

This diploma thesis focuses on the relationship between *ethnopolitics* (defined by a raised demand of political autonomy for a community delimited along ethnical lines) and *geopolitics* (spatial definition and pursuing of national interests, determined by power) in what is one of most serious conflicts in post-Soviet space – Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh. Structure of the thesis is dialectical. Firstly, it defines terms such as conflict, conflict resolution or security, which will be used in the rest of the paper. Then, the conflict is placed into a spatial context, be it in its physical/material or spiritual/historical dimension. An effort is made to contextually embed Nagorno-Karabakh into the region of South Caucasus – whose politics has for centuries been shaped by conflicting interests of great powers – and to present a detailed projection of the disputed territory; not merely that of Nagorno-Karabakh itself, but also that of adjacent *raions*, whose total area is almost double in comparison. The main argument of this section is that the value of Nagorno-Karabakh rests not in the material realm – a dispute over „scarce resources“ – but rather in the spiritual one, for it is perceived by the parties to the conflict as a „territorialization of national memory“, or a constitutive element for local ethnic nationalisms defined on the basis of mutual negation. Then, a chronology of this conflict – modern by its nature – whose history started in 1905, is presented. In the background of the sequence of events leading to an armistice of 1994, an argument is proposed that the key part in both the ethnic mobilization and the ensuing escalation of the conflict was played by rationality – and sometimes erroneously – calculating elites seeking political power, and to some extent also by Russian geopolitics. It is precisely to geopolitics and interference of great powers into the conflict for Nagorno-Karabakh that the following section is dedicated. Foreign policies of Russia, the United States, and to lesser extent also of Turkey, Iran and EU in respect to Nagorno-Karabakh are treated in detail; it is maintained that whereas Russia’s foreign policy – influenced partly by Classic Realist assessments of

the strategic value of the Caspian Basin, partly by irrational perception of threat nurtured by various metaphors and mystical elements – has been playing a rather malign and inciting role (supported in this to some extent by Iran), the United States and Turkey – whose complex relationship with Russia has been preventing unilateral support to a friendly state of Azerbaijan – make effort, due to geoeconomical considerations of necessity to stabilize the region, to bring the conflict to final resolution. The section is concluded by an account of so far poorly articulated EU's foreign policy in South Caucasus; and in order to sketch the wider context of present geopolitical struggle, a brief outline of the legal dispute concerning the Caspian Sea and of current state of transport network are also included. The next section of the thesis focuses on the conflict from the perspective of its resolution – first the strategies and positions in crucial matters of the parties involved in the negotiations held under the auspices of OSCE are examined: the final legal status of Nagorno-Karabakh, the status of adjacent raions, return of the IDPs, international guarantees and the form of future settlement – a package or gradual solution. Attention is paid to the activities of OSCE Minsk Group, charged with a task to organize a peace conference, and to how these activities have been influenced by geopolitical interests of great powers – the United States and Russia – reflected e.g. in the content of presented peace proposals or pressures exerted on the parties directly involved in the conflict. This section is concluded by statement that in the present geopolitical climate – of growing presence of the United States in particular – Armenia comes to understand the necessity to find a solution to the „hurting stalemate“ and that it cannot rely on prescription of the disputed area as *fait accompli*. That has recently provided the peace process with new dynamics. However, this process continues to face serious hindrances, in particular the position of Azerbaijan and NKR – which *unisono* believe that time is on their side; besides, the decision on the final status, the most crucial matter to be settled, is presently being but postponed into the future; and the mobilized public at all sides of conflict remains far from being tuned to compromise. In consideration to current regional and international situation, it is proposed that perhaps the best administrative model as an instrument to resolve the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh would be a re-negotiated autonomy of the area within the state borders of Azerbaijan. In conclusion of the thesis, the examined conflict as such and the relation of local events to a wider international context are used as a case to defend an argument that for resolution of international conflicts for territory or government, the rational method is the most recommendable one – i.e. with respect to difficult social phenomena such as identity, the parties of conflict must be made to redefine their interests in order to come to a conclusion that the peaceful

resolution is the preferred option for them. This, however, can be achieved only in the case the great powers involved do not perceive their competition as a zero-sum game in which in order to obtain short-term gains, everything is permitted.