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Implementation of State Governance in the Liberated Territories as One of the Manifestations of Azerbaijani Constitutionalism

Reykhana Fakhurat Kizi Jafarova

Doctor of Philosophy in Law, Senior Lecturer at the Department of “Criminal Procedure, Forensics, and Judicial Expertise”, Academy of Justice, Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Azerbaijan, <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-2406-1180>

Corresponding Author: reihanfarhad@gmail.com.

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Abstract: The reintegration of liberated territories into state governance poses a significant challenge for post-conflict reconstruction. This study examines how Azerbaijan reaffirms its constitutional principles—particularly sovereignty and territorial integrity—while working to establish effective municipal self-governance and economic decentralisation in its recently liberated regions. Using a qualitative research design, the analysis incorporates a systematic literature review and comparative case studies from post-conflict areas such as Bosnia, Kosovo, and Myanmar. This mixed-method approach facilitated a thorough evaluation of the interplay between centralised administrative control exercised through special presidential representatives and the emerging demands for local autonomy. The findings indicate that Azerbaijan’s centralised strategy, while effectively restoring state authority, has hindered the development of a sustainable municipal governance system. Issues with financial decentralisation persist, restricting local governments’ economic recovery and full operational autonomy. Additionally, the study points out that excessive centralisation could heighten ethnic tensions, underscoring the urgency for a gradual move towards inclusive governance models. The evidence indicates that empowering municipalities incrementally and enhancing fiscal independence is essential for achieving long-term stability and socio-economic integration. Balancing central control and

progressive decentralisation is vital for translating constitutional directives into practical, enduring governance structures in post-conflict contexts.

Keywords: Post-conflict governance, Azerbaijan, constitutionalism, municipal self-governance, economic decentralisation, ethnic reintegration, territorial integrity.

Introduction

The transition from a system where war might prevail to one under the rule of law is a challenge often faced in post-conflict territories (Saunders, 2002; Stearns, 2013). The ultimate tool for the construction of post-conflict society remains the Constitution. However, implementing some constitutional principles – human rights and liberty, unity, economic and social well-being, and maintaining international obligations – may have been outrightly suspended or restricted during the war presents an uphill task in liberated territories (Babayev et al., 2020). This study addresses the governance model adopted in Azerbaijani liberated territory to recommend a more sustainable model.

In conflict and post-conflict governance, particularly in cases marked by ethnic friction and territorial disputes, the enforcement of constitutional principles often presents contradictions (Donais, 2009). During the conflict, the most emphasised principles are sovereignty and territorial integrity, which are primarily secured through military force (Elayah & Lambert, 2023). However, in the transition to peace, the victorious state faces significant challenges in seamlessly reintegrating society under peacetime principles such as human rights, civil liberties, and economic well-being (Fontana et al., 2021; Mezzera et al., 2022). These principles can only be fully realised through establishing civil institutions and inclusive governance, creating a complex and often delicate situation for post-conflict governance.

Studies of post-conflict rebuilding in Myanmar, Bosnia, and Herzegovina show that the form and methods of constitutional law applied in the post-conflict territory have significant impacts in mitigating or exacerbating ethnic tensions (Belloni, 2007; Brinkerhoff, 2005; Kim & Kim, 2023). It is, therefore, essential to deeply analyse how the government institutions, the law, and the people interact during the transitioning period to develop a model of governance that will facilitate lasting peace and stability in post-conflict regions.

Research Problem

Constitutionalism in post-war territories poses a peculiar problem; its core principles – rule of law, territorial integrity, and human rights – are the exact antithesis of war. Restoring orderliness and peace among fleeing people and war-thorned institutions is difficult due to institutional, environmental, and human factors. A similar problem faces the state of Azerbaijan in reinstating constitutionalism through governance in its liberated territories. This Uphill task of restoring governance and law enforcement institutions further exacerbates this territory's ethical conflict. A study of this problem is needed to provide insight into how much Azerbaijan has succeeded in its bid to reintegrate the Nagorno Karabakh territory and provide direction for future governance in post-conflict regions.

Research Focus

This research investigates governance's legal and constitutional aspects in post-2020 liberated Azerbaijan territories, focusing on Karabakh and its surrounding districts. Through a historical lens, it uncovers the form of governance that thrived before the liberation and compares it to the current system since its recapture by Azerbaijan to determine to what extent Azerbaijan has been prosperous in implementing its fundamental constitutional principles in the governance of those territories.

The importance of this work lies in the need to develop a framework to reintegrate the liberated territories into Azerbaijan and how constitutionalism in this process can help reduce further strains on the ethical, economic, and social conflicts in these territories and provide a direction for rebuilding.

Research Aim and Research Questions

This work aims to analyse the existing governance structure in Azerbaijan’s liberated territories to assess how well it aligns with Azerbaijani constitutional principles and identify areas for improvement. This goal is achieved by analysing Azerbaijan’s constitutional documents to extract its fundamental principles, studying the documents and institutions related to the governance of the liberated territories to evaluate their adherence to constitutional principles, and conducting a comparative analysis with other post-war territories to develop recommendations on how Azerbaijan can seamlessly rebuild and reintegrate these regions into its governance system.

Literature Review

The governance of liberated territories in post-conflict settings is crucial to state-building, particularly in regions seeking reintegration into sovereign structures (Chandler, 2015). In the case of Azerbaijan, the re-establishment of governance in Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding territories has been framed within the country’s constitutional principles. This literature review examines existing research on Azerbaijani constitutionalism, governance models in liberated territories, and comparative perspectives from other post-conflict regions.

Post-Soviet Constitutionalism and Its Impact on Azerbaijan

The Azerbaijani Constitution is the primary legal framework guiding governance in the liberated territories. Salmanov (2021) emphasises the role of public control mechanisms in ensuring government accountability, noting that effective governance depends on structured civic participation and strong legal oversight. Huseynov (2023) expands on this by highlighting the organisation of local self-government in Azerbaijan, demonstrating how municipal structures interact with state authorities to maintain administrative efficiency.

Darchinova (2022) introduces a decolonial perspective on post-Soviet constitutionalism, arguing that legal structures in Azerbaijan still bear the imprint of Russian and Soviet legal traditions – which include a central influential figure, the president, and weak institutions, which creates a sham ‘democracy’ and waters down the implementation of democratic governance. The weakness of democratic institutions prevalent in former soviet states and its effect on public governance was also analysed by Parlett (2021). His findings are summarised in table 1 below:

Table 1

Types of Constitutionalism in Practice in Former Soviet States

Strong Constitutionalism	Instrumental/Contested	Weak	Sham
Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania	Moldova, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, Georgia	Russia, Kazakhstan	Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Turkmenistan

Source: Parlett (2021).

Azerbaijani Constitutionalism and Governance in Liberated Territories

Jafarova (2022) analyses Azerbaijan as a subject of constitutional relations, highlighting the significant role the constitution plays in shaping the legal personality of the Azerbaijani state, including its rights, obligations, responsibilities, and jurisdictional subjects. The distinct elements of the constitutional and legal status of the Republic of Azerbaijan are its attributes as a sovereign state. A key condition for the effective operation of civil society mechanisms is the establishment of balance, equality of rights, and the equitable development of the state, society, and the individual. All these cannot be achieved without sovereignty and territorial integrity (Vanelli & Ochoa Peralta, 2022).

The re-establishment of governance in the liberated territories currently follows the structure of appointing special presidential representatives to oversee the administration of the districts until full

municipal governance can be restored. With many factors hindering the city's complete reconstruction, including hidden mines, coupled with the lack of a specific timeline for implementing the constitutional municipal governments, it seems a long time would pass before proper municipal institutions are set up in the liberated territories. The dissolution of the self-proclaimed Artsakh Republic marks a significant turning point, emphasising Azerbaijan's reassertion of sovereignty and territorial integrity. Still, the more difficult constitutional framework would be re-establishing constitutionally structured governance (Yavuz & Gunter, 2023). Scholars have pointed out that while Azerbaijan has made strides in restoring infrastructure and public services, challenges such as security concerns, demining operations, and the resettlement of internally displaced persons (IDPs) remain a priority.

International and Comparative Perspectives, Lessons for Azerbaijan

Makili-Aliyev (2020) compares Nagorno-Karabakh and the Aland Islands using international law perspectives on contested territories. He suggests that the body of international law supports self-determination as an external state principle available for states to fight colonialism rather than an internal state principle which would produce strife and ethnic fraternisation. Lessons from the Aland model could provide insights into governance strategies that balance national control with regional stability.

Gasimzade (2022) explores the role of local governance in economic development, highlighting the need for decentralisation to enhance local administrative effectiveness. He argues that Azerbaijan's highly centralised governance structure limits municipal financial autonomy, which could impact governance in liberated regions.

Azerbaijan's governance approach can be compared to models used in other post-conflict regions (Fuller, 2013). Kim and Kim (2023) analyse governance structures in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Myanmar, demonstrating how ethnic self-determination efforts often lead to political fragmentation rather than stability. Their findings suggest that strong central governance, as pursued by Azerbaijan, may be more effective in ensuring long-term stability. Additionally, studies on Kosovo's post-war administration highlight the role of international peacekeeping forces in governance, an approach Azerbaijan has largely avoided by prioritising national control.

Despite progress, Azerbaijan faces several governance challenges in the liberated territories. The dependence on centralised governance structures, as highlighted by Salmanov (2021), raises concerns about the long-term viability of municipal autonomy. Additionally, Huseynov (2023) points out the importance of financial decentralisation in empowering local governments. Gasimzade (2022) further argues that municipalities' lack of financial independence could hinder economic revitalisation in the liberated regions. Addressing these challenges will require balancing state oversight and local governance, upholding constitutional principles while fostering sustainable development.

The literature suggests Azerbaijan's approach to governance in the liberated territories is firmly rooted in constitutionalism and central oversight. While this has enabled rapid reintegration, lessons from other post-conflict regions indicate the need for gradual municipal empowerment and civic participation. Future research should focus on evaluating the long-term effectiveness of Azerbaijan's governance strategies and identifying best practices for fostering local administrative resilience.

Materials and Methods

To investigate the extent to which governance in the liberated territories of Azerbaijan reflects Azerbaijani constitutionalism, this study adopted a qualitative research approach (Teherani et al., 2015)—using a systematic literature review through the gathering of relevant literature, analysing them critically and holistically, and synthesising the findings (Lame, 2019). Significant sources for materials include scholarly publications, reports from international organisations, academic articles, monographs, government reports, and legislative acts from multiple countries, including national laws, regulations, international treaties, and reports from non-governmental organisations. Priority was

given to peer-reviewed academic publications from 2020 to 2025 to ensure recent and relevant findings, reports from international organisations that analyse governance trends in post-war settings, government reports and legislative acts to provide official perspectives on constitutional implementation, comparative studies on other post-conflict regions (e.g., Bosnia, Kosovo, Myanmar) to contextualise Azerbaijan's governance approach. Studies that focused primarily on geopolitical power struggles and economic or non-governance-related aspects of the conflict were excluded, as they do not directly contribute to understanding the constitutional governance of liberated territories.

Materials were gathered through searches in academic databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, as well as from national legal sources. The review included publications from 2020 to 2025 that bordered on critical aspects of constitutionalism in post-war territories, particularly in Nagorno-Karabakh.

As a literature-based study, a key limitation is the reliance on secondary sources, which may not fully capture evolving governance dynamics. Future research incorporating fieldwork, interviews, or government reports would enhance empirical depth and provide a more comprehensive understanding of municipal governance in the liberated territories.

The object of the study is to the legal framework, principles, and forms of the Constitution and governance framework of the Republic of Azerbaijan and how well they are reflected in the governance system currently being implemented in its liberated territories; the institutions and officials involved in the reconstruction of the liberated territories and their full reintegration into the Azerbaijani Republic.

Result

Constitutional law concerns the relations of supreme power, which is expressed through the sovereign power of the people, exercised both directly and indirectly through the state, local self-government, public associations, and their respective authorities, including local self-government bodies and public association institutions (Loveland, 2024; Syrett & Alder, 2021). The Republic of Azerbaijan, as a participant in constitutional and legal relations, represents a system of all state authorities that carry out state tasks and functions, serving as the most significant form of democracy and the political organisation of the entire Azerbaijani people (Bastian & Luckham, 2003; Jafarova, 2022).

In this regard, Azerbaijan has faced a significant uphill since independence—asserting its constitutional rights and duties over its contested territory, Karabakh, and surroundings previously captured by Armenia. Karabakh is a small territory within the orbit of the South Caucasus that historically has been located at the nexus of three countries: the Russian Federation, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the Republic of Turkey. Karabakh has been a dwelling place for both Azerbaijanis and Armenians.

The dispute over the territory of Karabakh first arose between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 1918 when they had their first shot at becoming Sovereign states after the revolution in the Russian Empire (Khan, 2021). At the time, even Armenians living in Karabakh agreed that it should be a part of Azerbaijan, with territorial and cultural autonomy for its Armenian population. International recognition of Karabakh as a part of Azerbaijan also came as a declaration at the Paris Peace Conference of 1920. However, by 1921, all of the states of the South Caucasus had lost their newly gained independence and were already under Soviet rule (Bieber, 2015). That year, Nagorno-Karabakh was confirmed as a part of Azerbaijan (Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic at that time) with the creation of regional autonomy there to maintain the economic ties between Nagorno-Karabakh (mountainous part) and lower Karabakh (Kamal, 2020).

The modern Karabakh Conflict began in 1988 when the Armenian population of Karabakh, with the support of the then Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic, demanded secession of the territory of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast' (hereinafter NKAO) from the territory of the Azerbaijan Soviet

Socialist Republic and transfer of that territory to Armenia. Between 1988 and 1991, efforts were made to reach an amicable settlement through direct negotiation and international instruments, but all proved abortive. The situation inevitably escalated into a war between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

The military confrontation between 1992–1994 ended in defeat for Azerbaijan in the hands of hands of Armenia, resulting in occupation by the latter of the Karabakh and seven surrounding districts _ Khojaly, Shusha, Lachin, Khojavand, Kalbajar, Aghdam, Fuzuli, Jabrayil, Gubadli and Zangilan districts, along with 13 villages of the Tartar district, seven villages of the Gazakh region and one town of Nakhchivan’s Sadarak district, representing 20% of Azerbaijan territory. Since then, reasserting Azerbaijan’s full sovereignty over its internationally recognised territory has become its first and foremost aim in international politics. Thus, having recaptured the districts surrounding the enclave and made significant inroads, Azerbaijan overcame its mutilated sovereignty syndrome. It is now on the verge of reconstructing and re-integrating this territory into the country. Figure 1 below shows the status and control of the contested territories at the end of the “44 days war” in 2020 (Khalilzada, 2024).

Figure 1
Status and Control of the Contested Territories after “44 Days War”



Source: Kotzeva (2023).

The pre-2020 situation of Karabakh presented various contradictions to the Azerbaijani constitutional principles. These constitutional principles can be divided into “self-activating” and “positive activating principles” depending on whether they automatically exist by the fact of Azerbaijan's control of the territories (self-activating) or whether they would go further to require positive government effort to come into existence (positive activating). In this context, the two constitutional principles that are self-activating are sovereignty and territorial integrity because they start to exist once Azerbaijan gains military control of the territory. However, other principles, such as guaranteeing rights and liberties, economic and social development, municipal self-government, and enforcement of international obligations, would not exist until the government exerts further positive

efforts to ensure or maintain them (this is summarised in Table 2). The latter principles require more attention.

Table 2

Azerbaijani Constitutional Principles

Principle	Constitutional Provision	Type of Principle
Sovereignty	Articles 1 and 2	Self-activating
Territorial Integrity	Article 11	Self-Activating
Guarantee of rights and Liberties	Article 12	Positive Activating
Economic and Social Development	Articles 15 and 16	Positive Activating
Municipal Local self-government	Article 142	Positive Activating
International Obligations	Article 151	Positive Activating

Source: Authors’ development.

The sovereignty of Azerbaijan as a state and its will as a people (Article 2, Constitution of Azerbaijan) could not be achieved in the occupied territories in the pre-2020 period. The power in pre-2020 Karabakh was exercised by the government of the self-declared Artsakh Republic and the government of Armenia (Kolarz, 2020).

The territorial integrity of Azerbaijan is guaranteed by Article 11 of the constitution as ‘united, inviolable and indivisible’, and its sovereignty was tempered by the Armenian occupation, which put the Karabakh and seven surrounding districts under the effective control of Armenia (Khalilzada, 2024). In fact, during the continuance of the Armenian occupation, while ratifying specific international instruments, like the European Charter for Local Self-Government, Azerbaijan often added clauses that they might not be able to ensure their adherence in certain areas of their territories due to Armenia’s occupation. It also put the natural resources in those areas beyond the reach of Azerbaijan.

However, the recapture of these territories automatically enforces the self-activating constitutional principles of sovereignty and territoriality discussed above. However, for other principles of the constitution to be enforced—human rights, Unity, local self-government, and economic and social development—positive and long-term commitments would be required from the Azerbaijani government. This paper will now turn to the positive activating principles.

Implementing municipal self-government as provided for in the Azerbaijan constitution has been problematic in the liberated territories (Atar & Kirboz, 2024). This is because the development of the institution and environment required for this system to thrive requires a reconstruction of the cities and the return of the citizens. The presence of hidden mines, ethnic problems and uncertainties in the area have hampered this. The system currently being implemented in the Karabakh region is the Institute of Special Representations, created by the orders signed by the President. The first such administrations were created in Shusha and subsequently in Aghdam. This is a new institute in the process of formation and development. The Special Representation of the Karabakh Economic Region operates in liberated territories of the Terter, Aghdam, Fuzuli, and Khojavend districts. The Special Representation aims to coordinate all restoration and reconstruction works in liberated areas. Other institutions and means, such as inter-departmental coordination centres, Karabakh revival funds and non-governmental organisations, have been involved in the administration and reconstruction of these territories (Iskandarli, 2022).

These institutions, however, fall short of the Municipal self-government system contained in the Azerbaijani constitution (article 142) and reinforced by Azerbaijan’s ratification of the European local self-government Charter, which aimed the decentralisation of power to bring the government closer to the people. The Presidency of Azerbaijan has expressed its intention to implement the municipal system in the liberated territories shortly. Local self-government is a fundamental aspect of democratic

governance and is essential for citizen participation in decision-making. As of November 2023, the Azerbaijani government has announced plans to establish municipalities in the liberated territories. However, no concrete steps have been taken (Novruz, 2024).

The government must develop a timeline to implement the municipal self-government system because, as this paper will argue later, through a comparative analysis of the situation in Myanmar and Bosnia and Herzegovina, implementing a different system in the region for longer than necessary might inadvertently foster a feeling of segregation and may exacerbate the ethnic tensions that characterise the Karabakh region (Woelk, 2022).

Azerbaijan’s post-liberation governance in the reclaimed territories also centres around socio-economic development and reintegration. The government has embarked on large-scale infrastructure projects, including road networks, energy systems, and modern housing developments, to facilitate the return of displaced populations to the liberated territories (Ibrahimov, 2021). These efforts are aimed at enhancing the National Economy and aligning with Azerbaijani’s responsibility for its citizens’ economic and social well-being under articles 15 and 16 of its Constitution.

Efforts are also ongoing to ensure the protection of rights by the Azerbaijani Constitution and international obligations. Western Azerbaijan Community is working to provide a seamless return of Azerbaijanis ousted from present-day Armenia to their homes and further observance of their personal and collective rights. Its efforts align with persons’ right to return home as indicated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Refugee Convention and other primary international documents. Western Azerbaijan Community adopted the Concept of Return on January 26, 2023. It has also appealed to the Armenian government and international organisations to help facilitate these processes. These efforts would ensure the protection of the rights of Armenian residents densely settled in multicultural Azerbaijan’s Karabakh region, who are citizens of the country, as well as their social and cultural well-being. Conversely, Armenia is to secure the return of a significant number of Azerbaijani residents deported from their historical land, along with their safe living conditions.

Further, the situation in Karabakh threatens the principle of Unity enshrined in Article 5 of the Azerbaijani Constitution. Karabakh presents a unique situation - a territory comprised predominantly of Armenian population but landlocked into Azerbaijan territory (Rasizade, 2011). The population mix created some ethnic problems in that territory, which secessionist movements have further strained. It is essential to compare with other post-war governance jurisdictions, with conflicts characterised by similar ethnic problems, such as Myanmar, Bosnia, and Herzegovina. Post-conflict, Bosnia and Herzegovina, under the Dayton agreement, adopted a system of governance where the power was rotated among ethnic groups. At the same time, Myanmar ran a centralised military government that led to conflict (Jaeho & Sup, 2023). The Bosnia and Herzegovina system has been more successful than Myanmar. Table 3 demonstrates that the more minority rights are protected, the more likely to maintain long-term stability.

Table 3
Comparative Analysis of Governance Models in Different Post-War Regions

Post Conflict Region	Governance Model	Key Features	Challenges
Azerbaijan (Karabakh)	Centralised (Presidential Representatives)	Strong State oversight	Delayed municipal transition
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Power sharing model	Ethnic-based governance rotation, international oversight	Political fragmentation, governance inefficiency

Myanmar (Rakhine State)	Military-controlled regional administration	Security-focused governance, limited local autonomy	Ethnic exclusion, long-term instability
Kosovo (post 1999)	International administration	UN-led governance, municipal empowerment	Heavy reliance on external supervision and economic dependence

Source: Authors' development.

Discussion

The governance and reconstruction of Azerbaijan's liberated territories present a mix of constitutionalism, administrative restructuring, and socio-political reintegration. The research posits that while self-activating principles of Azerbaijani constitutionalism—territorial integrity and sovereignty—have been asserted using military power in its liberated territories, what now requires a deeper and strategic commitment is the creation of a socio-political environment where constitutional principles like human rights, economic progress, unity, and international best practices are maintained.

This study agrees with Huseynov's (2023) and Salmanov's (2021) study that long-term sustainability requires a gradual transition to municipal governance. One of the most significant aspects of governance in these territories is creating a municipal system that brings the government closer to the people, as guaranteed by the Azerbaijani constitution. Based on special presidential representatives and direct oversight from Baku, the current governance model ensures stability and security in the rebuilding process. Still, if this system is not transitioned to municipal self-government in other areas in due time, it may run counterintuitively to its objectives. Comparative studies, such as those by Kim and Kim (2023) on Bosnia and Myanmar, also indicate that over-centralisation of governmental powers may result in a feeling of segregation for the minority ethnic groups and foster instability in the long run.

To hasten the implementation of municipal governance in the liberated regions, the Azerbaijani government must create a concrete timeline with clear milestones for transitioning into local self-government. The administration must also pursue leadership and capacity-building programs for citizens and officials in the area to prepare them for self-governance.

From an economic standpoint, the integration of the liberated territories into Azerbaijan's national economy is progressing through infrastructure investments and the creation of economic zones (Gasimzade, 2022). However, financial autonomy for local governments remains an issue, as highlighted in Rahimli's (2021) work on democratisation trends in Azerbaijan. The country must implement a system that allows local government absolute financial autonomy by widening its tax jurisdiction. This task is even more difficult in the liberated territory, where the business environment may not allow for much local taxation. However, this can be achieved by earmarking certain independent funds for the municipal government while sustaining the rebuilding of the territories to ensure that their local economy recovers soon and the municipal government can afford absolute financial autonomy.

Ethnic reintegration remains a crucial challenge. The deep-rooted ethnic divisions between Azerbaijanis and Armenians in these territories necessitate inclusive governance strategies. The public institution in this area must enhance public participation in its decision-making and governance process by collating public opinion before making decisions on sensitive issues and ensuring transparency. This aligns with Robinson and Eller's (2010) argument that constitutionalism must be coupled with active civic participation to foster national unity. Also, when possible, implementing bilingual administrative policies by adopting bilingual communication (Azerbaijani and Armenian) in official documents and public services in the Karabakh region would foster unity. The government should also begin cultural reconciliation through public sensitisation programs and educational events.

Gasimzade (2022) and Rahimli (2021) stress that financial decentralisation is essential for economic recovery. This aligns with this study's findings that creating economic zones and

infrastructure investments currently ongoing in the liberated territories are pivotal in the reintegration process. However, whereas those scholars advocate for immediate fiscal autonomy for local governments, this study suggests a gradual delegation of financial control, ensuring that governance structures remain stable while transitioning towards greater municipal independence.

Lastly, this study supports the concerns raised by Kim and Kim (2023) regarding the dangers of excessive international oversight in post-conflict governance. While Bosnia and Kosovo relied heavily on external intervention, Azerbaijan should adopt an approach to ensure national sovereignty. Scholars have raised concerns that Russia's continued military presence in the liberated territory for peacekeeping may turn into a form of permanent occupation. This paper posits that the unique situation concerning the liberated territories does not require direct international oversight because the international community has long recognised those territories as a part of Azerbaijan. Therefore, while civil international agencies are essential for the rebuild, a reduced international military presence would ensure Azerbaijan's sovereignty over the situation.

Conclusions and Implications

The examination of governance in liberated territories as a manifestation of Azerbaijan constitutionalism has shown that this issue is highly relevant, given the significant impact of any chosen model of constitutional government on establishing the rule of law and stimulating socio-economic growth in post-conflict territories.

It has been determined that the Azerbaijani constitution comprises certain fundamental principles, among which are territorial integrity, sovereignty, human rights and liberty, and economic and social well-being, which must guide the administration of these territories.

An examination of other post-conflict territories, such as Myanmar and Bosnia and Herzegovina, shows that Azerbaijan must pursue a governance system that ensures the rule of law, fundamental rights, and protection of minority rights to reduce ethnic problems in the area and foster national unity.

The study notes that while Azerbaijan has made substantial efforts to re-establish socio-economic well-being and human rights in the affected territories, it must also take concrete steps towards a gradual establishment of municipal and local self-government in the affected areas to reduce ethnic problems and give the minorities a sense of inclusion.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future research incorporating fieldwork, interviews, or government reports would enhance empirical sides and provide a more comprehensive understanding of municipal governance in the liberated territories. Other research prospects include specific models for transitioning from Azerbaijan's current governance framework (special presidential representatives) to a full-fledged municipal self-government system in the Azerbaijan Republic, including the liberated territories. Additionally, Case studies from other post-conflict regions (e.g., Kosovo, East Timor) could provide comparative insights on best practices for local governance implementation.

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Conflict of Interest

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