South Caucasus characterised by internal conflicts. This has had an impact on social, political and economic aspects of life in each South Caucasian state, mostly through the deliberate utilisation of their conflicts by Russia. To better understand this, and its implications for Armenia and Azerbaijan along with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict itself, in what follows, I will first give a brief general outlook of the Russian presence in the South Caucasus and I will then discuss Russian-Armenian and Russian-Azerbaijani relations, with references to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The findings of this chapter, along with those of the previous one, will be evaluated and discussed in the next chapter of this thesis.

Although Russia under the rule of Yeltsin was not capable of making Russia a global power, starting with the second half of the 1990s, especially after the coming to power of Putin, whose second term reinforced the nationalist interpretation of Russia's role both in the world and the post-Soviet territory (Kuchins and Zevelev, 2012, p. 155; Abushov, 2009, pp.

190-191), Russia started to flourish in its post-Soviet area, including the South Caucasus. This was a result of the internal and regional dynamics taking place in the Russian Federation and the South Caucasus respectively. The Islamic insurgency in the North Caucasus – in Chechnya, and to a lesser extent in Dagestan – within the borders of the Russian Federation had caused serious injuries to the prospects of Russia assuming a regional, let alone global power (Baev, 2001, p. 2). To reverse this and having assumed there was a spill-over between the North and South Caucasus, and a support from the latter to the former to undermine Russia, Moscow decided to consolidate its grip on the former constituent states of the Soviet Union in its Southern Caucasus flank. Based on these considerations, Russia regarded the North and South Caucasus as one big 'interlinked' region (Trenin, 2009, p. 143), and did everything in its power to prevent any sort of instability, especially those stemming from conflicts, to damage its southern border (Abushov, 2009, p. 204) and interests in the South Caucasus. For example, the decision to invade Georgia to quell the Georgian attacks on the separatist regions of Abkhazia and Ossetia revealed how intent Russia was on maintaining its grip over this geography (Vosoghi, Emami, and Rostami, 2013, p. 470).

To avoid such an instability, and to enjoy the power and privileges it assumed from the Soviet Union, Russia, rather than resorting to direct military force immediately, mostly manipulated the three countries of the South Caucasus, a region defined as 'Russian exclusive sphere of influence' (Hedenskog and Korkmaz, 2016, p. 2), an area of Russian 'irrefutable influence' (Cherniavskiy, 2010, p. 27) or Russian 'near abroad' (Abushov, 2009, p. 189). The easiest way to manipulate the countries constituting the South Caucasus region has been capitalising on the 'frozen' conflicts that determine the domestic and international affairs of the countries of the South Caucasus (Tüysüzoğlu, 2017; Gafarlı et al., 2016, p. 8). The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and Russia's stance on it should be examined within this context since the Russian stance on the conflict has so far been 'controlled chaos' (Valiyev, 2012, p. 199), by which Russia used the conflict as a leverage to sustain its grasp over the South Caucasus. This, along with its general policies towards the conflicting parties enabled Russia to exert itself as the most important third party both as a destructive foe (mostly within the perception of the Azeri side) and a peace broker in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Nearly three years after the war over Nagorno-Karabakh turned into a bloody international war between two ex-Soviet countries, the Russian leadership of the time, despite

the apparent weaknesses of the state, was able to mediate the conflicting parties in 1994 letting them reach a ceasefire which is still in place despite certain outbreaks of violence from time to time, which has created a tradition of Russian mediation in the conflict. Despite the establishment of the Minsk Group to mediate the conflict, it has always been Russia that has mediated the conflict. Russia has so far regarded itself as the sole mediator to the extent of, as de Waal reveals, exclusion of other potential peace brokers like Turkey from the peace process along with keeping the peace discussions confidential to other countries (2010a, p. 173). This exclusion of certain players and their lack of information strengthened the Russian role as a mediator while hindering that of other potential mediators including Turkey. It should be noted here that this was a deliberate decision taken by the Russian state to increase its regional, and to a lesser extent, global power. The question to be posed here takes us back to the original research question that this thesis seeks to answer.

While manipulating and shaping its policies towards the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and to its main disputants, as we shall see in the remaining of this chapter, Russia has been a biased and partial party lacking neutrality. In fact, the policies of Moscow have made it involved directly in the conflict (Ismailzade, 2005, p. 104). Nevertheless, Russia has been and will keep being accepted as a mediator by both countries, a reality not applicable to Turkey. So, how has Russia been a mediator in the conflict despite its apparent bias and partiality? This chapter will help us answer this question. To do so, we should analyse the bilateral Russian-Armenian and Russian-Azerbaijani relations within the context of the conflict and the South Caucasus and discuss the findings in the following chapter.

5.2. Russian-Armenian Relations

As covered in the previous chapter, following its independence, Armenia aimed at following a neutral policy with a focus on improving its neighbourly relations. Nevertheless, due to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict with Azerbaijan, and the joint imposition of trade embargo and border closure on Armenia by Azerbaijan and its major ally Turkey, Armenia's initial aims proved to be futile. This situation along with the realisation that Armenia's geopolitical location hindered any prospect of it acting as a neutral state made Armenian policy makers turn back to Russia, which was consolidated with agreements on 'economic,

political and military issues' (Petros, 2003, p. 4). Russian-Armenian relations have been shaped predominantly by the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, especially from the stance of Armenians: what Armenia needed was the preservation of the status quo in the conflict to keep the territorial gains intact, whereas Russia, as we have touched upon in the beginning of this chapter, wanted to keep its grasp over the South Caucasus. In this section, the author will lay down the major economic, political, military and social issues that stemmed from the respective needs of Armenia and Russia and that determined the course of bilateral relations between the two states, the findings of which will be utilised in the discussion chapter.

Following the dissolution of the USSR, the closest relation that Russia established in the South Caucasus was that with Armenia which has been manifested with Armenia's 'participation in all Russia-led post-Soviet integration projects' such as 'the CIS, CSTO, Eurasian Customs Union and EAEU' (Gafarlı et al., 2016, p. 10). Although this trend initially emerged out of interdependent needs and interests of Russia and Armenia, within time, the bilateral relations between the two states turned into a Russian dominated zero-sum game.

Since the initial need for Russia among Armenians originated from the latter's security concerns following the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, as illustrated above, one of the earliest agreements concluded between the two states was a military agreement. In 1995, Armenia agreed to the establishment of the Russian 102nd military base to be stationed in Gyumri and the 3624th air base stationed in Erebuni (Arynbek, 2016, para 3). The 102nd military base turned out to be highly crucial in terms of meeting Armenia's security needs because Gyumri is an Armenian town on the Armenian-Turkish border, and because the Turkish Third Field Army is present on the border and its 'support to Azerbaijani military forces stationed in Nakhichevan' means Turkey 'could easily cut Armenia into two' (Global Security, n.d., para 10). Hence, the Russian military presence in the region serves the security needs of Armenia.

This treaty was amended first in 2000 making it possible for Russia to station its military 'in Armenia for 25 years (Hovhannisyan, 2011, p. 69), and then in 2010, after the 2008 Five-Day War between Georgia and Russia, which extended the stay of the Russian military base until 2044 (Global Security, n.d., para 14). For the neighbours of Armenia, the concerning issue apart from the extension of Russian existence in the region with this treaty revision was that the revision brought about more responsibilities for Moscow (German,

2012, p. 218). As Valiyev points out, the Russian troops stationed in Gyumri will be responsible for protecting not only the Turkish-Armenian border but also the Armenian-Azerbaijani border (2010, p. 3). Another important feature of this renewed treaty was the provision that required a mutual defence in the event of a military attack on either side (Hovhannisyan, 2011, p. 70). This is a quite crucial development because it implies that if the Azerbaijani government decides to use its military card to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, it may easily find itself fighting not just Armenian troops but also the Russian military. This provision consolidated the security needs of Armenia while cementing the power of Russia not only vis-à-vis Armenia itself but also vis-à-vis Azerbaijan because Russia emerged as a military threat once again. However, the consolidated Russian military presence in Armenia made Russia take the Armenian support for and dependency on Russia for granted (Giragosian, 2017), and led to the concerns that Armenia lost its independence becoming a Russian outpost in the South Caucasus (Minassian, 2008).

It should be stated that such arguments are well-grounded. For example, following the outbreak of violence in Nagorno-Karabakh in April 2016, Russia did not provide any military assistance to the Armenian side. This decision of Moscow not to get involved in the military confrontation which stemmed mostly from the fact that it did not know who initiated the conflict first (Korybko, 2017, para 5) brought about doubts in Yerevan pertaining to the reliability of Russia 'as a close strategic partner' (Balsyte, 2017, p. 1). In protest of this decision and in defiance of Russia, Armenia announced its plans to proceed with the Association Agreement with the European Union, which, however, was hampered by heavy Russian pressure (Korybko, 2017, para 9). Knowing, especially after the war in Georgia and because of the 'Turkic' threat on its two borders, that Moscow cannot be undermined, and it has nowhere to go, Yerevan followed suit and got back on its pro-Russian track, proving Giragosian, Minassian and other analysts/scholars with similar views correct. The outpost claims can easily be extended to the economic realm of Russian-Armenian relations as well.

The closure of the Turkish-Armenian and the Armenian-Azerbaijani borders had a severe impact on the economic activities and capacity of the Armenian state. Armenia could not be involved in any 'regional integration and cooperation projects' bringing together other members of the South Caucasus community and Turkey, increasing Armenia's 'dependency on Russia' (Gamaghelyan, 2010, p. 41). With Turkey and Azerbaijan out of picture as

possible economic partners, Armenia had to rely solely on Georgia in the South Caucasus. Given that Georgia was not so well-advanced an economy to meet the needs of Armenia, Russia came to the fore in the economic sphere as well. There are certain aspects of Russian-Armenian economic relations.

One of them is related to security. As the Azerbaijani economy grew exponentially due to its high oil and natural gas reserves and utilised this growth to modernise its military and to increase its hard power vis-à-vis the Armenians, Armenia had to find a way of procuring weapons and armament. Russia provided and keeps providing weapons to Armenia. The positive aspect here is that since Armenia is a member of the CSTO unlike Azerbaijan, Russia has been selling weapons to Armenia at internal prices (Hovhannisyan, 2011, p. 70; Minassian, 2008, p. 11). Suffering from border closures and trade embargo, and the modernisation and consolidation of the Azerbaijani army, Armenia has no option but to buy Russian weapons due to its economic setbacks and the abovementioned pricing.

Russian-Armenian economic relations involve another economic sphere as well. As Balakishi shows, 'Russia is the biggest main foreign investor in Armenia and controls approximately one quarter of Armenian trade turnover' (2016, p. 5). Russia invested more than $3 billion in Armenia in 2012 (Minasyan, 2013, p. 1). This is evident especially in the energy sector. There is a full dependency of Armenia on Russian oil and natural gas, and Russia is controlling crucial sectors of the Armenian economy such as 'the transportation, telecommunications, banking and energy sector' (Klever, 2013, p. 16). It is known that Russia has been using its energy card as a leverage towards many other countries in its near-abroad to control the economy of such states (Kelkitli, 2008, p. 75). Yet, Armenia is the weakest country in this sense, and Russia knows and utilises this to increase its power in the region. To illustrate, Russia, with its economic and, specifically energy diplomacy, compelled Armenia to hand over the control of many of its most strategic sectors to Russia to compensate for its growing debt to Russia (Kelkitli, 2008, p. 86; Balakishi, 2016, p. 5). Although the expectation of Armenia is, and the norm should be, mutual dependency with Russia in economy, this is not a likely development given the current web of relationship and the status quo.

The relationship between the West and Armenia also adds to the status quo in Russian-Armenian relations. Due to the border closure between Turkey and Armenia, it is not feasible to incorporate Armenia into Western markets. For example, in the early 1990s, three clothing factories, one of which was the world-famous Benetton, were opened in Yerevan yet they 'were forced to close soon after, since they were unable to receive necessary supply shipments' (Goldenberg, 1994, p. 76 as cited in Petros, 2003, p. 11). In a similar vein, when asked if Armenia would ever conclude a free-trade agreement with Europe, Sargsyan told that such an agreement would not be lucrative because the Turkish-Armenian border is still closed (Hiatt, 2015, para 6). Hence, it is no surprise to see that Armenia intensified its economic relations with the Russian Federation which climaxed with the admission of Armenia to the Eurasian Economic Union.

Before heading to analysing Russian-Azerbaijani relations, it should be made clear that the current state of affairs between Russians and Armenians is not likely to change either minimally or drastically. Armenia and Georgia were the only two countries in the South Caucasus that had a Russian military base. Following the Georgian-Russian war in 2008, Russia lost its military bases in Georgia, making Armenia provide Moscow with its only military base in the South Caucasus (Giragosian, 2017, para 5). Should Russian-Armenian relations deteriorate, Russia will no longer be able to maintain its 'military and political presence in the South Caucasus' (Minasyan, 2013, p. 4), something Moscow would not be willing to experience. However, the good news for the Russian policy makers is that Armenians do not have any substitute actor for Russia that would meet Armenian needs (Gafarlı et al., 2016, p. 11), and endanger the military presence of Russia in the region.

5.3. Russian-Azerbaijani Relations

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has been one of the major determinants of Russian-Azerbaijani relations. This has been the case because (1) the primary objective of Azerbaijani foreign policy is the resolution of the conflict (Mammadov, 2015, p. 30), and (2) as Azerbaijan has been able to maintain a relatively independent foreign policy due to its energy reserves without being affected by Russian leverage over energy so much, Russia knows that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict 'remains the only leverage that Russia can use against

Azerbaijan' (Valiyev, 2011, p. 143). Since the status quo in the conflict does not favour the Azeri side, it is trying to do everything it can to change the status quo. Nevertheless, to maintain its grasp over Azerbaijan, Russia does not seem to be willing to resolve the conflict at all. The truth is Baku still sees Moscow as the key to reclaiming its lost territories. Similarly, to protect its 'near abroad', Moscow is not willing to lose Baku. In short, geopolitical considerations pertaining to their own interests have been shaping the relations between the two states. To better understand this web of relations between Russia and Azerbaijan, the author will lay down the interrelated role of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, of the Russian aggressiveness in the region that became visible after the Five-Day War in 2008, and of energy in the bilateral relations of these two states.

Although Azerbaijan initially expected a pro-Azerbaijani response from Russia to settle the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict when it erupted in terms acceptable to Baku, the fact that such a move never came from Moscow prompted Baku to move westward in its foreign policy (Cherniavskiy, 2010, pp. 27-28). Hence, the early years of Azerbaijan were shaped by an increasing anti-Russian attitude in Baku under the presidency of Elchibey. This policy was not welcomed by Moscow which ultimately led to the ousting of Elchibey and to the coming to power of the Aliyev family in 1994. To avoid such a fate in an environment where Moscow was highly hostile to Baku, the Aliyev government initiated a 'balanced foreign policy' (Aslanlı, 2010, p. 140), which aimed at approaching the West to the extent that it would not agitate Russia. The memories of the coup against Elchibey, and as we shall see in the remaining of this chapter the impact of Russian policies in the region first in 2008 in the Five-Day War with Georgia, and then in 2014 in Ukraine, tilted this 'multi-vector approach between Russia and the western countries' (Arynbek, 2016, para 2) towards Russia because of two considerations in Baku. The first is that Azerbaijan understands that its relations with Russia are of utmost importance when it comes to the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The second thing is that despite their interests in the region, the West, especially the US and the EU, have so far not acted in a way that would make Baku regard them as reliable as Russia in the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict or in the region as a whole. Let's evaluate these two interrelated points in detail.

The Five-Day War between Georgia and Russia revealed the volatility of stability in the region and 'how dangerous an armed conflict may be in this region' (Kakachia, 2011, p.

19). Azerbaijan drew a lesson for itself too. As Valiyev discusses, the major effect of the war on Azerbaijan has been that Baku has attempted to maintain a balance between its relations with Russia and its westward political interests (2010, p. 1). This was because the war, which showed the weaknesses of the West to confront Russia directly in the South Caucasus (Mikhelidze, 2010, p. 5), showed Azerbaijan that the West's presence in the South Caucasus, especially vis-à-vis Russia, was more in rhetoric than in practice. The defeat of Georgia, a US ally in the region, helped Russia send the message that the US should not be deemed as the ultimate protector for the post-Soviet states, deteriorating the image of the US (Trenin, 2009, p. 148), which was a successful move. It is a known fact that in geopolitically important regions like the South Caucasus, actions are deemed more crucial than words. Hence, Azerbaijan realised that relations with Russia would be taken seriously not to agitate Moscow to the extent of military invasion of the Azerbaijani soil by Russia in support of Armenia, which the recent war in Georgia had revealed was highly possible. Despite, the Azeri views of apparent Russian bias towards Armenia, Baku attempted to improve its relations with Baku for the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The declaration signed between Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia regarding the dedication to the peaceful means for the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict right after the Five-Day War is an indicator of this attempt. To better understand the impact of the war and the successive developments, one can look at the fact that Mammadyarov, Azerbaijani Foreign Minister, stated that a primary objective of Azerbaijani foreign policy in 2011 would be improving the bilateral relations with neighbours, specifically Moscow (German, 2012, p. 221).

The Georgian-Russian war taught Baku another lesson that had an impact on Russian-Azerbaijani relations: the US and the EU cannot be blindly trusted within the realities of the South Caucasus. In fact, the rift between Azerbaijan and the US can be traced back to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict itself without even discussing the Five-Day War. Azeris contend that Washington shies away from utilising its leverage over Armenians to help Baku reclaim its occupied territories (Mammadov, 2015, p. 32). This, along with the apparent 'lack of long term commitment by the international community' (Klever, 2013, p. 2) apart from Russia had already contributed to an understanding among Azeris that Russia would be the key to any resolution regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The war just intensified this understanding.

A similar case can be made for the relations between the EU and Azerbaijan. Suffering from the conflict for more than two decades, Baku knows relying on Russia would be a better and possibly quicker option than turning its eyes to the EU. While the EU emphasises increasing the capacity of civil society along with improving democracy and human rights records, Azerbaijan envisages 'a strategic relationship based on mutual interests and objectives' (Mammadov, 2015, p. 33), that would help Baku resolve the conflict in terms acceptable to Azeris. Given that the relationship between Russia and Azerbaijan rests on a 'pragmatic, business-like, and mutually advantageous' paradigm with a focus on mutual satisfaction of objectives (Cherniavskiy, 2010, p. 35), which is more advantageous for a quicker resolution of the conflict, why Azerbaijan has recently favoured Russia over the EU can be better understood. This "business-like" relationship between Russia and Azerbaijan is crucial to analyse because it is related to another major aspect of the relations between these two states: energy reserves and energy policies of Russia and Azerbaijan.

Contrary to Armenia and Georgia, Azerbaijan has vast energy reserves which have increased the significance attached to Azerbaijan by regional and global powers. The natural gas Azerbaijan extracts from its sector in the Caspian Sea has boosted its economy, which was mostly used in increasing the country's military power which consolidated the security dilemma in the region. Additionally, the energy reserves consolidated the independent nature of the Azerbaijani energy policies which became evident especially after the completion of the South Caucasus pipeline (Kjærnet, 2009, p. 3), in a severe contrast to Armenia. Therefore, energy, one of the biggest Russian tools to be used while formulating foreign policy, does not have a leverage, or to be more correct a leverage as strong as the one on Armenia, on Azerbaijan.

The actions of Russia in the region, especially during the Five-Day War, had direct implications for Russian-Azerbaijani relations in general and the energy policies the two sides followed in specific. First and foremost, the war revealed to Baku that Moscow possessed leverages, albeit limited and indirect, in the energy zone over Baku. The war showed that 'the integrity of the oil and gas corridor depended simply on Russian good will' (Blagovi 2008 as cited in Kakachia, 2011, p. 17). Hence, even if Azerbaijan feels like it can antagonise Russia while formulating its foreign policy and energy policy, the proven

possibility of Russian destructiveness would prevent Baku from taking such a stand towards Moscow. There are two further (and softer) reasons why this is the case.

The first reason is that Azerbaijan is well aware of the way Russia approaches the post-Soviet area. To maintain its power and hold in the region, Russia will not back away from taking unilateral steps. The actions in Georgia in 2008, and most recently in Ukraine which led to the annexation of Crimea revealed that Russia favoured a more active approach based on concrete actions than a passive one based on mere rhetoric (Tüysüzoğlu, 2017, p. 192), in a severe contrast to the actions of the West. As we have so far seen, such an understanding in Moscow's approach to the post-Soviet region had potential ramifications for the fate of Nagorno-Karabakh. Given that Armenia is the bastion of Russia's vested interests in the South Caucasus that Russia will not forgo (Ismailzade, 2005, p. 105), for Azerbaijan, antagonising Russia through energy policies developed with and for the West would be tantamount to inviting Russian aggression towards Baku. Following the annexation of Crimea, Baku realised that as Russia is game-setter in the South Caucasus, a military option in order to retake Nagorno-Karabakh would be viable as long as Russia approves it (Ismayilov and Zasztowt, 2015, p. 4). Additionally, in line with the argument above, that the US and the EU imposed sanctions on Moscow following the annexation of Crimea while not having done the same thing against Armenia led to negative attitudes towards the West among Azerbaijani people (Mammadov, 2015, p. 35), leading to conclusions that Azerbaijan was doomed to be left on its own against Armenia and its patron Russia. To avoid such a bleak scenario, Azerbaijan moved to converge its energy interests with Russia because energy is the most significant aspect of Russia's global and regional power.

The second reason is related to the energy policies of Russia itself, which are capable of undermining those of Azerbaijan. To reduce the prospects of the realisation of the Nabucco or similar projects endorsed by Azerbaijan, Russia proposed the Turkish Stream project which would undermine Azerbaijan as the proposed project will eliminate the need for Azerbaijani gas in Western markets (Ismayilov and Zasztowt, 2015, p. 3). If the project concludes as envisaged, it will bring about a decrease in gas exports from Azerbaijan to Europe which will have the double impact of intensifying Baku's economic crisis and rendering the Azeri government fragile against the domestic 'unrest' (Ramani, 2016, para 8).

Therefore, although not as severely dependent on Russian energy policy as Armenia, Azerbaijan can also fall prey to Russian leverage in energy.

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the policies of Russia towards the conflict and the South Caucasus countries have so far determined the course of Russian-Azerbaijani relations. That Russian-Armenian ties became highly strong and consolidated following the signing of and revisions to military agreements between the two states, and the apparent Russian destructiveness as exemplified by Moscow's actions in Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014 along with the inaction of the West towards the region made Baku conclude that its bilateral relations with Russia are of utmost importance in the region when it comes to the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the realisation of other Azerbaijani goals in political and economic spheres. However, since Russia is seemingly more inclined towards making use of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict for its own interests rather than resolving it, which will make the conflict occupy a significant place in Azeri foreign policy, Russian-Azerbaijani relations will likely remain the same.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION: THE ROLE OF RESOURCES IN DETERMINING SUCCESS IN INTERNATIONAL MEDIATION

As we have already covered in the preceding two chapters, neither Turkey nor Russia is an unbiased, impartial and neutral actor in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. However, while Turkish mediation attempts towards the conflict have not been accepted leading to mediation failures, those of Russia have been accepted by both disputants leading to the first pillar of mediation success. In this chapter, under the light of the findings of the preceding chapters, the author will discuss the impact of resources a mediator possesses rather than that of mediator's being impartial, unbiased and neutral on mediation outcomes – success or failure – to test the main argument of this study as stated in the introduction chapter of this thesis. While analysing the role of resources, the author will refer to the 'six bases of power' concept of Jeffrey Rubin (1992).

6.1. Criterion 1: Reward Power

Rubin states that '[*r*]*eward* power is used when the influencer offers some positive benefit in exchange for compliance' (1992, p. 255). What this statement means, in the context of international mediation, is that if there is a potential to be rewarded in the case of accepting a mediation offer, then conflicting sides will opt for accepting the offer, resulting in a successful mediation, the first pillar of it, as defined in this thesis.

When we examine the relations of Russia with the disputants in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, we see this power in action. Russia, knowing that Armenia is locked in its environment by two allies, is able to offer security to Armenia and the maintenance of the status quo in the conflict which Armenia favours. Moreover, as we have seen in the previous chapter, due to its increasing energy capacity which leads to a bigger gross national income, Azerbaijan has bought high capacity weapons and increased its military capacity vis-à-vis Armenia. To mitigate the impact of this on Armenia, Russia has been providing Armenia with weapons at much lower prices especially because Armenia is a member of each Russian-

led alliance, both military and economic. These low prices represent another Russian reward for Armenia. Such a low pricing has also been the case in the supply of natural gas and oil from Russia to Armenia. This situation will remain the same as long as Armenia complies with Russia. Hence, the reward power, especially through the implications of the continuation of these rewards, explains why Armenians choose to comply with Russia in every single area, including Russian mediation offers in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Despite its inclination towards Armenia, Russia has been accepted as a mediator to the conflict by Azerbaijan as well, a situation part of which can be explained by the reward power. We know that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is used by the Azerbaijani elite to quell the growing domestic unrest and demands for more democracy. The Russian arms sale to Azerbaijan has enabled the Aliyev government to have slight military victories to help the government use the "rally-around-the-flag" sentiments among the Azerbaijani public (Ramani, 2016, para 12). Given that there is an arms sale embargo on Armenia and Azerbaijan, and Russia is the biggest country that breaks it, the arms sale coming from Moscow that helps Baku appease its domestic unrest and maintain a certain level of military might is a positive outcome of compliance between Moscow and Baku that the latter cannot give up. Moreover, even though Azerbaijan is not dependent on Russian energy as much as Armenia is, there is still a certain amount of dependency. As the developments following the Russian-Georgian War in 2008 have revealed, the pipeline projects between Azerbaijan and Europe, and the safety of pipelines in general can be interrupted by Russia because 'the integrity of the oil and gas corridor depended simply on Russian good will' (Blagov, 2008 as cited in Kakachia, 2011, p. 17). To defuse this danger, Baku knows that it should comply with Russia. Given that its energy reserves constitute the most important leverage over Armenia, Azerbaijan cannot jeopardise the continuation and safety of its energy exports, which are receptive to Russian threat. Additionally, as we have revealed in the previous chapter, the annexation of Crimea by Russia helped Azerbaijan realise that if it moves closer to and cooperates with Russia, it can create a possible Russian consent to gain the territories it lost during the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (Ismayilov and Zasztowt, 2015, p. 4). What this means is that as Russia is likely to offer such a territorial reward, cooperating with rather than antagonising Russia is crucial for Azerbaijan, which has a direct implication for the acceptance of Russian mediation offers as well.

When we examine the position of Turkey within this power, what we see is that Turkey does not possess reward power as Russia does. Turkey, within its current state of affairs with Armenia, is not able to offer any reward for Armenian compliance. In fact, the status quo in Turkish-Armenian relations hampers any prospect of Turkey rewarding Armenia in military, economic, political or social ways. The level of animosity between Turks and Armenians makes it difficult for the Turkish state to cooperate with Armenia or reward it in return for compliance. Additionally, that the borders are closed, and Turkey has been imposing a trade embargo on Armenia have so far alienated Armenia from Turkey. These issues along with the perceived military threat from Turkey among Armenians made Yerevan move further eastward towards Moscow (German, 2012, p. 222), which rewards Armenia with further security. Unless Turkey changes its policies towards Armenia, it will not able to make use of reward power. Therefore, with regards to reward power, Armenia does not have any incentive to comply with Turkey, and/or in our case, accept its mediation offers.

Turkey's reward power vis-à-vis Azerbaijan does exist, albeit in a weak form. Turkey borders Azerbaijan only through its autonomous region, Nakhichevan. Turkey, by the virtue of the Kars Treaty of 1921, is the guarantor of the security and independence of this autonomous region (Rasizade, 2011, p. 222). This protection constitutes one pillar of Turkey's reward power towards Azerbaijan because, for Baku, good relations with Ankara translate into the protection of Baku's exclave. The other pillar is related to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Turkey has advocated for the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and promoted the Azeri view on the conflict at the international level (Cornell, 1998, p. 51). If this support ceases to be delivered, Azerbaijan will be on its own in defending its own rhetoric regarding the conflict. Turkey also signed certain agreements to modernise and train the Azeri military. However, since Russia is the main weapon supplier to Azerbaijan, the Russian reward has been more crucial than this Turkish reward given the dynamics of the region and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, shaped by hard power considerations. Additionally, as mediation is deemed successful, its first pillar, only when both parties to the conflict accept a mediation offer, that Turkey has a limited reward power only towards Azerbaijan will not positively affect the prospects of future mediation attempts by Turkey.

6.2. Criterion 2: Coercive Power

As Rubin explains, in line with 'the language of threat', coercive power refers to 'the threat to impose one of ant of a number of possible punishments unless compliance results' (1992, p. 255). What the coercive power means, in the context of international mediation, is that if the disputants know that there will be possible severe punishments if they reject compliance, or a mediation offer in our case, they will be likely to comply with the third party, or accept its mediation offer to avoid such a fate.

As we have observed in the chapter dedicated to the bilateral relations Russia has formed with Armenia and Azerbaijan, one important feature of the Russian approach towards the two counties has been the focus on not losing and consolidating the power Moscow has over the post-Soviet zone. Seeing the post-Soviet countries within its sphere of influence, Russia will not tolerate any attempt by any post-Soviet state to endanger this position of Russia through cementing ties with the West, specifically the US and the EU. Although neither Armenia nor Azerbaijan have gone through any experience similar to those Georgia and Ukraine had, the Five-Day War between Russia and Georgia, and the Russian policies towards Ukraine leading to the annexation of Crimea by Russia have been enough to send signals of caution to Yerevan and Baku. Therefore, following the developments in Georgia and Ukraine, Russian coercion is likely to be taken into consideration by both Armenia and Azerbaijan. For instance, with regards to the former development, the 2008 declaration signed by Armenia, Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation on the peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is one of the biggest examples of how Russia's coercive power works because through this declaration both disputants stressed the importance of a peaceful resolution of the conflict to avoid the fate of Georgia. To better understand this situation, it is necessary to examine Russia's coercive power towards the two disputants separately.

For Armenia, the possibility of Russian invasion is politically and geographically less likely but still feasible. As we have already noted in the previous chapter, Armenia is the only country that has Russian military bases with thousands of soldiers. Therefore, despite being an unlikely event due to the circumstances Armenia and Russia find themselves in within the geopolitical considerations of the South Caucasus, if Armenia chooses to turn its eyes strictly to the West, or to decline any offer by Russia that may antagonise Russia and undermine

Russian interests, Russia will be able to inflict military pain on Armenia. In a similar vein, as Russia rewards Armenia with a sense of security, the same Russia, when its interests are deliberately ignored by Armenia, can step away from protecting Armenia, which would have severe repercussions for Armenians' security concerns. Additionally, as we have discussed extensively in the previous chapter, Russia is the major and nearly sole trading partner of Armenia. In the case of a Russian economic embargo, Armenia knows that it has nowhere to go. As a result, Russian coercion – both explicit and implicit – is highly felt by the policy makers in Yerevan, which has a natural impact on the considerations by Armenians regarding Russian mediation offers.

A similar case can be made for Azerbaijan as well. It is true that Azerbaijan, mostly thanks to its energy reserves in the Caspian Sea, has been enjoying a more independent and balanced foreign policy towards Russia than Armenia. Nonetheless, the Five-Day War made it obvious that Russia is the country to be reckoned with in the South Caucasus because any rhetoric of support coming from the West will not yield any tangible results as long as it fails to be taken into practice. This is why, after the war, Baku attempted to strengthen its relations with Moscow because a military confrontation with Russia would wreak havoc on the energy sector of Azerbaijan, crippling the most important leg of the Azerbaijani economy and jeopardising the Azeri position in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Also, the Russian military presence in Armenia and Azerbaijan's border with Russia make it easy for Russian troops to invade Azerbaijan if there need be, and to end the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict militarily in terms acceptable only to Armenia, which became more evident after the revision of the military alliance between Russia and Armenia in 2010. Thus, Baku understood that it would be difficult for it to retake Nagorno-Karabakh through military means because of the Russian deterrence (Ismayilov and Zasztowt, 2015, p. 4) and favoured a visibly pro-Russian foreign policy to induce Moscow to resolve the conflict peacefully and in line with the regulations of international law, which would better fit to Azeris' point of view regarding the conflict. The implications of the previous Russian aggression in the region, consolidating Russia's coercive power, are so effective that even though Russia did not support Armenia in the violent clashes in April 2016, in defiance of the military agreement between the two sides, Azerbaijan still is cautious towards Russia because Russia's inaction in April 2016 cannot be seen as a total inaction among Azeris. As the resolution of the conflict is the prime foreign

policy objective of Azerbaijan (Mammadov, 2015, p. 30), Russian coercion is an important factor for Azerbaijan making it accept Russian mediation as a reliable tool to manage the conflict.

Turkey is a militarily and politically powerful country when compared to both disputants which implies that Turkey can utilise coercive power. However, it is limited by the realities of the South Caucasus. It can easily be claimed that Turkey, a militarily strong country, can inflict military defeat on Armenia. In fact, in the early 1990s, when the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict turned into an international war between Armenia and Azerbaijan, in support of its ethnic-kin in the South Caucasus, Turkey threatened to carry out a military intervention in Armenia (Cornell, 1998, p. 61). Although these threats were not realised, knowing that Armenia would be overrun by Turkey, Yerevan and Moscow concluded the military treaty that established the Russian military bases in Gyumri on the Turkish-Armenian border (Global Security, n.d., para 10). Therefore, the possibility of a Turkish threat in the form of a military invasion was defused by this treaty. Additionally, unlike Russia, Turkey does not have an economic coercive leverage over Armenia. The borders are already closed and there is a trade embargo imposed by Turkey on Armenia. Closed borders cannot be closed further and an already imposed embargo cannot be imposed again. Hence, Armenia is not in a position to be (further) threatened by Turkey economically because there is no economic activity taking place between the two sides. What these two factors mean is that from a 'coercive power'-based consideration, Armenia does not have any incentives to comply with Turkey because the status quo does not allow Turkey to coerce Armenia either militarily or economically.

Turkish coercive power towards Azerbaijan is even weaker. As has already been discussed in the chapter on the bilateral relations between Turkey and the disputants, one of the pillars of Turkish-Azerbaijani relations has been the shared ethnicity between the two states. At the societal and to a slightly lesser extent at the state levels, the two nations have enjoyed a very positive relationship that is hard to be broken easily. Therefore, it is not likely for Turkey to threaten its 'brethren' in Azerbaijan because there would be a public backlash against it. In fact, as we observed during the Turkish-Armenian rapprochement, the highly positive relations between Turks and Azeris coupled with the hostility of these two publics towards Armenians derailed the rapprochement process, further consolidating the ties

between Turks and Azeris. Given this, it is not likely to see Turkey using the language of threat against Azerbaijan. Moreover, one of the major tenets of the current Turkish foreign policy has been making Turkey an energy hub (Kardaş, 2011, p. 58). As a result, it is somehow compulsory for Turkey to maintain positive relations with any energy producing country like Azerbaijan if it wants to realise this objective. In fact, this consideration, surfaced when Baku took steps against the energy deals between Turkey and Azerbaijan, was the other reason why the Turkish-Armenian rapprochement ended. What this illustrates is that, the language of threat utilised by Baku over Ankara has been an efficient leverage although for a successful mediation by Turkey in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict the exact opposite should be the case. Thus, in the realm of energy which is the most crucial aspect of the bilateral relations between the two states, there is no possibility of Turkish coercive power towards Azerbaijan.

6.3. Criterion 3: Legitimate Power

Rubin defines legitimate power as a form of resource that 'requires the influencer (the mediator) to persuade on the basis of having the *right* to make a request' (1992, p. 255). While analysing this base of power, what we have to stress is that legitimate power has a role to play, though it is a limited one in scope and effect. This is mostly because in the international system, each potential mediator has to use the legality of their proposed intervention for the purpose of justifying their actions (Rubin, 1992, p. 269). Additionally, as we have discussed earlier in this thesis, the interest in managing a conflict renders the offered actions of third parties legitimate (Bercovitch, 1996, p. 3; Zartman and Touval, 1996, p. 446). Therefore, legitimate power, from the perspective of mediators, is a given and cannot determine the likelihood of success or failure on its own when the focus is on the characteristic of the mediators because every mediator will claim that it is following a legitimate course. This is why the author of this thesis contends that out of the six bases of power a mediator might possess, legitimate power is the weakest one, making it possible to disregard it from Rubin's concept entirely.

6.4. Criteria 4 and 5: Expert Power and Informational Power

These two criteria will be analysed together because the informational power is an extension of the expert power. Therefore, it is useful to first define the two forms of power, and then analyse them in the cases of Russian and Turkish mediation vis-à-vis the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Rubin sees the expert power as a power that 'relies for its effectiveness on the influencer's ability to create the impression of being in a possession of some body of information or expertise that justifies a particular request' (1992, p. 255). As an extension of the expert power, the informational power is about what the 'information' that the mediator argues that it possesses entails and if such an information is made known to the disputants (Rubin, 1992, p. 255). In other words, the informational power is somehow the realisation of and measured by the reliability of the expert power.

As we have already discussed in the previous chapter, Russia, because of the domination of the South Caucasus by the Soviet Union, has a deep understanding of and knowledge about the problems and issues in the post-Soviet area (Tüysüzoğlu, 2017, p. 187), especially regarding the conflicts that erupted during the Soviet times. This was one of the reasons why Russia was able to mediate the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in 1994, which created a tradition of Russian mediation in the conflict. Relying on its expert power, in 1994, Russia was able to manage the conflict proving the reliability of the expertise it possesses, an example of the informational power. Because of this initial success, coupled with the understanding that Russia defines the rules in the post-Soviet area (Ismayilov and Zasztowt, 2015, p. 4) and the fact that both Armenia (Petros, 2003, p. 1) and Azerbaijan (Gafarlı et al., 2016, p. 10) have strong political and economic ties with Moscow, increasing the expertise of the Russian ruling elite with the domestic affairs of the two disputants, the success of Russian mediation, as defined in this thesis as the first pillar of mediation success, has been the norm in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

When we examine the Turkish mediation attempts in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the scenario is the exact opposite. During the Soviet period, the point of contact for international actors had been Moscow because the constituent states of the Soviet Union had to rely on Moscow as the constituent states were not able to conduct their own independent foreign policy. Thus, Turkey lacked required contacts with both Armenia and Azerbaijan that

would provide itself with the necessary information that could have been and can be utilised while offering mediation services. Additionally, as the 1990s proved to be near-disastrous for Turkey in terms of political and economic stability (see Uzer, 2012, p. 248; Aras & Akpınar, 2011, p. 54; Kirişçi and Moffatt, 2015, p. 71), Turkey was not able to focus its whole attention on the newly independent states (both Turkic and non-Turkic) that emerged from the Soviet Union following its dissolution in 1991. Moreover, as we have covered in the previous chapter, the sole Russian mediation in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict that neglects and even ignores other actors, curbed the ability of other potential actors to develop expertise regarding the conflict itself and the conflicting parties (de Waal, 2010, p. 173). Here, we can refer to the issue we covered in the chapter dedicated to the bilateral relations of Turkey with the conflicting parties again. As we have suggested in that chapter, one of the reasons why Turkey, during its rapprochement with Armenia, disregarded the link between Turkish-Armenian relations and the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict – a stance it has long advocated for – was that Ankara 'believed that progress on Armenia-Azerbaijan dispute was more advanced than it actually was' (de Waal, 2010, p. 173). This proves the point that unlike Russia, Turkey does not possess the expertise power, hence the informational power as the latter form of power is an extension of the former. This partly explains why Turkish mediation attempts in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict have been futile so far.

6.5. Criterion 6: Referent Power

Rubin defines the referent power in line with the relationship the mediator and the disputants have by saying that 'the influencer (the mediator) counts on the fact that the recipient (the disputant) in some way values his or her relationship with the source of influence' (1992, p. 256). The major component of this power is the existence, and value thereof, of relationship between the mediator and the disputant. Additionally, as stated earlier in this thesis, using a literal approach to the word, while discussing the referent power, the author of this thesis evaluates the idea of referring the disputant to mediation, which is often defined as delivery, as another component of the referent power. Let us examine these two components in the Russian and Turkish cases separately.

Russia, for nearly two centuries, has been the dominant actor in the Caucasus, both North and South. Therefore, it was able to cement a strong relationship between the Russians and the peoples of the Caucasus. The relationship had many pillars at the economic, political, social and military levels. The economic, political and military pillars, related to Russian hard power, have so far been more significant than the social pillar of the relationship, based on Russian soft power. This has been the case for both Armenia and Azerbaijan.

For Armenians, Russia is the major partner in every area. The relationship between the two is defined by the strategic goals each party seeks (Minasyan, 2013, p. 5; Vosoghi, Emami and Rostami, 2013). Russia provides security to Armenia and it is also the major trading country in Armenia which helps ease the isolation of the country in the region (Gamaghelyan, 2010, p. 45). Armenia has been the only country in the South Caucasus that has served the interests of Russia without creating any obstacles. Given that its ties with Georgia and Iran are relatively fragile, and Turkey and Azerbaijan keep excluding and isolating it economically and politically, Armenia is not in a position to jeopardise its relations with Russia, which Moscow knows, and even manipulates, very well.

Russia is a significant partner for Azeris as well. Azerbaijan is well aware of the fact that Russia is the major player in the South Caucasus. Russia has been the major trade partner of Azerbaijan both in energy and non-energy sectors, being the 'number one trade partner in the non-oil sector' (Mammadov, 2015, p. 34). Similarly, as we have already covered, there is a continuing military relationship between Azerbaijan and Russia. Politically speaking, the Azeri ruling elite is very close to the Russian ruling elite, a relationship that is highly consolidated and that dates back to the Soviet era. Therefore, for Azerbaijan, its relations with Russia are quite crucial not to be forsaken. The actions of Russia in Georgia and Ukraine are quite telling in this case. They showed what would happen to those states that disregard their relationship with Moscow and rely on a Western orientation (Kakachia, 2011, p. 19). As a result of these realities and considerations, and because of the historical presence of Russia in the region which dictates the developments in the region, maintaining relations with Russia has been a major task for both Armenia and Azerbaijan. That is why, in addition to the previous powers (or criteria), Russia is able to rely on the referent power both as defined by Rubin, and in the sense that Russia can refer disputants to the negotiations (delivery) as the author of this thesis added to the referent power.

Turkey, through its Ottoman background, has been in the Caucasus earlier than the Russian Empire was. However, the developments during and following the First World War created obstacles for Turkey in the South Caucasus, especially for Turkey's bilateral relations with Armenia. Mostly due to the clashing views on what happened in 1915 to the Ottoman Armenians and how to define the incident, Turkish-Armenian relations have been cold, and in fact non-existent. As we discussed in the chapter on the bilateral relations between Turkey and the disputants, although the initial period following the independence of Armenia turned out to carry a potential for developing positive relations between Turks and Armenians, this was a short-lived period, with the impact of the Armenian Diaspora which had its toll also in the latest round of rapprochement between the two countries. Currently, there are no diplomatic, military, humanitarian or economic relations between the two sides. As a result, there is no relationship that Armenia (the recipient) will value while making its decision towards the mediation offer of Turkey (the influencer).

The fate Turkish-Azerbaijani relations have experienced is quite opposite to the one experienced by Turkish-Armenian relations. The two sides are so close to each other that there are those in both countries that refer to the old rhetoric of 'one nation, two states' underlying the shared ethnicity and culture of the peoples of Turkey and Azerbaijan. Turkey, as already been stated, is the major supporter of the Azeri point of view regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and is an important partner in political, economic and military terms. Although the relationship between the two nations and states is quite strong, the Turkish attempt to bridge Ankara and Yerevan between 2008-2010 without involving Baku in the process negatively affected Turkish-Azerbaijani relations, leading to declining trust from Azerbaijan towards Turkey (Uzer, 2012, pp. 246-247). Additionally, the business-like approach of the Aliyev government to Azerbaijani foreign policy renders Turkish-Azerbaijani relations receptive to further injuries because Azerbaijan does not shy away from manipulating the energy needs of Turkey as a leverage. Hence, there is a relationship that Azerbaijan, as the recipient, will take into account while dealing with Turkish mediation attempt; however, the relationship is not as strong as it was. Based on the referent power criterion and the previous criteria, it can be stated that while Turkey cannot exert the referent power as defined by Rubin and in line with the idea of delivery on Armenia, it can do so, though in a limited fashion, on Azerbaijan. However, as we also suggested while discussing

reward power, what we know by now is that mediation is successful when its accepted by disputants, and a mediation is deemed to be accepted only when both sides accept an offer.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, through a case study, the author has attempted to develop an approach to mediation success and understand the basic determinant(s) of success and failure in international mediation and to test the main argument stated in the introduction chapter. As the term success has been used in line with and with an alteration to the definition of Frei (1976), the major focus in this endeavour has been the acceptance and/or rejection of mediation offers as the measure of success and failure, or the first pillar of mediation success.

As outlined earlier in this thesis, 'the characteristics of mediators' and 'the relations between mediators and the disputants', as suggested by Frei (1976), have been main pillars that the main argument and this study rest on. As the main argument suggested that '*the more resourceful a mediator is, the more likely its mediation efforts will be accepted/successful in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict*', the most important characteristic of a mediator regarding the first pillar of success in international mediation has been seen as resourcefulness. This is because, in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, both approaches to mediation are observed - Russia sees mediation as a foreign policy tool in the conflict whereas Turkey has sincere intentions to resolve the conflict, and Russia is accepted as a mediator to the conflict unlike Turkey. The major difference between the two parties is not related to bias but to leverages. While analysing this and testing the main argument, the author relied on the 'six bases of power' concept developed by Rubin (1992), while scrutinising the merits of this concept at the very same time.

To be able to come to a point where such an analysis would be conducted, the author first touched upon the major theoretical discussions in international mediation. The author then shed light on the case in question, the actors of the case and the relations between the actors in three subsequent chapters. The first of these three chapters provided a general picture of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict from a historical perspective whereas the second and third ones dwelled on Turkey's relations with the disputants and Russia's relations with the disputants respectively. The findings of this endeavour are as follows.

The findings from the previous chapters support the argument that both Turkey and Russia are biased and partial actors lacking neutrality towards the disputants, Armenia and Azerbaijan. However, while Turkish mediation attempts have so far been characterised by failure, those of Russia have been successful which makes it necessary to find an answer to the question of mediation acceptance (the first pillar of mediation success) beside the argument that if a mediator is biased, unneutral and partial, its mediation offers will not be accepted. The proposed answer that was supported by this thesis and other academic works has been that the key to success in international mediation, especially in protracted international, intercultural and interethnic conflicts, is to be in possession of certain leverages, which have been examined via the arguments of Rubin (1992) in this study, which constitutes the backbone of the main argument that the author of this work put forth in the Introduction chapter.

The findings of this thesis support the main argument because they prove that despite the apparent bias, lack of neutrality and impartiality, since Russia, compared to Turkey, has more resources – as categorised and discussed with regards to the 'six bases of power' concept of Rubin (1992), Armenia and Azerbaijan have so far both accepted the mediation offers coming from Russia. In other words, it is not the Russian impartiality or neutrality that helped Russia get accepted as the mediator in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, meeting the first requirement of mediation success, but it was Russia's resourcefulness despite its visibly biased and partial characteristics in favour of Armenia that made Russia an acceptable mediator to both disputants involved in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. In line with the previous argument, the reason why Turkish mediation attempts in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict have so far failed should be explained through its lack of required resources rather than its apparent bias and partiality in favour of Azerbaijan.

In fact, as Kocadal (2016), in his study on Turkish mediation in the Cyprus conflict, reveals, kin-mediation can prove to be a reliable and working phenomenon. Therefore, a bias coming mostly from a shared ethnicity, that of Turkey in this study, does not necessarily hamper the likelihood of the first pillar of mediation success as long as there are resources available to mediators that can be utilised towards both disputants properly. However, if a mediator, no matter who or what, is unbiased, neutral and impartial but still lacking resources (or leverages), then that mediator's mediation attempts will not be likely to succeed, or such

characteristics will not create a specific impetus among disputants for positively considering the mediation offers of that mediator.

The findings of this thesis have two important implications. The first one is for policy-making chambers, especially for those in Turkey. There are certain recommendations that the author of this thesis has derived from the findings of this work. If Turkey wants to be a successful mediator in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, then it should increase its reach to both disputants. As we have discussed, there are no relations between Armenia and Turkey at the moment, reducing the referent power of Turkey in the conflict. Therefore, it is of utmost importance for Ankara to first restart and then develop its relations with Yerevan (Welt, 2013) because developing relations with Armenia will increase Turkey's resources vis-à-vis Armenia which can be used by Turkey for its future mediation offers in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, especially its referent power vis-à-vis Armenia, which is deemed to be the most important form of power in this thesis (see below).

As we have already seen in the discussion chapter, Turkey does not have the reward and coercive power over Armenia. To overcome this, Turkey should open its border with and lift its trade embargo on Armenia. Opening the border with and lifting the trade embargo on Armenia will serve the interests of Armenia and Turkey both economically and politically, though the former will have more positive outcomes than the latter (Giragosian, 2009, p. 4). However, Turkey will gain certain advantages as well because following such a policy, while there will be a new trade route to be utilised by Turkey, Turkey will also add to its reward, and coercive thereof, power vis-à-vis Armenia. This is because when Turkey opens the border, it will reward Armenia which is going through a difficult economic phase with new economic prospects, and the threat of closing the border again will have a coercive impact on Armenia which will not be willing to return to its isolation. Additionally, Turkey should also initiate a comprehensive reconciliation with Armenia to ease the tensions between the societies of the two states so that Turkey would be readier to reward Armenia which is seen by an enemy by many Turks right now. The important point here is that such a reconciliation should include Azerbaijan as well.

As the latest round of rapprochement between Turkey and Armenia revealed, getting too close to Armenia at the expense of Azerbaijan is not a reliable policy option for Turkey

(see Göksel, 2011, p. 6). However, this does not necessarily mean that as Azerbaijan is one of the major allies of Turkey, Turkey should forsake the prospects of developing its relations with the foes of Azerbaijan. It means that Turkey, while trying to improve its relations with Armenia, should include Azeris as well because by doing so, Turkey will reveal that it is intent on ushering in a positive environment full of improving relations between the former foes, which will serve the purposes of decreasing the tension in the region, creating further potential for the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and reinforcing the referent power of Turkey vis-à-vis both conflicting parties (see Harutinian, 2010). This is the only way for Turkey to improve its relations with Armenia without deteriorating its relations with Azerbaijan. For example, the fate that Turkey experienced during the Turkish-Armenian rapprochement occurred to a certain extent due to the lack of Azeri involvement. Hence, rather than conducting bilateral projects with either side, Turkey should opt for (at least) trilateral projects or a trilateral rapprochement involving Turkey and the two disputants. However, the more regional actors are involved, the better results the projects will bring about. Here, Russia comes to the picture.

To illustrate the web of relations in the South Caucasus and the role Russia can play in this web, we can think of a hypothetical situation. While developing its relations with Armenia, Turkey will also develop its relations with Russia as Yerevan is Moscow's main ally in the South Caucasus. In other words, since Russia will not allow anything that will reduce its presence and gains in the South Caucasus, especially thanks to its control over Armenia, any development in Turkish-Armenian relations will be subjected to Russian scrutiny. The positive outcome of this is that Turkey and Armenian relations will be better off in line with the improvements of Russian-Turkish relations. An improvement in Russian-Turkish relations will be useful for Turkey as it will increase Ankara's leverage over Baku as well.

For instance, the decisions in the field of energy taken by Baku during the Turkish-Armenian rapprochement negatively affected Turkish aspiration of being an energy hub country and led to the failure of Turkish-Armenian rapprochement, and hence a reduction in Turkey's resourcefulness as a potential mediator in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Following the Turkish-Armenian rapprochement, as we have seen in the previous chapters, Baku tilted more towards Moscow in formulating its energy policies, bringing about 'a new

political vacuum in the region, that Russia has successfully filled' (Mikhelidze, 2010, p. 5) and endangering the projects like Nabucco and the Turkish demand for being an energy hub. However, Russia skilfully manipulated this, and offered Turkey the Turkish Stream project which undermined the need for projects between Turkey (and the West) and Azerbaijan. This project is crucial because with hindsight, if Turkey had had a better leverage in the field of energy than the one possessed by Azerbaijan during the rapprochement, which would be possible through the Turkish Stream project, then the decision taken by Azerbaijan would not have been that effective. Therefore, if Turkey develops its ties with Armenia and hence Russia, it will gain another leverage over Azerbaijan, which can be quite useful in conducting successful mediation campaigns, and in helping Turkey develop its relations with its neighbours through a multi-fold approach advocated above.

Therefore, for Turkey, Russia, from a policy-recommendation perspective, stands out as the major actor in the South Caucasus. As a regional power, no state can ignore its interests which should be taken into account if a peace process on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict gets initiated (Gamaghelyan, 2010, p. 44). Russia is not as constrained in its policies as Turkey is in the South Caucasus, which enables Russia to act on its own, something Turkey cannot enjoy (Hedenskog and Korkmaz, 2016, p. 3). Therefore, if Turkey, rather than acting on its own, offers its mediation to be co-led by Russia, then a more successful mediation can surface and be concluded.

Although, as illustrated by this thesis, Russia is able to mediate the conflict on its own, the inclusion of Turkey will serve the interests of Russia and the disputants because it will bring in a new perspective and new prospects for future for the disputants and the region in general. Therefore, the calls for more Turkish involvement in the peace process in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict coming from Sergei Lavrov, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, are quite significant here (see Shirinov, 2016, para 1). Such an inclusion in the peace process will be useful for Turkey as well because this will enable Turkey to gain an in-depth and first-hand knowledge about the conflicting parties, the conflict and the current level of relations between the conflicting parties which will increase the expert and informational powers of Turkey.

It is known that Russia is selling arms to both disputants (Abrahamyan, 2016, para 1). Because of this lucrative business and other economic and political interests, such as the fact that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict provides Russia with a strong leverage over the region and the disputants (Giragosian, 2017, para 17), Russia is not willing to resolve the conflict. Additionally, '[t]he Karabakh conflict guarantees Russia's military presence in the region' (Abushov, 2009, p. 209) and it 'has also become an instrument in Russia's hands to maintain a situation of "stable instability" in the South Caucasus by exploiting the conflict parties' political and economic weaknesses' (Mikhelidze, 2010, p. 2). Therefore, based on its articulated interests in the South Caucasus, it can be stated that 'if any power or force which one way or another tries to remove Russia from political and geopolitical arena, it will be faced with Russia's resistance and response' (Arynbek, 2016, p. 470). However, Turkish involvement in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict through mediation will not undermine the interests of Russia. This is mostly because Turkey wants to 'cooperate rather than compete with other mediators' in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (Gamaghelyan, 2010, p. 44).

To feed this cooperative approach, Turkey should also engage in more projects that will prioritise cooperation and peace. In the initial year of independence of Armenia, Turkey invited the country to the Black Sea Cooperation Organisation although Armenia is not a coastal state (Aras and Özbay, 2008, p. 2). Similarly, following the Five-Day War, the then Prime Minister of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, offered the establishment of 'the Platform of Stability and Cooperation in the Caucasus' which was welcomed by the states in the South Caucasus along with Russia (Ibrahimov, 2011, p. 17). Such moves will increase the credibility of Turkey in the eyes of the South Caucasian states as a prospective mediator because they will reveal that Turkey values cooperation, feeding reward power – in the sense of rewarding peace, and relationships, consolidating referent power. In short, from a policy wise perspective, Turkey should revise its policies towards the region, the disputants and other regional actors, especially Russia, for the aim of increasing its leverage over the disputants not for being perceived as an unbiased, neutral and impartial power.

The findings of this thesis have theoretical implications as well that will be useful in the scholarship on international mediation. Through a case study, the findings of this thesis, especially that of the discussion chapter, support those scholars who claim that possessing leverages rather than being unbiased, impartial and neutral is more important in conducting

a successful mediation. As this thesis rests on certain theoretical foundations, it has arguments for and against along with contributions to such theoretical arguments.

This thesis also contributes to the discussion on success in international mediation. What the thesis proposes is that, in line with the arguments of Touval (2003), since mediation is not just a conflict resolution method but also a foreign policy tool, considerations for success will be different in both cases. Whereas success will be determined by the level of conflict in the first scenario following the mediation process, it will be determined by whether the mediator has been able to achieve its foreign policy objective through mediation. In other words, there will be two separate post-mediation environments. However, for both approaches to mediation, a mediator should be accepted by both disputants. Although this seems self-evident and obvious, the author of this thesis contends that acceptance of mediation offers should be seen as an aspect of mediation success. This is because, as it has been argued in this study, acceptance of mediation offers is strictly related to the acceptability of mediators themselves, and the acceptability of mediators depends on the characteristics of them, resourcefulness versus neutrality/impartiality/lack of bias. As a result, the thesis offers a two-pillar approach to success in international mediation: the first pillar is the acceptance of international mediation offers, and the second pillar is the evaluation of the post-mediation environment that will depend on the way mediation is utilised.

While analysing the idea of leverage, the author relied on the 'six bases of power' concept of Rubin (1992). What the author has found out is that, taking into account both the case in this thesis, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and the international system in general, the legitimate power is not so well-observed in international mediation and is relied on least by mediators. This is because (1) states prefer acting on their own, especially those like Russia, and (2) if they do not want to act alone, states make references, albeit weak or trivially, to the mandate of international law to increase their legitimacy. Therefore, since the idea of legitimate power is somehow a given for each mediator, the author of this thesis argues that the 'six bases of power' concept of Rubin (1992) can easily be reformulated as the "five-power" concept in international mediation.

The other contribution of this thesis to the 'six bases of power' concept is providing a ranking for it. Based on the analysis conducted here, the author of this thesis claims that these

six different categories of power can be ranked, from the most important to the least important and with regards to the characteristics of protracted international conflicts an example of which is the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, as follows: referent power, coercive power, reward power, expert-informational power, legitimate power. Since mediation, at its core, is an extension of the bilateral relations between disputants deteriorated by their conflict, one of its core concepts is relationship. Additionally, as the final decision to accept or reject a mediation offers falls on the disputants in a conflict, they should be able to think about the existing web of relations between them and the interested mediator. As the referent power rests on this assumption, it should be seen as the most important power. Moreover, the author of this thesis, through a literal approach to referent power, also included the idea of 'referring disputants to mediation', what is mostly known in the field as delivery, making the importance of referent power clearer.

In today's international system, I do believe, coercion works better than rewards. Therefore, the coercive power comes before the reward power in mediation. The use of coercion, or a more 'manipulative' approach to mediation, works better especially when the conflicts are highly protracted (see Salmon et al., 2013), just like the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is. The expert and informational powers are quite crucial, but they tend to be supporting side powers rather than the most significant ones. The legitimate power comes the last because of the reasons outlined above. However, this list is a subjective and inconclusive one open to further debate. The important point here is that each item in the list contributes to the leverage of any mediator which can then be used to conduct successful mediations.

There are certain weaknesses of this study that I should discuss before concluding the thesis. This thesis rests on a qualitative analysis of Turkish and Russian mediation attempts in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and is restricted to the conflict. Therefore, the results, as stated above, are not conclusive and cannot be generalised. To do so, a quantitative analysis relying on the criteria used in this thesis, should be carried out. Another suggestion for further studies is to conduct a comparative analysis of Turkish mediation attempts in each case in which Turkey revealed an interest to mediate.

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