THE ROLE OF SOFT POWER AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT MANAGEMENT: THE CASE OF THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT

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# **List of Abbreviations**

ASEAN Association of Southeast Asian Nations

AU African Union

ECOWAS Economic Community of West African States

EU European Union

G8 Group of Eight

IGAD Intergovernmental Authority on Development

IGO International Governmental Organization

IMF International Monetary Fund

INGO International Non-Governmental Organization

NGO Non-Governmental Organization

NK Nagorno-Karabakh

OECD The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

OSCE [Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe](https://www.osce.org/)

SADC Southern African Development Community

UDI Unilateral Declaration of Independence

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UN United Nations

USAID The United States Agency for International Development

*Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.*

*-UNESCO Constitution[[1]](#footnote-1)*

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## **Abstract**

Throughout history, humanity has witnessed different types of conflicts: ethnic, religious, territorial. In contemporary society, conflicts have not stopped occurring, however, the mode of conflict management has been tremendously affected by the tools of soft power. Aside from the hard power, which is military actions held by states or international organizations, soft power has become an important tool in the peacebuilding process. By building common grounds for communication, soft power serves as a basis of discussion between two conflicting parties; as it is commonly known, communication is the key for conflict management. This is why soft power and public diplomacy should be an integral part of conflict management. Moreover, soft power in international conflict management and peace building is an important aspect as it works on the psychology and mentality of the people and tends to have a more long-term and peaceful resolution.

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is one of regional issues of the South Caucasus that still requires negotiations and management. With the development of media and track-two diplomacy in international conflict management, more and more conflicts take the path of peaceful management. It is too early to discuss the effectiveness of public diplomacy in the negotiation process of the NK issue, however, there are some existing initiatives that try building a common ground of discussions between the two communities. This paper analyzes the notions of conflict management and peacebuilding, tool of public diplomacy in international conflict management, and tackles upon the perspectives of the effectiveness of soft power and public diplomacy in international peacebuilding negotiations through the prism of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue.

**Key Words:** Soft Power, Public Diplomacy, Conflict Management, Peacebuilding, International Conflicts, the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict, Frozen Conflicts

**Introduction**

This paper argues that conflict management can be better achieved by providing more effective communication and interaction between countries. This study specifically examines the attitudes of the youth to better understand how the media is shaping the perceptions of each side in the conflict and how public diplomacy can be better used.

This is a study about the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, one of the frozen conflicts of the South Caucasus. The NK conflict began in 1988 “as a demand for the transfer of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast from Azerbaijani to Armenian jurisdiction” and developed to a full-scale war in 1992 after the collapse of the Soviet Union (Gasparyan, 2019, p. 236). The conflict was one of the fews in the post-Soviet area where the OSCE became a mediator in the peace negotiations. “The eleven-member OSCE Minsk Group was formed in 1992 and was named after Belarus’s capital because a peace conference on the status of Nagorno-Karabakh was scheduled to be held there. Members of the Minsk Group included Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, the Czech Republic (Czechoslovakia until 1993), France, Germany, Italy, Russia, Sweden, Turkey, the United States, and representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh” (Gasparyan, 2019, p. 236).

On 30 April 1993, the UN Security Council adopted a Resolution 822 on Nagorno-Karabakh demanding “the immediate cessation of all hostilities and hostile acts with a view to establishing a durable cease-fire, as well as immediate withdrawal of all occupying forces from the Kelbadjar district and other recently occupied areas of Azerbaijan,” and urging “the parties concerned immediately to resume negotiations for the resolution of the conflict within the framework of the peace process of the Minsk Group of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and refrain from any action that will obstruct a peaceful solution of the problem” (U.S. Department of State Archive, 1993).

In 1994, Armenia and Azerbaijan signed a ceasefire agreement which is continuously violated until nowadays. Throughout the years of the ceasefire, efforts were undertaken by the international arena to address the Nagorno-Karabakh issue. In 1997 Russia, France, and the United States took over the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmanship, “by presenting a “package” and “phased” plans for the settlement of the conflict which plan was rejected by Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan” (Gasparyan, 2019, p. 237).

Ever since the ceasefire was signed, “negative rhetoric and nationalist propaganda from domestic media outlets and in government statements from both countries have fuelled the conflict, making it harder for the two sides to reconcile” (Geybulayeva, 2012, p. 176). In April 2016, the ceasefire violations turned to a 4-day war escalation, which deepened the hostility of the two nations even more, as media was more developed and information was being transferred rapidly. It may be that myth and propaganda have spread among the people of the two countries, unfruitful negotiations between the leaders, plus little to no communication among the new generation may lead to future hostility in the frozen conflict. The new generation has no memory of the past occurrences and the mindset may be shaped by media and possible government propaganda. This paper argues that the effective conflict management process may be achieved by letting the people of Armenia and Azerbaijan have the opportunity of communication and interaction. This may be achieved through public diplomacy tools, which, according to Joseph Nye, include “projecting a country’s image in the information age, and a two-way communication process” (2008).

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#### **Literature Review**

**Conflicts, Conflict Management and Resolution**

Perhaps conflict is a universal feature of humans: it varies through different layers of a society and its individuals—intrapersonal, interpersonal, international. According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary (n.d.), conflict means a “competitive or opposing action of incompatibles: antagonistic state or action (as of divergent ideas, interests, or persons).” Conflicts may vary in their forms as well. In his *The Role of Soft Power and Non-Military Options in Conflict Prevention* (2014)*,* Edward Scott identifies three types of conflicts, each requiring different levels of intervention: “low intensity conflicts, medium intensity conflicts, and high intensity conflicts*”* (p. 5). The Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research identifies low-intensity conflicts as “disputes and non-violents crises” (Kosovo, Gibraltar) (Scott, 2014, p. 5). Medium intensity conflicts include violent crises especially intranational ones, while high intensity conflicts include full escalated wars. The Heidelberg Institute reported that there were “25 limited wars in 2013, such as inter-ethnic violence in Kenya and conflict between the Government and groups seeking succession in Indian held areas of Kashmir” (Scott, 2014, p. 6). There are also “hybrid” styles of conflicts such as frozen conflicts, in which “in which active fighting has ended or subsided but there is no peace agreement beyond a tenuous cease-fire” (Puddington, 2017, p. 48). In the post-Soviet territory there are a number of examples of frozen conflicts between countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova, Georgia, and Ukraine. While the kinds of conflicts vary, the core idea is the “clash” of interests and needs of two parties which, in turn, lead to the need of resolutions, conflict management, common grounds and compromises,

The practice of conflict management as a separate institution was established during the Cold War when there was a risk of a full-scale war resulting from two superpowers’ possession of nuclear weapons. The term conflict management “is a generic term to cover the whole gamut of positive conflict handling...a limited way to the settlement and containment of violent conflict” (Ramsbotham et. al., 2016, p. 34). Conflict management varies from conflict resolution as the latter is a more comprehensive term which “implies that the deep-rooted sources of conflict are addressed and transformed...implies that the behavior is no longer violent” (Ramsbotham et. al., 2016, p. 35). Peacekeeping and peacebuilding are future actions of conflict management ensuring the creation of peaceful relationships between the parties, and, in the case of the peacebuilding process even with a third party being involved in the process.

 One of the most widespread conflict models is the *hourglass model of conflict resolution.* The model is a combination of Galtung’s model of conflict, violence and peace and conflict escalation and de-escalation model. Galtung suggested that conflict can be viewed as a triangle, with contradiction, attitude and behavior (Galtung, 1969). Here the contradiction is the “clash” of interests between the two parties, attitude includes the perception of the parties of each other, involving “emotive (feeling), cognitive (belief) and conative (desire, will) elements” (Ramsbotham et. al., 2016, p. 12). Lastly, behavior undermines cooperation or coercion, depending on the mode of the 



conflict (violent or non-violent). The conflict escalation and de-escalation model (see

figure 1) views conflicts as a dynamic notion. Both escalation and de-escalation processes are unpredictable, however, the main stages of the process are the ones depicted above (Middel, p. 3).

With the combination of both of Galtung’s both theories, the hourglass model (see figure 2)includes correspondence to conflict resolution processes phase by phase. The main “actors” in each stage are conflict transformation, conflict settlement, and conflict containment that face different implementation techniques depending on the de-/escalation periods.

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*Conflict transformation* depicts the deepest levels of cultural and structural peacebuilding. *Conflict settlement* corresponds to “elite peacemaking, or, in other words, negotiation or mediation among the main protagonists with a view to reaching a mutually acceptable agreement” (Ramsbotham et. al., 2016, p. 16). *Conflict containment* includes preventive peacekeeping, usually implemented by deeper levels of peacekeeping, such as education and culture.

In addition, the role of third parties in conflict management and conflict prevention processes has become a major aspect. Conflicts have become a more comprehensive field of study, including various levels of analysis (states, systems, groups, individuals). The idea of conflict prevention has become one of the key ideas of multinational organizations, such as the UN, the OSCE, the EU, the OECD, the AU, ECOWAS, SADC, IGAD, ASEAN, the G8, the IMF. With a focus on the UN peacekeeping model, scholars identify first-, second-, and third-Generation peacekeeping. During the period of the Cold War, “lightly armed national troop contingents from small and neutral UN member states” were established in interstate conflict zones (Ramsbotham et. al., 2016, p. 175). The second generation peacekeeping (1990s) was more diverse, with security maintenance and humanitarian and political objectives. The third-generation peacekeeping model involves a greater and more long-term intervention of the UN. This fact may contribute to much criticism such as the spread of western ideas and western values spread on non-western countries.

According to the Centre for International Peace Operations Berlin, OSCE Mission in Yerevan and Baku dealt by the OSCE Minsk Conference are involved in the Nagorno-Karabakh peacekeeping operations (2020).

**Soft Power and Public Diplomacy**

The existing literature has several conceptualizations of soft power and public diplomacy, all of them having the same core idea, but each bringing up examples from a variety of perspectives.

According to Joseph Nye, an American political scientist, soft power has three resources, which are culture (media, markets), political values (media, NGOs, IGOs), and foreign policies (government, NGOs, IGOs) (2008, p. 97). Ibrahim Kalin, a special advisor to the President of Turkey, comes up with the identification of soft power as “culture, education, arts, print and visual media, film, poetry, literature, architecture, higher education (universities, research centres, etc.), non-governmental organizations, science and technology, the capacity for innovation, tourism, platforms for economic cooperation and diplomacy” (2011, p. 5). It is important to note that the tools of soft power are neither fully integrated nor separated from the state itself. Soft power explains “the attractiveness of a country’s culture, political notions and policies. The acceptance of a country’s policies as legitimate by others also defines that country’s soft power capacity” (Kalin, 2011, p. 9).

According to Joseph S. Nye, public diplomacy is a tool projecting a country’s image in the information age, and a two-way communication process (2008). Mostly merging the concept of public diplomacy with the idea of soft power, most of the literature does not give a specific description, but rather some characteristics of public diplomacy.

Goran Swistek, an academic in the fields of security and conflict studies brings up the notion of public diplomacy while contrasting it with military diplomacy in his *The Nexus Between Public Diplomacy and Military Diplomacy in Foreign Affairs and Defense Policy* (2012). While both of them can serve for preserving security in a given territory, military diplomacy focuses on *realpolitik* and the balance of power, while “public diplomacy, by contrast, is primarily focused only on the civilian population in foreign countries, usually in order to avoid giving any impression of being linked to the military, and therefore generally takes advantage of the reputation of non-governmental organizations” (Swistek, 2012, p. 83).

As a case study, the author brings up the example of Germany in the postwar era, which shifted its image-building from military means to cultural and educational ones (2012, p. 84). In 2004, under the theme of “no development without security,” Germany created provincial reconstruction teams (PRT) and their deployment to Afghanistan (Swistek, 2012, p. 84). These teams are made up of “engineers, and representatives of development agencies and non-governmental organizations as well as soldiers from the armed forces,” ensuring enhancing the reputation of Germany’s image abroad (Swistek, 2012, p. 85). However, the international audience warns Germany on being hesitant in the combination of military and public diplomacy forces in a single entity, as a failure of either could cause a loss of legitimacy of both.

As mentioned above, art and culture also serve as tools for conflict management. A vivid example of global peacekeeping through popular culture can be found in international competitions, festivals, and events. Oliver Ramsbotham, Tom Woodhouse, and Hugh Miall in their *Contemporary Conflict Resolution* (2016) discuss the correlation between arts, popular culture and conflict resolution. They write: “The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has arrangements with a range of UN agencies (UNICEF, UNHCR, UNDP, UNESCO) to use sport in support of refugees and others suffering in areas of conflict” (Ramsbotham et al., 2016, p. 412). A vivid example is the Olympic Games. Although the Olympic Games are perceived as a competition between nations, they serve as a tool for peacebuilding. That is said, the second point of the Olympic Charter states that “the goal of Olympism is to place sport at the service of the harmonious development of man, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity” (Ramsbotham et al., 2016, p. 413).

The role of cultural initiatives has a tremendous effect on the peacebuilding process. Moreover, it is effective in all the stages of conflicts. According to [Aoyama Gakuin University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aoyama_Gakuin_University), in conflict prevention cultural initiatives build confidence by mutual understanding, tolerance and trust-building (the role of peace education is crucial as well) (2009). In the conflict situation, cultural activities prevent feelings of loneliness and hopelessness, demonstrating some “inhumane aspects of the conflict” (Gakuin, 2009). In the post-conflict stages, culture serves as a type of “humanitarian aid” and reconstruction by healing trauma, organizing mutual events and workshops for restoring mutual trust among people coming from conflict areas (Gakuin, 2009).The empowering of culture in conflicts was fostered by the UN by the end of the last century, by “declaring the year 2000 to be the International Year of the Culture of Peace” (Ramsbotham et al., 2016, p. 417).

Aside from cultural initiatives, with the wave of globalization and the rise of technology, the role of media and journalism has been recognized to be a vital part of conflict management. “Mass communication has always been a double-edged sword. On the one hand, they inform and educate, and this can empower and unite; on the other hand, they also divide people and turn them against each other” (Ramsbotham et al., 2016, p. 421). It is not a secret that the media shapes people’s perceptions, thus, especially in conflict situations it can create stereotypical images of the other side. Moreover, even the media coverage of conflicts plays a role in the process, making reporting biased: a so called “CNN effect” makes “politicians, publics, NGOs and funders focus on the particular conflicts that are most in the news” (Ramsbotham et al., 2016, p. 423). Interestingly, journalism and the media play a vital role not only during conflicts, but also in the peacekeeping process. According to the International Federation of Journalists, journalists have a “tremendous potential to contribute to understanding and bridge-building” (Rejic, 2004). In the course of a debate about the reporting of ethnic conflicts in Africa, International Federation of Journalists, “besides the classic five *“w”s, (why, what, who, where, and when)* which should be covered in news items, for instance, demands from the United States of America (USA) also call for an *“s” (solutions)* as well as a “c” (common ground)” (Reljic, 2004, p. 4). Journalistic initiatives in conflict areas are also supported by external donors, such as George Soros’s funds into the support of independent media in Eastern and Central Europe.

However, it is hard to estimate long-term effects of such initiatives, as emerging conflicts and ongoing conflicts constantly require stable journalistic attention and are still in transitional mode for the discussion of effective press freedom. The undoubtable fact is that journalism and media do have a tremendous effect in peacekeeping and conflict management processes.

**International Intervention and Other Examples: Paths to Follow or Paths to Neglect?**

By understanding the essence of conflicts, conflict management, and the role of soft power and public diplomacy in them, it is crucial to see specific examples of international conflict management that may have the potential of serving as models for the NK conflict.

Pierre Jolicoeur and Frederic Labarre in their *The Kosovo Model: A (Bad) Precedent for Conflict Management in the Caucasus?* analyze the unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) of Kosovo in 2008, which suggested hope of international cooperation in post-Cold War conflict management process, and propose its effectiveness in the conflict management process in the Caucasus (namely, the NK conflict, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia conflicts). After the analysis, the author concludes that “conflict management in the Caucasus is a function of neither institutions nor international law, but rather of states'' (Jolicoeur and Labarre, 2014, p. 54). In fact, the authors suggest powerful actors’ interests prevailing in the region for their regional interests. “This leaves smaller actors in relative isolation and positions them asymmetrically vis-àvis the hegemon. That leaves little room for political maneuvering, including choosing ones alliances” (Jolicoeur and Labarre, 2014, p. 54).

According to experts, “in the current “no war, no peace” situation, the probability of an externally imposed solution is quite low” (Deriglazova and Minasyan, p. 78, 2011). Deriglazova and Minasyan in their *Nagorno-Karabakh: The Paradoxes of Strength and Weakness in an Asymmetric Conflict* discuss the possible interventions of international organization in the management of the NK conflict. “A peacekeeping operation under the auspices of the UN in South Caucasus is hardly probable because this touches on the interests of Russia, a permanent member of UN Security Council, as well as other colleagues in the mediation with the same status – the U.S. and France” (Deriglazova and Minasyan, p. 78, 2011).

The essence of the OSCE decision making process is based on consensus (or consensus minus one), “making it difficult for the OSCE to respond rapidly and launch peacekeeping operations” (Deriglazova and Minasyan, p. 78, 2011).

The European Union with its Estern Partnership Program has an emphasis on soft power including “a long-term program of conflict transformation by means of joint economic projects and the creation of new ideology of regional unity as opposed to nation-building” (Deriglazova and Minasyan, p. 82, 2011).

Examples of efficient peacebuilding activities in conflict zones can be found in several cases by “the result of unilateral actions by a great power, an international coalition or a military and political bloc (e.g., the Balkans in 1990s, South Ossetia in 2008)” (Deriglazova and Minasyan, p. 84, 2011). However, unilateral decisions are often politically biased and cannot be fully approved by the involved parties or the international arena. This assumption goes back to Jolicoeur and Labarre’s suggestion that the NK conflict should be managed by the states involved.

If a more comprehensive approach can be digested only through the involved states’ will, it assumes that there should be a certain communication between the states. Currently, the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan have no diplomatic connections, with several meetings of officials being held in a third country. Not to mention that there is little to no communication between the people of the two countries, which is a threat to a peaceful management of the NK conflict. Here is the point where the effectiveness of public diplomacy as a two-way communication can be viewed through the prism of the NK conflict.

**The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: What We Have and What is Done**

With the rise of the media, one can have access to information and communication in any part of the world. In the case of the NK conflict, the media, particularly social media can serve as a tool for communication between Armenians and Azerbaijanis, given the fact that other forms of communication are very rare. However, what social media shows, the amount of hatred over the NK issue is higher than any slight hope of cooperation and communication.

This hatred “trend” is apparent outside of social media as well. In November 2010, “a Yerevan-based NGO, Caucasus Center for Peace-Making Initiatives decided to organize an Azerbaijani Film Festival in Yerevan” (Geybullayeva, 2012, p. 179). This was a unique case as it was first of its kind. However, the initiative gained a negative response. Philip Gamaghelyan, the Co-Director of not-for-profit Imagine Center for Conflict Transformation, noted that “The most disturbing reaction is the way opposition to the event has been voiced. While few raised their concerns in a respectful way, the loudest voices have directed hundreds of insults and curses toward the organizers, potential attendees, Azerbaijani people and culture” (2010). By this example, where film could serve as a tool of public diplomacy to “ease” the tension between the nations met a relative unreadiness of the public.

Another example of a “universal peacekeeper” which is music, can be the case of the Eurovision song contest. After ESC 2009, an Azerbaijani, Rovshan Nasirli was called to the Ministry of National Security of Azerbaijan to explain why he voted for the representative of Armenia that year, with an explanation that “it was a matter of national security” (Michaels, 2009).

According to a study conducted in 2009 by Caucasus Research Resource Center, only 3 % of Azerbaijani respondents approved a friendship with Armenians, while the same survey resulted in 30% of approval of friendship with Azerbaijanis in Armenia (Caucasus Barometer, 2009). The gap has a tendency to increase. However, this does not mean that the perceptions of Azerbaijan in Armenia are good. In 2017, the Caucasus Institute conducted a research in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, pointing “towards a lack of readiness for establishing relations with Azerbaijanis and negative attitude toward them, chiefly in the form of mistrust and fear” (Mikaelian, p. 19, 2017). There is a mistrust towards Azerbaijanis, treating them as “turks” and a part of a community, rather than individuals, by citing proverbs such as “a Turk remains a Turk”14 and “make a friendship with a Turk but hold a stick in your hands” (Mikaelian, p. 19, 2017). Moreover, the quantitative data by the Caucasian Institute shows that the mistrust towards Azerbaijanis is stronger in Nagorno-Karabakh than in Armenia. This can also be discussed by taking into account the fact that there was more contact between the two nationalities in Nagorno-Karabakh. As noted by one of the respondents, “They (Azerbaijanis) spoke our language a bit and we spoke theirs. But after the Sumgait events, hatred was kindled between our two nations” (Mikaelian, p. 20, 2017). The same study found out “some experts and residents of border regions said that the current leadership of Azerbaijan was not interested in war and was using the conflict to stay in power” (Mikaelian, p. 21, 2017). Thus, this view highlights a common interest that may exist between Armenians and Azerbaijanis, which is peace.

These examples show that the countries seem not to be ready for common grounds of communication and dialogue. This can be referred to as time-framing, by suggesting that a longer status-quo situation in the conflict area may create “de-actualization” of the conflict and create common grounds. Common grounds cannot be created without negotiations and communication between the nations, the lack of which preserve a negative and stereotypical view of each. There are some examples of positive steps on the creation of common grounds between the parties organized by the media, IGOs, NGOs, and foreign services.

**The Role of Intrastate Actors: Reshaping Perceptions Through Cooperation**

Johan Galtung emphasizes that instead of governments, common people should transform conflicts (p. 21, 2007). As public diplomacy in conflicts has to do directly with the people, it is important to understand their perceptions of each other. According to the literature review above, it is apparent that there is a lack of communication between the two nations. Thus, the image of “the other side” is formed through the media. Interestingly, “if media can mobilize hatred and cultivate stereotypes, it can also mobilize peace by giving voice to alternative narratives and allowing moderates to identify common ground” (Crane, p. 8, 2011). As the main “consumers” of media are common people, in the cases of conflicts, media can play a cultivating role. On this occasion, Elise Crane defined peace media, which “in opposition to hate media, is an effort to promote peace by highlighting stories on successes, rather than failures, in various peace processes” (p. 18, 2011). Peace media includes public spheres for creating common grounds, journalism, social media. Moreover, she argues that peace media may play a crucial role in the peacebuilding process in conflicts. “Peace media seems poised to advance three functions related to conflict resolution theory: first, to humanize the other so it is no longer a monolithic entity, second, to undermine outgroup stereotypes, and third, to promote positive images of the other” (Crane, p. 18, 2011). As in the case of the NK conflict, there was a tendency of stereotypical and negative perceptions of each other, peace media seems to have the opportunity of being an effective tool of the peacebuilding process.

It is worth to note that the role of public diplomacy in international conflict management is affected by the states involved. In 2019, Yerevan Press Club, supported by the U.S. Department of State conducted a research *Armenia-Azerbaijan: Searching For New Models of Dialogue* with in-depth interviews and focus groups both in Armenia and in Azerbaijan. The research showed the people’s attitude towards the role of public diplomacy in the NK conflict.

Interestingly, there is a “blacklist” policy “against foreign journalists, representatives of the civil society, politicians and experts visiting Nagorno Karabakh without the consent of the Azerbaijani authorities'' (p. 35, 2019). This limits the opportunity of cooperation between the two states in terms of international cooperation. According to a media monitoring conducted by the Yerevan Press Club, the statement “Foreign journalists, representatives of civil society, experts, politicians should have the right of free movement and security guarantees in the conflict zone” was more widely accepted in Armenia rather than in Azerbaijan (p. 35). A focus group research among Azerbiajni participants showed that there are “obstacles in the work of the nongovernmental sector, especially when it involves contacts with Armenian partners” (p. 36). Moreover, both Armenians and Azerbaijanis believed that journalists and NGOs could play a huge role in the conflict settlement process and underlined the importance of their operations. Interestingly, there was a tendency of reciprocal “blaming” between the two nations in terms of the challenges of civil society’s operations in the conflict. Armenians claimed that “Azerbaijan blocks all initiatives, while Armenia is open for dialogue,” while Azerbaijanis explained the lack of negotiation process “due to the unconstructiveness of Yerevan” (p. 36, 2019).

Both Armenians and Azerbaijanis valued the role of civil diplomacy and its effectiveness. An Armenian participant of the focus group study “referred to the fact that Armenians and Azerbaijanis living in Moscow interact on different issues” (p. 39, 2019).Moreover, both Armenian and Azerbaijani participants brought up “the idea of a joint professional media code as a mechanism to reduce tension on the Armenian-Azerbaijani “information front” was close to many participants of the study” (p. 43, 2019).They also valued the role of international organizations in creating such codes and platforms of cooperation.

In terms of journalistic and media cooperation there is an existing example of such a code. The Caucasus Edition: Journal of Conflict Transformation is “an independent online publication that serves as a forum for scholars, practitioners, journalists, policy analysts and novice researchers to analyze as well as discuss conflicts and related issues in the South Caucasus and Turkey” (2010). The Journal was created by Philip Gamaghelyan (Armenian) and Jale Sultanli (Azerbaijani) and has a team of contributors from both and different nations that focus on scholarly analysis and articles on conflicts and developments in the region as well as perspectives on peacebuilding processes. The platform is edited and revised. Although it is not an interactive platform, it does show a collaboration between Armenians and Azerbaijanis as well as serves as a common ground on discussions. During an interview with Crane, Gamaghelyan noted that it is “not normal for Azerbaijanis to cooperate with Armenians” but that those “strong enough to publish on Caucasus Edition opened up the way for others to follow” (p. 45, 2011). Thus, currently there are some initiatives aiming at creating mutual cooperation between Armenians and Azerbaijanis, particularly using track two diplomacy and media.

The literature review above gave an understanding of conflicts and conflict management, soft power, and public diplomacy with a reference to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. In the case of this frozen conflict, there is a lack of communication between the actors involved, which leads to stereotypical perceptions, as studies found out. In the case of the NK conflict, intrastate actors (media, journalism), NGOs, IGOs, and foreing states play an integral role in creating a common ground of communication between the youth of the countries.

**Research Design and Methodology**

This capstone project aims to better understand the role of soft power and public diplomacy in international conflict management, in the case of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The research questions of this study are as follow:

*R.Q.1 What is the perception of the Armenian youth to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the Azerbaijani youth?*

*R.Q.2 How do public diplomacy and soft power impact the process of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict management?*

*R.Q.2 What communication platforms are created by public diplomacy to improve communication between the actors involved?*

**Research Methodology**

To address the research questions mentioned above, this study uses qualitative research. Particularly focusing on public diplomacy tools organized by third countries, IGOs, INGOs, and NGOs, the first stage of the research was focused on specific events organized for Armenians and Azerbaijanis for finding common grounds of communication. Secondly, in-depth interviews were conducted with representatives of third countries, IGOs, INGOs, and NGOs to understand the effectiveness of the programs in the NK conflict management process. Finally, a survey was distributed to the public in order to measure the public perception of key aspects of the study, particularly the role of intrastate actors (media, journalism), readiness of communication between the parties, and public perception in the NK conflict.

**Armenia’s Youth Perception of the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict and the Azerbaijani Youth: Survey**

An online survey was distributed among young Armenians, living in Armenia, Artsakh, and abroad. There are 56 respondents. The survey was distributed through various ways of communication, including social media (Facebook, Instagram) and email. The aim of the survey was to reveal Armenian youth’s perception of the Azerbaijani youth, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and the media's role in the conflict.

Overall, 75% of the respondents were female, 25% were male. As the research is designed for the youth, the majority of the respondents (94.6%) were at the age of 19-25, the remaining percentage being 26-45 years old. The highest level of education completed was PhD (3.6%), the minimum was high school (21.4%), with the highest percentage (66.1%) allocated to Bachelor or equivalent. The majority of respondents were from the Republic of Armenia, while 7.1 % came from Artsakh, and 12.5% were Armenians living abroad.

One of the aims of the survey was to understand the perceptions towards the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The majority of respondents believed that Nagorno-Karabakh should be an independent republic, while a slightly lower percentage of people believed it should become a part of Armenia. No one chose the option of Nagorno-Karabakh having an autonomy status within Azerbaijan (see Figure 3).





Regarding the future of the conflict (within the framework of 10 years), more than half of the respondents believed that a status-quo will be preserved. Interestingly, the pro-peaceful-negotiations and pro-military-action solution options shared nearly the same number of respondents(see figure 4).Interestingly, while respondents from Armenia and Artsakh had all three options of the NK conflict management, none of the respondents living outside Armenia chose the option of “managing the conflict through military actions.” This may be because of the fact that Armenians living abroad have more communication with Azerbaijanis, thus, they view the conflict from a less political, but more personal viewpoint. Moreover, 50% of male respondents who have served in the army chose the option of managing the NK conflict through military actions, 16% responded for peaceful negotiations, while others voted for the status-quo. Referring back to the literature review, this result shows that it may be that the hostile perceptions as well as the April 2016 escalation deepened the hostility between the nations and the uneffective ceasefire agreement put the future of peaceful negotiations under question.****

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Another aim of the survey was to understand the role of the media in the NK conflict and the perceptions shaped by them. The majority of respondents (64.3%) said that the media plays a role in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, while 26.8% of the respondents were not sure if it plays a role. Regarding the level of trust towards media in Armenia, the majority of respondents had a moderate level of trust, with no one trusting the media fully, and 8.9% of respondents with no trust at all (see figure 5).

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75% of respondents with the lowest trust towards the Armenian media were citizens of the Republic of Armenia, thus, the most exposed segment of the society. Moreover, 60% of the respondents with the lowest trust towards the Armenian media were not sure of its effect on the NK conflict, thus, leaving a vague understanding of the situation.

The third goal of the research is to understand the perceptions of the Armenian youth towards the Azerbaijani youth, as well as the perspectives of communication between the two sides. For the purpose of the first goal, two short-answer questions were distributed asking *What do you think of the Azerbaijani youth?* and *In your opinion, what do the Azerbaijani youth think of you?*

Answers to the first questions varied and can be classified to four categories. There were answers with no exact opinion, with the justification that the respondents did not have the opportunity of communication with Azerbaijanis. “I think that we don’t know them a lot to have an opinion about them” or “I have never met anyone from Azerbaijan but I think that they are like us.” Interestingly, none of the respondents from Artsakh fall into this category, whereas nearly 50% of Armenians living abroad stated they do not have an exact opinion because of no communication. The majority of respondents from the Republic of Armenia did not justify the absence of opinion due to a lack of communication.

The next category is the neutral one, with answers as “There are segments in the Azerbaijani youth which are more tolerant toward the issue. These segments are mostly the educated individuals who are seeing the solution in a peaceful and mutually beneficial negotiations. But there is also the other side of the society which shows hostile and aggressive attitudes toward the issue and Armenia in general.” As shown by a study of the Yerevan Press Club in 2019, Armenian respondents underline the aspect of Armenians and Azerbaijanis living abroad together peacefully. As one of the respondents mentioned, “Azerbaijani youth (living not in Azerbaijan but in other places like Moscow) are not against Armenians and quit the opposite with youth in Azerbaijan.” Interestingly, 80% of the respondents from Artsakh gave the neutral answer, which is an interesting finding, as the literature review above showed that the level of mistrust towards Azerbaijanis among people living in the Nagorno-Karabakh was higher than in Armenia.

The next category is the positive/humanistic image.The majority of answers were humanizing Azerbaijanis, often bringing up examples of personal relationships they have, such as “I have a friend from Azerbaijan, and I don’t think that Karabakh conflict somehow affects our relationships, “They all just want to live. I have friends who are really open minded but also have some people who are close minded.” Regarding the humanizing perspective, answers were differentiating between politics and people, as mentioned by one of the respondents, “The bad perceptions existing are simply because of political reasons, which I wish would disappear one day.” However, along with the positive image, one can still notice the essence of blaming, such as “People of Azerbaijan are not at fault for the massacres done by their predecessors... brainwashed youth but normal people at heart.”

The last category, which is the majority, is the negative perception. The majority of negative answers used phrases as “propaganda,” “misinformation,” “no critical opinion,” “ intolerance,” “Armenophobia,” “information vacuum by their authoritarian governments,” “brainwashed by their media.” A number of answers underlined the fact that “Maybe they are not ready to have peaceful negotiations and communication with us (Armenians),” putting the blame on the other side. This, once again, contributes to the findings of the Yerevan Press Club of mutual mistrust and blaming towards communication.

The answers to the question of Armenians’ perception of the Azerbaijani youth were mostly negative, with expressions such as “They think we are violent and are afraid to communicate with us,” “Honestly, they fear me,” and as “occupants and aggressors.” Some respondents shared their stories of interactions with Azerbaijanis, such as “I have met several young citizens of Azerbaijan. Sometimes they share their concern about this issue. However, in some cases when they know that you are Armenian they immediately stop the conversation.” Interestingly, there were answers underlining the fact of mutual misinformation, invalid assumptions. One can see a pattern of blaming here as well, with an example of a respondent’s answer such as “They grow up surrounded by propaganda, showing Armenians in a very, very negative way. Armenian official media and society overall can never even reach this level of negative attitudes toward the whole nation.”

It is important to mention that the role of media and communication in the opinion-based public perception is apparent as well. One of the respondents noted that “there is a lack of communication between the youth of both countries. The biggest channel currently is social media where hate speech and intolerance are highly significant. This type of situation makes both sides unaware of their true beliefs and concerns,” while another response clearly shows a pattern of misinformation and lack of communication by stating that “I saw a video once, where they were teaching kindergarten children that Armenians are their enemies and they should beat an Armenian whenever they see one. If that’s really what they’re teaching since kindergarten, then their opinion about our youth and Armenians in general is hardly positive.”

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After understanding the perceptions of each, the respondents were given the question on whether if they had the opportunity they would like to create common grounds of communication with the Azerbaijani. 50% of the respondents had a positive answer, with *maybe* being on the second place(see figure 6). In regards to the 2009 research by the Caucasus Research Resource Center, where 30% of the respondents confirmed communication with Azerbaijanis, there is a tendency of a will of creating common grounds. Interestingly, the majority (70%) of people from Artsakh had a positive answer to this question, whereas the percentage of other respondents’ positive answer was lower.

71.4% of respondents preferred workshops/educational or professional meetings abroad as the best platform for communication between the two parties, while 22% voted for online discussions, one of which justified the answer by the following, “Online with online security guarantees...considering the Ramil Safarov story[[2]](#footnote-2), I would not risk meeting them in real life.”

These figures show that although some Armenians may be prone to creating communication platforms with Azerbaijanis, there is a lack of trust. Moreover, there is a tendency of blame to the other side. In fact, this may be reciprocal: there is a lack of trust for communication because of the lack of communication itself. The majority of Armenian respondents who had an opportunity of interacting with an Azerbaijani were more clear in their answers and had a more positive tendency to the peaceful negotiations.

**The Role of NGOs: In-Depth Interview with The Imagine Center for Conflict Transformation**

The Imagine Center is “an independent, non-political organization that is dedicated to positively transforming relations and laying foundations for sustainable peace in conflict-torn societies.”[[3]](#footnote-3) Imagine Center is a regional organization. The team of the Imagine Center is formed from Armenian, Azerbaijani, and Georgian peacebuilding practitioners and researchers. It was initially established in 2007 as a dialogue platform between Armenians and Azerbaijanis and then turned to a platform for individuals working towards creating linkages and understanding in the times of conflicts. The scope of actions of the NGO include “research, conferences, and methodology development to dialogues, trainings, workshops, and peace action campaigns in Armenian-Azerbaijani, Turkish-Armenian, Syrian, Georgian-South Ossetian, Georgian-Abkhazian, Russian-Ukrainian, and other local and regional contexts.”[[4]](#footnote-4) The main activities of the Imagine Center for Conflict Transformation include direct dialogue, training for journalists (bringing together journalists from conflict areas to regional online publication, specifically The Caucasus Edition: Journal of Conflict Transformation), training for history educators (creating networks between history educators of the conflict areas). According to the Imagine Center website,[[5]](#footnote-5) the partners and donors of the initiative include U.S. Embassies in Yerevan, Baku, Tbilisi, Government Offices of Sweden, United Nations Development Program, Open Society Georgia Foundation, etc.

An interview was conducted with Christina Soloyan, the manager of the *Caucasus Edition: Journal of Conflict Transformation* (an Imagine-based project) since 2018. The purpose of the interview was to understand the operations of the Imagine Center in regards to the NK conflict. Soloyan gave an interesting overview of the scopes of the operations of the Imagine Center, by stating that

*“The conflict resolution and conflict transformation agendas are mostly promoted by the Western powers through funding schemes for dialogue, capacity building projects for journalists, activists, youth, and other type projects promoting cross-border communication. Throughout years these endeavors have been extremely important, considering the authoritarian approaches to the civil society in both societies. Although Armenia is in the active process of democratisation, the nationalist discourses still prevail. However, it is important to highlight that I do not consider the civil society work as part of public diplomacy of either country, as they are not necessarily in accordance with the foreign policies Armenia, Azerbaijan or any other country, and most of the NGOs put a lot of effort to keep their independence in their activities.”*

 Interestingly, Soloyan does not consider Imagine’s operations corresponding to the foreign policies of countries involved and as an independently-operating entity.

 As for the issue of the lack of communication between the parties, Soloyan believes that state propaganda, nationalistic discourse, and constant dehimanization of the other become the impeding factors of the eventual resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. On this regard, as Soloyan stated, the Imagine Center deals “with young generations of researchers, historians, educators, politicians to help them descontruct the existing mainstream narratives about the conflict, develop understanding and respect towards the other side, and eventually be ready to collaborate for development of common vision of the conflict transformation of the NK conflict, Georgian-Abkhazian, Georgian-South Ossetian conflicts.” Certain methodologies create common grounds of history, different reflective practices to help people look beyond “traditional” narratives. Soloyan elaborats on the operation process of the Imagine Center by stating that,

*“What is important that dialogues also always include sessions on conflict and peace studies, conflict transformation, as well as practical sessions on multimedia storytelling, academic writing (depending on the interests of the participants). The success of dialogue projects is usually materialized by the successful collaboration of the participants on research and multimedia projects, which get published on the caucasusedition.net. The successful collaborations that usually last 6-12 months by themselves already shift perceptions of Armenian-Azerbaijani relations for many people. The co-authored academic articles and the multimedia projects very often touch open taboos or under-researched topics, shed a light on issues in both societies and deconstruct the mainstream discourse, commemoration practices in conflict-torn societies, which bring into public discourse new ideas and new perspectives, which are important for moving forward with the peace process.”*

 Interestingly, the success of a given project is calculated by collaboration, which, once again, underlines the importance of working together, joint learning, inclusive and transparent negotiation process. It is important to note that the shift of generation and the vitality of working with the youth may have a state-level impact. As Soloyan mentions, “we are happy to have former colleagues and alumni of the Imagine Center among them. We believe that the experience they got during Imagine Center's projects should affect their vision of the resolution of the conflict and the future of Armenia in general.”

 Aside from the Imagine Center, Soloyan recalls several other organizations dealing with the NK conflict, such as “between Internews Armenia (currently renamed and rebranded to Media Initiatives Center) and Internews Azerbaijan. These organizations used to collaborate on documentaries, youth journalism programs and other professional collaborations. Recently, the Armenian and Azerbaijani filmmakers produced the trilogy "Part of Circles" (the project was organized by the Conciliation Resources).”

 Again highlighting Imagine’s operations as part of civil society, rather than public diplomacy, Soloyan talks about the importance of two-way communication over the management of the NK conflict. “Of course the work would be more effective and maybe the actors would come closer to the resolution of the conflict if there was enough freedom for the civil society actors to impact the peace process. However, that does not always happen in our region. But, I should also highlight that the civil societies of Armenia and Azerbaijani are in two-way communication and use any opportunity for collaborations,” mentions Soloyan.

 Although the Imagine Center is an indepent body, there are several external factors limiting its operations, such as, as Soloya mentions, “limited funding sources, the limitations associated with the agendas of the available funding schemes, and the current inertia in the official negotiations.”

**The Role of Third States: U.S. Embassy Yerevan**

The U.S. Embassy Yerevan was opened in 1992 in Yerevan, Armenia. Currently, it implements a number of cultural, educational, and media initiatives in Armenia.

 An interview was undertaken with Erica King, Cultural Officer at the Public Affairs Section at the US Embassy Yerevan. Within her duties, she mainly creates or supports programs that bring together Armenian and Azerbaijani youth. In her opinion, the sooner and more often two peoples communicate with each other, the more successful they will be during a conflict resolution process, especially when the peoples are younger and do not have such strong set opinions about each other. As King notes, “I think that is the United States' superpower, we have the power to convene.” She underlines that once everyone is getting in the same room, without distractions of their lives back home, the youth begin to communicate on their own. “That is the best result because we do not what to tell people how or what to communicate. We foster positive conditions so that people can start communicating and hope that they continue long after the program ends,” tells King.

To the question on how the educational programs by the U.S. Embassy in Yerevan affect the peacebuilding process within the framework of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, King answers that her team and she are unable to visit or program in Nagorno-Karabakh. They are unable to evaluate how their education programs would have impacted the residents of NK “Instead, we program strategically in areas bordering NK, providing English language classes and opportunities at our American Corners for young people to learn new skills or have access to technology like 3D printers. These educational programs inspire youth in the region to seek other opportunities we offer like our exchange programs. I believe these programs give the youth another perspective or viewpoint to consider,” notes King.

While tackling upon the question of peace media, King notes that the U.S. Embassy in Yerevan does not advise the media on how they report on the NK conflict. Instead, they engage the media through educational programming. “For example, the Embassy supports educational opportunities for Armenian students to study journalism at the Master's degree level in Georgia along with Georgian and Azerbaijani students. The time together helps the students to develop personal ties with each other and we hope that the students can call upon each other throughout their careers,” answers King.

From the interview, it is apparent that the US Embassy Yerevan, as an example of a foreign state, does not intervene in the conflict resolution process directly, rather affecting the educational path of students and young professionals for creating common grounds of communication. As she noted, the United States has the power to convene, thus, gather people from conflicting areas usually to a third state for communication. Interestingly, usually in these kind of programs participants communicate relatively without much hesitation because of leaving prejudice back home. Thus, the role of third states in the NKconflict resolution process can be identified through the example of the US Embassy Yerevan, which, along with public diplomacy and soft power tools has the capacity of creating common grounds of communication between Armenians and Azerbaijanis.

**Limitations and Avenues for Future Research**

Due to time limitations, the online survey was undertaken among 56 participants. A more comprehensive study would require a wider scope of respondents to understand their perceptions from a more profound viewpoint. However, the online survey was distributed through different channels, thus, maintained objectivity and a variety of opinions.

In order to understand each side’s opinions, it would be more effective to conduct research both among Armenians and Azerbaijanis. However, because of political reasons, only research among Armenians was possible.

Interviews were also planned to be conducted in Artsakh, among people living in Artsakh and officials working in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Artsakh. Nevertheless, because of quarantine outbreak and time and resource limitations for transportation to Artsakh, the interviews were conducted only within the scope of the Republic of Armenia.

Thus, this study may have new perspectives of researching public diplomacy in conflict management and the reshaping process of perceptions regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

**Conclusion**

 This paper studied the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, one of the frozen conflicts of the South Caucasus and argues that conflict management can be better achieved by providing more effective communication and interaction between countries.

Throughout the study, the attitudes and perceptions of each among the youth were examined to better understand how the media is shaping the perceptions of each side in the conflict. Afterwards, specific public diplomacy tools were projected that may have the avenues of an effective conflict management process. As it was exposed in the study, there is a lack of communication between the people of the states and the stereotypical perceptions of the other side are shaped through media and propaganda. There are existing institutions dealing with the process of creating common grounds of communication and collaboration between the people, specifically the youth.

Specifically, educational, professional and social media platforms are created between the people of the two states affecting the reshaping process of misinterpretations. Although the process is going slow, the research showed that there is at least a higher percentage of the will of communication.

**Recommendation**

 As the trust level between the people is low for special dedicated face-to-face meetings between Armenians and Azerbaijais, more attention should be dedicated to online communication among the youth, specifically focused on non-war related concepts, such as art, education, culture. This may help the people have a more dehumanized understanding of each other and enhance the perspective of the creation of mutual collaboration and trust. The online discussion platforms can be digested by third actors, such as NGOs or IGOs, as their operation was proven to show effectiveness.

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**Appendix 1: Survey Questionnaire**

(\*- required field)

**1. What is your age? \***

▢ 15-18

▢ 19-25

▢ 26-45

▢ 46-60

▢ 60 +

▢ Other:

**2. What is your gender? \***

▢ Male

▢ Female

**3. If male, have you served in the army?**

▢ Yes

▢ No

**4. What is the highest level of education you have completed? \***

▢ Secondary education

▢ High school

▢ Bachelor or equivalent

▢ Masters or equivalent

▢ PhD

**5. Where are you from? \***

▢ Republic of Armenia

▢ Artsakh

▢ Other

**6. Which status of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict do you predict in the coming 10 years? \***

▢ Status quo (preserving the current situation)

▢ Managing the conflict through peaceful negotiations

▢ Managing the conflict through military actions

▢ Other:

**7. Do you think the media plays any role in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict? \***

▢ Yes

▢ No

▢ Don't know

▢ Maybe

**8. To what extent do you trust the media in Armenia? \***

low level of trust

▢ 1

▢ 2

▢ 3

▢ 4

▢ 5

high level of trust

**9. Do you approve any form of communication between the citizens of Armenia and Azerbaijan? \***

▢ Yes

▢ No

▢ Maybe

▢ Don't know

**10. Nagorno-Karabakh must... \***

▢ Be an independent republic

▢ Become part of Armenia

▢ Have autonomy status within Azerbaijan

▢ Other:

**11. How effective do you think negotiations between the state leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan over the Nagorno-Karabakh issue are? \***

Low effectiveness

▢ 1

▢ 2

▢ 3

▢ 4

▢ 5

High effectiveness

**12. What do you think of the Azerbaijani youth? \***

Your answer

**13. In your opinion, what do the Azerbaijani youth think of you? \***

Your answer

**14. If you had the opportunity, would you like to create common grounds of communication with the Azerbaijani? \***

▢ Yes

▢ No

▢ Maybe

▢ Don't know

**15. If yes, what platform would be the best to do that? \***

▢ Social media

▢ Workshops/Educational or Professional meetings abroad

▢ Other:

**Appendix 2: Interview Questions for In-Depth Interviews**

**Interview Questions for the representative of the U.S. Embassy Yerevan**

1. How does the U.S. Embassy Yerevan create common grounds of communication between Armenian and Azerbaijani youth? (programs, events, etc.?)
2. How do the educational programs by the U.S. Embassy in Yerevan affect the peacebuilding process within the framework of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict?
3. In your opinion, can the communication between the youth of two conflicting countries affect the outcome of the process of conflict resolution?
4. How does the U.S. Embassy Yerevan promote peace media for the management of the NK conflict?

**Interview Questions for the representative of the Imagine Center for Conflict Transformation**

1. What is the current state of public diplomacy’s role in the management of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict?
2. In your opinion, are the lack of communication between Armenians and Azerbaijanis and misperceptions of each other affecting the NK conflict management process?
3. If yes, how does the Imagine Center impact the “reshaping” of misperceptions of the other side?
4. What are the main objectives of the Imagine Center in regards to the NK conflict?
5. What are the steps from the Azerbaijani side? Are there any other initiatives or other organizations that deal with the peacebuilding process?
6. Can public diplomacy be effective in conflict resolution if it is implemented only from one party, or should it be a two-way communication?
7. How is the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict different from other conflicts? From this perspective, how do public diplomacy tools change depending on the mode of a specific conflict?
8. What are some of the positive impacts noticed by the operation of the Imagine Center that affected the peacebuilding process?
9. What are the main challenges in the operation process of the Imagine Center?

**Appendix 3: Names of Interviewees**

Christina Soloyan, Manager of the Caucasus Edition: Journal of Conflict Transformation since 2018, Alumnus of Imagine's Dialogue program of 2017

Erica King, Cultural Officer at the U.S. Embassy Yerevan, Public Affairs Office since 2018

1. 16 November, 1944, London. Retrieved from [http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\_ID=15244&URL\_DO=DO\_TOPIC&URL\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID%3D15244%26URL_DO%3DDO_TOPIC%26URL_SECTION%3D201.html) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Ramils Safarov is an officer of the Azerbaijani Army convicted of a murder of an Armenian Army leuteniant Gurgen Margaryan in 2004, during a NATO-sponsored training in Budapest, Hungary. The case raised much discussions in the international arena. “The co-chairs of the Minsk group expressed their "deep concern and regret for the damage the pardon and any attempts to glorify the crime have done to the peace process and trust between the sides'' (BBC News, 2012). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Imagine Center for Conflict Transformation (n.d.) Retrieved from <https://www.imaginedialogue.com/who-we-are/history/> Accessed on March 16, 2020 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
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