

# Ethno-Territorial Conflict and Coexistence in the Caucasus, Central Asia and Fereydan

Babak Rezvani



UNIVERSITEIT VAN AMSTERDAM

# **Ethno-Territorial Conflict and Coexistence in the Caucasus, Central Asia and Fereydan**

**Babak Rezvani**

**University of Amsterdam  
2013**

Publication of this book is made possible by a grant from NWO (Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research).

Lay out: Babak Rezvani  
Cover illustration: Babak Rezvani  
**ISBN 9789056297336**  
**E-ISBN 9789048519286**  
**ISBN ePub 9789048519293**

© Babak Rezvani & Vossiuspers UvA–Amsterdam University Press, 2013

All rights reserved. Without limiting the rights under copyright reserved above, no part of this book may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise) without the written permission of both the copyright owner and the author of the book.

Alle rechten voorbehouden. Niets uit deze uitgave mag worden verveelvoudigd, opgeslagen in een geautomatiseerd gegevensbestand, of openbaar gemaakt, in enige vorm of op enige wijze, hetzij elektronisch, mechanisch, door fotokopieën, opnamen of enige andere manier, zonder voorafgaande schriftelijke toestemming van de uitgever.

Voorzover het maken van kopieën uit deze uitgave is toegestaan op grond van artikel 16B Auteurswet 1912 j° het Besluit van 20 juni 1974, Stb. 351, zoals gewijzigd bij het Besluit van 23 augustus 1985, Stb. 471 en artikel 17 Auteurswet 1912, dient men de daarvoor wettelijk verschuldigde vergoedingen te voldoen aan de Stichting Reprorecht (Postbus 3051, 2130 KB Hoofddorp). Voor het overnemen van gedeelte(n) uit deze uitgave in bloemlezingen, readers en andere compilatiewerken (artikel 16 Auteurswet 1912) dient men zich tot de uitgever te wenden.

# **ETHNO-TERRITORIAL CONFLICT AND COEXISTENCE IN THE CAUCASUS, CENTRAL ASIA AND FERREYDAN**

*academisch proefschrift*

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor  
aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam  
op gezag van de Rector Magnificus  
prof. dr. D.C. van den Boom  
ten overstaan van een door het college voor promoties  
ingestelde commissie,  
in het openbaar te verdedigen in de Agnietenkapel  
op dinsdag 12 februari 2013, te 12:00 uur

door

*Babak Rezvani*

geboren te Teheran, Iran

***Promotiecommissie:***

Promotor: Prof. dr. H. Knippenberg

Co-promotor: Dr. G.J.W. Dijkink

Overige Leden: Prof. dr. T. Atabaki

Prof. dr. A.J. Dietz

Prof. dr. G.C.A. Junne

Prof. dr. G.E. Frerks

Dr. C.M.L. Hille

Faculteit der Maatschappij- en Gedragwetenschappen

# Table of Contents

<b>Preface</b> -----	<b>9</b>
<b><u>Chapter One. It Was a Summer Evening: Introduction</u></b> -----	<b>13</b>
<i>The Regions</i> -----	16
<i>The Book's Structure</i> -----	19
<b><u>Chapter Two. Theoretical Framework</u></b> -----	<b>25</b>
<i>Ethno-Territorial Conflict</i> -----	25
<i>Ethnos and Ethnicity</i> -----	27
<i>State, Nation and Nationalism</i> -----	36
<i>The Causes of Ethno-Territorial Conflict</i> -----	42
Power of Culture: Religion, Language and Ethnic Kinship-----	43
Power of History: Traumatic Peak Experiences-----	46
Political and Economic Grievances-----	48
State in Disarray-----	51
Ethno-Political Systems and Opportunity Structures-----	54
Ethno-Geographic Configuration-----	59
<i>Explaining Ethno-Territorial Conflict: A Theoretical Model</i> -----	66
<b><u>Chapter Three. The Legacy of the Iranian and Soviet Ethno-Political Systems and Policies</u></b> -----	<b>69</b>
<i>The Soviet Union and Its Successor States</i> -----	69
The Soviet Nationalities Policy: Historical Underpinnings-----	72
The Soviet Union on the Eve of its Collapse and Beyond-----	83
<i>Iran</i> -----	92
Ethnic and Religious Policies in Iran: Historical Underpinnings-----	96
Territorial Administrative Policies in Iran: Historical Underpinnings-----	104
Ethnic, Religious, and Territorial Administrative Policies in Iran: The Contemporary Situation-----	108
<i>Conclusion: Ethno-Political Systems and Ethno-Territorial Conflict</i> -----	116
<b><u>Chapter Four. Methods</u></b> -----	<b>121</b>
<i>Ethno-Territorial Groups and Encounters</i> -----	121
<i>Ethno-Territorial Conflict</i> -----	123

<i>Explaining Conditions</i> -----	123
<i>Analyzing the Dataset</i> -----	132
<b><u>Chapter Five. Ethno-Territorial Groups and Encounters</u></b> -----	<b>135</b>
<i>Ethno-Territorial Groups in the Caucasus</i> -----	139
<i>Ethno-Territorial Groups in Central Asia</i> -----	152
<i>Ethno-Territorial Groups in Fereydan</i> -----	162
<b><u>Chapter Six. Ethno-Territorial Conflicts in the Caucasus and Central Asia</u></b> -----	<b>169</b>
<i>Political-Territorial History of the South Caucasus</i> -----	170
<i>The Karabakh Conflict</i> -----	181
<i>Ethno-Territorial Conflicts in Georgia: South Ossetia and Abkhazia</i> -----	196
<i>Political-Territorial History of the North Caucasus</i> -----	217
<i>The Ossetian–Ingush Conflict over Prigorodny</i> -----	223
<i>Wars in Chechnya</i> -----	227
<i>Political Territorial History of Central Asia</i> -----	249
<i>The Tajikistani Civil War and the Role Played by Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Pamiris</i> -----	254
<i>Uzbek–Kyrgyz Conflict in Southern Kyrgyzstan</i> -----	264
<i>Conclusion: Patterns of Ethno-Territorial Conflict</i> -----	271
<b><u>Chapter Seven. Analysis: Searching for Explanations</u></b> -----	<b>281</b>
<i>The Myth of Shatterbelts</i> -----	283
<i>Testing the Explaining Conditions Separately</i> -----	285
<i>Qualitative Comparative Analysis</i> -----	297
<i>Conclusion</i> -----	322
<b><u>Chapter Eight. It Was a Winter Morning: Conclusions</u></b> -----	<b>325</b>
<i>Research Results</i> -----	326
<i>Discussion</i> -----	331
<i>Recommendations</i> -----	336
<b>Appendices</b> -----	<b>339</b>

<b>Appendix 1: Measurement of Mosaic Type of Ethno-Geographic Configuration</b> -----	<b>341</b>
<b>Appendix 2: How Does Qualitative Comparative Analysis Work? An Example</b> -----	<b>351</b>
<b>Appendix 3: Ethno-Cultural Issues and Correction of the Numbers of Ethnic Population in the Republic of Azerbaijan</b> -----	<b>355</b>
<b>Appendix 4: Tajik Population in Uzbekistan</b> -----	<b>369</b>
<b>Appendix 5: Dataset of Ethno-Territorial Encounters in the Caucasus, Central Asia, and Fereydan</b> -----	<b>373</b>
<b>References</b> -----	<b>381</b>





# Preface

It was a summer evening. It was the last day of *the* summer. Arriving from Esfahan, my uncle picked us up at the bus terminal in Tehran. The sky was reddish. It was the last day of my serene childhood. It was war, the “War” from now on. Saddam had attacked Iran. It changed my childhood from a time of childhood—yes, just normal “childhood”—to a time of suffering, which accompanied me into my youth. Now, I know that I was not the only child who has been denied just normal “childhood”. I had always thought that war was something which belonged to the movies or legends. The reality soon taught me that I was wrong.

Shortly after my arrival in the Netherlands the War stopped. But it took more than one more year for the Western World to begin admitting that Saddam was “bad”. I was angry and I remain angry: why did they not admit that Saddam was “bad”—and not just bad, but cruel, bloodthirsty, and evil—when he killed so many Iranians and Iraqi Kurds by “conventional” and chemical weapons.

The War had ended, but the horrors of that war were still fresh in my memory. I still remember the day when the torn bodies of our schoolmates arrived at our school yard and made our tough *Nazem*—the school manager of punishments—hit his head and shed tears.

But the War had hardly stopped when new wars emerged—and still emerge all round the world, unfortunately. The ethnic conflicts in the Soviet Union broke out one after another. It was a time of euphoria in the West. The former communist regimes fell one after another. Despite the salience of an aggressive ethno-nationalism in the former communist countries, many believed that it was the beginning of better times. The nationalism? Oh, yes, the Nationalism; that was just an expression of new freedom, because the ethnic and national feelings were suppressed for “so many years”. Really?

Many years later it became visible that the better times were still not there. It was a time of extreme poverty and bloodshed. Thanks to my background, I have always been interested in the Caucasus. Why were they fighting? Despite many pseudo-intellectuals, I know very well that it was not natural for people in the Caucasus to kill each other. It was a time when I began seriously to study the Caucasus and Central Asia and the post-communist world in general.

The Caucasus and Central Asia were also the regions about which I wrote two Masters’ theses and one PhD thesis. This current book is a result of my PhD research. That research was made possible only by the grant I received from the Netherlands Organization for Scientific

Research (NWO). It was a competitive grant and was not easy to get. But fortunately I was successful and this motivated me all the more.

Therefore, I want to thank my supervisors, Professor Dr. Hans Knippenberg and Dr. Dijkink. Without their comments, corrections, suggestions—at times demanding but always benign—and guidance, I could not have managed to write this book. Writing this book has been a pleasurable task, which has consumed so many hours of my life in different parts of the world, such as the Netherlands, USA (Minnesota), Kyrgyzstan, Georgia, and Iran—even in the most unusual places, such as in airports, trains, and taxis.

I am grateful to Ruadhan Hayes for correcting and editing my English text; his efforts have enormously improved the readability of this book.

I also want to thank other colleagues from my institute—formerly called AMIDSt and now AISSR—at the University of Amsterdam. Many colleagues, both seniors and juniors, both scientific and non-scientific, were kind to me and have supported me in many ways. To name only a few, I would like to thank Virginie Mamadouh, Jan Mansvelt-Beck, Jan Markusse, James Sidaway, Herman Van der Wusten, Hebe Verrest, Benson Mulemi, Guida Morais e Castro Ermida, Puikang Chan, Gert Van der Meer, Joos Droogleever Fortuyn, Sjoerd de Vos and many others.

My international network has helped me enormously. This research could not have been done without their support and assistance. First of all, I want to thank the kind professor from Russia who scanned and sent me by e-mail the maps of “Narody mira”; unfortunately I lost his contact details because of so many upgrades to our email-system at the University of Amsterdam. In addition, I want to thank Giorgi Kipiani, Giorgi Kheviashvili, Nodar Kochlashvili, Merab Chukhua, Tornike Gordadze, Giorgi (George) Tarkhan-Mouravi, Giorgi (George) Sanikidze, Tina Gogheliani, Yuri (Giorgi) Anchabadze, Tom Trier, Arif Yunusov, Rauf Garagozov, Saadat Yusifova, Garnik Asatryan, Victoria Arakelova, Khachik Gevorgian, Aziz Tamoyan, Arayik Sargsyan, Kevin Tuite, John Colarusso, Viacheslav Chirikba, Tamerlan Salbiev, Shaban Khapizov, Temur Aitberov, John Schoeberlein, Laura Adams, Thomas Goltz, Iraj Bashiri, Michael Kemper, Maral Madieva, Merim Razbaeva, Kim German, Kamoluddin Abdullaev, Didar Kassymova, Said Muliani, Eydimohammad Sepiani, Mato Hakhverdian, Ahmad Muliani, and many others. Special thanks go to a young man originally from Aghdam, living in the special settlements for Karabakh refugees, who despite all difficulties came to Baku to visit me in the summer of 2008.

I want to also thank my PhD committee for having accepted the task to read my dissertation and promote me. They are Professor Dr. Gerd Junne (University of Amsterdam), Professor Dr. Ton Dietz (University of

Amsterdam and African Studies Center, Leiden University), Dr. Charlotte Hille (University of Amsterdam), Professor Dr. Touraj Atabaki (Leiden University and the International Institute for Social History, Amsterdam), and Professor Dr. Georg Frerks (Utrecht University).

Last but not least, I want to thank my family for supporting me in both my personal and professional life. My special gratitude goes to my dear wife, who has accompanied my life since five years ago and has supported me in joyful and difficult moments.

*Babak Rezvani*  
2012



## Chapter One

# 1 It Was a Summer Evening: Introduction

It was a summer evening, less than two months before the re-eruption of the South Ossetian and Abkhazian conflicts and the Russian invasion of Georgia. It was not very dark but the hot Georgian weather was cooling down as my train stopped in Sadakhlo, a town at the Georgian-Armenian border. Although it is located in southern Georgia, Sadakhlo is a predominantly Azeri town ethnically. The area in which Sadakhlo is located is overwhelmingly populated by Azeris. To the west is another area which is overwhelmingly populated by Armenians: Javakheti (called Javakhk by Armenians).

“Don’t worry. The train won’t go anywhere, unless I give the permission!”, the railway man told me in the Azeri language, instead of using Georgian, the language in which I had addressed him. A man in mid-fifties, he had found willing ears and was very eager to tell me about his town of Sadakhlo, his life, and ethnic relations in Georgia. While I found it very interesting, I did not want my curiosity to cause any delays in the long, not very comfortable, train journey. Armenian passengers were buying fruit from the local female Azeri vendors, calling them *sestra* [“sister” in Russian].

“Armenians are not bad. They are *vafadar*, *vafali* [faithful]. They are good friends. There are not many in Sadakhlo—only a few. But not far from here live also Armenians in big numbers. They are a stubborn nation, for sure, but I have no bad experiences with them. Armenians are not bad”.

He continued: “I was born in Sadakhlo, my father was born here, my grandfather, my great grandfather.... Do you like my town?”

It could indeed be this man’s personal opinion and experience, but I had also been told earlier by many others that there is no animosity between Armenians and Azeris in Georgia, that they cooperate together in business, and that their discontent is towards Georgians. Georgians think they are a tolerant people, and they are proud of the cultural plurality of Georgia. Certainly there are stereotypes in Georgia, and Georgians and Armenians can say very unkind things to each other, but it is unfair to say

that they hate each other. Generally, minorities in Georgia dislike Georgians more than vice versa.

Attitudes towards the “Other”—in the republics of Azerbaijan and Armenia, Armenians and Azeris respectively—do indeed approach the *hatred zone*. Notably, Azeris talk aggrievedly about the “Other”. Nevertheless, one should not generalize, and note that the Karabakh conflict has led to the vilification of the “Other”, and not vice versa. The Karabakh conflict is not caused by the perception of the “Other” having a villainous character. In other words, hatred has followed the conflict and not vice versa. The same Azeris were not shy about telling me about their pleasant Armenian neighbors in the Soviet past.

According to many Armenians, they and Azeris are closer to each other culturally than they are to Georgians, despite both being Christians. Armenians have lately built up good business relations with Iranian Azeris, whose number in Armenia is rather significant. It is true that many Armenians despise Turks and, in general, Muslims. A very central issue in each conversation with Armenians is how Turks (and Kurds and, in general, Muslims) killed Armenians during the First World War. Not infrequently they accuse Azeris, being a Turkic-speaking Muslim ethnic group, of hatred for Armenians. But there are also those who mention how many Armenians were saved by Turks and Kurds during the Armenian Genocide and that the Armenian diaspora in the Middle East lives peacefully with Muslims.

Talking in a balanced and rational way about Karabakh will most likely please neither Armenians nor Azeris. On the issue of land, you should either be with them or against them. Such was my observation in Armenia and Azerbaijan. While the issue of “Artskah [Karabakh] as an Armenian land” is not negotiable and is even untouchable for Armenians, their feelings toward their ethnic opponents—that is, Azeris—are not always very ill-tempered. It is not very uncommon to hear about Armenian-Azeri friendship in past Soviet times. “Also among Azeris are many good people. I know. I have lived with them. They came to Armenia and we went to Azerbaijan”, my taxi-driver in Yerevan told me. Discussing Gorbachev and the legacy of *perestroika* and *glasnost*, he said further: “Do you see? This stupid capitalism and democracy has changed everything. Before it was nice, but see it now. Now Yerevan is such a.... No wonder that no one wants to live here”. He went on to tell me about the ethnic relations: “In every nation are good and bad people. These types are to be found among Azeris, Armenians, Turks—among every nation!” On the other hand, there were those who would show you a bad face if you asked them about the possibility of Armenian and Azeri coexistence in the future. Indeed, the Karabakh conflict was a very emotional issue in both republics. The Azerbaijani-Armenian conflict over

Karabakh has been a very brutal one, which has cost many human lives and has caused large numbers of refugees and homeless. Nevertheless, Armenians and Azeris coexisted peacefully in Georgia.

I have always wondered why there are enduring ethno-territorial conflicts in some multi-ethnic parts of Central Eurasia and not in other parts. What are the conditions which make conflict in one area more likely than in others? Are these conflicts about land? Territorial factors seemingly play an important role in these conflicts. Starting from a political-geographic point of view, this study examines whether, aside from factors which are derived from existing social science theories, also the type of ethno-geographic configuration and other territorial factors contribute to ethnic conflict in selected parts of Central Eurasia: the former Soviet Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the region of Fereydan in central Iran (see Map 1.1).

In addition to presenting specific facts and general insights on the conflicts in these region, this study also intends to re-evaluate and improve the existing theories on the emergence of ethnic and ethno-territorial conflict and to formulate new ones.

A main hypothesis of this study is that a so-called *mosaic type* of ethno-geographic configuration (in combination with other factors) is an important condition in explaining the occurrence of ethno-territorial conflicts. Regions with an ethno-geographic configuration of a mosaic type display relatively highly homogeneous pockets of ethnic concentration. These are regions with a high density of different religious and ethnic concentrations, in which relatively small ethnic groups live in their own relatively homogeneous ethnic living area, bordering on or in close proximity to each other's ethnic living areas. The logic behind this hypothesis lies in the fact that when ethnic groups are highly concentrated in a small and highly ethnically homogeneous area they can be mobilized more easily. The relative homogeneity of the inhabited area may contribute to ethnic cohesion and feelings of belonging to, and ownership of, that area, and in addition it may make the target, that is, the ethnic opponent, more easily identifiable. Also because of the proximity and number of ethnic groups in an ethnically heterogeneous region, there are more potential encounters between these groups. In addition, conflicts may spread more easily in such a configuration: one conflict may (indirectly) induce another one. This epidemic mechanism does not necessarily indicate a domino-effect—that is, a direct contamination of conflicts from one case to the other—but most likely indicates a neighborhood effect.

In order to test the mosaic hypothesis and, in general, explain the occurrence of ethno-territorial conflicts, a dataset of ethno-territorial



encounters in the aforementioned regions will be analyzed systematically. These encounters may remain peaceful or become afflicted by conflict. These encounters will be characterized by a series of features which are derived from social science theory and which, in combination with the geographic features, are supposed to explain the occurrence of conflict. Special attention is given to the different ethno-political policies of Iran and the Soviet Union in the past. The analysis in this current study covers the period from the late 1980s onwards. This period is chosen because it coincides with the period of *perestroika* and *glasnost*, after which ethno-nationalism in the former Soviet Union was awakened and caused the chaos which ultimately led to the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The main research question of this study is as follows: *Which (combinations of) conditions can explain the occurrence of ethno-territorial conflict in (post-)Soviet Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Fereydan (Iran), from the late 1980s onwards?*

The above question also includes the following question: *To what extent is the ethno-geographic configuration an explanation for the occurrence of ethno-territorial conflict in (post-)Soviet Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Fereydan (in Iran) from the late 1980s onwards?*

## ***The Regions***

The Caucasus, Central Asia, and Fereydan are part of the macro-region called Central Eurasia. Central Eurasia is at the heart of the Eurasian continent around the Caspian Sea. Most of it consists of the post-Soviet space, but it also covers parts of China, Afghanistan, Iran, etc.

The Caucasus, Central Asia, and Fereydan are ethnically, linguistically, and religiously very heterogeneous. Both Central Asia and the Caucasus belong to the southern periphery of the former Soviet Union. In these regions non-Russians predominated. They both, unlike Fereydan, have a legacy of Soviet nationalities policy. Fereydan, on the other hand, is ethnically similar to the Caucasus. The contemporary Fereydan's ethnic map was formed in the 17<sup>th</sup> century when large numbers of Armenians and Georgians were settled in this region. Since that time Fereydan has its own Armenian name: "Peria". A symbol, or better said metaphor, which gives Fereydan a sense of identity is the metaphor of Fereydan as the "Little Georgia", the "Little Caucasus" or the "Iranian Caucasus". Perhaps it is better to call Fereydan the Iranian Switzerland, thanks to the lack of ethnic conflict and the presence of beautiful natural scenery there.

In Fereydan, Georgians and Armenians live next to the Khwansaris, Persian-speakers, and Turkic-speakers. The latter are linguistically and religiously very similar to the Turkic-speakers in the

Republic of Azerbaijan and its adjacent areas, as they speak a closely related Turkic language and are Shi'ite Muslims. Fereydani Armenians are Orthodox Christians (Gregorian) similar to Armenians in the South Caucasus, the rest of Iran, and elsewhere. In addition, the predominance of the Bakhtiari tribes in the highlands of Zagros in Fereydan, similar to the predominance of mountain tribes in the North Caucasian mountains, adds to the image of Fereydan as the Iranian Caucasus. The variation in the cultural, political, and geographic attributes of ethno-territorial encounters in these regions offers a fair basis for sound analyses. The various sizes of these regions are not very important in the analysis because it is not the regions but the ethno-territorial encounters which are the units of analysis in this study.

Former Soviet Central Asia covers the post-Soviet republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. This is also the definition of Central Asia in this book. The wider region of Central Asia, however, also includes Afghanistan, East Turkistan, or Xinjiang (a province in western China), and the Khorasan region (in the northwestern part of Iran), whose history and cultures are interwoven with those of the rest of Central Asia.<sup>1</sup>

By the Caucasus in this study is meant both the North Caucasus and the South Caucasus. The Caucasus mountain ridge runs roughly along the borderline between the North and South Caucasus. The North Caucasus covers the current Russian autonomous territories of Chechnya, Ingushetia, Dagestan, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, North Ossetia, Adygheya, and Kabardino-Balkaria. The North Caucasus is a peripheral region with a large majority of Muslim non-Russians. This is the region which Russia has had historically much difficulty in keeping under its firm control. The macro-regionalization of Putin-era Russia placed all the North Caucasian republics, except Adygheya, into the macro-district (*okrug*) of the North Caucasus, while adding to it Krasnodar Krai, in which the macro-district's administrative center, Krasnodar, is located. Krasnodar Krai is a territory inhabited by an overwhelming majority of Russians and has traditionally not been part of the Caucasus. Although the functionality of these federal macro-regions is disputed, it is obviously a Russian attempt to keep this area under closer Russian observation. By the South Caucasus (or Transcaucasia) is meant the republics of Georgia (including Abkhazia and South Ossetia), Armenia, and Azerbaijan (including Nagorno-Karabakh).

Fereydan is a region in central Iran in the western part of Ostan<sup>2</sup>-e Esfahan. By Fereydan in this book is meant the historical region of

---

<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of these issues, see Rezvani (2008c: 100-102).

<sup>2</sup> *Ostan*, *shahrestan*, and *bakhsh* are respectively the first-order, second-order, and third-order territorial divisions in Iran. For a more elaborate description and discussion, see Chapter 3 of this book

Fereydan plus shahrestan-e Khwansar (Khansar), which together are called Greater Fereydan. Aside from Shahrestan-e Fereydan proper, historical Fereydan also comprises the *shahrestans* of Fereyduhshahr and Chadegan. Fereyduhshahr is constituted of only one central *bakhsh* (subunit), but the other two are each constituted of two *bakhshes*. Aside from the central *bakhshes*, these are the *bakhshes* of Buin-Miandasht in Fereydan proper and Chenar-Rud in Chadegan. Historical Fereydan has an ancient history,<sup>3</sup> as along with its own myths and symbols.<sup>4</sup> The constituent parts of historical Fereydan are connected to each other by a dense network of transportation and interaction.<sup>5</sup> This is also the case with Khwansar, though to a lesser extent. Nowadays the Shahrestan-e Khwansar is integrated to a great extent into Fereydan and can be regarded, more or less, as a part of Greater Fereydan; aside from geographical proximity and climatological and physical-geographical similarities between them, there exists also a relatively high degree of human interaction between Khwansar and Fereydan. Many people from Khwansar and Fereydan have migrated in both directions and there have been intermarriages.<sup>6</sup>

The ethnic distributions in the Caucasus, Central Asia, and Fereydan are presented respectively in Figures 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4.<sup>7</sup> Many

---

<sup>3</sup> The known history of historical Fereydan is very old, like that of most of Iran. The story of Kaveh's rebellion and the defeat of Zahhak, a non-Iranian tyrannical king most probably of Assyrian origin (I argue), is mentioned in Ferdowsi's epic *Shahnameh*. Aside from this uncertain and more or less mythological history, there are other ancient references to Fereydan. The pre-Islamic name of Fereydan was Partikan. This name associates this region to the ancient Parthians. Nevertheless, this name seems to have a more ancient root. Herodotus in his *Histories* (Bk 1, Ch. 101) (2000 [5<sup>th</sup> century BC.], 89) refers to the Median tribe of Paraetakeni (also spelled as Paraetaceni), which are probably the ancient inhabitants of contemporary Fereydan. It is probable also that the locus of the battle of Paraitacene between the Diadochi, the rivals generals after Alexander's death, occurred in Fereydan. The contribution of Georgians to the history of Fereydan has been significant. They defeated the Afghan invaders near Fereyduhshahr after the Afghans had fought against the Bakhtiari tribes in the Zagros mountains to the south of Fereydan (Rahimi 2000: 25-32; Rezvani 2008a: 597; Rezvani 2009a: 63-68).

<sup>4</sup> There are symbols which give the region its identity and its people a sense of pride. People of Fereydan believe that Kaveh, the black smith who rebelled against the tyrannical Zahhak, was born in Fereydan, in the village of Mashhad-e Kaveh near Chadegan. Remarkably, Fereyduhshahr, (formerly called Akhoreh, Mart'q'opi and Sopeli (by different people), is named after Fereyduh, his companion). The statue of Kaveh stands in a square in Daran en route to Fereyduhshahr and Buin-Miandasht. Fereyduhshahr is a modern name, and aside from the aforementioned reason it is also chosen because it sounds similar to Fereydan.

<sup>5</sup> Any visitor to Fereydan can notice that the minibuses from Daran (the administrative center of Fereydan proper) depart every fifteen minutes to the other administrative centers, the towns of Chadegan and Fereyduhshahr, as well as to Buin-Miandasht, while there is no such frequent transportation possible to places outside the region of Fereydan.

<sup>6</sup> Notable cases of migration are Georgians in Rahmat Abad village of Khwansar, who moved there from the Georgian parts of Fereydan, and Muslim, Bahai, and Islamized Jewish Khwansaris who migrated to Fereydan. [Information gained by fieldwork and interviewing the locals]. Some information is also available in Rahimi (2000) and Sepiani (1979).

<sup>7</sup> These maps (Figures 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4) are based on similar maps available online at University of Texas Perry-Castañeda Library's Map Collection: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/> [with minor

ethnic groups of various sizes inhabit these regions. Among the larger ones are Russians and Uzbeks; among the medium-sized ones are Georgians and Tajiks; and finally, among the smaller ones are Dagestani ethnic groups such as Laks and Dargins.

## ***The Book's Structure***

Chapter 2 offers the theoretical framework of this study. For a definition of the concept ethno-territorial conflict it will be necessary to discuss concepts such as ethnicity, nation, state, territoriality, and conflict in their mutual relationships. This chapter also provides a theoretical review of the factors which are deemed to contribute to the occurrence of ethno-territorial conflict.

One of the most important factors that can explain ethno-territorial conflict is the ethno-political system involved. Therefore, Chapter 3 analyses the relevant ethno-territorial systems and policies of the former Soviet Union and Iran.

Chapter 4 concerns the methodology of this study. The units of analysis (ethno-territorial encounters) will be defined and the explaining factors which are derived from the discussions in the previous chapters will be operationalized with special attention to the measurement of the ethno-geographic mosaic configuration. Furthermore, the data and methods of analysis used in this study will be discussed. These methods concern case studies of the ethno-territorial conflicts involved and qualitative comparative and statistical analyses of all ethno-territorial encounters.

In order to identify the ethno-territorial encounters, Chapter 5 provides an overview of the ethno-territorial groups in each region in addition to their main linguistic and religious affiliations. The complete list of ethno-territorial encounters is provided in Appendix 5.

Chapter 6 presents the results of the case studies of ethno-territorial conflict: the South Ossetian and Abkhazian conflicts in Georgia; the North Ossetian-Ingush conflict over Prigorodny and the Chechen conflicts in Russia; the Armenian-Azeri conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan; the Osh conflict between the Uzbeks and Kyrgyz in Kyrgyzstan; and finally, the Tajikistani Civil War, with the participation also of Uzbeks and Pamiris, in alliance with and against Tajiks. There are no ethno-territorial conflicts in Fereydan.

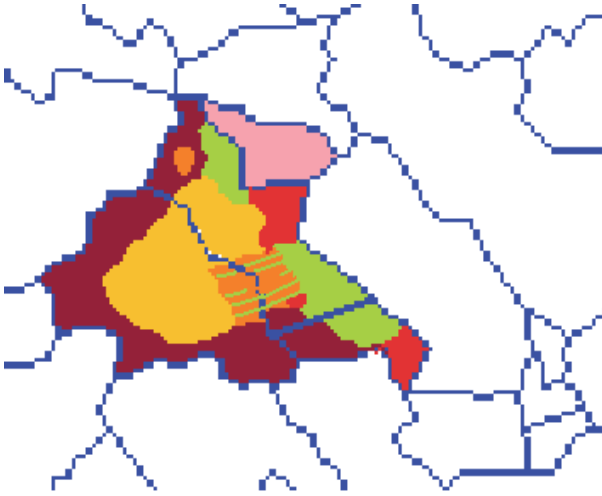
Chapter 7 presents the results of the qualitative comparative and statistical analyses of all ethno-territorial encounters.

Finally, Chapter 8 offers the conclusions of this study and confronts the results with the existing literature.



- 1= Central Asia**
- 2= The Caucasus**
- 3= Fereydan**

*Figure 1.1: Location of Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Fereydan*



## Ethnic Groups in Fereydan

-  Georgian
-  Bakhtiari
-  Persian-Speaker
-  Khwansari
-  Armenian
-  Turkic-speaker

*Figure 1.2: Ethnic distribution in Fereydan*



Figure 1.3: Ethnic distribution in the Caucasus

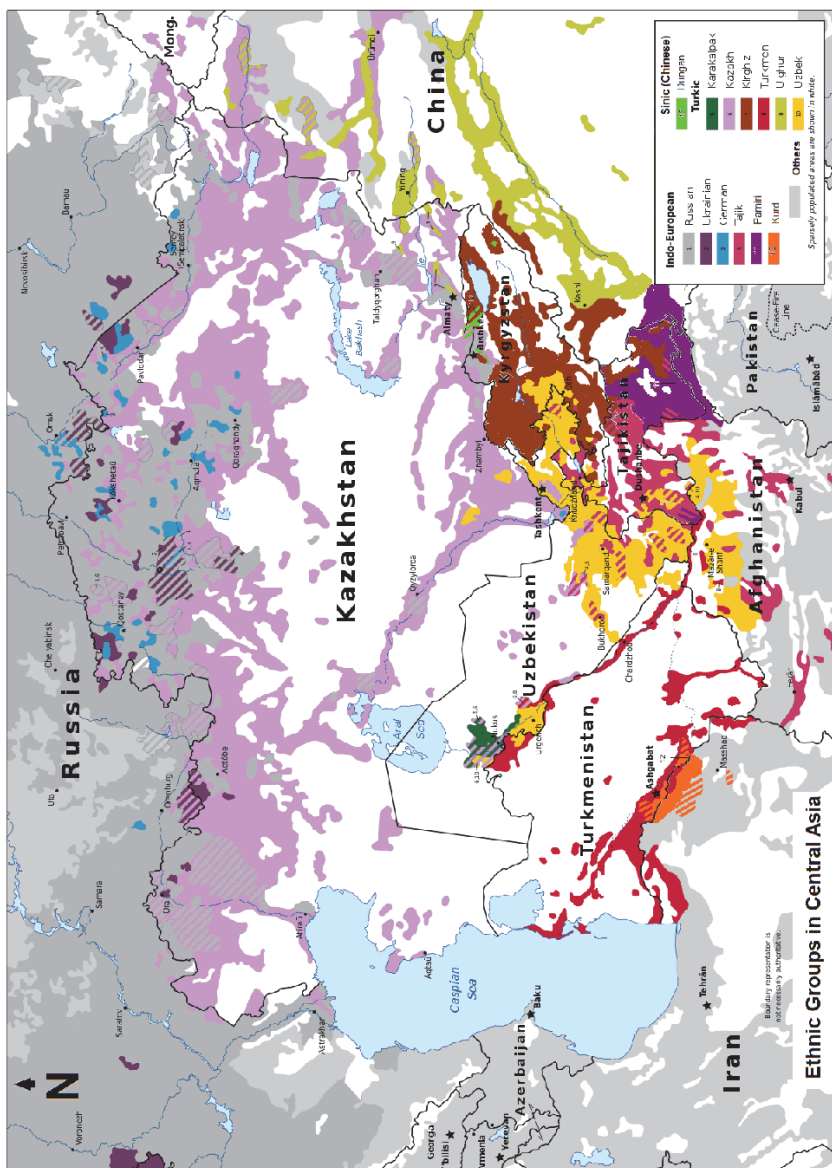


Figure 1.4: Ethnic distribution in Central Asia





## **Chapter Two**

# **2**

## **Theoretical Framework**

What do we mean by ethno-territorial conflict? What are ethnic groups, and what is their relationship with nations and states? Which factors are very likely to contribute to the emergence of ethno-territorial conflicts? This chapter aims to answer these questions. After having defined ethno-territorial conflict, the concepts ethnicity, nation, and state will be discussed.

The concepts ethnicity, politicized ethnicity, nation, and nationalism are essential to understanding ethno-territorial conflicts. Therefore, these concepts will be discussed before discussing factors which may contribute to such conflicts. The concepts territory and territoriality are related to these concepts, notably to nation and nationalism, and will also be discussed here.

After having discussed these concepts, possible factors responsible for the eruption of ethno-territorial conflict will be reviewed on the basis of existing theories. The impact of the newly introduced factor, ethno-geographic configuration, on ethno-territorial conflict will also be assessed. At the end of this chapter, a broad and abstract model is presented, which includes the theoretically relevant factors for the occurrence of ethno-territorial conflict.

### ***Ethno-Territorial Conflict***

Ethno-territorial conflict is a type of ethnic conflict with a clear territorial dimension. In such a conflict ethnic groups whose homelands border each other fight over a contested area, or one ethnic group fights against a state for political control over its (perceived) homeland. Speaking of ethno-territorial conflicts, three elements should be discussed: ethnicity (as collectivity), territory, and violence. The first criterion is the ethnic character of the conflict:

Generally speaking the term “conflict” describes a situation in which two or more actors pursue incompatible, yet from their individual perspective entirely just, goals. Ethnic conflicts are one particular form of such conflict: that in which the goals of at least one conflict party are defined in

(exclusively) ethnic terms, and in which the primary fault line of confrontation is one of ethnic distinctions.... Thus, ethnic conflicts are a form of group conflict in which at least one of the parties involved interprets the conflict, its causes, and potential remedies along an actually existing or perceived discriminating ethnic divide. (Cordell & Wolff 2010: 4-5; Wolff 2006: 2)

In an ethnic conflict at least one party is an ethnic group (Brubaker & Laitin 1998: 428; Cordell & Wolff 2010: 5; Wolff 2006: 2). The other party can be either another ethnic group or a state associated with a dominant ethnic group. Being a sub-type of an ethnic conflict, an ethno-territorial conflict also has a clear ethnic character.

In contrast to many prominent studies such as *Minorities at Risk: A Global View of Ethnopolitical Conflict* (Gurr 1993), “Peoples against States: Ethnopolitical Conflict and the Changing World System” (Gurr 1994), *Peoples versus States: Minorities at Risk in the New Century* (Gurr [ed.] 2000), and *Ethnic Conflict in World Politics* (Harff & Gurr 2004), in this current study ethnic and ethno-territorial conflict include both *inter-ethnic* and *ethno-nationalist versus the state* conflicts. In other words, this study also includes the (hypothetical) conflicts between two “minorities” and tries to explain them. In this study the political character of ethno-territorial conflict is manifested in the relationships between ethnic groups mutually, and between ethnic groups within a state and the state itself, often dominated by or associated with a certain ethnic group. This latter type is in fact equivalent to a situation in which one minority group fights against a majority ethnic group that controls and dominates the state. This type of ethno-territorial conflict is called a *vertical ethno-territorial conflict*. Separatist and autonomist wars are examples of the vertical type. Due to its logic, the vertical type of ethno-territorial conflicts are more likely to appear in countries in which the dominant understanding and definition of nation is an ethnic nation (see further in this chapter). A *horizontal ethno-territorial conflict* is a type of conflict in which two ethnic groups of the same level of hierarchy fight about the ownership of and authority and control over an area. Their attachment to and claim over a territory makes these ethnic groups, in fact, ethno-territorial groups.

The second criterion of an ethno-territorial conflict is its violent character. Not all types of ethnic strife can be regarded as ethnic conflict. An ethnic conflict is a violent conflict (Brubaker & Laitin 1998: 428; Cordell & Wolff 2010: 5; Wolff 2006: 2-3). For the non-violent (and less-violent) conflicts, more appropriately “terms such as ‘tension’, ‘dispute’ and ‘unease’ are used” (Wolff 2006: 3). As Cordell and Wolff (2010: 5) state, ethnic conflict of interest can hardly even be called “tension”, let alone conflict, as ethnic groups should systematically exercise violence for strategic purposes in order to justify speaking of ethnic conflict. Being

a sub-type of ethnic conflict, an ethno-territorial conflict has to be a violent conflict.

Although in this study violence is regarded as an indispensable aspect of any ethno-territorial conflict, the term “violent” should be operationalized. Numbers of deaths can be indicators of violence. Indeed many databases set a minimum number of human casualties in a certain time-span in order to speak of an ethnic conflict.

The third criterion is the territorial character. An ethno-territorial conflict is an ethnic conflict with an explicit territorial character. Territory and territoriality play a central role in any ethno-territorial conflict. Although one can think of (hypothetical) non-territorial forms of an ethnic conflict, territory and territoriality are indispensable aspects of any ethno-territorial conflict. Dispute over territory has been the cause of many wars between or within states.<sup>8</sup> Territorial ethnic conflicts, or ethno-territorial conflicts as we call them in this current study, are those ethnic conflicts in which the dispute is about the ownership of and authority and control over an area. A territorial conflict is always political because it is closely tied with power relations: “who gets what” is dependent on power relations, but the “what” itself—that is, territory and its resources—determine the power relations to a certain degree, because next to resources territory offers the controlling party the possibility to control its human resources and mobilize its population.

Being an ethnic conflict with prominent territorial character, at least one party in an ethno-territorial conflict is an ethno-territorial group. Simply put, ethno-territorial groups are rooted ethnic groups that place a claim on a territory, either based on historical ownership or on large demographic weight in an area. An ethno-territorial conflict is either between two such rooted ethnic groups or between one such rooted ethnic group and a state associated with another such rooted ethnic group. In addition, a state asserts a legal claim on its territory.

In conclusion, an ethno-territorial conflict is a violent conflict between two rooted ethnic groups—or between one such ethnic group and a state dominated by and associated with an ethnic group—who fight for the control and ownership of a disputed area or its political status.

## ***Ethnos and Ethnicity***

There are not many concepts in the social sciences which have caused so much cacophony as ethnicity, nation, and nationality. Much ambiguity is

---

<sup>8</sup> An interesting book in this regard is Stephan Wolff's (2003) *Disputed Territories: The Transnational Dynamics of Ethnic Conflict Settlement*, in which he discusses ethno-territorial cross-border conflicts.

due to the fact that by an ethnic group, different authors, at different times, have meant different entities. In the (recent) past as well as today, social entities such as tribes, religious communities, linguistic communities, racial minorities, and migrants have been called ethnic groups. In addition, many authors use the terms *nation* and *nationality* where they would be better to use the term *ethnic group* or *ethnicity*.

The term ethnicity is derived from the Greek *ethnos*. At times, the term *ethnos* is also used as “ethnie” in English, as is the case in French. In practice, however, the terms ethnic group or ethnic community are more often used than *ethnie*. The term *ethnic* is itself an adjective derived from the rarely used *ethnie*. Perhaps to fill the gap the term *ethnicity* was introduced into English, as a noun. Although related, by ethnicity is meant something different from *ethnic group*, *ethnic community*, or *ethnie*: whereas those latter terms refer to collectivities, the term ethnicity refers to a quality which is attributed to those collectivities. The following phrases can be useful in order to understand the complex interrelation: “To which ethnic group do you belong?” is more or less equal to “What is your ethnicity?”, and “What has ethnicity to do with it?” is more or less equal to “What has the membership of an ethnic group to do with it?” These terms refer to a cultural quality to which one is ascribed.

The term *ethnos* was used by the ancient Greeks as a designation for non-Greeks, while the Greeks themselves were called *genos Hellenon* (Hutchinson & Smith: 1996: 4). The association between *ethnos* and the “other(s)” seems to have persisted to modern times. The Ottoman Empire had offered the non-Muslim, minority *millets*, i.e. religious communities, a certain degree of autonomy in their internal communal affairs. This system was called the *millet* system.<sup>9</sup> The Greek Orthodox community was a recognized *millet* in that system. In fact, the word *millet* was used, in a way, as equal to its ancient Greek equivalent *ethnos*. It is remarkable that the word *millet* in modern Turkish and Persian (*mellat*) and *ethnos* in modern Greek are used for the English word “nation”.

Although the term “ethnicity” was already in use in the 1940s and 1950s, it was only in the 1970s that this term gained momentum in social sciences. Glazer & Moynihan (1975: 1) began their introduction by writing that “ethnicity [in the sense which we use it] seems to be a new term”. They used the concept ethnicity to indicate the generally conflicting relations between the subgroups and the larger society (see also Banks 1996: 73-75). Many other scholars also regard ethnic groups as subgroups within a larger society. This position is verbalized in the definition of ethnic group by Richard Schermerhorn (1978: 12):

---

<sup>9</sup> A similar system had already existed in the pre-Islamic times in the predominantly Zoroastrian Iranian Sasanid Empire, in which the Christians enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy.

An ethnic group is ... a collectivity within a larger society having real or putative common ancestry, memories of a shared historical past, and a cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements defined as the epitome of their peoplehood. Examples of such symbolic elements are: kinship patterns, physical contiguity (as in localism or sectionalism), religious affiliation, language or dialect forms, tribal affiliation, nationality, phenotypical features, or any combination of these. A necessary accompaniment is some consciousness of kind among members of the group.

Hutchinson and Smith (1996) have a slightly different definition. They do not place an emphasis on positions as minorities or subgroups within a larger society but also do not reject the existence of such cases. According to them an *ethnie* (a term that they use instead of ethnic group) is “a named human population with myths of common ancestry, shared historical memories, one or more elements of common culture, a link with a homeland and a sense of solidarity among at least some of its members” (Hutchinson & Smith 1996: 6). This definition is compatible with different views on ethnicity but allows a definition of ethnic groups without their relational position vis-à-vis other groups or the larger society. Ethnic *groups*, whether subgroups or not, should not be confused with ethnic *minorities*. Certainly, not only the minorities but also majorities can have ethnic identity (see also Banks 1996: 149-160). If ethnicity is regarded (correctly) as a cultural quality, then the majorities who have a culture also logically have ethnicity and are members of an ethnic group. Certainly, this current study does not limit an ethnic group to a minority group.

The cacophony about ethnicity and ethnic groups results also from the interchangeable usage of the concepts ethnic group and nation. Surely there is a strong relationship between the concepts ethnic group and nation. While many are aware of their difference, many journalists, policy makers, politicians, and even scholars use these concepts as identical. For example, according to the scholar Walker Connor, “[a] nation is a nation, is a state, is an ethnic group, is a...” (1978).<sup>10</sup> Indeed, “the dividing line between ethnic unit and nation is a very blurred one” (Saul 1979: 354), but there is a line, or better said a grey transitional area where ethnic group and nation merge and beyond which they are distinguishable. It is not possible to speak about nations and ethnic groups separately (see further in this chapter). It is, therefore, appropriate to differentiate between the two concepts but also to pay attention to their

---

<sup>10</sup> This is the title of one of Walker Connor’s (1978) oft-cited papers: “A Nation is a Nation, is a State, is an Ethnic Group, is a...”.

relationship. Nations consist of one or more ethnic groups, but not all ethnic groups are nations.

Another aspect of this cacophony is the fact that there are so many theoretical views on ethnicity. While there are certain differences in these views, the differences are usually exaggerated. There are not as many factual differences as there are different points of emphasis. Most authors do acknowledge that there are many dimensions and aspects of ethnicity but they pay attention to one or a few more than the others. There is not as much denial of certain aspects as there are stresses on different aspects.

Theoretical views on ethnicity can be grouped and placed along a continuum of which the two polar opposites are primordialism and instrumentalism. However, as there are too many views, there exist too many names and “ism”s. Instrumentalism itself is usually used as an umbrella term for theoretical views which criticize primordialism and is called by many authors by other names such as constructivism, circumstantialism, situationalism, functionalism, mobilizationism, etc., as a polar opposite to primordialism, or a different label, or a variant thereof (e.g. essentialism, ethnic nepotism, culturalism, etc.).

Moreover, there is no general agreement on who is who and where he stands in this continuum. For example, Barth, a major critic of classical primordialism, is “nearly always described as an instrumentalist” (Eriksen 2002: 54) but is charged with primordialism by Abner Cohen (1974: xii-xv), another critic of primordialism. Horowitz’s view,<sup>11</sup> which is often (correctly) regarded as a primordialist<sup>12</sup> one, is named as a social psychological one by John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (1996: 10). A. D. Smith is an influential theoretician whose theoretical view, more often than not, is regarded as a primordialist one. He, nevertheless, opts to call his theoretical view rather as an “ethno-symbolic” one (Smith 1999: 40; Hutchinson & Smith 1996: 10). Many authors call A. D. Smith’s theoretical view “perennialist”.

Whatever the names may be, two polar opposites are distinguishable, one of which emphasizes subjective emotional aspects, kinship, and cultural elements as essences of ethnicity, while the other polar opposite emphasizes the fact that ethnicity is dynamic and is a product of rational choice or policies, or in any case a response to certain circumstances. The different designations make the subtle differences and nuances clearer. Many alternative designations for primordialism stress the importance of the (often ascriptive) cultural elements or the often

---

<sup>11</sup> Horowitz’s most-cited book is titled *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, in which he emphasized the importance of kinship and the resemblance of ethnicity to families (1985: 55-92).

<sup>12</sup> It seems that primordialism has obtained a negative connotation in the social scientific literature. This is, however, not my view. By classifying someone as primordialist, I do not try to reject his or her views.

static, subjective, and emotional aspects of ethnicity. On the other hand, the alternative designations of instrumentalism stress the dynamic and reactive aspects of ethnicity. Simply put, according to the instrumentalist view, an ethnic group cannot exist in separation from other ethnic groups, as it takes two to tango! According to the relational character of the instrumentalist point of view, ethnic groups do not exist on their own merits and are only existent because of their place in a larger society.

The primordialist-instrumentalist debate which began in the 1970s was only the beginning of an incessant debate on the meaning of and approaches to and theoretical views on the concepts of ethnicity and ethnic group, a debate which is still developing. Since then, the theoretical discussion on ethnic groups has been framed in a dichotomous way, or better stated, in the aforementioned bipolar continuum. The primordialist theoretical view is older than the prevalent debate. In fact, instrumentalism can be seen as a reaction to primordialism's shortcomings, but it does not mean that there is no truth in primordialism as a theoretical view. It is especially hard to deny the truth in its modern and modified versions. The term primordialism, in the sense that is used in the social sciences, was coined by Shils (1957). Primordialists assert that a group's identity is a given and that within every society particular fundamental, (perhaps irrational) solidarities exist, which are based on blood, race, language, religion, etc. Clifford Geertz (1963) is generally known as the intellectual father of the primordialist view on ethnicity.

According to primordialists, ethnicity is based on pre-existing fundamental cultural aspects such as kinship, language, religion, and folkloric customs. When someone is born into a community, he or she is, according to primordialists, automatically a member of that community. (S)he is attached to that community by "blood relationship" and kinship and ideally displays the racial and phenotypical features of that ethnic group. His cultural traits are then mere ascriptions. (S)he speaks the language of that community, confesses the religion of that community, and preserves the traditions of that community. In this sense (s)he is automatically a member of that community and therefore possesses emotional ties to that community.

This emotional aspect of primordialism regards ethnic groups, in fact, as an extension of familial and clan ties. Van den Berghe's (1978a; 1978b; 1979; 1986; 1987 [1981]; 1995) socio-biological understanding of ethnicity is a primordialist one heavily based on racial and biological characteristics of human groups. According to this understanding, ethnic nepotism is natural and innate to human nature, because like any other species, humans have an inclination to their kin and rivalry with or aversion to (more) distant or non-kin groups. Although a person's emotional attachment to the ethnic group cannot be neglected, its



similarity to familial or even clan relations seems to be exaggerated. Members of a family (or even a clan) know each other and often have harmonious interests, while members of an ethnic group are usually anonymous to each other and do not have necessarily harmonious interests. Nonetheless, even though less than is the case in the context of family or clan membership, the members of an ethnic group do indeed share certain interests or perceive some interests as common ethnic interests. This is especially the case in political environments, where ethnicity is politicized and one's personal well-being is dependent on his or her membership of an ethnic group and the privileges associated with it.

A very narrow understanding of primordialism, in the sense that the ethnic identity is based the membership of an ethnic community by birth and on fixed cultural content, suggests that cultural changes should be viewed as a process of evaporation of the group's identity rather than its redefinition. It is, therefore, appropriate to also define ethnic groups on bases other than cultural traits alone.

The polar opposite of primordialism, generally known as instrumentalism, is promoted by many different critics, who all have in common that they regard ethnicity as a dynamic concept rather than as a static one. According to these views ethnicity is a result of mobilization, organization, and interaction. Glazer & Moynihan (1975), two of the most prominent theoreticians associated with instrumentalism, maintain that ethnic groups are constructed entities and function as useful instruments to reach collective advantages, especially in social contexts which are characterized by a high degree of competition. From this point of view, the potential members of an ethnic group are mobilized around certain political goals. Ethnicity is, therefore, politically relevant. As they wrote in their earlier seminal publication, *Beyond the Melting Pot* (Glazer & Moynihan 1963: 310): "Social and political institutions do not merely respond to ethnic interests; a great number of institutions exist for the specific purpose of serving ethnic interests. This in turn tends to perpetuate them".

A narrow understanding of instrumentalism suggests that ethnic groups do not exist naturally but are formed in order to pursue a goal and as a response to different situations and circumstances. Such a narrow and rational-choice view on ethnicity is difficult to maintain. Culture is a central aspect of ethnicity. The cultural dimension and aspects of ethnicity could be dispensed with totally, if ethnicity was situational and pursuing a goal was the main rationale behind it. People could better pursue their goals by formations such as labor unions and political parties. Even though instrumentalists tend to place the emphasis elsewhere, they cannot totally dispense with culture. In his seminal book, *Ethnicity and*

*Nationalism*, Thomas Hylland Eriksen (2002), who holds a firm instrumentalist position, combines the cultural dimension of ethnicity with instrumentalist logics of situationalism and relationalism. According to Eriksen (2002: 12): “For ethnicity to come about, the groups must have a minimum of contact with each other, and they must entertain ideas of each other as being culturally different from themselves. If these conditions are not fulfilled, there is no ethnicity, for ethnicity is essentially an aspect of a relationship, not a property of a group”. In addition, he maintains that “ethnic relations are fluid and negotiable; that their importance varies situationally; and that, for all their claims to primordiality and cultural roots, ethnic identities can be consciously manipulated” (Eriksen 2002: 21).

A well-known classical theoretical view on ethnicity and ethnic groups is that of Fredrik Barth (1969), who focuses on the “ethnic boundaries and their persistence”. Although recognizing the relative importance of cultural elements, Barth (1969: 10-15) does not regard ethnic groups merely as fixed static carriers of culture, but rather as social organizations formed on the basis of interactions between them, and allegiances between their members. According to him, ethnic groups are separated and distinguishable from each other by social boundaries, and hence these boundaries are indispensable for the study of ethnic groups and understanding of inter-ethnic relations. Ethnic boundaries are kinds of social boundaries which determine the exclusion or inclusion of the (potential) constituent members of an ethnic group, as a social organization (Barth 1969: 15-17).<sup>13</sup> According to this perspective, preservation of ethnic distinctiveness does not depend on the isolation of the groups; on the contrary, it is preserved owing to the processes of contact and social interaction between ethnic groups. Barth’s perspective allows, on the one hand, exploration of ethnic formation from the subjective view of its members, and on the other hand, it allows a goal-oriented rational action analysis of it by recognizing social and political relations inherent to these processes. In this sense, Barth’s perspective reconciles primordialism with its polar opposite.

The usage of many names for the polar opposite(s) of primordialism (e.g. instrumentalism, constructivism, situationalism, circumstantialism, etc.), which subject primordialism to similar but yet slightly different criticisms, indicates that the polar opposite of primordialism is itself multi-faceted and, therefore, there exist much

---

<sup>13</sup> In one of my earlier writings (Rezvani 2008a: 602-603), I presented indications and evidence for the fact that religious affiliation appeared to be an ethnic boundary in Iran to the extent that Jahangir Khan, a Christian of Georgian origin, could not fit into the Iranian Georgian realm because Iranian Georgians were Shi’ite Muslims. Owing to his faith, he crossed the prevalent social boundary and entered the Christian Armenian realm and in fact became an Armenian.

diversity and to some extent even disagreement among the critics of primordialism, as well. It also indicates the complexity of the concept ethnicity. As a matter of fact, the criticism of primordialism is not as much of primordialism's logics as it is of its shortcomings in explanation and understanding of many dimensions and aspects of ethnicity which remain underexposed and obscured by classical primordialism. The understanding of ethnic phenomena does not require denying primordial sentiments and cultural elements but rather complementing them with other aspects and elements.

Clifford Geertz, often known as a classical primordialist, has tried, in a way, to reconcile primordialism with instrumentalism. Geertz (2000 [1973]) in a later account discussing the nationalist movements in post-colonial countries after the Second World War, observes that two tendencies of "essentialism" and "epochalism" are visible in the processes of formation and consolidation of collective identities. Essentialism is based on "the indigenous life style"—that is, on the local fortification of the indigenous institutions and traditions, recovering, re-discovering, and revaluing cultural roots, national character, and even race. Epochalism, on the other hand, is based on "the spirit of the age"—that is, the interpretation of contemporary history by social actors (Geertz 2000: 243-254). Geertz is pleading for comprehensive studies which consider the political realities of the time but do not neglect the cultural and symbolic aspects of identity. Ideologies of identity formation are rarely purely essentialist or purely epochalist, and there often exist dynamic interactions between both tendencies (Geertz 2000: 243). This perspective can be regarded as an effort to reconcile primordialism and instrumentalism with each other. Epochalism does not depart from a static point of view. To be precise, it can be called a circumstantialist perspective, because it represents in fact a reaction to circumstances. Essentialism in this perspective means that primordial sentiments, cultural aspects, and the generally assumed givens are not neglected by Geertz.

The fact that many authors emphasize the social relations and boundaries (Barth 1969) and the political character of the ethnicity (Glazer & Moynihan 1975) does not mean that they neglect primordial sentiments totally or do not acknowledge the importance of cultural elements at all. Glazer & Moynihan (1975: 18-20) state that ethnicity is not only a mechanism to obtain collective interests, but that culture also plays an important role through the "affective ties" with which the "political interests" are combined. Even authors who legitimately question the primordial, affective, and ineffable character of ethnic ties (e.g. Eller & Coughlan 1993; Eller 1999) do acknowledge the importance of culture and history in the arena of ethnic relations. The reason behind Abner Cohen's (1974: xii-xv) charging of Barth with primordialism might lie in

the fact that Barth himself recognizes and acknowledges the *imperative* character of ethnic identity, in the sense that “it cannot be disregarded and temporarily set aside by other definitions of situation” (Barth 1969: 17). Another reason might be the fact that even though Barth’s primary focus lies on ethnic boundaries, he does not neglect culture:

I have argued that boundaries are also maintained between ethnic units and that consequently it is possible to specify the nature of continuity and persistence of such units.... [E]thnic boundaries are conserved in each case by a set of cultural features. The persistence of the unit then depends on the persistence of these cultural differentiae while continuity can also be specified through the changes of the unit brought about by changes in the boundary-defining cultural differentiae. (Barth 1969: 38)

It would be rather stubborn and naïve to state that ethnicity is only a social organization aimed at gaining political, economic, and social advantageous. Cultural content does indeed matter. By cultural content I mean culture and cultural elements, or even—as they are often called—cultural markers in concrete and specific terms. It is not culture in an abstract sense but refers to things such as the language a certain people speaks, the religion they confess, etc. Cultural content is an important aspect of ethnic identity and hence also of inter-ethnic relations, because ethnic groups tend to define themselves on the basis of their perceived differences from other groups. Only by virtue of cultural content is one group distinguishable from “others”. In addition, group membership by virtue of descent or “blood relationship”, as well as feelings of belonging, do matter. It can happen that someone does not practice the cultural traditions, does not confess the religion of his/her ethnicity, or does not speak his/her ethnic language, but still belongs to a group. Why? Because (s)he is attached to that ethnic group by kinship relations. Moreover, one can deny one’s ethnicity and step out of it; but when this does not happen, it means that (s)he does have primordial sentiments to a certain degree. If one does not like his/her ethnic affiliation, (s)he either steps out of it (if possible) or tries to do his/her best in order to be “proud” of his/her background; otherwise, (s)he suffers from “cognitive dissonance”.

Ethnic groups are primarily cultural collectivities. This, however, does not deny that they can, and often do, have political relevance. Not only do members construct an ethnic group in order to gain political advantages, but the reverse can also be true: politics can construct an ethnic group. The political context itself can impose definitions and boundaries on groups and by this means construct ethnic groups. In different political and social contexts, ethnic groups can be defined differently. Often state laws define the boundaries of an ethnic group. This legal enforcement usually has political, social, and economic

consequences. Members of an ethnic group can opt to behave accordingly to claim their privileges but can also opt to resist and try to change this categorization when they see it as unjust and detrimental to their interests. Indeed, in many states such as Lebanon, the former Soviet Union, and Yugoslavia, ethnic categories were more than just cultural categories; they were politicized and hence were also political categories. In many countries, for example in the former Soviet Union, the allocation and distribution of ethnic groups in different administrative units determined to a certain degree their members' privileges or deprivation (Bremmer 1997; Martin 2001a; Martin 2001b; Slezkine 1994). In many countries, for example in the former Soviet Union, its successor states, and the USA, census could be regarded both as a political instrument and as a political force itself because it plays an important role in defining the ethnic boundaries—it can divide and label population, not necessarily but often in ethnic terms (Bhagat 2001; Bhagat 2003; Hirsch 1997; Hirsch 2005; Kertzer & Arel 2002; Waters 1990; Waters 2002).

Ethnic groups are not always politicized and not always defined in legal terms, but nations—however one might define them—are always defined in legal terms and are always political categories, as they are entitled to a state, either in reality or in their own perception. This is exactly one of the main differences between the concepts of ethnic group and nation.

## ***State, Nation and Nationalism***

The concept of nation is intimately connected with that of ethnic group and the distinction between these concepts is often blurred. Many people, even many scholars, can be confused about these two concepts. Their distinction, however, is not unclear. A nation is a community whose members subjectively feel that they belong together and who already possess a state or feel entitled to have one. It is often said that a nation is an imagined community (Anderson 1983), because not all its members know each other but, nevertheless, feel that they belong together.

A state is the political organization of a nation. States are territorial entities. A state is not only a collection of institutions and laws, but it is also a territory. State laws and institutions gain their meaning only in combination with territoriality. A state can exert its power and implement its policies only in its defined territory. In simple words, a state is the territorial manifestation of a nation, notably a type of nation which is called a civic nation. (This concept will be discussed further below.)

A nation may be constituted by only one ethnic group, but it may also be constituted by many ethnic groups. There are generally two views on nation: a civic nation and an ethnic nation. The civic nation comprises

all citizens of a state. This view is prevalent in American terminology, in which the concepts of “nation” and “country” are used interchangeably. Therefore, this view on nation is also called a territorial nation. This does not imply, however, that a territorial nation has no ethnic basis. It can be based on either one or more ethnic groups. In many states, especially those in Africa, these ethnic groups do not share a common history or are not intimately connected to each other more than they are to groups in other states. On the other hand, there are many nations which are multi-ethnic and their members share long history and a similar culture with each other. These latter countries, for example Iran, India, and to a certain degree also China, are usually those states which have ancient roots in history and show a certain continuity in the course of time.

In the second view on nation the concepts of “ethnic group” and “nation” are used interchangeably. The ethnic nation comprises only one ethnic group. Ethno-nationalists maintain an ethnic view on nation. The ethno-nationalist ideal is one country for one (dominant) ethnic group. According to the logic of this view, all ethnic groups other than one ethnic group are doomed to take a subordinate position. Ethnic minorities are consequently excluded from the ethnic nationalism prevalent in the polity in whose territory they are living. On the other hand, the civic view of nation does not exclude people’s (potential) membership of a nation on the basis of their ethnicity. According to Bhiku Parekh (1999: 69), who holds a civic view:

National identity...is a matter of moral and emotional identification with a particular community based on a shared loyalty to its constitutive principles and participation in its collective self-understanding. It creates a sense of common belonging, provides a basis for collective identification, fosters common loyalties, and gives the members of the community the confidence to live with and even delight in their disagreements and cultural differences.

Civic nationalism can be embraced by all citizens; indeed, many authors (e.g. Ignatief 1999) conceive civic nationalism as a benign phenomenon. According to Parekh (1999: 69), “the identity of a political community is located in its political structure, and not in the widely shared personal characteristics of its individual members”. At the same time, “members of a multicultural society belong to different ethnic, religious and cultural groups, and these identities deeply matter to them. The prevailing view of national identity should allow for such multiple identities without subjecting those involved to charges of divided loyalties” (Parekh 1999: 69-70).

In Gellner’s (1983; 1997; 1999) view, nations are modern formations which are brought together by modern means of

communication and education. Gellner's theoretical understanding of nation-building (i.e. the modernization theory) is more in harmony with the creation of a civic nation than with the creation of an ethnic nation. Logically, creation of a civic nation is less dependent on ethnic markers but is rather heavily dependent on the possibilities of extension of the national identity to a larger group of members. In fact, Gellner's notion of nation-building is more or less the same as the extension of "the high culture" of the elite into larger groups of people, a process which contributes to make a coherent society, called "nation": "[High] cultures define and make nations: it is not the case, as nationalists believe and proclaim, that independently and previously existing nations seek the affirmation and independent life of 'their' culture. Cultures 'have' and make nations; nations initially neither exist nor have or do anything" (Gellner 1997: 69). In this view, nation-building is dissemination and standardization of a high culture. Although not stressed by Gellner, whose approach is historical to a high degree, this high culture is not necessarily an elite culture but can be also defined as core values which are often agreed upon in some kind of social contract. Of course, nation-building in this sense implies a certain degree of homogenization. Not only the degree but also the nature of homogenization and homogeneity is determined by conscious or unconscious political planning. As the concept of nation is intimately tied to that of society, and as a nation is thought to be a social construct (see Anderson 1983; Hobsbawm 1990; Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983), the ways in which society is shaped do influence the definition and perception of a nation. Education has the ability to disseminate "high culture" and has always been seen as a means of nation-building. Moreover, it disseminates the ideas and views of how a nation should be constructed. It disseminates the interpretation of national history, describes the "desirable" state of affairs in the society, and gives directions to its future development. Other modern means which contribute to the dissemination of high culture to the masses, and hence homogenization of the society in one way or another, are conscription, radio and TV broadcasting, and the press.

On the other hand, according to the primordialist or, as many might say, perennialist view of A. D. Smith (1981; 1986; 1999; 2003), which he regards as an "ethno-symbolic" approach (Smith 1999: 40), nation-building is based on some pre-modern ethnic and symbolic components which give the members of a nation a sense of identity. According to this view, national identity is more or less the same as a pre-existing ethnic identity, and ethnic nationalism is a mere expression of it.

According to Benedict Anderson (1983), a nation is an imagined community—a community of persons, often anonymous to each other, but who, nevertheless, feel they belong together and to the same community.

An identity based on cultural markers determines to a certain degree the ethnic identity, but for national identity and citizenship more important are the feelings a people have of belonging, attachment, and loyalty to the society as a whole. These feelings of belonging and loyalty can be enhanced by the press, radio and television broadcasting, and other modern means—notably education. Assuming that nations are constructions or imaginations,<sup>14</sup> the functional role of education becomes evident. Education is a method which disseminates ideals about the type of nation—whether civic or ethnic—and standard(ized) (high) culture to citizens. Education, as a mean which reaches the masses, can be very influential in the process of nation-building and national self-definition.

Owing to the aforementioned reasons, the primordialist notion of the nation tends to be an ethnic one, and the modernist notion of the state tends to be a civic one. The modernist view of nation-building, of which Gellner is one of the main theoreticians, is valid in the sense that it explains and describes the process of bringing together people and making them believe that they are a collectivity, and by this making them a politically relevant collectivity. The modernist view explains better civic integration, while the primordialist view holds a predominantly ethnic notion of nations. It is deliberately said above “tends to be”, because modernist theory can go hand in hand with, and explain the building of, an ethnic nation, and primordialism (or perennialism) can go hand in hand with a civic nation, in the sense that one can be proud of one’s multi-ethnic, multi-cultural nation and feel emotional attachment to its culture and values, especially when it is an ancient or old nation.

Accepting the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural character of a national society means the acceptance of a civic nation, a nation in which all ethnic and cultural groups have feelings of belonging and possess equal rights and obligations: all citizens on the territory of a state are the state’s nation.

A main difference between nations and ethnic groups is their connection to a territory. Nations, due to their intimate connections with states, are territorial entities. Territoriality in this sense is legally sanctioned and often undisputed ownership of a territory. Territoriality of ethnic groups is less clear. They often do place claims of indigeneity in and hence ownership of a certain area, and after all their living area is one of the main denominators of their ethnic identity. Nations, on the other

---

<sup>14</sup> There are scholars (e.g. Hobsbawm 1983a; 1983b) who state that much national tradition is invented. I am among those who do not deny the truth in this statement but, nevertheless, argue that such statements do not deserve universal acceptance. Further discussion of these issues is not within the scope of this current study. I have discussed this issue concisely along with relevant statements advanced by Hanson (1983) and Friedman (1992a; 1992b) in one of my published papers (Rezvani 2009a: 55-57 and 72, note 6).



hand, are associated with a state that possess sovereignty over a certain territory. The association between a people and a territory is more pronounced in the case of civic nations than ethnic nations and ethnic groups. A civic nation is in fact a territorial nation. Hence, in this case the state territoriality collides with national territoriality; the territory belongs to the state and its nation. Ethnic nations are in fact ethnic groups that possess a territorial state or aspire to have one. Ethnic groups are distinguishable, on the basis of their language, religion, race, and last but not least, habitat or living area. Although most ethnic groups' ethnonyms are not derived from geographic names, it is, nevertheless, not difficult to find many ethnic groups whose ethnonyms are derived from their habitat or living area. Examples are the *Polynesians*, the *Yemenite* and the *Iraqi Jews*, the *Rif Berbers* (that is, Berbers from the Rif mountains of northern Morocco), the *Afrikaners*, *Punjabis*, (that is, those from the land of five rivers, or in other words, Punjab), *West Saharans*, *Surinamese Hindoostanis*. As Hindoostan is a territorial denomination for India, the latter ethnonym is derived from both their present and previous homelands. Even the Gypsy group called Sinti, I argue, may have derived their ethnonym from Sindh, that is, Indus. The association of a nation, even an ethnic nation, with a territory is even clearer. All nations are ideally associated with a state. A state is not only a political organization; it is a political organization in a defined territory. Even ethnic nations, which are defined by ethnicity rather than territory, are associated with one state as their national motherland. For example, Poland is viewed by most Poles as their national motherland, even though many Poles are living in neighboring states. Civic nations, on the other hand, are always identified by their association with a state's territory: an American or a US citizen is a citizen of the political territory called the United States of America, and a Swiss belongs to the Swiss nation, which is defined by its inhabitation of or origination from the political territory called Switzerland. In more simple words: although a Kenyan is from Kenya, a Massai can be from either Kenya or Tanzania. Moreover, an Iraqi is from Iraq, but a Hungarian is not necessarily from Hungary; he can also be from Romania or Slovakia.

The distinctions between civic and ethnic nations are ideal typical, and both types of nations can exist together. In many countries, many ethnic groups are defined or identify themselves as ethnic nations, while being a constituent part of a territorial civic nation. A few examples are Kurds in Iraq, Basques, Catalans, and Galicians in Spain, and French Canadians or Quebecois in Canada. Moreover, one should realize that the process of state-building and even nation-building are dynamic. State forms change and reform themselves, and nations define themselves otherwise. Most democratic European countries are originally defined as

ethnic nations but are moving towards civic nationhood. In fact, a civic type of nation is more in harmony with the idealism of democracy, as it does not exclude segments of society. On the other hand, also non-democratic countries could define their nationhood as a civic one. The world's history offers many examples.

State-building and nation-building are interrelated but not the same. There is much theoretical debate on whether nations invented nationalism or nationalism invented nations. Both can be true. As Van der Wusten and Knippenberg (2001) have pointed out, the effect of nationalism on state-building is contingent on the time and location of these states. As Richard Jenkins (1997: 144), somewhat blurring the concept of nation with ethnic group, states: "Historically, the argument tends towards tautology: nationalism is what supersedes ethnicity, which is what precedes nationalism". Hence, nations can build states, but states can also build nations. Generally, however, A. D. Smith's (1981; 1986; 1999; 2003) view is more acceptable than Gellner's (1983; 1997; 1999), especially if the nation concerned is an ethnic nation. These are ethnic groups that make nations, and nations make states. Nationalism refers to two phenomena. Nationalism can be defined as a process of ethnic groups becoming nations and, more so, a process of nations building a state. Nationalism can also be defined as an ideology. Nationalism is an ideology associating a nation with a state. Nationalism, as an ideology, can be useful in gluing together the constituent parts of the nation, regardless of whether they be members of the same ethnic group or of different ethnic groups. Ethnic groups can be manipulated and redefined by the state, but they usually exist before the existence of the state. Many ethnic groups continue to exist when their host state disintegrates or becomes incorporated into another state. In addition, there have been ethnic groups in many parts of the world, without being associated with any political territory or any other form of territorial organization that would deserve the label of state.

Many states, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe, are the result of the collapse of empires and ethno-nationalist movements. In these cases, nations existed prior to their state. In other cases, particularly those of older states, no such obvious sequence is traceable. One indication is that in ancient states (for example, the Greek and Mesopotamian city states) many states had the same ethnic background. According to certain "modernist" understandings of nation- and state-building, nationalism would have tended to unite these small states into one, which did not happen. The only sound conclusion is that nation-building and state-building are not necessarily modern phenomena and that different mechanisms may have led to the same outcomes: nation and state.

The state as a territorial polity has existed since antiquity. David J. Bederman (2001), for instance, maintains that there existed a certain international law in antiquity, which regulated the relations between ancient states. This law, however, differed in many ways in different regions of the world. It is much fairer to say that not “the state as such” but “the modern state” is a modern construct. History, however, cannot be divided easily into pre-modern and modern—and post-modern for that matter—periods. States, like other social constructs, evolve over time and take different forms. There are no general rules for this development. Different states in different parts of the world develop differently and take various forms. It seems, nevertheless, that more and more states tend to move towards a democratic state with a civic nation as its dominant mode of nation. But even this is not totally certain.

Another issue which requires attention is the relationship between state building and territorial autonomy in the preexisting territorial organization of a state prior to its collapse. State formation after the collapse of a former state is more probable if that state was a federation, especially an ethno-territorial federation. The constituent autonomous territories in a federal state often possess wide-ranging capabilities or at least characteristics of a state, such as a local government and council, in addition to attributes such as flags and sometimes also a constitution or “national” anthem. An ethno-territorial federation is a federal state in which the territorial organization is based on ethnicity. The possibility of state-building is greater if these “federal” subjects of the collapsing state possess legislative, judicial, and functioning, strong executive power. Many states are evolved as a result of a collapsing federal state; examples are the successor states of the former Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia.

### ***The Causes of Ethno-Territorial Conflict***

Having defined the concepts ethno-territorial conflict, ethnicity, and nation, this chapter goes on to review the relevant theoretical explanations for the emergence of these conflicts. Ethno-territorial conflicts are violent conflicts between two rooted ethnic groups, or between one such group and a state associated with and dominated by a dominant ethnic (majority) group. They either contest an area over which both have claims or fight for its control or political status.

A study by Sambanis (2001) asserts that ethnic and non-ethnic civil wars have different causes. Ethnic conflicts do share many causes with non-ethnic conflicts, but the additional aspect of ethnicity itself suggests that additional factors may play a role in their explanation. As ethnicity has a cultural dimension, it is likely that cultural factors play a

certain role in the emergence of ethnic conflict. Different studies, however, take different positions with regard to the centrality of the role played by such factors. Plausibly, their role is larger in identity wars, while in on-ethnic civil conflicts other factors such as political liberties or economic deprivation may play a central role. As different ethnic groups with different cultural attributes coexist in large parts of the world and throughout long periods of history, primordialism cannot explain the eruption of ethno-territorial conflicts. However, as its name suggests, the explanation of ethno-territorial conflict requires attention to cultural factors, which are related to identity issues as well as territorial factors.

Different aspects and different causes of ethnic conflict will be reviewed in this chapter. These are based on relevant theoretical discussions, which also apply to ethno-territorial conflict as a territorial type of ethnic conflict. Most ethnic conflicts are ethno-territorial conflicts. Therefore, most discussions on ethnic conflict and its theoretical explanations also apply to the ethno-territorial conflicts.

### ***Power of Culture: Religion, Language and Ethnic Kinship***

The fact that ethnic conflict is all about a conflict between ethnic groups—and hence cultural groups—means that cultural factors are important and should be considered in the understanding and explanation of ethnic conflicts. This has two reasons. First, ethnic groups themselves are defined and distinguished from each other by cultural traits. Second, many cultural issues are very sensitive, issues for the sake of which people will mobilize and even be ready to kill and be killed.

Religious sentiments have often been viewed as major (primordial) sentiments which may cause ethnic conflict. Samuel Huntington can be seen arguably either as a culturalist, primordialist, or even an essentialist theoretician.<sup>15</sup> Huntington's (1993; 1997)<sup>16</sup> theory of the "Clash of Civilizations" implies that civilizations based on different religions clash with one another.<sup>17</sup> In fact, his theory asserts that religiously based civilizations clash when they encounter each other *territorially*. This territorial aspect is clearly visible in his schematic figure (Huntington 1997: 245), in which he views conflict between those

---

<sup>15</sup> Although Huntington maintains that a clash of civilizations occurs in global contexts after the Cold War, it is nevertheless fair to call him an essentialist because he sees, apparently, in this context the eruption of conflict along religious lines as more or less inevitable, unavoidable, self-explanatory, and hence *natural*.

<sup>16</sup> Although published in 1997, the book was copyrighted in 1996.

<sup>17</sup> The idea of a clash of religion-based civilizations appeared earlier in Bernard Lewis's (1990) article, "The Roots of Muslim Rage", preceding Huntington's (1993) "The Clash of Civilizations?"

civilizations that encounter each other territorially more likely in the real world. This implies that neighboring ethnic groups who confess different religions are likely to come into conflict with each other. Indeed, in many cases of ethnic conflict the ethnic groups confess different religions, although elsewhere adherents to different faiths do coexist peacefully.

Modern history contains many examples of conflicts in which the battling ethnic groups are defined on the basis of their religion. Early in 2006 a bloody conflict was underway in Iraq, which has not yet completely subsided. This conflict erupted when a Shi'ite religious iconic sanctuary was bombed by Sunni militants. Moreover, in this conflict, the participants were mobilized along religious fault lines, as the ethnic division in Iraq is partly based on religion and partly on language (see Rezvani 2006; Wimmer 2003). Similarly, the ethnic conflict in Bosnia was not exclusively about the theological differences between Catholic Christianity, Orthodox Christianity, and Sunni Islam, but the participants were mobilized along these fault lines because religion functioned as an ethnic denominator in that context.

Ethnic groups can also be mobilized around other cultural values and ethnic denominators that can create either a sense of belonging and affective attachments among the members of one ethnic group, or a sense of cultural distance and *otherness* between members of two groups. In a similar way to religion, language can also be an issue around which people can be mobilized, and hence it can be a relevant factor in the explanation of ethnic conflict. The reason is that language is a main denominator of ethnicity, even more so than religion is. In Belgium the *Taalstrijd*—literally, the “struggle about language”—is a notorious case. It is not so much about the language as it is about the perceived discrimination of each group in the past (the Flemings) and now (the Walloons) in Belgium. Although the struggle about the language between the Dutch-speaking Flemish and the French-speaking Walloons is not violent, it is, nevertheless, very emotional. It is remarkable that peoples who speak, *de facto*, the same language try to name it differently and exaggerate the differences between their speech when they come into conflict or are separated from each other. The most notable examples are the Serbian, Bosnian, Croatian, and Montenegrin languages, which were all regarded previously as a single Serbo-Croatian language. Although unlike religion, language is not about the essential values in a human belief system and is generally regarded primarily as a means of communication, linguistic difference, nevertheless, may serve as a factor which indirectly can affect the eruption of ethnic conflict.

Speaking different languages makes ethnic groups distinguishable from each other. Differences, and hence also similarities, between the languages spoken by two ethnic groups can also be an indicator of their

ethnic kinship. Since cultural denominators are functional in defining ethnicity and ethnic groups, it is plausible that cultural relatedness affects ethnic relations. Indeed, the power of culture is not only in an absolute sense but it can also be in a relative and relational sense. If cultural denominators define what one ethnic group is and the “others” are, they can also define how close they are to each other. Indeed, ethnic kinship is subjective; ethnic groups feel themselves to be related to each other, basing their feeling on different criteria. Not all linguistically related ethnic groups feel related. As ethnic identity is a subjective matter for a great part, so also is ethnic kinship. Nevertheless, ethnic groups who speak intimately close languages are very often also related in religion and other cultural aspects and feel related to each other. Therefore, linguistic similarity at such an intimate level is very often a good indicator of ethnic kinship.

Consistent with the logics of ethnic nepotism and primordialism, it is often asserted that kinfolks—that is, ethnic groups who believe themselves to be related to each other by descent and are ethnically or generally culturally related—are more likely to support each other and are less likely to come into conflict with each other. One of Samuel Huntington’s (1997: 272-290) main theses is that countries and diasporas are likely to rally behind and support their co-ethnics or ethnically close nations and ethnic groups in other countries. Although he speaks of kin-countries, it is obvious from his discussion, and notably his inclusion of diasporas in it, that this kinship also relates to kinship at ethnic or ethno-national level. Huntington’s (1997: 272-290) assertion is in accordance with Stavenhagen’s (1996) assertion that kinfolk and diasporas usually support their relatives owing to affective attachments. Following Horowitz (1991), Kaufman (2001: 31) regards ethnic kinship as a relevant factor in ethnic conflict: “Demographic threats may also motivate ethnic fears, most insidiously in cases involving an ‘ethnic affinity problem’ in which the minority in a country...is the majority in the broader region”.

On the other hand, Stefan Wolff’s (2003) study shows that even the kin-state’s relationship with the external minority—that is, co-ethnics of its own ethno-national group in a neighboring country (host state)—is very complex. Kin-states’ impact on an ethnic conflict is not always encouraging, but it usually plays a role, nevertheless, in the course of the conflict. Wolff’s study, however, deals with territorial dispute and latent ethnic conflict generally and does not deal mainly with present-day, large-scale violent conflicts. It is perceivable that kin-states behave differently when their ethnic kin is involved in a violent conflict.

Samuel Huntington’s (1997: 272-290) assertion is also consistent with Vanhanen’s (1999a, 1999b) view on ethnic nepotism being a mechanism which mitigates the probability of ethnic conflict. Apparently

it can be argued that culturally related ethnic groups are less likely to come into conflict with each other. An anthropological study which supports that assertion is Jon Abbink's (1993) study dealing with the ethnic conflict in the Kafa region in the southwestern part of Ethiopia. It is remarkable that Dizis have come into conflict with Suris but not with their kinfolk Tishana to their north, to whom they are linguistically and culturally related. Suris speak a language which belongs to another language group and are culturally more distant. This example suggests that cultural distance can play a role in the emergence of conflict.

Not only ethnic kinfolds but also diasporas—that is, the members of the same ethnic or ethno-national group that live in another country—can affect ethnic conflict in many ways. The impact of diaspora is supported by Collier's and Hoeffler's (2004: 13-27)<sup>18</sup> conclusion that revenues from diaspora contribute positively to the duration of conflict because they can be used for funding a conflict. Although the diaspora can also contribute to peace when different diaspora groups work together in order to broker a peace deal in their homelands, they more likely to contribute to the escalation of conflict and hatred because they themselves are not physically affected by the conflict and often cherish a romantic and old-fashioned view of their or "their ancestral" homeland. Collier and Hoeffler (2004: 27) maintain that time will heal the wounds of a civil war; nevertheless, they hold diaspora responsible for delaying the healing process after a war. It can be argued that diasporas' remittances have a large impact on the duration of conflict and not on its eruption, because as long as the motive behind the flow of remittances is conflict-related, they are likely to flow after a conflict has begun. In addition, diaspora communities themselves are usually not involved in the decision-making and mobilization process in their (ancestral) homeland. Therefore, the impact of diaspora is mostly on the duration and not on the eruption of ethnic conflicts.

### ***Power of History: Traumatic Peak Experiences***

History is often used as a justification for ethnic strife and hostility. Traumatic experiences may influence the social and political behavior of an ethnic group for a long time. Traumatic experiences are remembered and memorized and hence affect political behavior and action (see e.g. Edkins 2003). Traumatized ethnic groups such as Chechens and Armenians refer often to their traumatic experiences in order to justify their ethnic strife.

---

<sup>18</sup> An earlier version of this study (Collier & Hoeffler 2000) is published by the World Bank.

Dijkink (1996) has discussed the influence of historical peak experiences on the national orientation of different peoples regarding their own identity and their place in the outside world. Historical peak experiences are events remembered, largely reproduced overtly (e.g. in the press and media). They give a direction to national action and make a national identity, world view, and hence behavior, emically understandable in any case, if not really predictable (Rezvani 2009a). Dijkink (1996) discusses peak experiences at the national level. Regarding the fact that nations are either based on one or more ethnic groups and in any case incorporate them, peak experiences can also relate to ethnic groups. Therefore, ethnic peak experiences can affect ethnic groups' political behavior. They are connected to the ethnic and territorial identity of the people who have experienced them. The orientation and direction of action of people are influenced by these historical peak experiences, but at the same time the identification of those events as such and their representation and narration are co-determined by the self-identification and national or ethnic (political-historical) orientation of the national or ethnic groups concerned (Rezvani 2009a: 56).

Peak experiences are powerful tools for mobilizing people for a conflict. Especially the traumatic events which have targeted a people based only on their ethnicity are very powerful for this purpose, because they evoke justice-seeking among the members of that ethnic group as a collectivity. Since "time heals", these events are more powerful when they have occurred relatively recently rather than being forgotten in the darkness of history and when the effects are still visible or tangible.<sup>19</sup>

Ethnic entrepreneurs are very selective with regard to history. Only those elements in the ethnic history which are helpful for ethnic mobilization are used and interpreted in such a way as to benefit them (see the case descriptions in Eller 1999). Indeed, relatively recent traumatic ethnic peak experiences, such as deadly large-scale ethnic deportations or genocides, are such events that lend themselves well to ethnic mobilization. A traumatic peak experience functions as an issue around which people can be mobilized for a conflict based mainly on other disputes and grievances. It might even be itself a main motive behind an ethnic conflict. History is full of examples of popular mobilization for the sake of justice.

---

<sup>19</sup> This statement is consistent with those of Lake (1995) and Collier & Hoeffler (2004). According to David Lake (1995), a long period of peace reduces the likelihood of outbreak of ethnic wars. Indeed, time heals: the probability of outbreak of a new war is lower as time passes. This assertion is supported by the quantitative study of Collier & Hoeffler (2004).



## ***Political and Economic Grievances***

Traumatic peak experiences are not the only sources of grievances. Other sources of grievances can be in the economic or political sphere. Ethnic entrepreneurs can mobilize an ethnic group by commemorating humiliation, discrimination, and traumatic events of the past, but their real aim may be personal greed, such as the control of natural resources—for example, oil, gas, water, minerals, etc. Apparently greed and grievance, or as Arnson and Zartman (2005) call them, “need, creed and greed”,<sup>20</sup> are not easily distinguished from each other. In other words, whether one calls it greed or grievance, the fact remains that these include issues around which people can be mobilized. It is logical that demands couched as grievances have a stronger mobilizing power for people, as people may act with a sense of justice-seeking.

Collier and Hoeffler (2004: 3) maintain that “greed and misperceived grievance have important similarities as accounts of rebellion”. It appears that they base their conclusion that civil wars are usually driven by greed (and not grievances) on their observation that civil wars occur when the opportunity costs of mobilization are low. This, however, does not seem to be convincing reasoning. The ethnic—or more precisely, ethno-political—entrepreneurs may deceive the population by representing their own greed as grievances of the population. Even if there is no deceit involved, greed and grievance are not easily distinguishable because something which is grievance for one may be interpreted as greed by someone else. Indeed, the distinction between greed and grievance is not a sharp one: greed and grievance can be both sides of the same coin, and the identification of the same issue as either greed or grievance is closely dependent on the definition and perception of the agents themselves. In fact, unlike Collier and Hoeffler’s (2004: 3) statement, it is not so much *misperception* as simply *perception* which labels greed and grievance arbitrarily.

The following example may clarify the ambiguous but, nevertheless, strong relationship between greed and grievance. An ethnic group lives in an area which is rich in oil. There is a widespread desire among the members of that ethnic group that their area should be separated from the state of which they are a constituent part now and that it should become an independent state. They, or more precisely, their leaders, maintain that they are treated unfairly by the state because the state spends the oil revenues on the whole country. They advance the fact that their area is the only oil-producing area in the state but is not as

---

<sup>20</sup> This is part of the title of their book, *Rethinking the Economics of War: The Intersection of Need, Creed, and Greed* (Arnson & Zartman [ed.] 2005). Many authors have paid attention to the “greed vs. grievance debate” in that book.

prosperous as the state's capital city. They see their claim to be based on grievances, while people from other areas most probably maintain that it is an issue of wanting more spoils—and hence, an issue of greed. Some analysts might even maintain that the local elites will be better off if the area becomes independent as they are the ones who will become richer than anyone else.

Poverty and relative deprivation have been considered as conflict-generating factors. Based on such an assumption, economic grievances may contribute to ethnic conflict when disparity in the level of wealth and economic discrimination is institutionalized and routinely targets members of certain ethnic groups. In other words, economic discrimination and disparity in the level of wealth are manifestations of power relations between ethnic groups within, and vis-à-vis, a state. Nevertheless, the effect of economic grievances on ethnic conflict remains ambiguous. It is debatable whether *the relative deprivation* between, and *the level of wealth* among, different ethnic groups is a cause of ethnic conflict (see Sambanis 2001). Often it is asserted that the poorer countries and regions are more conflict-prone, apparently because there is competition over resources and poor people have nothing to lose and have much more to gain in a conflict. *The relative deprivation* theory asserts that the deprived ethnic group comes into conflict with the state or their ethnic overlords. Although these theories seem plausible, empirical observations do not always support them. On the one hand, such cases as the conflict in the Basque country, one of the wealthiest regions of Spain, show that the relative economic deprivation theory does not apply. On the other hand, even though there is no sound evidence that conflicts are due to poverty, it does seem that conflicts are more likely in poorer countries. Nevertheless, this does not mean that also ethnic, or ethno-territorial, conflicts are more probable in poorer countries.

As many examples show, economic factors do not play important roles in identity wars. Even though they may serve as additional reasons for a war or issues around which more combatants can be mobilized, they are, nevertheless, often neither sufficient nor necessary factors for eruption of ethnic conflict. Toft (2003) and Kaufman (2001) have discussed (and proven) that materialistic, or what one might call economic, explanations of ethno-territorial conflicts (in post-)communist states are unconvincing. In addition to the above example of Spain, the successor states of the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia offer good examples. Although in a situation of economic deterioration, neither Soviet Union nor Yugoslavia were poor countries. Ethnic conflicts erupted in both rich and poor parts of those countries. Slovenia was the wealthiest republic, which along with Croatia—another better-off republic—announced its independence from the former Yugoslavia. Both

the relatively prosperous Croatia and the poor Kosovo and Macedonia were the scenes of bloody ethnic conflicts. Similarly, the most prosperous Baltic republics—Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia—were among the first republics that broke away from the Soviet Union. Irrespective of welfare and prosperity, bloody ethnic conflicts have erupted in different parts of the Soviet Union.

Moreover, greed and grievance are not always about money or other quantitatively measurable indicators. People can feel aggrieved owing to the fact that they are considered or treated as second-class citizens. History is rich in examples of rich members of minorities who, nevertheless, held a vulnerable social position and status. Lack of democracy and political freedom, and group-based social and political inequalities, can serve as sources of grievance. As politics is intimately related to power relations within a state, political grievances are thought to be responsible for the outbreak of ethnic civil wars. According to Sambanis (2001: 280), “[i]dentity wars are predominantly caused by political grievance and they are unlikely to occur in politically free (i.e. democratic) societies”. Gurr (2000) views grievances as important causes of ethnic conflict, and he believes that non-violent political action precedes violent ethnic conflict and regards democracy as a moderating mechanism to ethnic conflict. According to Gurr, (2000: 58) democracy “provides the institutional means whereby minorities in most societies secure their rights and pursue their collective interests”. Nevertheless, in an earlier publication, Gurr (1994) maintained that transitional stages to democracy or half-hearted democracies often generate conditions which enhance the chances of ethnic conflicts’ eruption:

Transitions to democracy contribute in complex ways to ethnic and communal conflict. Some ethno-political contenders use democratic openings to justify protest and rebellion as struggles for individual and collective rights. And some ultranationalists who have been elected to power in the Soviet and Yugoslav successor states use similar kinds of rhetoric to justify restrictions on the rights of communal minorities in the name of the “democratic will” of the dominant nationality. The general prediction is that ethno-political conflicts should be more numerous and intense in newly democratic and quasi-democratic states than in institutionalized democracies or autocracies.... Half of the fifty conflicts followed in the wake of power transitions, including nine that began within five years of state establishment and eleven within three years of revolutionary seizures of power (including coups by radical reformers). (Gurr 1994: 361)

Gurr’s (1994) view is consistent with Mansfield’s and Snyder’s (2005) assertion that countries in early stages of transition to democracy are very likely to become involved in wars. All in all, it is not certain that democracies are immune to ethnic conflict. The world is full of examples

of democracies in which ethnic and ethno-religious groups are discriminated against. All these states are at risk of ethnic conflict because the unsatisfied and justice-seeking oppressed ethnic groups may come into conflict with the state and its privileged ethnic group(s). On the other hand, democracies indeed offer an alternative to violence. In democracies, ethnic demands can be channeled through legal, democratic, non-violent routes. Nevertheless, precautions are called for: this mechanism may only work in democracies which have reached a certain level of development. The relationship between ethnic conflict and a combination of democracy and prosperity remains ambiguous. On the one hand, there is not much to demand democratically or by force in poor countries. On the other hand, scarce resources contribute to more (ethnic) competition over the state and its resources (see Dietz & Foecken 2001).

Different types of inequalities are usually interwoven: economic inequality itself is not totally independent of social and political inequality. This is especially true in states with a legacy of planned economies and in which democracy is absent or not functioning perfectly. Due to the interwoven character of politics and economy in these countries, politically privileged groups are often also economically (and culturally) more privileged. Indeed, a state's laws and policies can treat some ethnic groups as second-class citizens, while they can privilege (the) other ethnic group(s). It is, therefore, important to concentrate on state policies and political structures in general.

### ***State in Disarray***

History knows many examples of fragile or failed states which were afflicted by bloody conflicts. It is not certain that those conflicts were the cause of state collapse or the state collapse itself was a trigger to the conflicts. Both can be true. Often there is an underlying state of fragility and malfunctioning of the state which may either trigger conflict or offer an opportunity to the opposing or dissatisfied parties to start a conflict. A collapsing or failing state and "emerging anarchy" (Posen 1993a: 27) caused by the loss of a state's power may evoke fears and bring about a "security dilemma" (Posen 1993a; 1993b) among ethnic groups—and, therefore, cause or trigger conflict. State fragility and collapse facilitates rebellion as there is no well-functioning state to maintain order. Many institutes and organizations invest serious effort in the identification of fragile states as a preventive measure, in order to prevent, contain, or control (emerging) conflict (see Nyheim 2009).

The collapse of an existing political order, particularly state collapse, has been viewed by many authors as a main cause of ethnic conflict. According to Baker and Ausink (1996), in a failing state the

society becomes factionalized and opportunities are created for ethnic leaders to play on groups' fears and loyalties and mobilize their constituencies, often using (ethno-)nationalism. Similar statements have also been advanced by other authors. In a policy brief written succinctly by Lipschutz and Crawford (1995), the authors advance that the real cause of conflicts is *collapse of social contracts*. What they call social contracts can be seen as *modi operandi*—that is, the modes of conduct in relations among citizens, or between citizens, civil society, and the state. These modes of conduct do not need to be just and egalitarian. The only thing they should do is to function properly. This assertion is consistent with the earlier mentioned assertion that a transition towards democracy may cause or trigger—or in any case, facilitate—(ethnic) conflict.

Moreover, the collapse of the social contract—or more precisely, the state's instability itself—can bring about or awaken grievances. Uncertainty about their (future) status and position may evoke fears among the members of ethnic groups, as they do not want to be the underdog after the collapse of the social contract. No one wants to be worse off. After the collapse of a social contract, ethnic leaders can take their chance to rectify the past injustice. This injustice does not need to be objectively true, as long as it is true in these leaders' or their supporters' perceptions. After the collapse of a social contract, the aggrieved ethnic groups may take the opportunity to set the perceived wrongs right. On the other hand, the former overlords and dominant ethnic groups do not like to lose their (relative) privileges.

Referring to Vesna Pestic,<sup>21</sup> David Lake and Donald Rothchild (1996a: 43; 1998: 7) maintain that the “fear of the future, lived through the past” causes ethnic conflict. These fears arise in the context of state weakness:

Collective fears of the future arise when states lose their ability to arbitrate between groups or provide credible guarantees of protection for groups. Under this condition, which Barry Posen<sup>22</sup> refers to as “emerging anarchy”, physical security becomes of paramount concern. When central authority declines, groups become fearful for their survival. They invest in and prepare for violence, and thereby make actual violence possible. State weakness, whether it arises incrementally out of competition between groups or from extremists actively seeking to destroy ethnic peace, is a necessary precondition for violent ethnic conflict to erupt. State weakness helps to explain the explosion of ethnic violence that has followed the collapse of communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, and it has also led to violence in Liberia, Somalia, and other African states. (Lake & Rothchild 1996a: 43)

---

<sup>21</sup> Lake & Rothchild (1996a: 43; 1998: 7) refer to remarks by Vesna Pestic at the IGCC Working Group on the International Spread and Management of Ethnic Conflict, 1 October 1994.

<sup>22</sup> Lake & Rothchild (1996a: 43) refer to Posen (1993b).

The collapse of social contracts brings about a security dilemma which in turn rests upon information failure and a perception of lack of commitment by the other group (Lake & Rothchild 1998: 17; Wolff 2006: 74). The collapse of a functioning *modus operandi* within a state disrupts the consolidated power relations. Power relations become the subject of redefinition and reconsolidation. As one ethnic group does not know exactly how another ethnic group may act and how committed they are to previously agreed accords between them, they may begin with defending their position before it is too late. Strategic pre-emptive use of force “is generally thought to be more likely in conditions of emerging anarchy which heighten the uncertainty of identity groups about their future (physical or cultural) survival” (Wolff 2006: 75). In other words, the security dilemma itself is a manifestation of the collapse of the consolidated social and political order.

According to David A. Lake (1995: 2),<sup>23</sup> “the breakup of multinational states, as witnessed in the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia”, is one example of the breakdown of an existing social order and may cause fear and insecurity among ethnic groups about their future.<sup>24</sup> State collapse and economic change are often inseparable from each other. For example, the demise and collapse of the Soviet Union and the communist economic system, and socio-economic changes, went hand in hand.

Indeed, it is plausible to agree that economically and politically collapsing states are prone to ethnic conflict. The collapse of a social contract can be seen as an underlying background condition which facilitates ethnic conflict. Nevertheless, it is not easy to accept that fear of future evoked by the collapse of the state or social order necessarily causes—always, everywhere, and in all cases—ethnic conflict. There are examples of ethnic groups that did not come into conflict after the weakening or collapse of a state. Only a few ethnic groups came into conflict after the weakening and collapse of the Soviet Union, and the disintegration of Czechoslovakia proceeded peacefully. On the other hand, many countries—for example, India and Turkey—are afflicted by ethnic conflict without being weak or failing states.

Apparently, although state failure and collapse facilitate ethnic conflict, ethnic conflict is unlikely to emerge unless certain conditions are present. The question should be asked why ethnic groups are insecure

---

<sup>23</sup> This refers to a policy brief by David Lake, in which he succinctly discusses his ideas, which are also discussed in his later writings written with Donald Rothchild. These writings include their paper (Lake & Rothchild 1996a) in the academic journal *International Security*, their IGCC Policy paper (Lake & Rothchild 1996b), and their edited volume (Lake & Rothchild 1998).

<sup>24</sup> Elaborate discussions are available in different contributions in Lake & Rothchild (1998).

about their future in the first place. In other words, the question should be asked what conditions make ethnic groups fear for their future and why only a few become involved in conflict in a collapsing state or after the collapse of a state.

It seems that a “state in disarray” is rather a precondition than a condition causing conflict. It serves as a catalyst and facilitates and eases other conflict-generating mechanisms which are primarily dependent on other conditions. In addition, there is a tautology hidden in this. Is it the situation of a state in disarray that causes conflicts, or is it these conflicts themselves that bring the state into disarray? Or is it that there is a dynamic interrelationship between both, and each can cause the other? Although a situation of disarray may facilitate the eruption of conflicts, it is more likely that the hidden conflicts may contribute to bring the state into disarray. Therefore, it is more appropriate to look at the root causes of conflict. As this factor is not of the same nature as most others, it will not be included into the explaining model.

### ***Ethno-Political Systems and Opportunity Structures***

States are not only arenas of ethnic conflict but they are also major agencies in bringing about ethnic conflict.<sup>25</sup> They are often a party to conflict and, moreover, their laws and modes of ethno-political relationship—and hence ethno-political systems—contribute to ethnic and in particular ethno-territorial conflict. They may either cause grievances or serve as opportunity structures for mobilization of ethnic groups. “Ethnic identity and interest per se do not risk unforeseen ethnic wars; rather, the danger is hegemonic elites who use the state to promote their own people’s interests at the expense of others” (Gurr 2000: 64). It is not multi-ethnicity as such, but the modes of power relation within, and the political structure of, states, which affect the ethno-political relations within the state and hence can contribute to the eruption of ethno-territorial conflicts. Therefore, the role of the state and its prevailing ethno-political system should not be neglected in any understanding and explanation of ethnic conflict.

Ethno-political systems are themselves results of power relations in a state, but on the other hand, they can reinforce and even enforce a latent potential for ethnic conflict. Consociational democracies (see Lijphart 1977) are often thought of as systems which have moderating capability and reduce the probability of conflict in countries, in which the

---

<sup>25</sup> Similarly, Roessingh (1991: 186; 1996: 268) concludes that the role of the state in generating and molding ethno-national sentiment in Europe is important.

population is diverse and divided along ethnic (or religious)<sup>26</sup> cleavages. Differences in identity and cultural values do not necessarily lead to ethnic conflict, assuming that ethnic elites cooperate. When different ethnic groups share a civic identity, citizenship and civil rights are thought of as being politically more important than cultural differences. Therefore, the probability of ethnic conflict is lower in political systems in which the nation is defined, or *de facto* perceived, as a civic nation. This political climate is likely to enhance, among different ethnic groups, the feelings of belonging to the state. On the other hand, systems which enable the dominance of majorities over minorities, or those that divide the population along ethnic or religious lines and attach certain rights to the religious or ethnic group's membership, enhance the likelihood of conflict eruption. This likelihood is higher in political systems which subordinate certain ethnic or religious groups to other groups.

The *politicization of ethnicity*, or the legitimization of ethnicity as a political category in David Lake's (1995) terminology, seems to be an important explaining factor for the eruption of ethnic conflict. The examples are obvious: in the former Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union, and Lebanon—three countries which were afflicted by ethnic conflicts—ethnicity was politicized. The politicization of ethnicity has led to similar conflicts in Ethiopia (see Abbink 1993), and the ongoing ethnic conflict in Iraq (see Rezvani 2006; Wimmer 2003) is fought in a context in which ethnicity is politicized.

The combination of ethnic kinship and ethno-political subordination may cause the internationalization or trans-nationalization of conflict. Although a conflict may erupt only in one state, its dynamism and causes can be based on and extend to the ethno-political situation in two (or many) neighboring countries. According to Kaufman (2001: 31), demographic threats may cause ethnic fears in cases in which the minority in a country is the majority in the broader region. Similarly, according to Lake (1995: 3), “[p]articularly dangerous are pairs in which an ethnic group is a dominant *majority* in one state but a repressed *minority* in a second”. Majority and minority in this sense are more than demographical entities. The word “repressed” obviously suggests that Lake's (1995: 3) argument is not simply about demographical majorities and minorities. Apparently, the combination of demography with ethno-political status is important for the explanation of ethnic conflict. Although it may matter, in general the role of demography is ambiguous in the explanation of ethnic conflict. Ethnic demographic dominance is not very likely to contribute to ethnic conflict when a nation is defined as a civic nation and

---

<sup>26</sup> As we have seen, religion and ethnicity are not totally separate from each other. Religion itself can serve as an ethnic marker.



when ethnic groups are not institutionally politicized, but such dominance *is* important when ethnic groups are politicized and the nation is defined as an ethnic nation.

The first step is taken for the politicization of ethnicity when a nation is defined as an ethnic nation. Ethnicity acquires importance when nations are formally, and even in many cases legally, recognized on the basis of ethnicity. In these contexts, ethnicity becomes politicized easily. When certain rights, facilities, and resources are distributed on the basis of ethnicity, or when there is a party system which is based on ethnicity and in which ethnic parties represent ethnic interests, ethnicity ceases to be a cultural quality only and transforms into a politically relevant quality.

Very often and in many states, the politicization of ethnicity is accompanied by autonomy arrangements. One should distinguish between territorial and non-territorial autonomies. The second form is often called “cultural autonomy” and was proposed by the Austrian Marxists, Renner and Bauer, for the multi-ethnic situation in the Habsburg Empire.<sup>27</sup> It showed a certain similarity with the Ottoman *millet* system, in which members of religious communities were given autonomy in their religious affairs. Renner’s and Bauer’s proposal, however, was primarily designed for ethnic groups and not religious communities as such. Both systems are also similar in certain ways to the Dutch system of *verzuiling* (pillarization). A non-territorial autonomy may also politicize ethnicity, when cultural autonomy is combined with a range of other communal institutions and, notably, when privileges and rights of each ethnic group are attached to quotas. Nevertheless, unlike territorial autonomy in an ethno-territorial federal system, non-territorial autonomy has no significant territorial consequences.

Federalism and ethno-territorial arrangements maintain an ambiguous relationship with the politicization of ethnicity and hence articulation of ethnic grievances. On the one hand, they sanction and legitimize the politicization of ethnicity and offer opportunity structures to ethnic entrepreneurs, and on the other hand, they can have a moderating effect on the articulation of ethnic grievances and ethnic demands.

According to Gurr (1994: 366; 2000), autonomy arrangements and federalism serve as moderating mechanisms by reducing ethnic grievances or at least channeling them. Gurr (2000: 56-57) maintains that there is no evidence that negotiated autonomy will lead to secession (which also presumes that it does not contribute to escalation or protraction of ethnic conflict). According to him, “the ethnic statelets that won *de facto* independence in the 1990s—Somaliland, Abkhazia, the

---

<sup>27</sup> See in this regard the classical work of Karl Renner (1918), *Das Selbstbestimmungsrecht der Nationen- In besonderer anwendung auf Österreich. Erster Teil: Nation und Staat.*

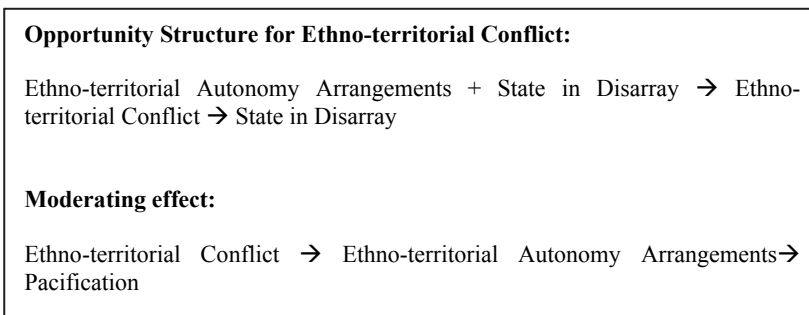
Trans-Dniester Republic, and Iraqi Kurdistan—did so in the absence of negotiations, not because of them” (Gurr 2000: 56). However, it is important to note that negotiations usually take place after initial fighting as autonomy itself is often an issue which is fought for:

[M]odern [ethno-nationalist] political movements are directed toward achieving greater autonomy or independent statehood. Most have historical traditions of autonomy or independence that are used to justify these contemporary demands. In some instances autonomy was lost centuries ago,...but it still motivates political movements. (Harff & Gurr 2004: 23)

Although at times ethno-nationalist movements get enough satisfaction with autonomy arrangements and stop their fight, more often they only agree with them knowing the difficulty of achieving full independence. In this sense the negotiated autonomy arrangements can be (perceived as) the first step towards a war of liberation and full independence, despite “freezing” the conflict for the time being.

On the other hand, the cases of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union are evidence of the contrary. One thing, however, is noteworthy: in Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, federalism preceded regime change—or more exactly, the rupture of social contracts—and hence served as opportunity structures for the warring parties. In the cases in which federalism has proven to be moderating, it succeeded the actual conflicts and, unlike those cases mentioned above, it was a negotiated arrangement.

Hypothetically, two mechanisms can be distinguished, in one of which territorial arrangements for autonomy serve as opportunity structures and trigger ethno-territorial conflict after regime change or instability, and in the other of which territorial arrangements serve as moderating and pacifying mechanisms, assuming that the state is stable (see Figure 2.1).



*Figure 2.1. Tempering or facilitating effect of Territorial Arrangements of Autonomy on Ethnic Conflict*

This double character of territorial autonomy is consistent with Van der Wusten's and Knippenberg's (2001) observation that a state system in disarray offers opportunities for ethnic politics. According to these authors, ethnic politics—or as I would rather term it, ethnic strife—occurs in a recursive way: the achievements in one phase serve as a facilitating structure for the next round of ethno-political activism. Hence, although moderating and mitigating and even resolving ethnic conflict in a state at an early stage, territorial autonomy may lead to the disintegration of that state in the long term.

It is important, however, to note that “territorial autonomy”, as such, does not necessarily cause devolution, state disintegration, and ethnic conflict. Indeed, as Yash Ghai (2000: 11-14) discusses, ethnicity-based autonomies are very different from those which are not (primarily) based on ethnicity and have different effects regarding their stability and functioning. In fact, the first ones are either a result of devolution of a centralized state or may themselves cause such a devolution. Many states are only partially or imperfectly ethnicity-based federations. For example, Canada has nine provinces, of which one (Quebec) is French-speaking and the others are predominantly English-speaking. According to McGarry (2005: 96-97; 2007: 135), such a system may mean that conflict of interests between provinces may crosscut ethnic lines and brings about alliances between Quebec and some English-speaking provinces. Such a mechanism decreases the probability of state collapse and, in fact, also of potential ethno-territorial conflict. The situation in the former Soviet Union, however, was such that its territorial autonomies were based on ethnicity and showed a high “correlation” with ethnic heterogeneity. Not all ethnic groups possessed autonomy, and rarely did one ethnic group possess two autonomous territories; in any case, no ethnic group possessed two higher-ranked autonomous territories (union republics) at the same time. According to Coakley (2003a: 16-18; 2003b: 313-314), territorial autonomy, especially when it is congruent with the spatial distribution of ethnic groups, tends to strengthen ethnic commitment and territorial demand by ethnic groups. The emergence of ethno-territorial conflict has a high chance of occurring in such ethno-political systems (e.g. the former Soviet Union and former Yugoslavia).

Roessingh (1996; 2001) divides the states in Europe along two dimensions and into four categories: liberal democratic unitary states, liberal democratic federal states, communist unitary states, and communist federal states. Accordingly, ethno-territorial conflict and disintegration of a state is most probable in a communist federal type. Communist federal countries were ethnicity-based federal systems. Indeed, many successor states of the USSR and Yugoslavia, two states which had well-developed ethnic territorial federal systems, have experienced ethnic violence. This

is certainly consistent with Roessingh's (1996; 2001) observation of the collapse of federal communist states in Europe.

According to Van der Wusten and Knippenberg (2001: 288-289), following Roessingh (1996) one should distinguish between the short-term and long-term effects of autonomy and federal arrangements:

[I]t seems clear that liberal-democratic political systems provide a better chance for mitigating or preventing ethnic conflict than (post-)communist systems, especially when unitary states are involved. Federalist systems based on ethnic characteristics may prevent ethnic conflicts in the short term; while the long-term result may very well be the (peaceful or not) dissolution of the system itself. In the long run non-territorial consociational options may provide the best chances for overcoming ethnic tensions and strengthening an overarching loyalty to the state involved, notwithstanding the overwhelming dominance of territorial arrangements for national minorities in present-day.

In conclusion, the modes of ethno-political relations in a state, and between the state and its citizens, affect ethnic, and particularly ethno-territorial, conflict or co-existence in that state. Politicization of ethnicity and particularly ethno-territorial autonomy in a federal state serve as opportunity structures which contribute to ethno-territorial conflict or even the disintegration of a state after regime change and rupture in the social and political order.

### ***Ethno-Geographic Configuration***

There have been many theories which connect the human valorization of territory and the control of its resources, or territoriality in general, to social and political behavior. A number of these theories maintain that territoriality is conditioned and caused by human genes or human instinct. According to the anthropologist Robert Ardrey (1967), a territorial imperative governs human and animal spatial behavior. According to Ardrey, (1967) they have an instinct to possess and defend their territory. A more recent biological deterministic theoretician of territoriality is the geographer Malmberg (1980), according to whom an instinctive aggression is at the basis of territorial defense.

More theorists regard human spatial behavior and territoriality as social behavior. Robert Sack (1983; 1986), a geographer, regards territoriality as a reflection of social power. In such a view, delimiting and asserting control over a geographical area enables social actors, whether individuals or collectivities, to affect or control people and their relationships within that area. A similar view is held by Jean Gottman (1973), another geographer, who regards territoriality as a reflection of

political power among politically organized peoples. Rationales behind territoriality are both physical and material security: territory can be organized for economic needs and for security because defending an area confers security.

I argue that such a distinction between the biological and social nature of territoriality, however, should not be taken as clear-cut. Social behavior may be driven by biological instinct or needs. For example, humans need food to survive. Agriculture and hunting as well as more modern versions of human professions are examples of social behavior that serve the basic human need for food. The basic point is that humans do have a relationship with territory and that human territoriality is socially, and hence also politically, relevant.

The relationship between territory and human social behavior is threefold. First, territory can be used instrumentally in order to control and mobilize people for certain goals. Second, it can be used instrumentally in another way also: to extract its resources. If one (collectivity) possesses and controls a territory, it (most usually) also possesses and controls all its natural and human resources. These two ways refer only to (political) actors who possess jurisdiction over a territory. The third relationship, however, is more general: territory is also affective and emotional. It has meaning for people, individuals, and collectivities, and for their identity, as they feel emotionally attached to their living areas or even to places where their ancestors have come from, or to any other place with significant meaning for them.

Territory is a reflection, and at the same time a container, of social power. It is also a container of meaning and resources. Consequently, territory itself can be viewed as a resource. It is a product of human power, but it also contributes to human power in many ways. In other words, territory is a product that produces. It is capital and commodity. It is valuable to humans. Indeed, territory is often viewed as a commodity over which much competition exists. Such competition between collectivities over territory brings about territorial conflict.

No ethno-territorial conflict can occur without territory. Territory, *sui generis*, is a subject of conflict and can be used instrumentally in the course of a conflict. Consequently, ethno-geographic configurations, as an assemblage of many territories (in the broad sense) over a space, contribute to conflict. Nevertheless, not all ethno-geographic configurations are equally likely to do this. Below, it is reasoned why a certain type of ethno-geographic configuration, the mosaic type to be exact (see Figure 2.2), is likely to contribute to ethno-territorial conflict.

Looking at ethnic maps of different regions, certain patterns immediately strike the eye. One configuration does not resemble another. In some

regions, ethnic groups live more compactly than in others. Some regions are ethnically more heterogeneous than others. In some regions, different ethnic groups may inhabit the same area, while in other regions ethnic groups tend to live more in separation from each other.

Ethnic heterogeneity has been viewed as a major factor responsible for the eruption of ethnic conflict. Too often, based on an implicit primordialist understanding of ethnic conflict, it is advanced that different ethnic groups will come into conflict in heterogeneous societies. Basing his argument on the earlier mentioned mechanism of ethnic nepotism, Vanhanen (1999a; 1999b) maintains that ethnic heterogeneity is the main factor in the explanation of ethnic conflict. He bases his argument on the social mechanism which he, following Van den Berghe (1987 [1981]), calls *ethnic nepotism*. However, it is clear that his regression equation explains no more than half of the variance in ethnic conflicts and that his equation predicts a higher degree of ethnic conflict in certain regions and a lower degree in other regions. What he does not point to, but what can be seen from his regression, is regional differentiation. The cases which show a higher degree of conflict than could be predicted by the regression equation are located in regions where the ethnic groups are concentrated in rather small ethnic territories (e.g. the former Yugoslavia and Iraq), while the cases which show a lower degree of conflict than predicted by the regression equation are located in regions where different ethnic groups are less concentrated and tend to live in ethnically heterogeneous areas (e.g. the Caribbean).

It is fair to say that ethnic heterogeneity plays a role in bringing about ethnic conflicts, because there can be no ethnic conflicts without “ethnicity”. The problem is, however, that most regions of the world are ethnically heterogeneous, without always being afflicted by ethnic conflict. Many studies have already pointed to a regional effect on conflicts. Gurr and Moore (1997) maintain that ethnic conflicts in a region may trigger new ones, and Sambanis (2001) speaks of “bad neighborhoods”—that is, regions which display a higher incidence of ethnic conflict. There are apparently regional differentiations. Despite all being ethnically heterogeneous, ethnic conflicts are more prevalent in certain (types of) regions.

The regional effect on conflicts is due not only to variation in geographic location on the world globe, but also to variation in the type of ethno-geographic configuration. By ethno-geographic configuration I mean the patterns of ethnic distribution and settlement in a region. Actually, ethno-geographic configurations are manifested simply by colored patterns on a map of ethnic distribution.

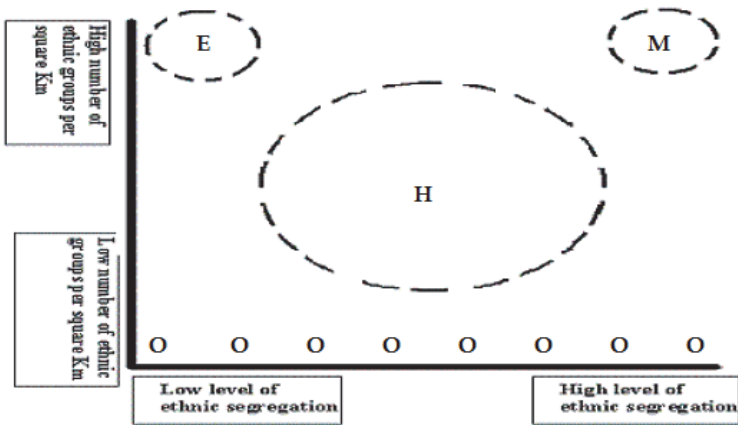
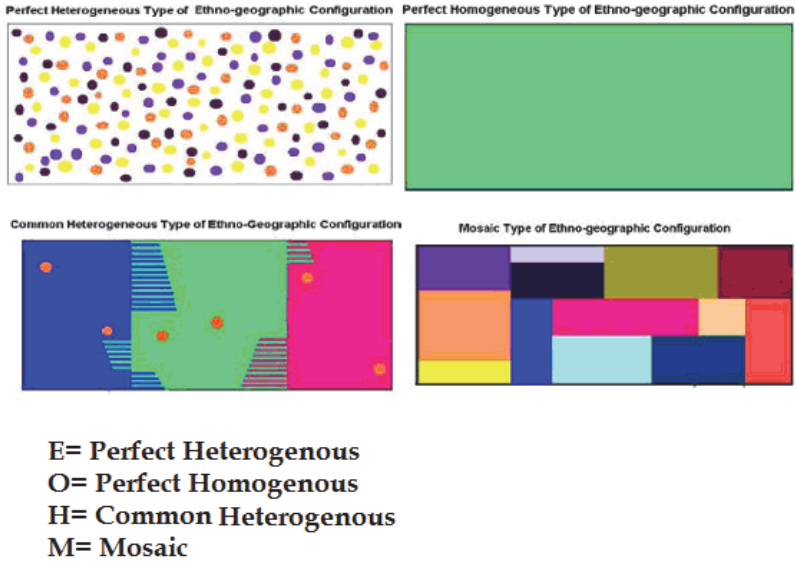


Figure 2.2. Types of Ethno-Geographic Configuration.

I distinguish four ideal types of ethno-geographic configuration: “perfect heterogeneous”, “perfect homogeneous”, “common heterogeneous”, and “mosaic”. The first two types are mere (hypothetical) ideal types.<sup>28</sup> In the “mosaic” type, ethnic groups live compactly, in relative separation from each other, and in relatively small homogeneous areas. The “common heterogeneous” type is the most common type of ethno-geographic configuration. In this type of ethno-geographical configuration the ethnic

<sup>28</sup> Very seldom, if at all, does any area (at meso-scale) in the world fulfill their criteria.

groups are less compactly distributed over space than in the mosaic type. In the common heterogeneous type, ethnic groups inhabit larger areas, and there are transitional areas which are inhabited by many different ethnic groups with sizable numbers of members. (For a schematic view, see Figure 2.2.)

My hypothesis is that apart from all factors derived from existing theory, also the ethno-geographical configuration contributes to the emergence of ethno-territorial conflict. Regions with an ethno-geographic configuration of the mosaic type display relatively highly homogeneous pockets of ethnic concentration. These are regions with a high density of religious and ethnic concentrations, in which relatively small ethnic groups live in their own ethnically homogenous territory, segregated but in close proximity to each other's ethnic territory.

There are several reasons why the chances of ethno-territorial conflict are greater in a mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration than in other types. The first reason is very simple: there are, relatively, many territorial encounters between ethnic groups in a relatively small area. (In most cases, the number of these encounters is even larger than the number of ethnic groups). Due to the relative abundance of territorial encounters between ethnic groups, the potential for ethno-territorial conflict is higher in such an ethno-territorial configuration than in any other. In addition, when ethnic groups are highly concentrated in a small and highly ethnically homogenous region, they can be mobilized more easily, while due to ethnic segregation and concentration, the target—that is, the ethnic opponent—is relatively easily identifiable. Moreover, the relative homogeneity of the inhabited area may contribute to ethnic cohesion and feelings of belonging to, and ownership of, an area. In addition, the multitude of ethno-territorial groups in a region and their proximity to each other may lead to certain dynamics and hence affect ethnic relations in the region in a pressing way.

One such dynamic is the epidemic dynamic. In regions in which there are many ethnic groups living in their own relatively homogeneous ethnic homelands, the incidence of conflict is higher because of the epidemic nature of the mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration. The conflicts can be diffused within a region in a mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration. Without naming it as such, Abbink (1993) attributes the ethnic conflict in the multi-ethnic region of Kafa in southwestern Ethiopia to the domino effect of the mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration. According to him, Suris came into conflict with Dizis to their north because Suris' homeland was itself pressured from the south by other groups. This case shows that territorial pressures from one direction can be transmitted to other directions. More often, however, it is



not so much a case of dominos as it is a case of “there is something in the air”. It is not necessary that the areas afflicted by conflict border each other. Relative proximity or the location of many ethnic homelands in a relative small area makes it possible that one case infects the others. Sambanis (2001: 275) concludes that conflicts are more likely in certain geographic regions than in others. The epidemic dynamic is most likely the reason behind this prevalence of conflict in such regions. The political unrest and revolutions in many Arab countries (2011), the earlier ones in the post-communist countries (Ukraine, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and Serbia), and the collapse of communists regimes in Central and East Europe (more than) two decades earlier (1989–1990) were examples of the same mechanism. In all these cases, political developments diffused from one country to another without the countries even being contiguous to each other.

Ethnic groups consist of human beings who perceive themselves as a cohesive group. Ethnic groups in general, and particularly those with an ethno-nationalist orientation, claim territory as their ethnic homeland. Not only the (official) nationalist ideologies but also popular folklore compare ethnic groups and nations to families and homes. It is important to note that ethnic groups and nations themselves approach the situation as families and homes. They use terms like “motherland”, “fatherland”, *vaterland*, *vaderland*, *mamuli* (which in Georgian roughly means something which you inherit in the paternal line), or simply refer to homelands, such as *heimat* (from the Germanic *heim*, which roughly means “native home”) or *mam-e mihan* (a Persian combined word in which the homeland is called a “mother”). Families and households live in homes, and hence ethnic groups are territorial creatures. They demand a habitat, a *Lebensraum*. Moreover, they have emotional ties to their homelands. Following the terminology of humanistic geography (see e.g. Storey 17-19), their homelands are not *spaces* but *places* to them. Their homelands are not simply pieces of land; they are ethnic territories and are imbued with meaning. These belong to them, and if claimed exclusively, “others” are ideally excluded from living in them or associating with them.

Ethnic groups, which are human groups and therefore of human nature, have a preference for larger territory above smaller territory, *ceteris paribus*. Even though it is not excluded that in some situations they may give away a piece of land, strictly taken, it is not very probable that they do so by free will or without any coercion. It is, nonetheless, more likely that one who possesses a large territory makes concessions and gives away territory than one who possesses smaller territory.

Are the contours or shape of a territory relevant for conflict? Yes, they are. Certain shapes of territory are more difficult to defend, while

certain others are easier to defend and more likely to facilitate ethnic mobilization. According to Barry Smith (1997), the desire to reach geometrical circularity of territory contributes to conflict. The ideal of geometrical circularity appears in a mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration. Although his logic does indeed apply, I argue that the process usually occurs in a reverse direction. According to Smith, the ideal of geometrical circularity and connectedness will cause war because the leaders of the groups want to create such boundaries (configurations) as they offer them certain advantages in terms of defense and strategy and in control of the territory. In his opinion, this is the ideal: a national territory should be, more or less, a circular, contiguous area. In order to reach this ideal, wars have been fought.

In reality, however, many wars are fought by states which have already reached the geometric, contiguous, circular ideal. According to Smith's lines of logic, these states should not have gone to war, but it is clearly observable in history that the satisfaction of the ideal of geometrical circularity has not stopped states from engaging in war. On the contrary, it has even made wars and military enterprise easier, because the compactness of territories has many advantages for mobilization and defense. Whether or not Smith's assertion may find support in certain cases is a subject for more investigation. I argue, nevertheless, that the opposite is true: when the ideal of geometrical circularity is present, the possibility of war *increases*.

Because of their compact nature, ethnic homelands in a mosaic type of configuration very often display the ideal of geometrical circularity. Hence my argument is exactly the reverse of Barry Smith's (1997) line of thinking. It is easier to control the area more effectively and exercise (full) control over the territory and mobilize its inhabitants for a war in a mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration than in a common heterogeneous type of ethno-geographic configuration, which in reality appears when the mosaic type is absent. Moreover, the fact that in mosaic types of ethno-geographic configurations these areas of "geometrical circularity" are small, the territorial pressure and ease of mobilization add to the chances of an ethno-territorial conflict. Hence, the existence of geometrical circularity itself facilitates conflict.

In conclusion, because of the reasons mentioned and the mechanisms discussed, a mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration contributes to the emergence of, or at least facilitates, ethno-territorial conflict. Due to the relatively large number of ethnic groups in an area and their proximity to each other, the probability of ethno-territorial conflict is higher in such a type of ethno-geographic configuration. In particular, due to the compactness of ethnic habitats (living areas) and their proximity to each

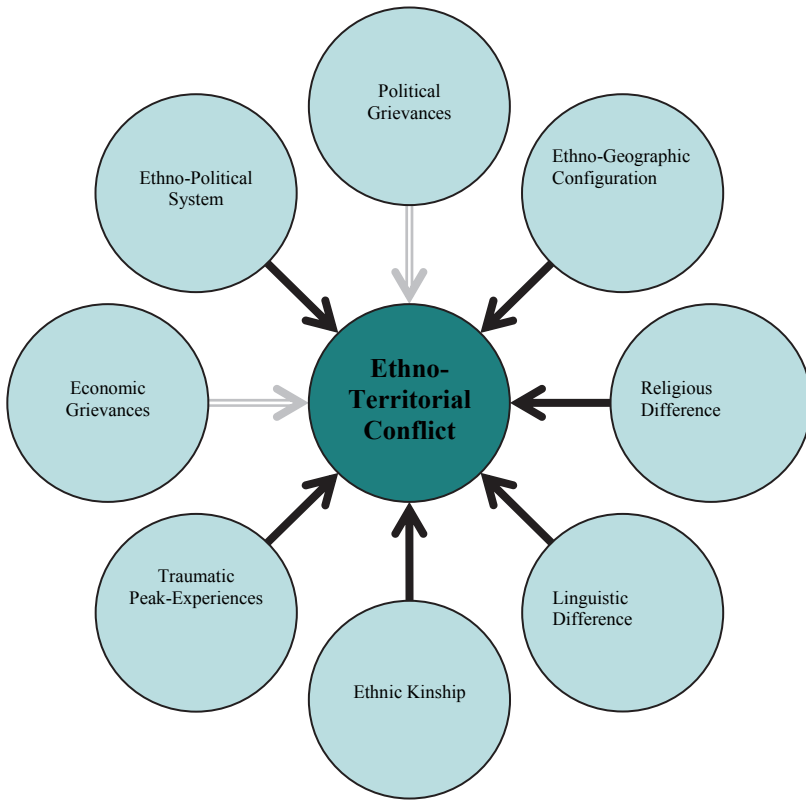
other, mobilization of ethnic groups is easier, and conflict can diffuse from one case to others in the region. The relative ethnic homogeneity of the inhabited area strengthens ethnic cohesion and makes ethnic mobilization relatively easier, while it also makes the location of ethnic opponents better identifiable. It also enhances feelings of belonging to, and ownership of, an area by an ethnic group.

### ***Explaining Ethno-Territorial Conflict: A Theoretical Model***

Having reviewed the available theoretical explanations, a model is presented in which many factors contribute to an explanation of the emergence of ethno-territorial conflict (Figure 2.3). In all likelihood, no factor can explain ethno-territorial conflict completely; However, certain factors, in combination with each other, probably contribute to its eruption. (Empty gray lines in the model [Figure 2.3] indicate ambiguous relationships.)

The factors presented in the model are all structural factors—that is, they relate rather to cultural, spatial, social, and political structures than to agencies.

Ethno-political systems as a factor can further be differentiated into many other relevant conditions which may contribute to the emergence of ethno-territorial conflict. Ethno-political systems and policies in the Soviet Union and Iran are the subjects of the next chapter, at the end of which a more detailed model will be presented.



*Figure 2.3. Factors explaining ethno-territorial conflict: An abstract model. (Empty gray lines indicate an ambiguous relationship.)*



## **Chapter Three**

# **3**

## **The Legacy of the Iranian and Soviet Ethno-Political Systems and Policies**

According to the previous chapter, one of the most relevant conditions that can explain ethno-territorial conflict is the ethno-political system involved. To the regions in this study, two ethno-political systems in particular are relevant: the former Soviet Union's ethno-political system is relevant to the Caucasus and Central Asia, and the Iranian ethno-political system is relevant to Fereydan.

After the Bolshevik revolution, the Soviet Union developed a nationalities policies which had territorial manifestations and the legacy of which is still present in its successor states. The Soviet nationalities policies showed sharp discontinuity with the former Tsarist policies on different ethnic and religious groups in the Russian Empire. Iran, on the other hand, has shown relative stability in its ethno-religious, and less so in its territorial-administrative, policies in the last centuries. Its ethno-religious policies are relatively unaltered since the establishment of the Safavid Empire in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

This chapter will provide an analysis of both systems, with a focus on their conflict-generating or conflict-mitigating/preventing aspects. As a result, a further specification of ethno-political systems as an explaining condition for ethno-territorial conflict will be necessary.

### ***The Soviet Union and Its Successor States***

The Soviet Union (Figure 3.1), officially called the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), evolved from the dominions of the former Tsarist (Romanov) Russian Empire. The Soviet Union was gradually established after the October Revolution of 1918 until 1922. "The Soviet experiment", as the historian Ronald Grigor Suny (1998)<sup>29</sup> calls it, lasted

---

<sup>29</sup> See also Suny (2003) for primary documents and important scholarly articles about 20<sup>th</sup> century Soviet history.

until 1991, when it ended by the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Soviet legacy and the effects of its collapse and aftershocks are still prevalent and important in the explanation and understanding of ethno-territorial conflicts, and in general ethnic relations, in the Soviet successor states. The establishment of the Soviet Union was a dramatic break with the Tsarist Empire. Not only were the ideological orientations of the two states, or empires, different, but their state forms and the modes of ethnic relations in them were also very different.

By the establishment of the Soviet Union, the Bolsheviks broke radically with their Romanov Tsarist past and developed the new ethnic, religious, and territorial system of the Soviet Union. Unlike in the Tsarist empire, in the newly born Soviet Union, ethnicity, ethnic nation, and hence multinationality were institutionalized:

This institutionalized multinationality sharply distinguished the Soviet state from its Romanov predecessor, to which it is too often casually assimilated as a modernized but essentially similar “prison of nations”. The Romanov Empire was indeed for centuries a polyglot and polyreligious state.... But its multinationality, while increasingly (although far from universally) perceived as a central political fact by some peripheral and central elites, was never institutionalized. (Bruebaker 1994: 74, note 12)

The Soviet Union was a federal territorial system based highly on ethnicity. The Soviet federal system constituted a territorial hierarchy, consisting of territorial units of different autonomous capabilities. The highest ranked were the Soviet Socialist Republics (SSRs), also known as the “union republics”; then followed, respectively, the Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics ASSRs, the Autonomous *Oblasts* (AOs) (also known as autonomous provinces), and the National *Okrugs* (NOs) (also known as national regions). There were also many peoples who had no autonomous homelands. As a rule, these autonomous homelands were designed and delimited as territories where the titular ethnic groups were concentrated, but this does not mean that the titular groups always comprised the majority of population there (Pokshishevsky 1974: 9-67).

This territorial division was the main outcome of the Soviet interpretation and realization of the right of national self-determination. The initiator of this policy was the first Soviet leader, Vladimir Ilyich Ulianov, better known as Lenin (1870–1924). The architect of this policy was the Georgian, Ioseb Besarionis dze Jughashvili (Russian: Iosif Vissarionovich Jugashvili), better known as Stalin (1879–1953). The interpretation and implementation of the right of national self-determination began during the Lenin era, (1917–1924), but was consolidated during the Stalin era (1924–1953). The territorial divisions,

as they existed when the Soviet Union collapsed,<sup>30</sup> were largely consolidated in the 1930s during the Stalin era. All autonomous territorial units in the Caucasus and Central Asia were formed no later than 1936. As the result of the conquest of territory the Soviet western international and internal borders changed. During and after the Second World War Stalin revised some of the earlier decisions, punished and deported a number of peoples, and redrew the map of the Soviet Union. After Stalin's death, however, Khrushchev largely reinstated the ethno-territorial map of 1936.



Figure 3.1. Soviet ethno-territorial divisions

The collapse of the Soviet Union led to the establishment of 15 independent states, the foundations of which had already been laid during the Soviet era as constitutionally recognized ethnic homelands, in the form of Soviet socialist republics (see Figure 3.1). The former Soviet socialist republics, as quasi states, resulted in the establishment of independent states when the binding mechanism of the Soviet Union's center was dissolved. The establishment of independent republics caused many ethnic tensions, with (subordinated) ethnic groups disputing the borders and/or state forms of the newly independent states and their

<sup>30</sup> These divisions are still largely preserved. Only in the Russian Federation have some autonomous units' statuses, including those of Karachayev-Cherkessia and Adygheya, been elevated to autonomous republics.



inclusion in states, which followed the pattern of ethnic domination of the Soviet era.

Further in this chapter will be discussed, firstly, the theoretical discourse of the Soviet nationalities policy,<sup>31</sup> and secondly, the practical reasons why the Bolsheviks chose to offer the right of national self-determination to people at all. Following this, the general outcome of the implementation of the Soviet nationalities policy on the eve of Soviet Union's collapse (1991) will be discussed.

### ***The Soviet Nationalities Policy: Historical Underpinnings***

When the Bolsheviks seized political power in the Soviet Union, they decided that the peoples of the former Soviet Union should have the opportunity to realize their right of national self-determination. According to the Bolsheviks, national self-determination was not only a formal right, but it positively contributed to the realization of socialism.

Lenin appointed Stalin as the "Commissioner of Nationalities" and gave him the task to investigate the national question in the Soviet Union, in order to be able to implement the appropriate policy. After Lenin's death, Stalin himself was responsible for the implementation of his own program on the Soviet nationalities.

According to Stalin, in order to be a nation, a people should speak its own language, live in a certain territory, be involved in an economic life, and possess a psychological make-up:

A nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture. It goes without saying that a nation, like every historical phenomenon, is subject to the law of change, has its history, its beginning and end. It must be emphasized that none of the above characteristics taken separately is sufficient to define a nation. More than that, it is sufficient for a single one of these characteristics to be lacking and the nation ceases to be a nation.... It is only when all these characteristics are present together that we have a nation. (Stalin 1913)<sup>32</sup> [Italics in the original are omitted]

---

<sup>31</sup> Many accounts exist in which the Soviet nationalities policy and its legacies are described and discussed. To name only a few, I refer to Brubaker (1994), Bremmer (1997), Kaiser (1994), Martin (1999; 2001), Motyl (ed.) (1992), Shiokawa (1999), Slezkine (1994), Smith (ed.) (1996), Suny and Martin (ed.) (2001), and Szporluk (ed.) (1994).

<sup>32</sup> J. V. Stalin (1913). *Marxism and the National Question*. Available online: <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1913/03.htm#s5> (First published in *Prosveshcheniye*, No. 3-5, March-May 1913; transcribed by Carl Kavanagh) (Accessed 8 September 2003).

According to Stalin, language is the most important ethnic denominator. He regards race as irrelevant and does not point directly to religion as an ethnic denominator:

Thus, a nation is not a racial or tribal, but a historically constituted community of people.... Thus, a common language is one of the characteristic features of a nation. This, of course, does not mean that different nations always and everywhere speak different languages, or that all who speak one language necessarily constitute one nation. A common language for every nation, but not necessarily different languages for different nations. (Stalin 1913)

According to Stalin, having a common language is not sufficient if the people involved do not live in a common territory. He rejects the non-territorial option of cultural autonomy which was suggested by the Austrian Marxists, because it may replace the class struggle with national struggle:

We spoke above of the formal aspect of the Austrian national programme and of the methodological grounds which make it impossible for the Russian Marxists simply to adopt the example of Austrian Social-Democracy and make the latter's programme their own.... It will be seen from the foregoing that cultural-national autonomy is no solution of the national question. Not only that, it serves to aggravate and confuse the question by creating a situation which favours the destruction of the unity of the labour movement, fosters the segregation of the workers according to nationality and intensifies friction among them. Such is the harvest of national autonomy. (Stalin 1913)

Whether Stalin's latter claim was just or not, his stress on territoriality is undeniable. As we have seen, he also does not recognize a tribe as a nation. A relevant problem would be whether or not the (predominantly nomadic) ethnic groups that are divided into tribes and live in different territories should be regarded as one nation or not. Despite the fact that in the former Soviet Union many such ethnic groups lived, Stalin is not clear on this issue. I will come back to this issue later on.

Stalin's third precondition is clearer. According to him, nations possess a psychological make-up. Indeed, nation-building does have psychological aspects. "The usual point of departure is to assume that people need to identify with some cause or group larger than themselves" (Breuilly 1993: 414). Stalin links the psychological make-up of a people to a *national character* and a *common culture*. Furthermore, he regards a nation as a historically constituted community of people. In other words, by *national character* he probably does not mean the culture in a narrow

sense only but also acknowledges national attributes such as collective memory.

Another precondition for being a nation, according to Stalin, is being involved in a common economic life. He gives Georgians as an example:

The Georgians before the Reform inhabited a common territory and spoke one language. Nevertheless, they did not, strictly speaking, constitute one nation, for, being split up into a number of disconnected principalities, they could not share a common economic life; for centuries they waged war against each other and pillaged each other, each inciting the Persians and Turks against the other. The ephemeral and casual union of the principalities which some successful king sometimes managed to bring about embraced at best a superficial administrative sphere, and rapidly disintegrated owing to the caprices of the princes and the indifference of the peasants. Nor could it be otherwise in economically disunited Georgia.... Georgia came on the scene as a nation only in the latter half of the nineteenth century, when the fall of serfdom and the growth of the economic life of the country, the development of means of communication and the rise of capitalism, introduced division of labour between the various districts of Georgia, completely shattered the economic isolation of the principalities and bound them together into a single whole. (Stalin 1913)

It is clear that by a common economic life Stalin means a highly integrated economic system. There lived many communities of self-subsistent farmers when the Bolsheviks took control over the territory of the Soviet Union. It is also undeniable that the members of large ethnic groups such as Russians, who lived in a vast territory, did not all share a highly integrated economic system. It is improbable that Russians of Far East shared the same economic sphere as the Russians of European Russia. On the other hand, there were nomadic tribal ethnic groups who did share an integrated economic system with other ethnic groups. In Central Asia many nomadic tribal groups lived who produced meat and dairy products for exchange with agricultural and industrial products of urban and rural dwellers. Their main economic dependency was on other ethnic groups, rather than on other tribes of their own ethnic group. According to Stalin's logic, they did not constitute a nation, neither with their own co-ethnics who lived in other (far-away) areas nor with other ethnic groups in their proximity who spoke, nevertheless, different languages and had other ways of life. In practice, however, Stalin did have a solution in order to build a nation out of these ethnic groups. In general, Stalin proposed creating these conditions artificially when they were historically absent.

In his speech for the students of the Communist University of the Toilers of the East on 18 May 1925, he stated that these were the

Bolsheviks who have created existing nations out of peoples who could be regarded as potential nations. He stated that Bolsheviks by abolishing the former political territories in Central Asia and artificial division of the political boundaries of the newly established territories, in fact, have united ethno-national homelands or countries which were fragmented. To clarify his claim, he stated that while the Polish bourgeoisie needed several wars in order to unify Poland by abolishing the former political territories and creating new ones, Bolsheviks needed only a couple of months of enlightening propaganda in order to unify Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan (Stalin 1953: 10-11). Obviously, he regarded the former generally multi-ethnic political divisions in Central Asia as inappropriate and regarded the newly established territorial divisions as more appropriate.<sup>33</sup> This is not very surprising because Stalin's view of a nation was primarily an ethnic one. He regarded attempts at artificially creating ethnic homogenous territories as being processes of unifying peoples who had been disunited before.

This Soviet-style, ethno-territorial engineering shows an uneasy relationship with the right of national self-determination, because it was Moscow, the *Soviet Center*, and not the peoples, which freely decided about their fate. The establishment of the Soviet Union was a result of the conquest of the former Tsarist Russian Empire's territory by Bolsheviks and the implantation of the right of national self-determination. Despite the official propaganda, this process was not always welcomed by different groups. Moreover, the implementation of the right of national self-determination occurred in accordance with its interpretation by the Soviet leaders and policy makers of that time.

The question that should be asked here is whether Bolsheviks themselves believed in the right of national self-determination in an idealistic sense, or they chose to embrace this right only for practical reasons. The answer is probably both. The Soviet nationalities policy was formally based on the right of national self-determination from the outset. This policy was implemented officially during Lenin's rule. One aspect of this policy was *korenizatsiya* in the 1920s. *Korenizatsiya*, which means "nativization", can be seen as a pragmatic policy in order to strengthen effective Soviet rule over the subjects of the former Tsarist Russian Empire. *Korenizatsiya* is derived from the Russian *koren*, which means "root". In fact, by *koren* is meant the ethnic roots. This terminology indeed suggests the ethnic view of the Bolsheviks on nations.

Below I will discuss the Soviet nationalities policy from its initial stages of formation and implementation during Lenin's era until its final

---

<sup>33</sup> Even these newly established territories were again divided and their boundaries underwent major changes and minor corrections until 1936.

consolidation in Stalin's era, and thereafter I will also discuss the reasons which led to the Bolsheviks' acceptance and interpretation of the right of national self-determination, as they did during the initial stages of the Soviet Union in Lenin's era.

First of all, it is important to realize that Lenin was not a nationalist, and in his view nationalist ideas were considerably inferior to communist ideals. Nevertheless, Lenin was an idealist who believed in the ideas of anti-imperialism. It is very probable, therefore, that Lenin truly and honestly believed in nationalism as an instrument of popular liberation. Indeed, nationalism has an emancipatory effect because it can weaken the importance of social classes and embraces an imagined community regardless of social class.

Another reason was the international discourse on the right of national self-determination after the First World War. At that time, nationalism was flourishing, and many nation-states were built out of the ruins of the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires. By supporting the right of national self-determination, Lenin implicitly wished to transcend the notion of the Soviet Union as a territorial political entity and create an ideological organization which directed its subjects towards true communism.

Despite having had, at times, different opinions and ideas, Lenin was impressed by the anti-imperialist ideas of the German Marxists Rosa Luxemburg (1871–1919) and Karl Kautsky (1854–1938), and he himself was a main theoretician of anti-imperialism (Van der Pijl 1992: 66-74). Therefore, it is very probable that he honestly believed in the right of the Russian Empire's peoples to national self-determination. Although it remains speculation, as even psychologists cannot always know the real intentions of a person very clearly, it is very probable that Lenin did regard the realization of the right of national self-determination of the peoples of the Russian Empire as a progressive phase towards the complete communist phase of social and societal development.<sup>34</sup>

Lenin and his fellow Bolsheviks took a pragmatic position on the issue of the realization of the right of self-determination by the peoples of the Russian Empire. Apparently they realized that they were not strong enough, at that moment, to rule all the territories of the former Russian Empire, without the consent of the local, more or less ethno-nationalist, forces. The Bolsheviks did not have enough power to establish an assimilatory rule over all their subjects. Therefore, a better strategy was to

---

<sup>34</sup> Shaheen (1956) discusses the Bolsheviks' and Lenin's choice in his book, *The Communist Theory of National Self-Determination: Its Historical Evolution up to the October Revolution*. A very well-written and informative account on the Soviet nationalities policy and the different opinions on national self-determination is Yuri Slezkine's (1994) oft-cited article, "The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism". See also Van der Pijl (1992: 75-98).

co-opt some local elites in order to gain their support. The co-optation of local elites could be contradictory to the emancipatory aspect of nationalism, as these elites were in many cases those elites of the *ancien régime* who announced their loyalty to the Bolshevik rule. Bolsheviks, in a few cases, co-opted and made concessions to some local elites who, in reality, did not agree with many aspects of the Bolsheviks' ideas. In other cases, however, they abolished the supremacy of the elites of the *ancien régime*. Co-optation of the local elites, therefore, should be seen in the light of a pragmatic strategy. This explanation does not exclude the former explanation about Lenin's ideological beliefs, but it is an explanation which shows that the Bolsheviks were more or less also obliged to take this option. It is likely that if the Bolsheviks had possessed more power, they would not have implemented such a policy at all and would have justified their policies by another set of ideological reasonings.

Contrary to the ideas of the Austrian Marxists Karl Renner (1870–1950) and Otto Bauer (1882–1938), who proposed the non-territorial option of cultural autonomy without binding these cultural rights to a certain territory,<sup>35</sup> the Bolsheviks chose the option of federalization. Federalization served as a territorial option for the realization of the right of self-determination.

The Bolsheviks' preference for a territorial option, however, does not mean that there existed no cultural autonomy at all. Cultural autonomy existed at least in theory for the spatially dispersed peoples, until 1934 (Kolossoff 1995: 242). Arguably, it existed in specific forms even after that date in certain cases. Cultural autonomy, however, was not the general rule in the former Soviet Union. In general, Soviet policies were especially assimilationist with regard to the non-titular ethnic groups (Bremmer 1997: 14). In short, it is fair to state that non-territorial cultural autonomy was more an exception than the rule in the former Soviet Union. The general rule was that ethno-cultural rights, in the realm of the Soviet ethno-federal system, were bound to the titular territorial units.

There are also a number of other reasons which can clarify why the Bolsheviks opted for the territorial option and not the non-territorial option as the Austrian Marxists Renner and Bauer did. First, most of the ethnic minorities were concentrated in the peripheries of the former Tsarist Russian Empire. This was in sharp contrast to the situation in the Austria-Hungarian Habsburg Empire, the large urban centers of which were very diverse in their ethnic compositions. The pattern in the former Tsars' empire was that the ethnic minorities were concentrated in certain regions—in fact, in their native regions—and were absent, rare, or not

---

<sup>35</sup> See Karl Renner's (1918) classic work on this issue, *Das Selbstbestimmungsrecht der Nationen—In besonderer anwendung auf Österreich. Erster Teil: Nation und Staat*.

very populous in any case in the major Russian urban centers such as Moscow and St. Petersburg.

Second, a non-territorial option regarding the cultural autonomy of the ethnic minorities was difficult if not totally unachievable in that period of time in such a vast territory as the former Tsar's empire. This had to do with the stage of development in the transportation and communication industry at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, together with the large territory of the empire. Today, a non-territorial option would indeed be a serious option, but we should remember that at the beginnings of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there were no such instruments as fast-speed airplanes and trains, mobile phones, satellite TVs, and Internet.

Third, the architect of the territorial system—Stalin, a Georgian—was himself from the periphery of the Russian Empire. Although it is debatable and more a psychological debate than our debate, it is very probable that Stalin, like most Caucasian people, had seen the Tsarist Russian Empire not as a unity but as a superficial political structure incorporating different non-Russian territories. Certainly, a Russian from the European Russian center of the empire would have had a more centralist view on the empire than someone from the periphery, who would tend more to define it as a non-voluntary incorporation of different peoples and regions into the “Russian” empire. For Stalin, indeed, the Tsar's empire would have been a “prison of peoples” who were diverse in many aspects, but still under the rule of the same master. This view of his, of an incohesive, difficult-to-handle empire, possibly also contributed to the autocratic way Stalin ruled the Soviet Union. Although Stalin's power during the leadership of Lenin should not be exaggerated, after Lenin's death Stalin had the strongest influence on the Soviet nationalities policy.

The politicization of ethnicity in the Soviet Union was brought into effect directly after the establishment of the Soviet Union and was a result of the implementation of the right of national self-determination, *as understood by the Soviet leaders and policy makers*. The population of the Soviet Union was divided into officially recognized ethnic groups. Commissions were tasked with identifying different ethnic groups for the sake of censuses. The categories changed over time, in that many lesser ethnic groups were later on put together into the ethnic categories of the ethnic groups into which they were assimilating or stood in close affinity with (Hirsch 1997; 2005). The Soviet Union's population, therefore, was a collection of different ethnic nations or *natsional'nosti*. *Natsional'nosti* is the plural of *natsional'nost'* and is often translated as “nationality” in English. These nationalities, however, were not only subjects of census but determined also to a large extent people's social positions:

Ethnic nationality (*natsional'nost'*) was not only a *statistical category*, a fundamental unit of social accounting, employed in censuses and other social surveys. It was, more distinctively, an obligatory and mainly ascriptive *legal category*, a key element of an individual's legal status. As such, it was registered in internal passports and other personal documents, transmitted by descent, and recorded in almost all bureaucratic encounters and official transactions. In some contexts, notably admission to higher education and application for certain types of employment, legal nationality significantly shaped life chances, both negatively (especially for Jews) and positively (for "titular" nationalities in the non-Russian republics, who benefitted from mainly tacit "affirmative action" or preferential treatment policies). (Brubaker 1994: 53)

The ethnic nations or nationalities were important legal categories in Soviet policy-making. In the 1920s the Soviet authorities adopted the policy of nativization, *korenizatsiya*, which meant extending education among nationalities in their own national languages. *Korenizatsiya* was a means in the hands of Soviet leaders to spread and propagate effectively their official policy to the masses. This means that *korenizatsiya* was not aimed at the encouragement of ethno-nationalism and nationalization of different ethnic minorities, but as the masses did not know Russian very well it was merely a necessity. *Korenizatsiya* can be seen as a practical measure to spread the state's ideology to the masses. In the localities, however, some activists tried to use this policy for nationalistic purposes. Paradoxically, the policy of *korenizatsiya*, which encouraged the use of local languages, went hand in hand with de-nativization of languages. The adjusted Perso-Arabic alphabets, used by many Muslim peoples, were replaced first by the Latin and then by the Cyrillic alphabets. On the other hand, the Georgian and Armenian alphabets, used by Armenians and Georgians, the two largest Christian peoples in the Caucasus, remained intact and in some cases were imposed on smaller Caucasian languages such as Abkhazian (Jones 1997: 507). Therefore, the meaning of the policy of *korenizatsiya* was ambivalent and its implementation was not at all consistent.

During Stalin's rule in the 1930s, the Soviet nationalities policy was consolidated. However, one should not confuse this consolidation of the Soviet nationalities policy with Russification:

[T]he Soviet Union was never organized, in theory or in practice, as a *Russian* nation-state. Russians were indeed the dominant nationality, effectively controlling key party and state institutions [at the highest Soviet level]; and Russian was promoted by the state as its lingua franca. But this did not make the state a Russian nation-state, any more than the dominance of Germans and the use of German as a lingua franca made the Austrian half of the Habsburg empire a German nation-state. (Brubaker 1994: 51)



From the 1930s onwards Soviet “socialism”, or “state capitalism” as many prefer to call it, was mixed and flavored with nationalism. This, however, did not necessarily mean that a policy of Russification was established. A prejudiced view completely in accordance with Western anti-Soviet sentiments of the Cold War era is the view that Soviet nationalities policy aimed at Russification of non-Russian ethnic groups. Although this viewpoint is not entirely groundless, it is often presented in a simplistic way. It is true that many non-Russian smaller ethnic groups in the Soviet Union have been, more or less, linguistically Russified. Many other smaller ethnic groups tend to assimilate into the languages of another large ethnic group than Russian. They tend to speak the languages of the titular nation of the territory in which they lived. And, it is clear that larger nationalities have retained their national languages to a fairly high degree, especially in their own titular autonomous territories (Dostál & Knippenberg 1992; Knippenberg & Dostál 1979; Knippenberg & Dostál 1981; Shiokawa 1999; Strayer 1998: 80-78). This is clear evidence that Soviet federalization was a hierarchical territorial arrangement. At the same time, one should be aware of the fact that Russification is not necessarily linguistic Russification, but could also mean more widespread cultural Russification. As Russians were the largest ethnic group in the Soviet Union, and the greatest portion of the Soviet elite were Russians, cultural Russification of non-Russian populations was self-evident if not inevitable.

In reality, the official policy of the Soviet Union during that era was not Russification but nationalism. This official revitalization and salience of nationalism can be linked to the fact that in the interbellum, nationalism—especially among the counter-hegemonic powers—became the state’s official political discourse. Nationalism has always been connected to protectionism and mercantilism in the European states system. The Soviet Union, as a planned economy which attempted to reach economic self-sufficiency, was indeed a protectionist if not a mercantilist state. The embracing of nationalism, therefore, was absolutely in accordance with the economic policies and ambitions of the Soviet state during the interbellum.

Nationalism in the Soviet Union became salient from the 1930s onwards. Although there has been also repression against certain nationalist expressions in Stalin’s era, in general, and in the long run, ethnic nationalism was strengthened. Russian nationalism was not the only form of ethnic nationalism in the Soviet Union. In addition to it, Uzbek, Armenian, Georgian and some other kinds of nationalism were also revitalized, gained salience, or were in any case tolerated, although at relatively lower levels of hierarchy compared with Russian nationalism (see, for example, Shiokawa 1999).

After the late 1930s and the establishment of almost all ethnic homelands, Soviet nationalities policy was characterized by its ethno-territorial hierarchical structure. At the top of this hierarchical ethno-territorial system were the SSRs (union republics), which were elevated as independent states after the collapse of the Soviet Union. SSRs could incorporate ASSRs and AOs. AOs possessed a lower level of autonomy compared with an ASSR. The lowest-ranked ethnic territories, the NOs, were found only in the Russian Federative SSR (the Russian FSSR).<sup>36</sup> There existed many non-autonomous *oblasts* (provinces) in many union republics, but a few union republics were divided only into *rayons* (districts). Although Russians were at the top of the hierarchy in a cultural sense, they possessed a federative union republic, which did not possess its own political organs until the late 1980s. This situation suggested a kind of asymmetric federation consistent with the Soviet nationalities policy's rationale. As a matter of fact, this situation suggested that the Soviet Union was Russia, out of which a number of ethnic homelands were given away as concessions to the smaller ethnic groups.

Next to Russians many other relatively large ethnic groups such as Georgians or Uzbeks possessed their own SSR (union republic). Then followed the second-, third-, and fourth-ranked ethnic groups, such as the Abkhazians, Khakass, and Chukchis, who possessed respectively their own ASSRs, AOs, or NOs. Then followed the ethnic groups, such as the Talysh, who were not awarded any autonomous homelands. At the bottom of the hierarchy stood the (minor ethnic) groups who, unlike the former groups, were not officially recognized as separate *natsional'nosti*, that is, ethnic nations or nationalities.<sup>37</sup>

After Stalin's death, the next Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev (1894–1971), corrected the extremes of the later Stalinist policies and returned more or less to the original situation of the Soviet nationalities policy in the 1920s. He rehabilitated a number of peoples, such as the Ingush and Chechens, who were deported in large numbers by Stalin. Khrushchev in general relaxed the attitude of the Center towards nationalities by taking some measures in order to decentralize the process of policy-making. Although he advocated and propagated the coming

---

<sup>36</sup> Both nouns (name of a territory) and adjectives (designation of ethnic groups) can accompany the territorial units. For example, both “the Uzbekistan SSR” and “the Uzbek SSR”, both “the Abkhazia ASSR” and “the Abkhazian ASSR”, and both “the South Ossetia AO” and “the South Ossetian AO” can be used. The meanings remain the same, but the stresses are different; the usage of adjectives stresses ethnic entitlement, while the usage of nouns stresses the name of a territory. Both versions are used in this book.

<sup>37</sup> The Karelo-Finnish SSR was established in 1940 and abolished in 1956. It became the Karelian ASSR inside the Russian FSSR. The reasons behind these changes in its status and name were probably the attitudes and intentions of the Soviet Union towards Finland. Similar cases were Moldova and Azerbaijan, whose names and territorial borders were instruments that served Soviet geopolitical interest and intentions vis-à-vis Romania and Iran, respectively.

together (*sblizhenie*) and ultimately the merger (*sliyaniye*) of nationalities under communism, it was more just an ideal than reality. This was clearly in accordance with the original aims of Lenin, permitting nationalism in the realm of the right of national self-determination as a progressive process—a process which has its progressive effects at a certain time but will lose its utility at later stages of the establishment of a communist system. In reality, however, “nationality was an asset and there were no nationally defined entities above the union republic” (Slezkine 1994: 433). The Soviet nation, in reality, was an assemblage of different ethnic nations:

Soviet rulers never elaborated the idea of a *Soviet* nation. To be sure, they did seek to inculcate a state-wide Soviet identity, and in the 1960s and 1970s they developed the doctrine of the “Soviet People” (*sovetskii narod*) as a “new historical community”. But this emergent entity was explicitly conceived as supra-national, not national. The supra-national Soviet People was consistently distinguished from the individual sub-state Soviet nations. Nationhood remained the prerogative of sub-state ethnonational groups; it was never predicated of the statewide citizenry. (Brubaker 1994: 54)

The Soviet ethno-territorial hierarchy was also reflected in Soviet education policy, which influenced the language situation of each nationality.<sup>38</sup> Generally, education in the native language of large nationalities was enforced up to high levels of education, but education in languages of smaller ethnic groups was only enforced up to relatively low levels of education, if at all (see Dostál & Knippenberg 1992; Shiokawa 1999; Silver 1974). This is clear evidence of the fact that the lower an ethnic group was ranked in the hierarchy, the more strongly it underwent the tendency of assimilation. It is true that some nationalities were officially subject to assimilation into higher-ranked nationalities, but this did not mean necessarily assimilation into the Russian nation: it could have been into other high-ranked nationalities.

This situation was maintained until Mikhail Gorbachev (b. 1931, in office 1989–1991), implemented reforms named *perestroika* [restructuring] and *glasnost* (*glasnost*) [openness] in the second half of the 1980s. The peak of *glasnost* and *perestroika* appeared after 1987, when he rehabilitated a number of dissidents and changed many officials. “In his striving for *perestroika*, democratization and a greater openness of the society, he initially underestimated the nationalist sentiments that would be evoked” (Knippenberg 1991: 43).<sup>39</sup> From this time onwards the

---

<sup>38</sup> Pavlenko (2008) offers a concise overview of bilingual education in the Soviet Union.

<sup>39</sup> Knippenberg (1991) in his article refers often to Gorbachev’s (1987b) book, *Perestroika: A New Vision for Our Country and the World*, an English translation of Gorbachev’s (1987a) *Perestroika i novoe myshlenie dlya nashei strany i dlya vsego mira*. It is notable that Gorbachev still referred to the Soviet Union as a country. This, however, ceased to be the case definitively and clearly when the

economically weakened and politically chaotic Soviet Union was struck by ethno-national strife. The national homelands demanded more autonomy or independence and, in addition, many ethnic conflicts erupted.

### ***The Soviet Union on the Eve of its Collapse and Beyond***

*Perestroika* and *glasnost* had brought about ample opportunity for the expression of dissatisfaction about social and political life in the Soviet Union. The Soviet economy was in very bad shape in the late 1980s. If the reforms of the *perestroika* era were not the reason for this poor economic situation, they did not help it either. *Perestroika*, in the word of Robert Strayer (1998: 116), “created a kind of limbo economy, in which neither the Plan nor the market worked effectively”. Such a poor economic situation, accompanied by political chaos caused not least by ethno-national and other cultural strife, drove the Soviet empire to its death.

A common Cold-War era misperception of the situation is that the Soviet system suppressed religion and ethnic and national cultures. This is not fully true. There were times in which the Soviet state took an overtly anti-religious position and destroyed many churches and mosques. In general, however, there was ample opportunity for religion to be practiced. Although bound to certain restrictions, certain expressions of religion were tolerated in the secular Soviet Union (see, for example, Abazov 2007: 64-77; Akbarzadeh 2001). Religion did survive as an ethno-cultural attribute in the secular Soviet Union. Shahram Akbarzadeh (2001: 453) describes the situation in the Soviet Union’s major Muslim region, Central Asia:

Soviet authorities could exercise control over the number of clerics trained to read (and to interpret) the Koran but could hardly destroy traditional practices and festivals. Even though the Soviet imposed national identity, that was designed to replace the sense of belonging to Islam and to create secular societies, it failed to eradicate the importance of Islamic traditions for Central Asians. The two parallel processes of a spreading national identity, introduced to the region under Soviet rule, and the unforeseen merger of folkloric and scriptural versions of Islam further entrenched Islam as an important pillar of identity within the incipient national context.

The Russian Empire and the Soviet Union were often called “prison of nations”. Its prisoners, at least its largest one, however, did not suffer death but were fed and were stronger when they were released from it. To use Strayer’s (1998: 71) words, nations flourished in that “prison of

---

Soviet Union collapsed soon thereafter.

nations”. The Soviet Union did not succeed in assimilating different ethnic groups into one whole. To speak in Yuri Slezkine’s (1994) terms, it was not a “communal apartment” of different peoples but had enhanced ethnic particularism. The Soviet nationalities policy and ethno-territorial federalism had brought about rivalry and competition among different ethnic groups. Ethnic conflict’s potential was already existent in the Soviet Union; with the Union’s demise and collapse, however, many latent ethnic conflicts became manifest and erupted, resulting often in cruel wars.

Although certainly authoritarian in nature, the Soviet Union was best described as an ethno-territorial federation of ethnic nations and not as a unitary nation state:

[T]he Soviet Union was neither conceived in theory nor organized in practice as a nation-state. Yet while it did not define the state or citizenry as a *whole* in national terms, it did define component *parts* of the state and the citizenry in national terms. Herein lies the distinctiveness of the Soviet nationality regime—in its unprecedented displacement of nationhood and nationality, as organizing principles of the social and political order, from the state-wide to the sub-state level. No other state has gone so far in sponsoring, codifying, institutionalizing, even (in some cases) inventing nationhood and nationality on the sub-state level, while at the same time doing nothing to institutionalize them on the level of the state as a whole. (Brubaker 1994: 52)

In fact, the Soviet policy built many nation states under the realm of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union’s official name, “The Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics” (USSR), is a good reflection of the actual situation: it was a union of different SSRs, which were designed as ethnic homelands of various ethnic nations, functioned as quasi states, and had the right to secede from the Union. On the eve of the Soviet collapse, there existed fifteen union republics, in a number of which existed lower-ranked autonomous territories (see Table 3.1). The union republics had formally the right to secede from the Soviet Union.

While Articles 34, 35, and 36 of the Soviet Constitution<sup>40</sup> (last modified version of 1977) claimed equal rights for all Soviet citizens, regardless of their “nationality”,<sup>41</sup> race, and gender, Chapter Eight of that constitution (Articles 70 to 88) identified the Soviet Union as a hierarchical federal structure, within which the higher-ranked federal units enjoyed more privileges than the lower ones. Given the fact that these

---

<sup>40</sup> *Constitution of the Soviet Union* (last modified 1977). Available online on the website of *University of Bern, Faculty of Law*, at: [http://www.oefre.unibe.ch/law/icl/r100000\\_.html](http://www.oefre.unibe.ch/law/icl/r100000_.html) (Accessed 20 November 2006).

<sup>41</sup> As the Soviet Union held an ethnic view on nation, the term nationality in this context means ethnicity.

territorial units were identified and created on ethno-national foundations, this meant that some ethnic groups enjoyed more privileges than others. Although in theory all subjects of the former Soviet Union were equal and enjoyed equally the right of self-determination, in practice the Soviet nationalities policy resulted in an unequal hierarchical federal system. The Soviet Union proclaimed that it offered the right of national self-determination to all peoples of the Soviet Union; but firstly, not all peoples had their titular homelands, and secondly, the autonomy of the different homelands varied in the federal hierarchy, in which the national and cultural rights, and even material and job-related privileges, were generally bound to certain territories. The result of this policy was a division of peoples into several ethnic nations and a hierarchical, ethno-territorial federal system (see, for example, Bremmer 1997; Martin 2001a; Martin 2001b).

The Soviet ethno-territorial federal system, in which cultural and “national” rights were bound to territorial autonomy, gave rise to ethno-territorial rivalry over the statuses of homelands. The introduction of a non-egalitarian hierarchical federal system on the basis of ethnicity resulted in ethnic competition. While different ethnic groups saw each other as potential rivals, they saw Moscow—the Soviet Center—both as a master and a protector at the same time. This made a paternalistic position possible for the Soviet Center. In this uneven distribution of power and ethnic status among ethnic groups, the lower-ranked ethnic groups naturally appealed to Moscow for protection against the observed and perceived injustice towards them by the higher-ranked ethnic groups. Bremmer (1997: 14) shows the ethnic relations in the former Soviet Union in an abstract table. I have represented that table and in addition have translated this ethnic competitive system into a schematic figure which shows the situation in a simplified fashion (see Table 3.2 and Figure 3.2). The ethno-political relations are displayed in Figure 3.2. Obviously, the subordinated ethnic groups sought protection and mediation from their ethnic kin in the neighboring territorial units against the excesses of their ethnic overlords in the host republics. Nevertheless, the tasks of protection of, and mediation between, ethnic groups, and the regulation of ethnic relations, were mainly the prerogative of the Soviet Center. Moscow was the most powerful “agent” in keeping together the Soviet Union’s ethnic groups and territorial units. With its demise, ethno-national strife manifested and gained salience in the former Soviet Union. The roots of these (latent) conflicts, however, were already laid, if not consciously engineered, in its ethno-territorial system. This system worked well as long as the Soviet Center was powerful and functioned properly. With the Soviet Union’s demise, however, ethnic fears manifested themselves. The lower-ranked titular ethnic groups could not enjoy the Soviet Center’s

protection and mediation any more. This fact alone was one of the main, if not *the* main, reason why many of those groups rebelled against the hosting republics and demanded independence. The openness created after *glasnost* and *perestroika*, as well as the emerging anarchy, offered ample chances to rebel. The emerging anarchy itself contributed to the awakening of ethnic fears and hence indirectly to ethnic rivalry and conflict.

The territorial division of Soviet Central Asia and the Caucasus, especially in the South Caucasus, was very complex. Three SSRs existed in the South Caucasus: the Georgian SSR, the Azerbaijan SSR, and the Armenian SSR. They were also known respectively as the SSRs Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia. Inside the Georgian SSR existed two ASSRs and one AO: the Adjara ASSR, the Abkhazian ASSR, and the South Ossetian AO. There existed two lower-ranked autonomous territorial units inside the Azerbaijan SSR: the Nakhichevan ASSR and the Nagorno-Karabakh AO. All North Caucasian autonomous territories were part of the Russian Federative SSR. In the North Caucasus there were four ASSRs and two AOs: the Dagestan ASSR, the Chechen-Ingush ASSR, the North Ossetian ASSR, the Kabardino-Balkarian ASSR, the Adygheyan (Adygheyan) AO and the Karacheyevo-Cherkessian AO.

Five SSRs existed in Central Asia: the Kazakh SSR (Kazakhstan), the Kyrgyz SSR (Kirgizia or Kyrgyzstan), the Uzbek SSR (Uzbekistan), the Tajik SSR (Tajikistan), and the Turkmen SSR (Turkmenia or Turkmenistan).<sup>42</sup> The Karakalpak ASSR and the Gorno-Badakhshan AO were situated respectively inside the Uzbek SSR and the Tajik SSR. Aside from these, there were no other lower-ranked territorial units in Central Asia. The locations of these autonomous territorial units are shown in Figure 3.3 (see also Table 3.1 and Figure 3.1).

In the Caucasus and Central Asia, as elsewhere in the Soviet Union, the names of the union republics and the lower-ranked territorial units generally reflected the names of the titular ethnic groups. There are, however, a few exceptions. Nagorno-Karabakh was in fact an Armenian autonomous territory inside Azerbaijan, and, therefore, Armenians could be regarded as the titular people there. In Nakhichevan, Azeris were titular. The Nakhichevan ASSR was a part of Azerbaijan SSR, disconnected from it by the Armenian SSR. Similarly in Adjara ASSR, the Georgians were the titular people. Adjara's population consisted predominantly of Georgians, of whom a part were Muslims. All native ethnic groups in Dagestan ASSR were regarded as "official" peoples,

---

<sup>42</sup> Depending on the context and the language, the Kazakh SSR, the Uzbek SSR, and the Tajik SSR were also known as respectively the SSRs Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. The Turkmen SSR was also known as the SSR Turkmenia or the SSR Turkmenistan. The Kyrgyzstan SSR was also known as the SSR Kirgizia or the SSR Kyrgyzstan.

which means *de facto* that they were titulars. These were Avars, Laks, Dargins, Lezgins, Tabasarans, Taskhurs, Rutuls, Aguls, Tats, Kumyks, Azeris, Russians, Nogays and Chechens.<sup>43</sup> Gorno-Badakhshan AO was the homeland of the Pamiri or Badakhshani peoples. Although the later Soviet censuses have reclassified the Pamiri peoples as Tajiks, their existence in the Soviet Union could not be denied and, in fact, was strengthened after *perestroika* and the Tajikistani Civil War. The Pamiri people, who had a strong sense of linguistic and, more so, of religious particularism, were *de facto* the titular group in Gorno-Badakhshan (see also Chapter 5).

All ethno-territorial wars discussed in this book emerged during the Soviet demise and shortly afterwards. Outside the Caucasus and Central Asia, the Transnistrian conflict in Moldavia has emerged, in which the Slavs (i.e. Russians and Ukrainians) separated the region to the east of the River Dniester from Moldavia (Moldova).

The Soviet-era divisions are still largely preserved. Only in the Russian Federation are many autonomous provinces (the former AOs), among which are Karachayevo-Cherkessia and Adygeya (Adygeya), elevated to autonomous republics. Ingushetia and Chechenya have become separate republics after the former Chechen-Ingush ASSR split in two. The statuses of Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia are not yet clear. These regions have seceded respectively from Azerbaijan and Georgia. Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia, and Abkhazia have declared their independence. Armenia holds an ambiguous position with regard to Nagorno-Karabakh. Although Armenia does not officially recognize the independent republic of Nagorno-Karabakh, in practice it regards it as an independent Armenian state associated with the Republic of Armenia. Many Armenians, both politicians and ordinary people, regard it as a part of Armenia. After a war with Georgia (August 2008), Russia recognized the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Only a few other states have recognized them as independent. In reality, however, Russia has violated Georgian territorial integrity and has incorporated these territories, although half-heartedly, into its own territory. Needless to say, the distribution of Russian passports among the population in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, initiated even before the 2008 Russian-Georgian war, as well as the Russian military presence there, suggests a *de facto* incorporation of these territories into the Russian Federation. In practice, Russia treats South Ossetia and Abkhazia as Russian protectorates or as republics *de facto* associated with the Russian

---

<sup>43</sup> As the “multi-national” Dagestan has been an interesting case in the Russian federation, there are many written sources describing and discussing the ethno-political situation there. For a better understanding of the situation in Dagestan, see, amongst others, Belozerov (2005), Bugay & Gonov (2004), Ormrod (1997), Walker (2001), Ware & Kisriev (2001; 2009).



Federation.<sup>44</sup>

*Table 3.1. Autonomous Territorial Units in the Soviet Union*

<b><u>SSRs</u></b>	<b><u>ASSRs</u></b>	<b><u>AOs</u></b>	<b><u>NOs</u></b>
<b>Azerbaijan</b>	Nakhichevan	Nagorno-Karabakh	-
<b>Armenia</b>	-	-	-
<b>Georgia</b>	Ajara, Abkhazia	South Ossetia	-
<b>Tajikistan</b>	-	Gorno-Badakhshan	-
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	Karakalpakstan	-	-
<b>Turkmenistan</b>	-	-	-
<b>Kyrgyzstan</b>	-	-	-
<b>Kazakhstan</b>	-	-	-
<b>Ukraine</b>	-	-	-
<b>Belarus</b>	-	-	-
<b>Moldavia (Moldova)</b>	-	-	-
<b>Estonia</b>	-	-	-
<b>Latvia</b>	-	-	-
<b>Lithuania</b>	-	-	-
<b>Russia</b>	Dagestan, Chechen- Ingush, North Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Bashkiria (Bashkortostan), Buryatia, Kalmykia, Karelia, Komi, Mari, Mordovia, Tatarstan, Tuva, Udmurtia, Yakutia	Karachayevo-Cherkessia, Adygheya (Adygheya), Gorno-Altai, Jewish Birobijan, Khakassia	Agin-Buryat, Chukotka, Evenk, Khanty-Mansi, Nenets, Koryak, Taymyr, Komi-Permyak, Ust-Orda Buryat, Yamalo-Nenets,






<sup>44</sup> For background information and different views on and analysis of the August 2008 war, see e.g. Cornell & Starr 2009; Jones 2010.

*Table 3.2. Patterns of inter-ethnic relations in the former Soviet Union*

	<b>A-CENTER</b>	<b>B-FIRST-ORDER TITULAR NATIONALITY</b>	<b>C-SECOND-ORDER TITULAR NATIONALITY</b>	<b>D-NON-TITULAR NATIONALITY</b>
<b>A-Center</b>		Integration	Integration	Assimilation
<b>B- First-order titular nationality</b>	Liberation	Competition	Domination	Domination
<b>C- Second-order titular nationality</b>	Collusion	Liberation	Competition	Domination
<b>D- Non-titular nationality</b>	Collusion	Liberation	Liberation	Competition

Source: Bremmer, I. (1997). *Post Soviet nationalities theory: past, present, and future*. In: I. Bremmer & R. Taras (eds). *New States New Politics; Building the Post-Soviet Nations: 3-29*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. P: 14

The Soviet ethnic and administrative relations:

Legend	( figure and legend is designed by myself)
	SSR
	ASSR
	AO (or NO)
	Soviet Center = Moscow
*	Union Republic's (SSR's) Center
@	Regional Center
X	Non titular ethnic group, and/or irredenta (=ethnic groups who have their own ethnic homeland somewhere else)
	Appeal for protection Competition, Rivalry, or Tension

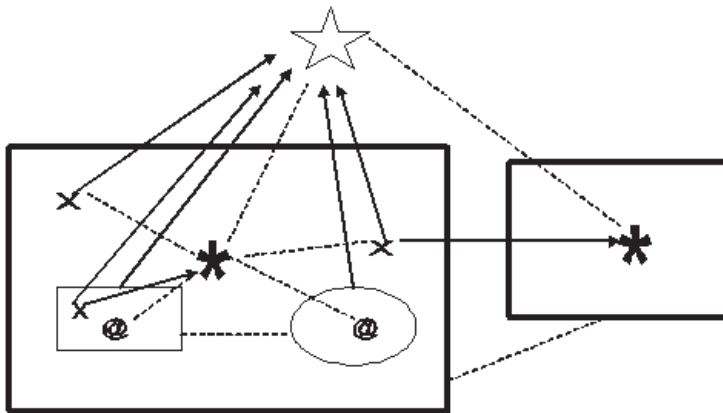


Figure 3.2. Patterns of inter-ethnic relations in the former Soviet Union

## MAP OF AUTONOMOUS TERRITORIAL UNITS IN THE SOVIET UNION'S SOUTHERN PERIPHERY

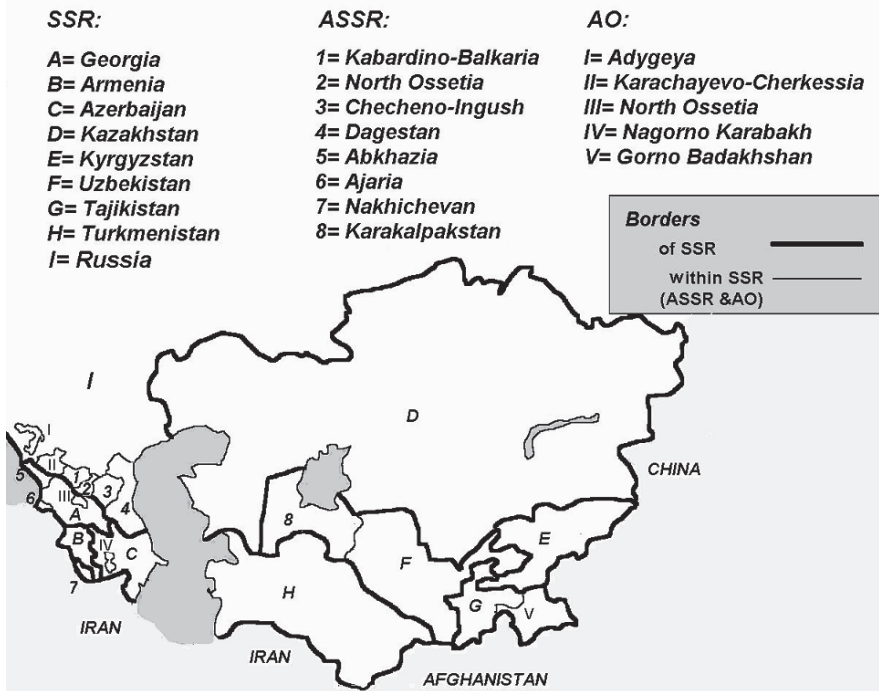


Figure 3.3. Autonomous territorial units in the Caucasus and Central Asia

## *Iran*

Iran, like the former Soviet Union, is a multi-ethnic country. Unlike the situation in the former Soviet Union, however, Iranian statehood and nationhood have deep historical roots. Although all states are constructions, many are older than others. In addition, not all nations are as old; many nations are consolidated earlier than others. Although modern means facilitate and catalyze the process of nation-building, there are still many nations that were consolidated in pre-modern times. Iran is one of these nations. The Iranian liberation struggles against Arabs and Mongols indicate a sense of nationhood already in pre-modern times. Ferdowsi's epic, *Shahnameh* (11<sup>th</sup> century AD), relates Iranian nationhood to an Iranian political entity. In this sense, *Shahnameh* is nationalist in nature.<sup>45</sup> Notably, it uses the name Iran, which was in use since the Sasanid Empire (3<sup>rd</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> century) and was recovered as the name of a unified and independent state during the Safavid Empire (16<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> century).

Unlike many other states, Iran has not been an ethnic state, since long ago. Unlike the Soviet Union, which evolved from a Russian state and offered autonomies to ethnic minorities, Iran has long been a multi-ethnic state, in the political center of which different ethnic groups have taken active part. Iranian culture has absorbed many newcomers, who in turn have put efforts into nourishing it. For example, the Saljuqid dynasty, like most other Turkic and non-Turkic dynasties, revived and nourished the Persian language (see, for example, Gronke 2003: 46). In the Islamic era, the Persian language has functioned as the literary language even though the Turkic-speaking Iranians have ruled Iran more often than other ethnic groups. Notably, "Azeris...have played major roles in every turning point of Iran's modern history" (Tohidi 2006). Even some smaller ethnic groups have contributed to Iranian statehood: Allahverdi Khan Undiladze and his son, Emamgholi (Imamquli) Khan Undiladze, were Georgians; the late Safavid royal family was at least partially Georgian; and many diplomats and ambassadors were Christian Armenians.

---

<sup>45</sup>According to the German Iranologist, Monika Gronke (2003: 38), Ferdowsi was discovered in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century by Iranian nationalists as a national awakener and his *Shahnameh* used as an icon of Iranian national identity: "Im frühen 20. Jahrhundert entdeckten iranische Nationalisten Ferdousi als den «Wiedererwecker» einer eigenen iranischen Identität (nach der Eroberung Irans durch die Araber im 7. Jahrhundert) und das Schāhnāmeḥ als literarisches Denkmal dieser Identität". This is true, but there remain some questions: Why were many other literary works, in a country which is famous for its rich literature, not chosen by nationalists as an iconic symbol of Iranian national identity? How do we know that the use of *Shahnameh* in earlier times was not nationalist in nature? For example, *Shahnameh* was widely reproduced during the Safavid era, when Iran was reunited as an independent country. At that time, Iran was involved in wars with the Ottomans, who threatened Iranian unity and independence. Apparently, *Shahnameh* is of a nationalist nature.

The foundations of the first independent united Iranian state<sup>46</sup> in the modern-day territory of Iran<sup>47</sup> were laid by Medians in 728 BC (Dandamayev & Medvedevskaya 2006; Diakonov 2009 [1956]; *Encyclopædia Britannica* 2010; Frye 2002: 80-81).<sup>48</sup> From the outset, Iran was a multi-ethnic political unit. Already in the pre-Islamic Iran different ethnic groups, such as Medians, Persians, and Parthians ruled Iran. Despite the loss of Iranian unity and independence after the Islamic conquest, the “idea” of Iran and the Iranian pre-Islamic imperial traditions lived on (see, for example, Gronke, especially pages 7-67).<sup>49</sup>

After a period of subjugation and national struggle against Arabs, Mongols, and other invaders, the sovereignty over more or less the same territory as the Sasanid territory was restored under the Safavid Empire, “as a territorial entity stretching from the Caspian Sea to the Persian Gulf” (Atabaki 2005: 25-27). History does not know many examples in which old countries were rebuilt out of the ashes. The restoration of an independent, unified Iranian empire was, however, such an example. Although the Sasanid Iranian traditions and arts were not totally extinct after the Sasanid Empire’s collapse, they enjoyed a renaissance during the Safavid Empire, a time in which Iranian tradition in the arts and architecture flourished (Farrokh 2009: 277).<sup>50</sup>

Like the Sasanids, the Safavids announced an official state religion. Unlike the Arab caliphates, however, the Iranian glory depended much on its national culture, and the Iranian identity was not primarily religious even though religion and politics cooperated with each other. “[R]eligion and state were considered as sisters but not the same organization” (Frye 2002: 83). The Sasanids had announced Zoroastrianism as the official religion of Iran, and at the time of the Safavids it was Shi’ite Islam.<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>46</sup> Although many, especially those with a Euro-centrist orientation, maintain that the state is a modern European phenomenon, history shows otherwise. In this current study, all sovereign territorial-political constellations are justly regarded as states.

<sup>47</sup> There were earlier independent territorial-political constellations in the territory of modern-day Iran. The best example is the Elamite Kingdom (Elamite civilization: fourth–first millennium BC; the Anzanite dynasty ruled several centuries during the second and first millennium BC). These kingdoms, however, were local and stretched over only a relatively small part of Iran. There are not many reliable sources about many of these (small) kingdoms’ actual independence.

<sup>48</sup> This refers to the short, and in many aspects vague, article entitled “Media” in *Encyclopædia Britannica (Online)*, with which many Iranologists do not necessarily agree. Available online: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/372125/Media> (Accessed 24 October 2010).

<sup>49</sup> Gronke (2003: 9), for example, mentions the use of the name Iran as a territorial entity during the Mongol rule in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, even though there was no independent Iranian state at that time. However, as she correctly mentions, these were the Safavids (1501), who could establish a united independent Iran for the first time after Islam (Gronke 2003: 11).

<sup>50</sup> Kaveh Farrokh’s book (2009: 277) depicts a pre-Islamic-style gilded lion from the Safavid era from Georgia. In that book (Farrokh 2009: 281), a Safavid-era dagger from Iran is also depicted, which is decorated in a manner reminiscent of Sasanid art. Similarly, it is well-known that Safavids recited the *Shahnameh*’s pre-Islamic epics to boost their troops’ morale in their wars against the Ottomans and other adversaries.

<sup>51</sup> The Islamization of Iran and adjacent regions proceeded after the fall of the Sasanid empire (226–

Shi'ite Islam could give a distinct identity, different from the Sunni subjects of the Ottoman empire, and in that sense Shi'ism has been essential in the consolidation of the Iranian political identity:

The Safavid attempt to introduce greater political unity through centralization and institutionalization of Shi'ism created for the Iranians a new, defensive identity in relation to those who lived beyond their borders. For the subjects of Safavid Persia defined themselves not by their own "national" characteristics, but rather by local exclusion, i.e. through a negative definition, comparing themselves with their immediate Sunni Muslims neighbors. (Atabaki 2005: 26)

In many ways, the Safavid Empire was modeled on the Sasanid empire. The Safavid Empire claimed and ruled over roughly the same territory as the last pre-Islamic Sasanid Empire, and the first Safavid king, Ismail I, following the old pre-Islamic Iranian tradition, was crowned as the *Shahanshah* [King of Kings, the Great King] of Iran in 1501 in his capital of Tabriz (Gronke 2003: 69). The Safavids were also successful in creating an Iranian territorial identity for their and successive Iranian empires:

The emergence of Persia as a territorial entity stretching from the Caspian Sea to the Persian Gulf took on a more concrete shape in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with the production of the first semi-modern European maps of the country.... Indeed, it was with reference to such mapping that...[various Iranian rulers insisted] on the persistence of Iran's legitimate frontiers.... The Safavids' territorial Persia indeed turned out to become a standard reference for all following rulers. (Atabaki 2005: 27)<sup>52</sup>

Iran's territory was reduced approximately to its current borders during the Qajar era (1794–1925). The "Great Game" rivalry between Russia and

---

651 AD) in the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD. The city of Darband (Derbent) in the North Caucasus (in present-day Dagestan), which served as the northern Sasanid port, was conquered in 654 AD, and thence the first attempts at Islamization of the North Caucasus began. It took until the 18<sup>th</sup> century, however, to Islamize a number of North Caucasian peoples, for example the Karachay and Balkar tribes (see *Ethnohistorical* 1994: 80 and 339).

Fleeing eastwards, the last Sasanid Emperor Yazdegerd III was killed in Central Asia (in Mary, Merv, in present-day Turkmenistan) in 651 AD. Subsequently, the Muslim Arabs conquered Central Asia. Initially, for example, in 720–722, 728, and again in 776–778 AD, there were many instances of local resistance on the part of Zoroastrians and Shamanists against the invading Muslim Arabs, when "local populations mounted major insurgencies" (Abazov 2007: 67). The Sasanid elite who fled to China were allied with China (Farrokh 2009: 274; Wong 2000). A milestone in the Islamization of Central Asia was the battle of Talas between the Abbasid Islamic Caliphate and the Chinese Tang Empire, the main external rival claimant to Central Asia in 751 AD. As a result of the victory in the battle of Talas, the victorious Muslims were able to control Central Asia and the Islamization could proceed with more ease. Nevertheless, it took until the 17<sup>th</sup> century to finalize Islamization of a few nomadic peoples.

<sup>52</sup> Jeremy Black, in *Maps and History: Constructing Images of the Past* (1997) and *Maps and Politics* (2000), reviews and discusses the role of maps as sources of legitimization of political behavior and as reflections of political reality.

Great Britain over Central Asia had resulted in a loss of territory and regional influence by a relatively weak Qajar Iran. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Iran lost its Caucasian territories, as well as some adjacent areas in contemporary Turkmenistan, to Russia. The city of Herat, which was ultimately adjoined to Afghanistan, was lost to the British.<sup>53</sup> The contemporary Iranian territory has been stable from that time onwards. Only the Island of Bahrain was formally separated in 1971 from Iran. There were also a number of cases of “border corrections”, notably when Iran ceded a piece of land to Turkey (1932), which gave the latter a short borderline with Nakhichevan (see, for example, Hunter 1997: 444 and 459, note 18; United States of America Department of State International Boundary 1964).

Formally, the religious, ethnic, and territorial policies of the modern Iranian state are three separate ones. Nevertheless, the former two overlap to a great extent. From the Safavid era onwards, the religious and ethnic policies of the Iranian state have manifested a great deal of continuity. The Iranian territorial administrative policy, on the other hand, has shown many changes. In general, there has been an increasing tendency towards administrative territorial fragmentation and political centralization. There are, however, a number of milestones in Iranian political history which have shaped the ethnic, religious, and territorial administrative policy, and the legacies of which still affect the contemporary situation: these were the establishment of the Shi’ite state during the Safavid Empire, the Constitutional Revolution in the late Qajar era (1905 and 1911), the modernization and centralization era of Reza Shah, and the Islamic revolution of 1979. Events such as the CIA-led coup (1953) against the democratic national(ist) government of Mosaddegh<sup>54</sup> and the Iran–Iraq war (1980–1988), even though very essential in Iranian political history, did not have a major impact on the contemporary ethnic, religious, and territorial administrative policies of Iran.

---

<sup>53</sup> Naser Takmil Homayun (2001) discusses these treaties in his *Marzha-ye Iran dar Dowre-ye Moaser* [Contemporary Borders of Iran]. English articles about them can be found in the Columbia University-based *Encyclopædia Iranica* and many more non-Iranian sources, particularly those that were published before the 1979 revolution.

<sup>54</sup> It is, nevertheless, possible that if Dr. Mossadegh’s government had not been toppled, it and its successors might have given the population more democratic rights, improved the position of religious minorities, and provided more facilities for peripheral regions, all of which could mitigate many grievances among the Iranian population.



## ***Ethnic and Religious Policies in Iran: Historical Underpinnings***

Unlike the situation in the Soviet Union, the ethnic, religious, and to a lesser extent territorial administrative, policies of Iran in the period of concern to this study display continuity with the past.<sup>55</sup> These policies in the Islamic Republic of Iran are, in fact, a continuation of the previous political regimes and are developed and evolved from them. Therefore, as the legacy of the past lives on in contemporary Iran, it is useful in this chapter to first discuss the historical underpinnings of the present (and the period of concern to this study) before the contemporary situation is discussed.

Shi'ite Islam has been the official state religion of Iran since the Safavid era. Even during the periods of attempted secularization by Reza Shah (and to a lesser extent, Mohammad-Reza Shah) Pahlavi, the Shi'ite background of the Iranian state was not questioned. In order to consolidate his reign, Reza Shah pledged loyalty to Islam and initially sought alliance, or in any case understanding, with the Shi'ite clergy (Gill & Keshavarzian 1999: 432 and 441-445). Although "[in] the course of Reza Shah's reign, the [Shi'ite] clergy's judicial powers were increasingly reduced...[and the] clergy's position was certainly injured by Reza Shah's secularizing policies..." (Ghods 1991b: 225-226), the legal code approved in 1928 during the reign of Reza Shah "made many concessions to the Sharia, or the religious law" (Ghods 1991b: 225). That "code was not exceedingly controversial for it overwhelmingly followed the prevailing Shi'ite law. In fact the civil code remains mostly intact today following the Islamic revolution" (Gill & Keshavarzian 1999: 448). After the Islamic revolution (1979) the Shi'ite clergy's position was recovered and strengthened enormously, more than ever before.

Despite concessions to the clergy in legal matters, Reza Shah's period was characterized by strong tendencies towards secularization and anti-religious policies, such as the prohibition of the Islamic headdress for women (*hijab*), even though the Shi'ite underpinnings of the Iranian state were respected. The Iranian state in the period of Reza Shah, as a polar opposite to the Islamic Republic after 1979, can best be described as a *secular Shi'ite state*, that is, a state in which secularization was proceeding but had still preserved its Shi'ite character.

The establishment of a Shi'ite Islamic Republic with theocratic tendencies may have evoked fears in many religious minorities, to various degrees. Nevertheless, the communal cultural autonomy of the non-

---

<sup>55</sup> The ethnic, religious, and territorial policies in the Soviet Union constituted a break with the pre-revolutionary, Tsarist period.

Islamic religious minorities and their reserved seats in the Iranian parliament, legacies of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution (1906), were respected in the Islamic Republic era.

The policy of the Iranian state towards ethnic rights and privileges, with the minor—somewhat ambiguous—but notable exception of Reza Shah's era, is characterized by indifference. This does not mean that the Iranian state has been indifferent towards the actions of feudal lords or regional elites. It means only that ethnicity was regarded traditionally as something belonging to the cultural realm, and the Iranian state was tolerant towards ethnic diversity, separately from religion. Traditionally, ethnicity as such—that is, separated from its religious layer—has not been a politicized and important issue in Iranian politics. During the Reza Shah-era centralization and homogenization policy, however, many tribal chiefs and local feudal elites were dispossessed of their power. The educational policy of Reza Shah's era favored (cultural) homogenization of society in Iran. Despite the fact that Persian already had a stronger position in Iranian literature and was historically the most dominant language in Iran, some might argue that these policies were anti-ethnic in nature. Although it should not be exaggerated, there exists some truth in that Pahlavis' (particularly Reza Shah's) reign affected ethnic groups and in general the peripheries (see Ghods 1991a; Ghods 1991b; Samii 2000).<sup>56</sup> According to Beck (1980: 16):

Tribal populations, as well as all ethnic minorities in Iran, were denied many national rights under the Pahlavis and were victims of Persian chauvinism. National education, in which all students were required to read and write in Persian and in which Persian culture and civilization were stressed to the almost complete neglect of the contributions of other population segments, was culturally destructive.

Reza Shah aimed at modernization of social and economic life and centralization of power in Iran by authoritarian methods (see, for example, Atabaki 2005; Atabaki & Zürcher 2004; Ghods 1991a; Ghods 1991b; Katouzian 2004). Therefore, he was a natural opponent to the autonomously acting tribal (semi-)nomadic ethnic chiefs, such as those of the Bakhtiari and the Qashqai tribes. During Reza Shah's era, a policy was formulated, called "Takhteh Qapu", which aimed at the de-structuring of tribal organization and forced sedentarization of nomads (Ahmadi 2005: 209-219; Katouzian 2004: 31-32; Keddie 1986: 163-164). This policy

---

<sup>56</sup> It is fair to say that Reza Shah, himself a Mazandarani married into an Azeri family, was not much interested in ethnicity, as long as one accepted his authoritarian rule. Nevertheless, his attempts at centralization and modernization of political and social life were undeniably accompanied by some degree of homogenization.

was, in many aspects, similar to the Soviet policy on nomadic populations in Central Asia and elsewhere.

Reza Shah-era policies of modernization of Iranian society and centralization of political power also had many homogenizing effects. These policies were in certain ways Reza Shah's positive reactions to the voices of certain circles of Iranian intelligentsia:

The setback that the Iranian constitutional movement (1906–11) suffered in the years before the outbreak of the First World War, the political disintegration and partial occupation of Persia during the war, all of these left the middle classes and the intelligentsia in Iran no other option than to look for a man of order, who, as an agent of the nation would install a centralized, powerful (though not necessarily despotic) government capable of solving the country's growing economic as well as political problems, while at the same time safeguarding the nation's unity and sovereignty. Where social egalitarianism, liberalism and romantic territorial nationalism had inspired the earlier generations of intellectuals in their efforts to initiate change and reform throughout the country, for the post-war intelligentsia more preoccupied with the ideas of modern and centralized state building, political authoritarianism and linguistic and cultural nationalism became the indispensable driving forces for accomplishing their aspirations. (Atabaki 2005: 29)

Reza Shah's anti-feudal and anti-nomadic policies were not necessarily detrimental to the members of these populations themselves. Although it disoriented their way of life in the short term, it enabled the authorities to provide the former nomads with better health care and educational facilities (Ahmadi 2005: 215). While Reza Shah's policies liberated the population from the yoke of the (petty) tribal chiefs, it was by no means anti-ethnic, in the sense that it did not disfavor persons only because of their ethnic or tribal background. For example, "Sardar Assad Bakhtiari,"<sup>57</sup> a prominent Bakhtiari khan who had fought for the Constitutional Revolution and helped in the deposition of the Qajar ruler Mohammed Ali Shah, became Minister of War. Reza Shah trusted these men ... [who] made important contributions to the formation of internal and foreign policies in [the early period of his reign]" (Ghods 1991b: 220). Many former nomads were settled as oil workers in Khuzestan. In general these nomadic ethnic groups were not a "bad thing" for the consolidation of central power in Iran. Although their chiefs were disadvantaged by Reza Shah's policies and, therefore, were natural opponents to Reza Shah, these nomadic ethnic groups were not necessarily detrimental to Reza Shah's centralization policies, because they had a positive effect on Iranian territorial integrity. As they identified themselves with Iranian culture and

---

<sup>57</sup> Although the source spells his name as Assad Bakhtiari, its spelling as As'ad Bakhtiari is more appropriate.

the Iranian nation, the presence of such groups in Khuzestan, for example, was a natural guarantee against the disloyal and separatist Arab sheikhs,<sup>58</sup> who did not identify with the Iranian nation. The services of many nomadic tribal groups to the Iranian nation and state were already evident in earlier history. For example, the Safavid Empire was consolidated by the Qizilbash tribes; Nader shah, who defeated the invading Afghans, was from the Afshar tribe; in Fereydan particularly, the Bakhtiaris' attack on the invading Afghans seems to have been important for the final defeat of the Afghans by Georgians (Rahimi 2000: 27).

In 1941 Soviet and British troops occupied Iran in the course of the Second World War and put an end to Reza Shah's regime, which was deemed to be sympathetic to Nazi Germany. Despite the fact that after his abdication the weakened tribal forces once again began uprising, and despite his relatively short reign, Reza Shah's policies have had a lasting effect on Center vs. periphery relations, in that they had dealt a lasting blow to feudal forces. Earlier, the Iranian Center had tried many times to restrict the power of regional and feudal forces with mixed success. Notably, Shah Abbas I (reigned 1587–1629) was successful in his reforms of restricting the power of hereditary regional governors by replacing them, or controlling them, by administrators from the Center.<sup>59</sup> Even though the feudal (tribal) forces could recover and reorganize themselves at moments when the Center was weak, they could not recover fully after Reza Shah's reign and in the context of ongoing modernization of social and economic life. Reza Shah succeeded in destroying the feudal lords' and tribal chiefs' power, but he did not succeed in doing so to an equal extent all over Iran; in some less urbanized peripheries, especially in the Sunni areas, the old feudal lords could retain their power to a certain, but decreasing, extent. Even within these Sunni peripheries, some areas were cleansed of the feudal lords and structures to a larger extent than others were. For example, in Baluchistan, which was less urbanized and modernized in comparison with most other Sunni regions of Iran—Kurdistan, for example—the feudal and tribal structures remained better preserved after Reza Shah's reign (Ahmadi 2005: 235).

Although the agency of the masses in modernity should not be neglected (Atabaki [ed.] 2007; Atabaki [ed.] 2010; Atabaki & Van der Linden 2003), the role of the elite in the process of modernization is evident. Reza Shah's authoritarian reform was supported by, and in

---

<sup>58</sup> Reza Shah suppressed the separatist Sheikh Khaz'al in Khuzestan, who was supported by Great Britain.

<sup>59</sup> Generally a trend is visible that at the time when the central authorities gained more power, they centralized the political decision making, while local political forces gained momentum again when the Center was weakened. In the long term, however, it meant that in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and particularly during and after Reza Shah's reign, the Center had consolidated its supremacy in an enduring way. These policies are succinctly described and discussed by Bahram Amir Ahmadian (2004).

certain sense was a welcoming response to, the voices of mainly leftist and progressive intelligentsia:

Reza Shah's policy of centralizing government power and implementing modernization was in a sense a reaction to this widely felt need for authoritarian reform. The process of political and cultural centralization, flavored with secularism, westernism and meritocracy, generally enjoyed the support of many members of the intelligentsia, especially those with progressive and left-wing leanings. (Atabaki 2005: 30-31)

History might have proven that modernization usually leads to homogenization, but for many members of the Iranian intelligentsia at that time, it was the other way around. Although they recognized the relationship between modernization and homogenization, they set the course of action vice versa. They believed that in order to reach modernization, it was necessary to homogenize the society, and, therefore, a strong central and authoritarian regime was necessary. Consequently, the mainly leftist and progressive intelligentsia proposed authoritarian modernization, centralization, and homogenization on idealistic grounds:

They were convinced that only a strong centralized government would be capable of implementing reform, while preserving the nation's territorial integrity. Likewise they believed that modernization and modern state building in Iran would require a low degree of cultural diversity and a high degree of ethnic homogeneity. Along with ethnic and linguistic diversity, the existence of classes, too, was rejected. (Atabaki 2005: 30)

Ironically, Reza Shah's modernization policies proved to work against his own (as well as his son's and the Islamic Republic's) regime's stability, policies, and ideals. A result of Reza Shah's policies of modernization was the formation of a new modern intellectual elite that opposed the authoritarianism which had enabled its own formation. Reza Shah's policies resulted in the creation of a well-educated elite, intellectually attracted to Western liberal democratic ideas, while having an Iranian nationalist orientation. These intellectuals, who could not be absorbed into Reza (and Mohammad-Reza) Shah's regime, were attracted to the newly democratic (and leftist) opposition. Notably, they were absorbed by the National Front of Mosaddegh.<sup>60</sup>

After World War II, this new middle class, in an effort to attain political power that would not be dominated by any foreign country, became the main social base of Mosaddegh's national front.... While the [Reza] Shah's policies created a new middle class which could theoretically have

---

<sup>60</sup> Dr. M. Mosaddegh, who opposed the Pahlavis and established the first democratic government in Iran, was toppled by the CIA. In 2000 Madeline Albright, the American Secretary of State at that time, admitted this fact.

played a major role in Iran's modernization, he was too insecure to permit this class to play a role in Iran's government. The resentment and frustrated ambitions of this modern middle class dominated Iran's political history for over a decade after his abdication in 1941, reaching its height in Mosaddegh's National Front. (Ghods 1991b: 227-228)

Similarly, the sons and daughters of the former feudal lords, who were attracted to, and recruited by, the leftist movements and opposed the Pahlavi regime (and the Islamic Republic for that matter) had very often enjoyed modern and Western or Western-style education (Beck 1980: 20, in Ahmadi 2005: 171).

The National Front was a democratic nationalist movement. It aimed at democratization of Iran, and although not disrespectful to ethnic identities, it believed in an integral, unitary Iranian nationalism. The democratic and leftist movements also believed very much in Iranian unity. The reason is simple and seems logical. A central-oriented regime can most effectively be opposed by centralized methods. Reza Shah's (and to some extent Mohammad-Reza Shah's and the Islamic Republic's) regimes were centralized, and as long as they acted indiscriminately towards the opposition, unity was the most effective strategy for the opposition. Moreover, the underpinnings of their leftist and liberal democratic ideologies did not support the ideals of ethnic and regional particularism. In addition, the Shi'ite Islamic supporters of Ayatollah Khomeini, who assumed power after the Islamic Revolution of 1979, did not regard ethnicity as something politically relevant and important. For them, religion was a more important issue.

For opposition groups who struggle against and oppose the center of political power, appealing to the whole Iranian nation is the most effective strategy as long as there are no foreign funders and supporters. As a result of such a strategy the grievances in the peripheries do not automatically result in inter-ethnic tensions and violence but direct themselves towards the political center, demanding improvement of their social, cultural, and economic situation. Indeed, as Tohidi (2006) states: "an uneven and over-centralised (mostly Tehran-centered) strategy of development in Iran has resulted in a wide socio-economic gap between the centre and the peripheries. A great part of the grievances of ethnic minorities in the provinces is due to the uneven distribution of power, socio-economic resources, and socio-cultural status". Although many are accused of, and in reality have, ties with foreign countries and movements (Tohidi 2006),<sup>61</sup> the "overwhelming majority of the ethnic-rights activists

---

<sup>61</sup> It is remarkable that Nayereh Tohidi, who is accused by many Iranians, mostly nationalists, of showing sympathy towards the pan-Turkist-minded activists, maintains that the regional dynamics such as a Kurdish autonomous government in Iraq and an independent Republic of Azerbaijan may provoke and/or support ethnic movements in Iran. She also states that Mahmud-Ali Chehregani, the

in Iran declare themselves to be against secessionism” (Tohidi 2006). As history shows, even persons with undeniably strong ties with, and support from, foreign governments have initially announced their allegiance to Iranian national unity and territorial integrity. Such a person was Seyed Jafar Pishevari, who became the head of local government in the Iranian Azerbaijan under the Soviet occupation (November 1945 – November 1946). On numerous occasions, Pishevari, in Iran and the Soviet Union, praised the Iranian nation as a great and historic nation and announced his loyalty and allegiance to Iranian territorial integrity (Ahmadi 2005: 286-287). According to Tohidi (2006), an enhancement of ethnic rights will not “threaten Iran’s territorial integrity and national unity”.

Nevertheless, it is appropriate to distinguish between the dissent among Azeri, Bakhtiari, and other Shi’ite ethnic groups and that of Sunni ethnic groups. Although the Iranian Constitution does discriminate between Shi’ite Muslims and other confessional groups, and although the Sunni peripheries of Iran are at a lower level of economic development and have many grievances, their secessionist character should not be exaggerated. As long as these movements are not the remnants of old feudal forces and are not supported by foreign forces, they seek legitimacy and support for their cause among all Iranians, notably the democratic opposition, which is traditionally populated by better-educated people from the Center. Remarkably, the leftist movements in notably Sunni peripheries often enjoyed support and leadership from Shi’ite (Persian-speaking) leaders (Ahmadi 2005: 173).

In such a context, in which the centralized Iranian state is the ultimate authority and in which there exists no superseding authority above it, the struggle against the Center requires either internal popular support and widespread resonance among the Iranian population—most of whom are ideologically in favor of Iranian territorial integrity—or substantial funding and support from foreign forces. Oddly enough, an intermingling of interests among the traditionalist dissident Sunni clergy, feudal, and tribal lords as well as certain modernist (apparently) leftist and (allegedly) human rights activist forces collide in their struggle against the Center. In addition, as Bayat (2005: 44) puts it:

[An] inadvertent consequence of the Islamic Republic’s promotion of an ardent Shi’i identity was a backlash in the Sunni areas of Iran. In

---

main leader of the pan-Turkist-minded movement in the Iranian Azerbaijan Iran (although in exile), has ties with Baku and the USA (Tohidi 2006). It is remarkable that she discusses in no less than three quarters of her article the situation of Azerbaijani (pan-Turkist) activists, while this is a minor phenomenon compared with the rather violent and well-organized ethnic dissent in Iranian Kurdistan and Baluchistan. It is also remarkable that she calls the Ostan-e Golestan in northern Iran the province of “Turkmenistan”. Ostan-e Golestan is a region, which is mainly inhabited by Mazandarani and Turkmen ethnic groups.

Azerbaijan, and among Shi'i Arabs of Khuzestan and the Shi'i Kurds of Kermanshah, Bijar and Qorveh, this new emphasis did serve to strengthen a sense of communal unity, but at the same time it alienated the Sunni Kurds, Baluch and Turkmens. Alongside the increasing pull toward Iraqi Kurdistan among the Sunni Kurds, in regions such as Baluchistan, this resentment has provided a breeding ground for Sunni fundamentalism with clear links to the "Wahhabi" madrasas of Pakistan.

Sunni grievances in the Shi'ite state are a fact. Many of their grievances, however, are not religiously or ethnically based but are due to the lack of facilities and the economic neglect of their peripheral regions. On the other hand, the role played by external forces should not be neglected. Traditionally, the Soviet Union has been the main source of propagation of politicization of ethnicity in Iran and the instigation of ethnic strife under the label of the right to national self-determination (Bayat 2005: 44). Similarly, since the collapse of the Soviet Union, a few Western and regional states and organizations have announced their desire to provide—or actually do provide—support to some "ethnic" movements,<sup>62</sup> a number of which resort to terrorist activities (see, for example, Ahmadi 2005; *Asia Times* 3 November 2005; Bayat 2005: 43-45; Eurasianet.org 27 February 2010; Farrokh 2005a; Farrokh 2005b; Goldberg 2008; *The Guardian* 23 February 2010; Harrison 2007; Hunter 2006: 122; *The Jerusalem Post* 29 November 2010; Reuters 23 February 2010; Tohidi 2006).<sup>63</sup>

The effectiveness and success of such separatist movements, however, remain obscure and generally weak, mainly because of the lack of large-scale popular support, as well as a strong Iranian state. As Bayat (2005: 42-43) puts it, even though ethnic politics do exist in Iran, still it is clear that in comparison with other multi-ethnic countries in the region "Iran's national identity has been coherent and stable. Through British and Russian occupation, the Shah's authoritarian rule and the tumult of the 1979 revolution, there have been revolts organized along ethnic lines, but these have not bedeviled the state as much as their counterparts in Turkey and Iraq".

In conclusion, the foundations of Iranian statehood and nationhood have deep roots in history. The Iranian policy regarding ethnic and religious groups shows a considerable degree of continuity since early-modern

---

<sup>62</sup> Tabriz News (<http://tabriznews.ir> and <http://www.tabriznews.com>), a news website from Tabriz (the regional center of Iranian Azerbaijan) offers good coverage of news, as well as pictorials and analytical articles on these issues. It is remarkable that pan-Turkists, ethnic supremacists, and separatist movements often accuse the Iranian authorities of distorting news. They regard sources of news, such as Tabriz News, which broadcast news that they do not like, as instruments of the Iranian authorities. In reality, Tabriz News is an independent, non-governmental, news site, which has even been subject to governmental censorship.

<sup>63</sup> Ahmadi (2005) and Farrokh (2005a; 2005b) provide many non-Iranian sources that speak about foreign involvement with ethno-nationalist and separatist movements.



times. In particular, Reza Shah's policies in the 20<sup>th</sup> century were essential in the lasting extermination of the centrifugal forces in the largest part of the country. These policies resulted in the creation of a middle-class elite who believed in an integral Iranian nationalism. In fact, ethnic identities were de-politicized even more if they had not been so already. These policies with regard to integration of religious minorities into mainstream society were less successful. Although largely secularized, Iran remained a Shi'ite country, and the Shi'ites hold the better positions in society. This situation endured and gained new meaning and force after the Islamic Revolution. Foreign support to certain movements, as well as various degrees of popular grievances, in the predominantly Sunni areas still provide some challenges to the Iranian Center and may result in ethnic unrest, despite the fact that ethnicity as such (separate from religion) in Iran is generally void of much political meaning and is relegated to the cultural sphere.

### ***Territorial Administrative Policies in Iran: Historical Underpinnings***

The territorial administrative system of Iran has no ethnic or religious underpinnings. Both the Constitutional Revolution (1906)<sup>64</sup> and Reza Shah's policies have had lasting effects on the contemporary Iranian territorial administrative system.

The first-order administrative units in Iran are called *ostan*. These are the largest administrative units in Iran and are governed from the offices of *ostandaris*. Many *ostans* are ethnically heterogeneous and, in addition, almost all ethnic groups and religious communities are divided into more than one *ostan*. Each *ostan* is divided into many *shahrestans*, which are governed from the offices of *farmandaris* (see Figure 3.4). All *ostans* contain many *shahrestans*, except Ostan-e Qom, which contains only one. *Bakhshes* are the territorial administrative divisions below the level of *shahrestans*, and are governed by offices of *bakhshdaris*. All *shahrestans* contain at least one *bakhsh*, called the central *bakhsh*, which has the same administrative center as the corresponding *shahrestan*. Many *shahrestans*, however, contain one or more additional *bakhshes* with their own (lower-level) administrative centers.

*Ostan* and *shahrestan*, as administrative units, correspond respectively to *ayalat* and *velayat* prior to 1925 (Kuchakian Fard 1999: 9-10). To give an indication of what an *ostan* or *ayalat* might mean, I would say that the American *states* and the German *Länder* are both still called

---

<sup>64</sup> In fact, the constitutionalist revolutionaries struggled against the absolutist monarchy and were active over a longer time period (1905–1911).

*ayalat* in Persian. Although they do not always represent the historical regions, and the representation in the Parliament (*Majles*) proceeds roughly on the basis of each *shahrestan*, *ostans* are important territorial units. *Ostans* receive an allocated budget from Tehran. They have branches of many ministries as well as radio and TV stations. They have also offices of the Organization of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handcraft, which have as tasks, amongst others, the protection of local material and immaterial culture. The Iranian Constitution offers provisions for local councils at all administrative levels (Articles 7 and 100). However, the most important body of legislative power is the Parliament, members of which are elected roughly at *shahrestan* level. Some *shahrestans* have more than one representative, but most have only one representative in the Parliament. A (relatively small) number of *shahrestans*, however, have one representative for more than one *shahrestans*.

Before the Constitutional Revolution the territorial administrative divisions were based on tradition and power relations and not on rational and technocratic grounds. The Constitutional Revolution curbed the power of king, princes, and feudal nobility in internal affairs. It also revised somewhat the territorial administrative divisions, but the asymmetric character of the system was retained to a certain extent. After the Constitutional Revolution, a law was included in the Constitution, which defined the territorial administrative units and prohibited alterations in their borders except by law. According to this law, known as *Qanun-e Ayalat va Velayat*, Iran was divided into four *ayalats* and 12 *velayats*, plus the capital Tehran. *Velayats* were either directly under the central government or under *ayalats*. Below the level of *velayat* was the administrative level called *boluk*, the borders and territory of which could be modified only by law. Below the level of *boluk* was *mahal* (Amir Ahmadian 2004: 82-83).<sup>65</sup>

During the Pahlavi era, under the reign of Reza Shah Pahlavi, thirty-one years after the ratification of the law *Qanun-e Ayalat va Velayat*, a new law was passed which cancelled the former law. According to this law (1937), the territorial administrative units were named in the descending order *ostan*, *shahrestan*, *bakhsh* and *dehestan*. These names somewhat resemble the Sasanid-era administrative units. Accordingly, Iran was divided into six *ostans* and 50 *shahrestans*. *Shahrestans* were below *ostans* and *bakhshs* were below *shahrestans*. At the bottom stood *dehestans*, rural areas which stood under *bakhshes*. This new law gave the cabinet of ministers the power to change the borders of territorial

---

<sup>65</sup> Bahram Amir Ahmadian (2004) gives a succinct review of the territorial organization of Iran from ancient times until recent times, in *Taqsimat-e Keshvari* [The Country's Divisions of Provinces].

administrative divisions. The appointment of the heads of these territorial administrative divisions were made by the Ministry of Interior Affairs (Amir Ahmadian 2004: 83-84).

After the invasion of Iran by British and Soviet troops during the Second World War, Mohammad-Reza Pahlavi was enthroned as the new *shah* [king]. Although during his reign the former symmetric and centralized system was preserved, the number of *ostans* increased as a result of a process of territorial-administrative fragmentation which continues to the present day (Amir Ahmadian 2004: 86-7).

The same administrative territorial system was preserved after the Islamic Revolution (1979) and the fragmentation (at all administrative levels) proceeded further. According to the Statistical Center of Iran,<sup>66</sup> in 2006 there existed 30 *ostans*, 336 *shahrestans*, and 889 *bakhshes*, and there were 1016 *shahrs* (urban centers) and 2400 *dehestans* (rural areas). Although *dehestan* is still a formal territorial unit, it is in fact nothing more than a designation of rural areas. the modern *shahrs* should not be confused with the archaic Sasanid-era *shahrs*, an appropriate translation of the latter being “country” or “large region”. *Shahr*, in the formal Iranian territorial administrative system, means city or town and is simply a designation of urban areas as opposed to rural areas (*dehestans*). On 23 June 2010 the decision to split Ostan-e Tehran into two was ratified by the parliament and hence a new *ostan*, called Alborz, was created with Karaj as its administrative center (*Tehran Times* 24 June 2010). Consequently, the number of *ostans* in Iran rose to 31 (see Figure 3.4).

In contrast to the situation in the Soviet Union and its successor states, the Iranian territorial administrative system has no explicit ethnic basis, is flexible, and is not fixed by the Constitution. Although ratification by the parliament is required, the delimitation of territorial administrative divisions is not fixed by the Iranian Constitution, and hence further administrative fragmentation is very likely.

---

<sup>66</sup> Statistical Center of Iran: <http://amar.sci.org.ir/Detail.aspx?Ln=E&no=98468&S=SS> (accessed 8 August 2012).

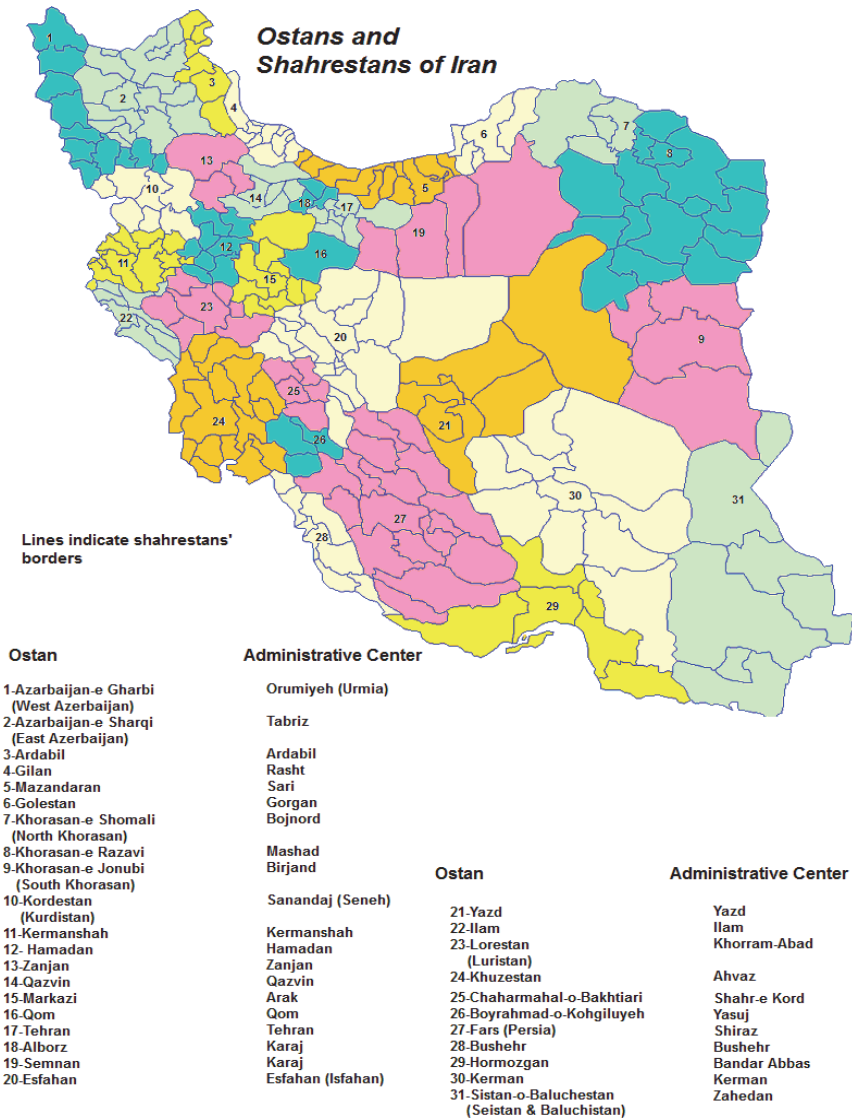


Figure 3.4. The Iranian territorial administrative divisions: ostans and shahrestans. Colored areas are ostans; the lines indicate the delimitations of shahrestans.

## ***Ethnic, Religious, and Territorial Administrative Policies in Iran: The Contemporary Situation***

Article 12 of the Iranian Constitution<sup>67</sup> stipulates that the official religion of Iran is Islam of the Shi'ite Twelver Ja'fari School. The same article offers a number of other Islamic schools, without referring specifically to Sunnis, the freedom to practice their religion, enjoy religious education, and observe and implement their religious rules, laws and rites within their communities in regions of the country where Muslims following any one of these schools constitute the majority. Article 13 recognizes Zoroastrians, Jews, and Christians as recognized religious minorities and offers them the above-mentioned rights, without any specification about their numbers in certain regions or localities. Article 14 prohibits the maltreatment of the above-mentioned non-Islamic religious groups. At the national level, the non-Islamic religious minorities enjoy guaranteed, special seats in the Parliament. Jews and Zoroastrians each possess one seat; Christians have three seats (Assyrians one and Armenians two). The representation of minorities in the parliament is a legacy of the Constitutional Revolution (1905–1911). Although Iran moved again afterwards towards authoritarianism, the legacy of, and the many reforms brought about by, the Constitutional Revolution and its constitution (1906) are still preserved in the Iranian Constitution.

On the one hand, the non-Muslim religious minorities are too few to be able to pose any danger to the Shi'ite character of the Iranian state; and on the other hand, the Iranian Islamic system after the Islamic Revolution of 1979 needed such a structure, because it is in accordance with the traditional Islamic policy towards the *dhimmi* communities (see Sanasarian 2000). *Dhimmi* is a term used in Islamic law and is used to refer to the “people of the book”—that is, the Abrahamic religions and (only in Iran) Zoroastrians—who live under an Islamic political system, are loyal to it, and in exchange are awarded with intra-communal autonomy and protection by the Muslim authorities (see e.g. Bosworth 1982). Bahais, on the other hand, are not recognized as a religious minority. Their strategies vis-à-vis the Islamic Republic's laws have been either exodus from Iran, conversion (to Shi'ite Islam), or hiding their identity. Mandaean are another religious community in Iran that is not recognized constitutionally, but nevertheless enjoys relative religious liberty. Unlike the case of Bahais, the reason for their non-recognition is seemingly not based on theological grounds. Most probably it is due to the fact that Mandaean, who live in close-knit communities in Ostan-e

---

<sup>67</sup> *Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran* (last modified 1992). Available online at the website of University of Bern, Faculty of Law, at: [http://www.oefre.unibe.ch/law/icl/ir00000\\_.html](http://www.oefre.unibe.ch/law/icl/ir00000_.html) (Accessed 20 November 2006).

Khuzestan in southwestern Iran, are unknown to a great extent in the rest of Iran and even in Khuzestan. Many view them as Christians, while they themselves, as the followers of John the Baptist, resent such a denomination.

Generally, there exists a hierarchy of political and civil rights in Iran with regard to religious affiliation. At the top are the Shi'ite Muslims. Shi'ite Islam is recognized as the Iranian state religion and many political positions such as the *Vali-ye Faqih* [Supreme leadership] (Article 5) and presidency (Article 15) are constitutionally reserved for Shi'ites.<sup>68</sup> In practice, all important political and societal positions are occupied by Shi'ites. At the next level are the constitutionally recognized, non-Muslim religious groups and the non-Shi'ite Muslims, both with different modes of social and political rights in the Iranian state. Nevertheless, it is fair to say that the non-Islamic, recognized minority religious communities fare better than the Sunnis.

The constitutionally recognized non-Muslim religious communities are indeed excluded from many important positions; nevertheless, they enjoy cultural autonomy in their communal affairs throughout Iran and a relatively large degree of tolerance from the Iranian political establishment. For example, they are allowed to consume alcohol, which is severely punished in cases of Muslim citizens. They also have reserved seats in the parliament, for their representatives who seek to protect their constituencies' interests. Their communal affairs and intra-community disputes proceed according to their own religious laws, although when they come into conflict with Muslims, they take an inferior position. Until relatively recently (2003), blood money, the compensation for the death of someone, was for a non-Muslim only half that of a Muslim.<sup>69</sup>

As A. William Samii (2001: 130) notes, the Sunni minorities are discriminated against in Iran, and, as is the case with the non-Muslim minorities, they are also excluded from important political and societal positions. In addition, many Sunni mosques in Iran have been destroyed or closed, and in the Iranian capital Tehran, with its many churches and synagogues, there are no Sunni mosques at all (Samii 2000: 130; Tohidi 2006). According to a report by *La Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'Homme* [International Federation for Human Rights], published during Khatami's presidency (known as the period of reforms), the authorities refused to allow Sunni Muslims to build a Sunni mosque in Tehran (FIDH 2003: 6). Even though the way the relevant article in the Iranian Constitution is formulated makes it somewhat ambiguous, it is not

---

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> The equality between the blood money of males and that of females, in the Islamic Republic's penal laws, was about to be realized in 2009.

a clear violation of the Iranian Constitution. The Iranian Constitution clearly states that “other Islamic schools” enjoy communal freedom to practice their religious rites in personal affairs. Public (religious) affairs, however, accord with the Muslim religious minorities’ rules and traditions, *in the regions where they constitute a majority of the population*, and only when they do not infringe upon the rights of the followers of other schools. This latter regional provision is not made with respect to the recognized non-Muslim religious minorities. In contrast to the non-Muslim recognized minorities, they have no reserved seats in the Iranian Parliament, but their concentration in some *shahrestans* (especially those in the *ostan* of Kurdistan and the *ostan* of Sistan and Baluchistan) means that there are always Sunni members of Parliament. In fact, Sunni affairs tend to be territorialized, while those of non-Muslim minorities can best be described as existing in cultural autonomy throughout Iran.

At the bottom of this hierarchy are the non-recognized religious communities. These include, first and foremost, the Bahais; but Christian sects not native to Iran can also be counted in this group. The Muslim authorities prohibit the conversion of Muslims to these sects, and the Christian communities’ authorities in Iran are very hostile towards them for they fear losing constituency (see Afshari 2001; Sanasarian 2000).

The situation with regard to languages and, in general, ethnicity (separated from its religious layer) is very different and more or less egalitarian. According to Article 15 of Iran’s Constitution, the official language and script of Iran, the lingua franca of its people, is Persian, but the use of regional and ethnic languages in the press and mass media, as well as education about their literature in schools, is permitted. In addition, Article 19 stipulates that “all people of Iran, whatever the ethnic group or tribe to which they belong, enjoy equal rights; color, race, language, and the like, do not bestow any privilege”.

Similar to the position of the Russian language in the former Soviet Union, the Persian language is regarded as the lingua franca of Iran; but in contrast to the Soviet case, no other languages are the subject of politicization, legalization, privileges, prohibition, or even denial. In fact, unlike the Soviet Union, in which languages and education in those languages were subject to a hierarchical ethnic and ethno-territorial system, Iran identifies itself as a flexible multilingual country without any territorial bias. No ethnic language enjoys any especial status in any territorial division. The constitutional law regarding languages deals with them with regard to the whole Iranian territory. The Iranian policy with regard to ethnic and regional languages can best be described as indifferent. It neither protects, nourishes, or cultivates any local languages

or dialects, nor does it prohibit their usage. In such an environment, Standard Persian and the Tehrani colloquial Persian dialect (broadcast by TV and radio all over Iran) have a dominant position in comparison with other languages. Other languages, nevertheless, are not totally neglected by private, NGO, or state initiatives (see also Rezvani 2009b: 199). Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) has programs in Persian, Azeri, Kurdish, Turkmen, Baluchi, and Arabic (Samii 2000: 131). The Swedish scholar Carina Jahani (2005: 156), an expert on Baluchis, provides many examples from Iran with regard to (the role of the state in bringing about) cultural and ethnic realities in Iran:<sup>70</sup>

TV programmes showing regional variations in e.g. lifestyle, dress, dance etc. are frequently broadcast. Permission has been given to arrange ‘poetry evenings’ with recital of Balochi traditional and modern poetry e.g. in Chabahar where many culturally active Baloch live. The bilingual magazines in Persian–Balochi...are also a positive feature. There is, in fact, a considerable publication (books, newspapers etc.) taking place in the two largest minority languages Azerbaijani and Kurdish, and in the academic year 2004-05 B.A. programmes in the Azerbaijani language and literature (in Tabriz) and in the Kurdish language and literature (in Sanandaj) are offered in Iran for the very first time. There is also a Department of Gilan Studies at the University of Rasht.

As education is an important factor in the spheres of national and ethnic identity, and as the Iranian educational policy with regard to different ethnic and regional languages is criticized, it is appropriate to say a few words also in this regard. There is no clear and uniform national policy on education in, and in general the statuses of, different languages of Iran. In practice, the statuses of different languages are not equal. For example, after Persian—the lingua franca throughout Iran—Azeri and Kurdish are high-status languages, with TV and radio broadcasts and many publications in them. Some other languages or dialects, such as Bakhtiari and Qashqai, are relegated more to the folkloristic spheres, while languages such as Gilaki, Mazandarani, and Baluchi take an intermediate position. The fact is, however, that the Constitution provides enough opportunity to educate and cultivate all languages, and there is no legally based hierarchy.

The Iranian Constitution and ethnic policies in general do not legally categorize and rank ethnic groups, nor prohibit education in ethnic languages; on the contrary, it permits education in them. Nevertheless, in

---

<sup>70</sup> She does this in her contribution to an edited volume by Annika Rabo and Bo Utas, entitled *The Role of the State in West Asia*, published by The Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul and distributed by I. B. Tauris (London). Bo Utas is an Emeritus Professor of Iranian languages at the Swedish Uppsala University, and Annika Rabo is affiliated to the Center for Research on International Migration and Ethnic Relations (CEIFO) Stockholm.



practice there is no national or regional policy with regard to education in different ethnic and regional languages. The possibilities, however, are present. A good example is the communal effort of the Fereydani Georgians, who aim to educate their children in the Georgian language and alphabet, an effort which is supported by the local authorities. Moreover, the choice for education in native languages is dependent on many factors, amongst which are the possibilities of organization and demand from the population. It is not automatically beneficial for ethnic groups to opt for non-Persian education when children are fluent in Persian. Some may see education in the native language as unnecessary and redundant when their children are already fluent in their own native language. Moreover, if different languages are introduced into the educational system, this may lead to a situation in which the holders of certificates from schools of certain languages are restricted from participation in higher education in another language. Since the main higher educational centers of Iran are located in Tehran and other Persian-speaking cities, such as Esfahan, Shiraz, and Mashhad, this latter situation is especially detrimental to the careers of students from non-Persian-speaking, economically underdeveloped peripheral and predominantly rural regions such as Kurdistan and Baluchistan. Certain small but somewhat significant circles regard linguistic pluralism as detrimental to Iranian unity. Such fears, however, seem to be unfounded. Education in ethnic languages and literature, even if regarded as unnecessary by its native speakers, is not detrimental to Iranian national unity. "Most Iranians who speak these languages perceive their ethnic identity as a complement to their national identity. Indeed, it has long been understood and widely accepted that this diversity is an asset to one of the world's oldest continuous civilizations" (Tohidi 2006).

Although Standard Persian as the official language of the state and the lingua franca enjoys a dominant position, its speakers are not legally nor even *de facto* superior to others. The supremacy of the Persian *language* in Iran does not mean that the *ethnic* Persian-speakers are superior to others. Persian is a lingua franca for all Iranians and is a supra-ethnic language, as most ethnic groups inside Iran and many of those outside Iran have written their literature in this language and contributed to its development (Asaturian [Asatrian] 2011: 19,<sup>71</sup> Frye 2006). In reality, no ethnic group in Iran enjoys any favorable position in comparison to others, as long as they belong to the Shi'ite (titular) majority or adhere to the same religion in general. Obviously, it is the language that enjoys special status and not certain ethnic groups. This

---

<sup>71</sup> According to the traditional Persian spelling of his name, Asatrian is written as Asaturian in this publication (2011).

situation is similar to the situation in USA, where English is the lingua franca, but no privilege is bestowed on Americans of British descent. Americans of British descent clearly have no more privileges (and obligations) compared with Americans of German, Swedish, or French descent, for example.

In contrast to the case in the Soviet Union, the Iranian *ostans*, the first-order territorial administrative divisions, are not based on and demarcated rigidly along ethnic lines. Iranian *ostans* are primarily territorial administrative entities and not ethno-territorial ones. Although many ethnic groups inhabit these *ostans*, they are not primarily designed along ethnic lines. The cultural infrastructures—such as the provincial radio and television stations and the provincial headquarters of the Iranian “Organization of Cultural Heritage, Handcrafts and Tourism” (formerly three separate organizations)—which aim at the protection and exploitation of the cultural landscape of their corresponding *ostan*, accentuate the identity of each *ostan* and additionally provide their diverse ethnic groups some instruments for protection and cultivation of their ethnic and regional cultures and identities. As their territory is inhabited by concentrations of certain ethnic groups, many Iranian *ostans* have radio and television broadcasts in more than one local language or dialect. Although these are usually the most widely spoken languages, no ethnic groups retain any constitutional privileges in any *ostans*. This means that immigrants from other parts of Iran can function and participate without any legal (and often social) obstacles in the political, social, and economic life of their new place of residence. This situation is in sharp contrast to other political systems, such as the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, in which ethnicity was politicized and “territorially privileged”.

The Iranian Constitution offers provisions for councils and consultative bodies at different administrative levels (Articles 7 and 100). Nevertheless, the Constitution does not identify these administrative units nor prescribe any guidelines on how these administrative levels should be demarcated. This is in sharp contrast to the situation shortly after the Constitutional Revolution, a provision which was later abolished by Reza Shah’s constitution. The effect of Shah’s constitution still prevails, in the form of a flexible (rationalized) administrative territorial system (Amir Ahmadian 2004: 83).<sup>72</sup>

Furthermore, the Iranian Constitution formally proclaims the equal status of all *ostans*. According to Article 48, “there must be no

---

<sup>72</sup> In that period the Iranian territorial administrative units were recognized and demarcated in the Constitution. That situation changed, however, after Reza Shah’s constitution (1927), which relegated the demarcation (and creation and abolition) of the *ostans* to the central government. This situation prevails and has resulted in a flexible administrative territorial system.

discrimination among the various *ostans* with regards to the exploitation of natural resources, utilization of public revenues, and distribution of economic activities among the various provinces and regions of the country, thereby ensuring that every region has access to the necessary capital and facilities in accordance with its needs and capacity for growth". The practice, however, is different. Although *ostans* are equal legal subjects, they do not have an equal level of development. Especially the mainly Sunni-inhabited *ostans* such as Kordestan (Kurdistan) and Sistan & Baluchestan (especially its Sunni part, Baluchistan) are poorer and enjoy fewer facilities.

The fact that Tehran—the Center—allocates the economic means and facilities, justly creates the impression that the Sunni-inhabited and, generally, the peripheral areas are discriminated against. The centralized system of Iran also means that local elites in some localities always try to elevate the administrative level of their locality, in order to secure more economic means and facilities. The higher the level in the administrative territorial hierarchy, the greater is the extent of facilities and economic means. Holding the status of an *ostan* is especially advantageous for it provides direct funding by Tehran. This leads to a process whereby an aspirant capital lobbies Tehran against the desires of the hosting *ostan's* capital in order to get "liberated" from the latter's tutelage and hence receive its own budget. This process has resulted in lobbying by local elites for the creation of new *ostans*. Splitting up an already existing *ostan* usually means the division of one (or more) ethnic concentration(s) into more territorial administrative levels. The best example was the creation of Ostan-e Ardabil due to local elites and popular demand, which resulted in the division of the former (almost homogenous ethnically) Azeri Ostan-e Azerbaijan-e Sharqi (East Azerbaijan) into two *ostans* (Chehabi 1997).

Although the Iranian political system shows some federal characteristics, it is still a centralized system in a unitary state. If it was a strict federal system and if ethnicity was heavily politicized in Iran, many ethnically divided *ostans* would have been subject to ethnic competition and tensions. A federal structure, whether in a democratic environment or not, may function well without causing major ethnic tensions, but it is its combination with politicized ethnicity that causes ethnic competition and potentially also ethnic and ethno-territorial conflict. An ethno-territorial federal system would give the separatist leaders more opportunity to effectively rebel against the central state when the central state is weak. Although Iran has not been free of ethnic strife, this has less to do with its territorial arrangements. The ethnic strife in Iran is most serious in its peripheral Sunni areas, and these are still less violent in comparison with most other states in the region. In general, the lack of ethno-territorial federalism, absence of politicized ethnicity, and the (quasi) civic nature of

the Iranian nation mitigate the probability of ethnic and ethno-territorial conflict.

Fereydan, whether the historic Fereydan or the Greater Fereydan, is a modal Iranian region in the western part of Ostan-e Esfahan. It is average in many aspects: urbanization, population, size of area, and welfare. It is, nevertheless, exceptional in the ethnic and religious sense. It is one of the very few regions in Iran traditionally inhabited by a rural Christian community. Its ethnic heterogeneity is also larger than most other areas in Iran. Therefore, Iranian policies on ethnic and religious groups are very important in Fereydan compared with most other Iranian regions.

Fereydan, owing to its ethnic similarity to the Caucasus, is often colloquially called the Iranian Caucasus. However, because its inhabitants coexist peacefully, it is also called the Iranian Switzerland. Although it should not be exaggerated, Fereydan has not always been a peaceful environment in the past. A good portion of the Fereydani population are the descendants of (semi-)nomads who were sedentarized either voluntarily or by force. A large portion are also the descendants of the Georgians and Armenians who were moved there in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. One rationale behind the Georgian settlement in Fereydan was that Shah Abbas I regarded their martial skill as very desirable in countering (semi-)nomadic, notably Bakhtiari, feudal lords (Rezvani 2008a: 599-560). Finally, in Reza Shah's era, a lasting blow was dealt to the troublesome Bakhtiari feudal lords, who had caused much insecurity in Fereydan and adjacent areas (Rahimi 2000: 57-67).<sup>73</sup>

The territorial administrative tendency towards fragmentation is also clearly visible in Fereydan. Historical Fereydan was originally one *shahrestan* in Ostan-e Esfahan. First Fereyduhshahr and then Chadegan became separate *shahrestans*. In addition, in the latter *shahrestan*, a new *bakhsh* was established. Today the historical Fereydan and Khwansar, a region which we call the Greater Fereydan, contains four *shahrestans*: Fereydan proper, Fereyduhshahr, Chadegan, and Khwansar. In addition to the central *bakhshes*, Fereydan proper and Chadegan contain other *bakhshes* in their territories. These are respectively the *bakhshes* Buin-Miandasht and Chenar-Rud (see Figure 3.5).<sup>74</sup>

---

<sup>73</sup> Although (semi-)nomadic tribes could be troublesome at times, they had generally good and peaceful relationships with the sedentary population. The Bakhtiari tribe's attack on Afghans, for example, preceded the Georgian victory over the invading Afghans during the late Safavid era.

<sup>74</sup> The Iranian administrative units very often bear the administrative center's name. This is not the case in Fereydan. Daran is the capital of Fereydan proper. In contrast to popular belief, the town of Daran has never been called Fereydan, and there is, or was, no other town with that name. Owrgan is the administrative center of Bakhsh-e Chenar-Rud. The other administrative units' names correspond to their administrative centers.

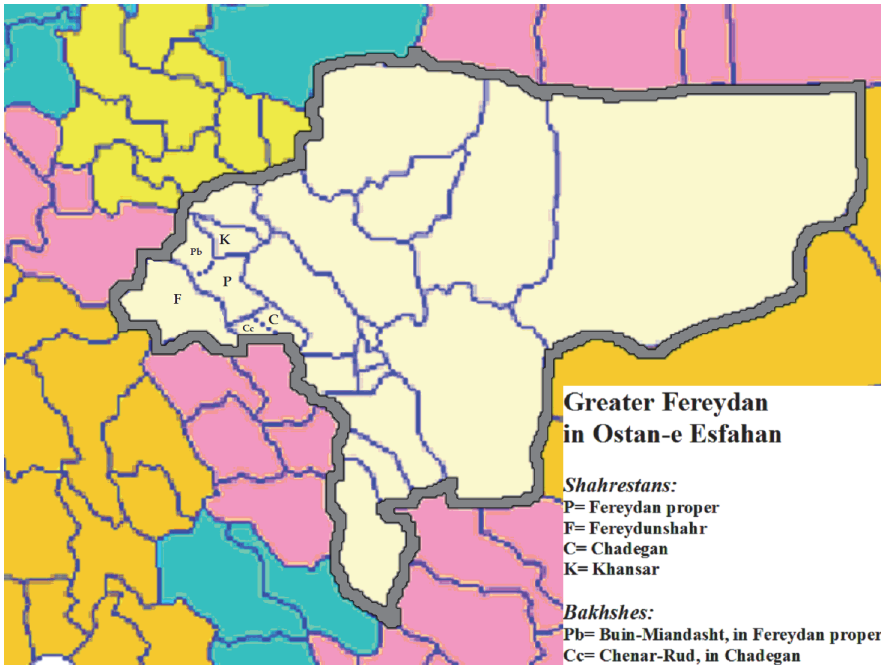


Figure 3.5. Fereydan in Ostan-e Esfahan. Ostan-e Esfahan is the light-colored area which is delimited by bold lines.

### ***Conclusion: Ethno-Political Systems and Ethno-Territorial Conflict***

The ethno-political system of the Soviet Union, unlike that of Iran, politicized ethnicity, enhanced—in many cases even created—ethnic nationalism, and promoted ethnic competition and conflict. The hierarchical ethno-political system in the Soviet Union subordinated some ethnic groups to others; many ethnic groups were awarded higher degrees of territorial autonomy than others; many others were not awarded any territorial autonomy at all. In addition, many ethnic groups in the Soviet Union have experienced traumatic peak experiences such as genocide and deportation, which are likely to influence their political behavior and hence may contribute to the emergence of ethno-territorial conflict, especially regarding the fact that these experiences have often had territorial consequences.

Although politically subordinated to the Soviet Center (Moscow), the SSRs, or union republics, were in fact quasi-states. They even had the formal right of secession from the Soviet Union. More importantly, they possessed most attributes of nation states. In fact, the Soviet nationalities

policy and ethno-national delimitation of the Soviet territory laid the foundations of the independent Soviet successor states.

By politicizing ethnicity and offering territorial autonomies to a number of ethnic groups, the Soviet ethno-political system, in fact, combined cultural aspects with political-territorial ones. One of this system's results was ethno-political subordination. In this system, ethnically based political grievances stemmed from ethno-political subordination. In many cases an ethnic group that was a subordinated group somewhere was the titular population in a neighboring territorial autonomous unit. Therefore, territorial contiguity to an ethnic kin, especially when it possessed territorial autonomy within, or was the titular group in, a neighboring republic, could have an effect on ethnic relations and competition in neighboring republics.

The mode of nationhood determines to a large extent the ethno-political subordination and privileges of ethnic groups. In a (systematic) analysis, therefore, one must pay attention to factors such as ethno-political subordination, possession of territorial autonomy, and traumatic peak experiences, in addition to cultural factors such as linguistic or religious difference. Geographical contiguity may be combined with other factors and consequently more concrete factors may be formulated. Contiguity to the titular territories of their kinfolk is one such factor.

The possession of territorial autonomy by an ethnic group is an important condition because it serves as an opportunity structure. It helps to mobilize people for a cause, among which an ethno-territorial conflict is not a very strange one, because such a conflict is usually depicted as a just cause. Although the autonomous capabilities of these territories may be shallow in the formal legal sense, ethnic groups effectively possessing such autonomous capabilities have an edge over all other ethnic groups who do not have such autonomies, especially in a time of political instability when the power structures are disturbed and the political centers' power is in disarray. The possession of autonomous territories also has a symbolic value. Especially in such hierarchical ethno-political systems, possession of autonomous territory means that that ethnic group is "special" and more important than many others.

Regarding the fact that ethnic competition in the Soviet Union made ethnic groups dependent on the Center, bi- or multi-titular autonomous territories were less likely to wage a separatist war. It was also not very likely that their co-titular ethnic groups would come to large-scale warfare with each other when none had a demographic majority. If one of the co-titulars had demographic dominance in an autonomous territorial unit, it was likely that it controlled the autonomous apparatus entirely and had it at its service for mobilization for a conflict. Therefore, the demography matters in this context. Ethnic groups with a demographic

dominance within their titular autonomous territory are more likely to take advantage of their autonomous apparatus for mobilization for an ethno-territorial conflict.

Regarding the fact that the ethnic groups in the former Soviet Union differed in size, demographic dominance is also important in combination with contiguity. One ethnic group can be a minority in one location while being a majority in the broader region. One ethnic group may be ethno-politically subordinated in one union republic but may be titular in a neighboring, usually larger, republic. There were a few rather large ethnic groups in the Soviet Union, such as Russians or Uzbeks. They may have been subordinated minorities in a republic but were a dominant titular majority in a neighboring republic. This condition, called trans-border dominance in this study, may compensate for the subordinate position of their co-ethnic kin in contiguous republics.

The differences between Iran and the Soviet Union are paramount. Nevertheless, there are also many differences between different cases in the (post-)Soviet space. It is true that the Iranian ethno-political system did not display many features of the Soviet one. At the same time, however, these features, such as a dominant demographic weight in a territorial autonomy, contiguity to ethnic kinfolk, or trans-border dominance are not equally present everywhere and among all ethnic groups in the (post-)Soviet space. Therefore, it is appropriate to take these features into the systematic analysis in order to explore the causal conditions which have led to ethno-territorial conflicts. Moreover, the Soviet Union in the late 1980s was a state in disarray; nevertheless, only a few ethnic groups came into conflict with each other. In other words, while all conflicts emerged in a state in disarray, not all ethnic encounters in that state were afflicted by conflict. This is yet another reason for not explaining ethno-territorial conflicts simply by the factor of “a state in disarray” (or political instability in general), but rather including many different factors in the analysis.

Figure 3.6 depicts the factors which can be taken as specifications of ethno-political systems and ethnic kinship, in interplay with each other and with demographic and geographic properties such as geographic contiguity and demographic dominance. The resulting factors (in bold letters) will be included in the analysis. Ethnic kinship and linguistic similarity overlap nearly perfectly in this study (not least owing to the Soviet nationalities policy). In the Soviet system, economic grievances were very often related to ethno-political subordination. Figure 3.7 presents a refined model for the explanation of ethno-territorial conflicts. This model is more detailed and concrete than the one in the previous chapter (Figure 2.3).

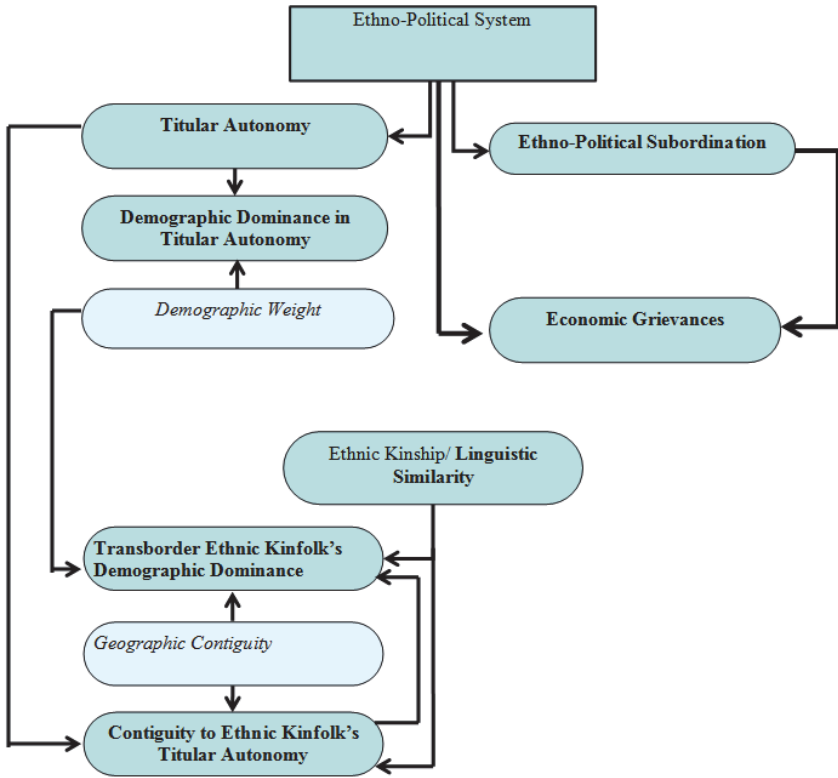
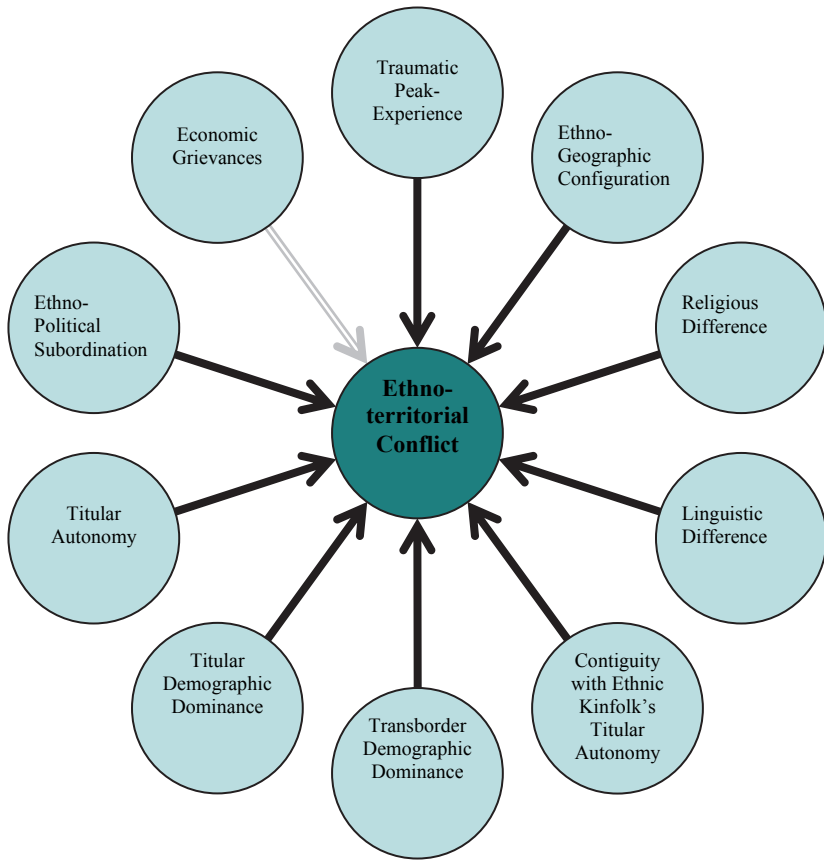


Figure 3.6. Derivative factors from ethno-political systems and their interrelationship with other factors. (The italic text in the lighter colored boxes represent not theory-driven factors but geographic properties. Factors in bold letters are included in the refined model.)





*Figure 3.7. Factors explaining ethno-territorial conflict: A refined model. (Empty gray lines indicate an ambiguous relationship.)*

## **Chapter Four**

# **4**

## **Methods**

To answer the main research question of this study, it is not only necessary to explain why certain ethno-territorial conflicts occur, but also why other ethno-territorial groups do not come into conflict. Therefore, I constructed a database of 129 ethno-territorial encounters, the units of analysis, and at the same time all potential conflicts. In this database the encounters are characterised by having conflict or not (the dependent variable) and by features that correspond with the explaining conditions (the independent variables) which were selected in Chapters 2 and 3 (see Figure 3.7). The measurement of the dependent and independent variables will be discussed in this chapter.

My analysis is twofold. First, I shall give an analytical description of those encounters that are identified as ethno-territorial conflicts, based on fieldwork and existing literature. Chapter 6 will present the results of these case studies of conflict. Second, the database of all ethno-territorial encounters will be analysed systematically by qualitative comparative (QCA) and statistical methods. Chapter 7 will present the results of this analysis.

Before doing so, it is necessary to identify the ethno-territorial groups and encounters. Chapter 5 and Appendix 5 will present the results of this identification. The criteria for this identification will be discussed in this chapter. Then follows the criteria for identification and measurement of the dependent variable, ethno-territorial conflict. Following this, the measurement of the explaining conditions will be discussed. Finally, the methods of analysis will be introduced.

### ***Ethno-Territorial Groups and Encounters***

I define ethno-territorial groups as those ethnic groups that are rooted in the land on which they are living and hence may potentially have claims upon it. Ethno-territorial encounters (frequently called encounters in this book, for reasons of simplicity) are dyads of two ethno-territorial groups that border each other. The ethnic map and the situation according to the last Soviet census (1989) is taken as the source of reference, as that year

coincides roughly with the emergence of ethno-territorial conflicts in the (post-)Soviet space. Some trees' roots go deep into the ground; other trees' roots do not go deep into the ground, but they cover a rather vast area. Both types of trees are rooted and cannot easily be uprooted from the orchard. Both types are among the main "residents" of that orchard and "claim" their share of and place in that "ground".

Rootedness of ethnic groups can be based both on an ethnic group's longevity in a country (or union republic) or on the large number of its members there. Indigeneity—that is, being indigenous to the land—means that the respective ethnic group has lived in that union republic or country at least since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Such ethnic groups are considered ethno-territorial if they constitute the majority of the population in at least one village, town, or city in the union republic or state in which they are living. (As information on the number of people in the 18<sup>th</sup> century is scarce and often unreliable, a number exceeding 5,000 in 19<sup>th</sup> century is a good indication of their presence in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.)

An ethnic group is also considered ethno-territorial when it settled in a certain union republic or state in the 19<sup>th</sup> century on the land where traditionally nomadic groups prevailed, provided its number in the 19<sup>th</sup> century exceeded 5,000, and it inhabited in 1989 three contiguous villages, cities, or towns, in one of which it constitutes the majority of the population.

When there is no evidence or indications that an ethnic group has lived on the territory of a union republic or state since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it will be considered ethno-territorial if it is indigenous in a neighboring union republic or state, providing that its number exceeded 20,000 (in 1989, according to the last Soviet census) in the union republic or state in which it is living. In addition, in the state or union republic in which it is living, that ethnic group should constitute the majority of the population in at least five contiguous villages, cities, or towns.

Contiguity in these measurements means that these settlements are less than 15 kilometers apart from each other. Regarding the geographic and demographic features of the regions involved (for example, their population density, the natural landscape, and the condition of the terrain), this is a good criterion.

In cases where none of these conditions are met, those ethnic groups are also considered ethno-territorial which live in a significant area of that union republic or state—that is, in at least ten contiguous, towns, villages, and cities—and constitute at least 20% of the total population of that union republic or state. (Although in this case it is debatable whether we can regard such ethnic groups as rooted ones, it is still justifiable to regard them as ethno-territorial because of their large share in the population of that union republic or state.)

Regarding the geographical, demographic, and historical realities in these regions, I believe these criteria offer a firm basis for the identification of ethno-territorial groups there. In many cases one ethnic group may be considered ethno-territorial on more than one ground. This has made it possible to include as many as possible ethno-territorial groups in this study. This has had consequences especially for Central Asia, where many ethnic groups arrived later than the 18<sup>th</sup> century but nevertheless constitute rather significant ethnic concentrations. The more cases can be included into the analyses, the more significant will be the results of the analysis.

### ***Ethno-Territorial Conflict***

According to the discussion in Chapter 2, a conflict should be violent and the groups involved should be fighting over a territory, or one group is fighting against a state that is dominated by, and associated with, another ethno-territorial group (an ethnic nation). In these cases, the conflict between a state dominated by an ethnic nation and an ethnic group means a conflict between the dominant majority and a subordinated minority. To establish whether a conflict is violent is arbitrary. I decided to use a criteria of at least 100 deaths during the time of fighting, when, in addition, each party has suffered at least 25 human lives. This threshold is relatively low compared with those in most other studies and databases.

**C=1**= Two ethno-territorial groups fight over an area, which has resulted in the death of more than 100 persons, and, in addition, each party has suffered at least 25 human lives.

**c=0**= Two ethno-territorial groups do not fight over an area, or if their clash does not result in the death of more than 100 persons, and, in addition, each party has suffered at least 25 human lives.

### ***Explaining Conditions***

In Chapters 2 and 3 many explaining conditions (factors) were selected and a model was presented (see Figure 3.7).<sup>75</sup> Below, their definitions and measurements are given. As the qualitative comparative analysis (see further in this chapter) requires dichotomous variables, all conditions will be measured accordingly. These dichotomous variables are conditions

---

<sup>75</sup> Explaining conditions may also be called “causal conditions”. I prefer “explaining conditions” above “causal conditions” thanks to certain methodological and philosophical reasons which go beyond this book.

which can be either present or absent. Therefore, these variables are also interchangeably called factors or conditions.

### ***Ethno-political subordination (S)***

The condition ethno-political subordination is present when one of the ethno-territorial groups in an encounter is politically subordinated to the other. In practice, in the (post-)Soviet context, this means an ethno-territorial encounter between a titular and a non-titular ethnic group in an SSR/state. In Iran, the Shi'ite ethnic groups are in fact titulars, and all non-Shi'ite ethnic groups are not. Hence, in the context of Iran, an ethno-territorial encounter is marked by ethno-political subordination when an ethno-territorial encounter exists between a predominantly Shi'ite ethnic group and a non-Shi'ite ethnic group.

**S=1=** One ethno-territorial group is the titular group of the hosting union republic or country and the other is not.

**s=0=** Both ethno-territorial groups are the titular groups or both are non-titular groups of the hosting union republic or country.

### ***Religious difference (R)***

Religious difference is present when the majority of both ethno-territorial groups confess different religions. This study differentiates between six religions: Shi'ite Islam, Sunni Islam, Judaism, Yezidism, Orthodox Christianity (Eastern Christianity), and other Christian denominations (Western Christianity). The main religious affiliations of ethno-territorial groups in different regions are listed in Chapter 5.

**R=1=** The majority of both ethno-territorial groups adhere to different religions.

**r=0=** The majority of both ethno-territorial groups adhere to the same religion.

### ***Linguistic difference (L)***

Ethno-territorial groups in the Caucasus, Central Asia, and Fereydan speak various languages belonging to different language families. These families are: Slavic, Germanic, Iranic (or Iranian) and Armenian, Nakh-

Dagestani,<sup>76</sup> Northwest Caucasian,<sup>77</sup> Kartvelian, Turkic,<sup>78</sup> and Sinic. The first four language families are sub-families of the Indo-European language family. There is much debate about the classification of (North)-Caucasian languages. In this study a classification is made of the Caucasian languages based on expert sources. Most of these language groups are divided further into many branches, which contain many languages. The many language families and their branches present in this study are depicted in Figures 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3.

Two languages should be in the same branch of the same language family in order to speak of language similarity. These branches of the same family are in fact the penultimate groupings in *Ethnologue*, a website/(printed) encyclopedia, which lists languages of the world and their affiliations (*Ethnologue* 2009, 16<sup>th</sup> edition). The languages at this level are very often intelligible to each other's speakers.

The classification of languages in this study generally accords with those in *Ethnologue* (2009, 16<sup>th</sup> edition). Owing to the complexity of

---

<sup>76</sup> Linguistic study of the Caucasus has resulted in complex and sophisticated debates. Many authorities connect the Nakh-Dagestani and Northwest Caucasian languages together to a (hypothetically) North Caucasian language (super)family and many do not. The Nakh-Dagestani language group is divided into many branches: the Nakh, the Avar (Avar-Andi-Tzes), the Lak-Dargwa (Central), and the Southern or Lezgian branches (Van den Berg 2005: 150). Khinalugh can be regarded either as a language distantly related to the other languages in the Lezgian branch or as a separate branch of the Nakh-Dagestani languages. In addition, there still exists ambiguity about the affiliation of certain languages and dialects. For example, Archi is a language spoken by a small group in Dagestan who are registered as Avars. There is ambiguity about whether this language belongs genetically to the Avar-Andi-Dido, Lezgian, or even Lak-Dargwa branches of the Nakh-Dagestani languages. As the Soviet ethnic categories are maintained in any case when the groups are smaller than 20,000 souls, and as Archi is not the main language of Avars, this ambiguity does not generate any problems for the analysis in this book.

<sup>77</sup> The Northwest Caucasian family of languages has suffered greatly owing to Russian policies. Most general descriptions are not very accurate. Therefore, to depict its branches, we have relied on written (and oral) expert information. Next to the Kabardian and other members of the Circassian dialect continuum (see e.g. Colarusso 1992; Kumakhov & Vamling 1998), it also contains Abkhaz/Abaza and Ubykh languages (Hewitt 2005: 91). Abkhazian and Abaza are intimately close to each other and show only a few phonological differences. Abaza can be considered as an Abkhazian dialect, or both languages can be seen as two varieties in a dialect continuum. Ubykh is now extinct. Ubykh language was spoken in the area around the city of Sochi prior to the Russian-Circassian war. Its last native speaker died in 1992 in Turkey (Hewitt 2005: 91 and 93).

<sup>78</sup> Johanson (1998: 82-83) maintains the following classification, upon which there is a large degree of agreement among linguists and which also corresponds with *Ethnologue* (2009, 16<sup>th</sup> edition). These classifications are also maintained in this study (as long as there exist languages of that branch in this study), but the subgroups' names are different. These are: 1) the southwestern (SW) branch or Oghuz Turkic; 2) the northwestern (NW) branch or Kypchak (Kipchak, Qypchaq, etc.) Turkic; 3) the southeastern (SE) branch or Uyghur Turkic; 4) the northeastern (NE) branch or Siberian Turkic; 5) Chuvash, representing Oghur or Bulghar Turkic; 6) Khalaj, representing Arghu Turkic. The last branch, Khalaj Turkic, is an isolated language which is spoken only by relatively small numbers of people in central Iran. Only the first three branches appear among the languages spoken by ethno-territorial groups in these regions. In this book, however, the designation Karluk or Qarluq is preferred above Uyghur for the southeastern branch. Although there is ample evidence that their ancestors, being related to the Khakas ethnic group, spoke a different language (see Butanaev 1995), the modern Kyrgyz language is similar to Kazakh and is most often categorized as a Kypchak Turkic language.

the subject, however, only those in the Caucasus differ to minor extents from those of *Ethnologue* (2009, 16<sup>th</sup> edition). The classification of other language families in *Ethnologue* (2009, 16<sup>th</sup> edition) accords with other sources. With regard to the Caucasian languages, the classification of certain experts in Caucasian linguistics (e.g. Colarusso [1992], Hewitt [2005], and Van den Berg [2005]), are given priority over those in *Ethnologue* (2009, 16<sup>th</sup> edition). Those sources are cited in Chapter 5 of this book. In that chapter the main language of each ethno-territorial group is listed along with its language family and branch.

**L=1**= Both ethno-territorial groups speak languages belonging to two different language families, or to two different branches of the same language family.

**I=0**= Both ethno-territorial groups speak languages belonging to the same branches of the same language family, or speak the same language.

### ***Traumatic peak experience (T)***

A traumatic peak experience is present when at least one of the ethno-territorial groups in the encounter has undergone a traumatic peak experience in the last 100 years, in the form of an ethnically targeted, well-organized massacre (or genocide as it is often called), or ethnically oriented deportation which has cost many human lives. These massacres or deadly deportations must have resulted in the death of over 100,000 persons, or at least 20% of the ethnic population, at the time of their occurrence. This “punishment” must have been either organized by the state (Soviet Union and Iran in this study), or the state must have been actively involved in the process and its aftermath.

The reason for these criteria is that traumatic experiences which occurred in the recent past and in the same territory as an ethnic group’s contemporary living area are more likely to evoke feelings of justice-seeking, because they are more engraved in the mind of the survivors still alive and the ethnic group’s collective memory in general.

In practice, these are the Stalin-era deportations of many ethnic groups, as well as the Armenian Genocide, the latter occurring (mainly) in the Ottoman Empire but effects of which were also felt in the territory of the former Soviet Union (and elsewhere).

**T=1**= At least one of the ethno-territorial groups in an encounter has experienced a traumatic peak experience.

**t=0**= None of the ethno-territorial groups in an encounter has experienced a traumatic peak experience.

### ***Autonomous setting (A)***

An autonomous setting is present when both ethno-territorial groups are titular, at the same or different levels in the same state or union republic.

In practice, this means that either both ethno-politically subordinated groups enjoy lower-ranked territorial autonomies within a state or union republic in which they are not titular at SSR level, or one of the ethno-territorial groups enjoys a lower-ranked territorial autonomy and the other one is the titular ethnic group of that union republic or state. These lower-ranked territorial autonomous units can be either autonomous provinces or autonomous republics, formerly called AOs and ASSRs.

**A=1**= Both ethno-territorial groups are titular at the same or different levels of hierarchy in the same union republic or country.

**a=0**= One or none of the ethno-territorial groups are titular at the same or different levels of hierarchy in the same union republic or country.

### ***Titular demographic dominance (D)***

Titular demographic dominance is present when both ethno-territorial groups in an encounter constitute the majority (that is, over 50%) of the population in their corresponding state (or union republic) or lower-ranked autonomous unit (AO or ASSR). This combines the criteria of the condition “autonomous setting (A)” with demographic dominance of both ethno-territorial groups in their autonomous units.

**D=1**= Both ethno-territorial groups constitute the majority of population in their corresponding titular homelands, in the same country or republic.

**d=0**= At least one ethno-territorial group does not constitute the majority of population in its corresponding titular homeland, or has no lower-ranked titular homeland in that union republic or country.



### ***Contiguity to titular kinfolk's homeland (G)***

Contiguity is present when the state or the union republic in which the ethno-territorial encounter is located borders a state, union republic, or lower-ranked autonomous unit where the subordinated ethno-territorial group or its kinfolk is titular.

Kinfolks<sup>79</sup> are defined as those ethno-territorial groups that speak the same or intimately related languages—in other words, when the condition “linguistic difference” is absent ( $l=0$ ) in a hypothetical encounter between these ethno-territorial groups.

**G=1=** At least one ethno-territorial group has an ethnic kinfolk in a neighboring republic, country, or lower-ranked autonomous unit.

**g=0=** None of the ethno-territorial groups has an ethnic kinfolk in a neighboring republic, country, or lower-ranked autonomous unit.

### ***Transborder dominance (B)***

This condition is defined as a condition in which the subordinated group's kinfolk is at least three times more populous in its neighboring titular homeland than the titular group is in the state or union republic in which its ethnic kinfolk lives.

In fact, this is a situation when the condition contiguity (G) is present and, in addition, the subordinated ethno-territorial group in one union republic (or state) numbers (over) three times more than the other ethno-territorial group in its titular union republic or state. The following example attempts to make this clear. People B is an subordinated group in A-istan. But the number of Bs in B-istan is three times larger than the number of As in A-istan.

**B=1=** At least one ethno-territorial group has an ethnic kinfolk in a neighboring republic, country, or lower-ranked autonomous unit who are at least three times more populous than the titular group in the host state or union republic where its kinfolk lives.

**b=0=** None of the ethno-territorial groups has an ethnic kinfolk in a neighboring republic, country, or lower-ranked autonomous unit

---

<sup>79</sup> Kinfolk is used as a singular in this book as a synonym of an ethnically related ethnic group or nation.

who are at least three times more populous than the titular group in the host state or union republic where its kinfolk lives.

### ***Mosaic ethno-geographic configuration (M)***

A mosaic ethno-geographic configuration (M) is present when an ethno-territorial encounter is located in an ethno-geographic configuration which can be identified as a mosaic type. In practice, in this study, this means that the ethno-territorial configuration is a common heterogeneous type, if it cannot be identified as a mosaic one. (The other two types of ethno-geographic encounters are ideal-typical and occur only in rare cases in the world.)

As this factor is innovative and included for the first time in a study, an instrument must be made in order to assess whether the type of ethno-geographical configuration in an area is of the mosaic type or not. How do we measure mosaicism and how is a measurement of this concept constructed? In Appendix 1, the construction of an instrument is reasoned and a method is proposed which it is believed can measure well the mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration.

**M=1**= An ethno-territorial encounter is located in a mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration.

**m=0**= An ethno-territorial encounter is not located in a mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration.

### ***Economic grievances***

A variable measuring economic grievances in an ethno-territorial encounter requires reliable data about the income (or other indices of welfare and well-being) of each ethno-territorial group at local level. Such reliable data are very difficult to obtain, by any method of data collection. Economic data gathered and published (if at all) during the era of the Soviet Union are not reliable. They also explicitly disregard the informal economy. It is also almost impossible to gather these data for such a vast area 20 years after the Soviet collapse.

Indeed, there existed differences in the level of welfare between different (post-)Soviet republics and between them and Iran. In Iran regions exist which are relatively underdeveloped—for example, Baluchistan and Kurdistan—and relatively developed—such as Tehran and Eastern Azerbaijan. Fereydan, located in Ostan-e Esfahan, one of the more highly developed *ostans* of Iran, is nevertheless mainly a rural region and more or less comparable to the Iranian average in most aspects.

The Soviet data were ordained territorially rather than ethnically. They represented the situation in a certain territory, rather than for each ethnic group separately. Therefore, they are not really suitable for an analysis in which units of analysis consist of pairs of ethnic groups. Moreover, they are not reliable and they do not account for the rather pervasive black economy. The available statistical and qualitative data (often, but not exclusively, attained during fieldwork) revealed that there was no clear relationship between either territorial or ethnic level of welfare and the eruption of ethno-territorial conflicts. For example, Georgia was a republic with a relatively high level of welfare, and Tajikistan scored the lowest on most indicators of welfare and development in the whole Soviet Union. Both republics, however, were afflicted by ethno-territorial conflicts. Similarly, Abkhazia and the ethnic Abkhazians were among the economically better-off, and Pamiris were among the most underprivileged and poorest ethnic groups, respectively in Georgia and Tajikistan (and perhaps the whole Soviet Union). Both ethnic groups were involved in ethno-territorial conflicts. In Iran, too, there are no ethnicity-based statistics. (There are, however, quantitative studies and surveys that consider ethnicity.) No large, ethnicity-based discrepancies between the level of welfare and income became visible to me during my fieldwork in Fereydan.

Economic grievances in the Soviet Union were largely dependent upon its ethno-political system, and correlated largely, but imperfectly, with the variable ethno-political subordination. In the (post-)Soviet context, ethno-political subordination also meant that the titular ethnic groups were privileged and had better chances to obtain governmental administrative and, in general, higher positions in their homeland. Although this was not a black and white pattern and exceptions did exist, this was, nevertheless, a general pattern broadly present all across the (post-)Soviet space.

Deterioration of economic situation is thought to be a conflict-generating factor. It generates unemployment and frustration and can contribute to mobilization for a conflict. “Unemployment does not only mean that people lack jobs and incomes. It has far-reaching psychological implications.... It leaves people idle to conspire and develop negative energies instead of contributing to societal welfare and progress” (Junne & Verkoren 2005: 324). In fact, the Soviet Union and its successor states were struck by economic deterioration and unemployment as well as social unrest in the late 1980s and the early 1990s, the period when the ethno-territorial conflicts broke out.<sup>80</sup> *Perestroika* and *glasnost* were not

---

<sup>80</sup> Already in 1989, Tishkov (1989: 191) saw the future of the Soviet Union as a single country as threatened, owing to the ethnic strife caused by the difficult democratization process in the former Soviet Union.

only the beginning of increased political liberties but also the beginning of the end of the Soviet Union. The Soviet empire was already struck by economic stagnation for many years, but *perestroika* and *glasnost* were the final blows to the Union. Owing to the newly created openness, formerly hidden stories of a bankrupt empire were publicized and its vulnerabilities were exposed. In addition, many forces abused the newly offered openness and political liberties to create tensions. The bomb of ethno-nationalism and separatism were first exploded in the Baltic region, where the nationalists expected support and affection from “European” and “Western” countries, as they deemed themselves closer to them than to the Eurasian Soviet empire. Soon ethno-nationalism, accompanied by economic demise and other sources of social unrest, spread all across the former Soviet Union. Finally, the August coup d’état (1991) destroyed the last hopes of keeping together the old empire. The aftershocks of the collapse of the Soviet Union were felt all across the post-Soviet space. Nevertheless, some parts were more vulnerable than others. The Russian Federation, for example, as a powerful and resource-rich country, was less vulnerable than most other post-Soviet republics.

Iran, on the other hand, revived economically roughly at the same period. The Iran–Iraq war ended in 1988. The Iranian economy received a boost. Although after the Iran–Iraq war Iranian relations with the West were not optimal and Iran suffered under many economic sanctions at most times, the termination of the Iran–Iraq war meant a period in which different projects were begun to renovate and repair the devastated infrastructure. The war had “consumed” much of Iran’s budget, as Iran had to buy often unsophisticated weaponry at higher rates on the black markets. After the war, more budget became available, there were more jobs, and the social situation also improved, as many young men saw a brighter future. Nevertheless, it was not as bright as it was seen to be. More young men were now seeking jobs, but jobs were not available for everyone. This led to a distressing social situation, especially when the income gap increased between the rich and the poor, notably in the largest urban centers such as Tehran, Esfahan, and Tabriz. Fereydan was a mainly rural region and (indirectly) benefitted from the end of the war. Even though the end of the war was not as bright as many had expected, it did bring more stability to the country. This was in sharp contrast to the chaotic situation at the same time in the (post-)Soviet republics. From this aspect, the economic situation in both countries correlated perfectly with political instability.

Therefore, regarding the difficulties and arguments discussed above, these two variables are not included in a systematic analysis in this study.

## *Analyzing the Dataset*

There are two methods of analyzing the dataset. First, the statistical relationship between the separate explaining conditions and the occurrence of conflict will be established by simply comparing the (statistical) chance of conflict in the encounters where the condition is present with those where the condition is absent.

Second, the Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) of Ragin (1987) will be used. The QCA's aim is to offer explanations for an outcome, based on combinations of explaining conditions. QCA in this study attempts to explain the emergence of ethnic conflict by a combination of the explaining conditions. QCA is a comparative method, based on Boolean algebra and its binary logic. It compares all cases (ethno-territorial encounters), in which an outcome (ethno-territorial conflict) is either present or absent, and seeks combinations of conditions (independent variables) which can explain the outcome. QCA, in fact, combines many features of qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis. Independent variables in this method are (causal) conditions which are either absent or present, or in a more mathematical language they get either zero or one as value. The outcome in this method is the dependent variable that has to be explained and is either absent (=0) or present (=1). In the Boolean algebraic tradition of QCA, a present condition is represented by a capital letter and an absent condition by a lower case letter. In a QCA, a certain knowledge of the cases by the researcher is necessary. Contrary to variable-oriented quantitative methods, accession to reliable databases and statistical skills are not sufficient. Sometimes a researcher who applies Boolean analysis operates as a judge. He, indeed, should determine whether a causal condition is present or absent. But a Boolean judge, as well as every other good and capable judge, reaches his conclusions based on certain criteria. Appendix 2 describes how the method of QCA works.

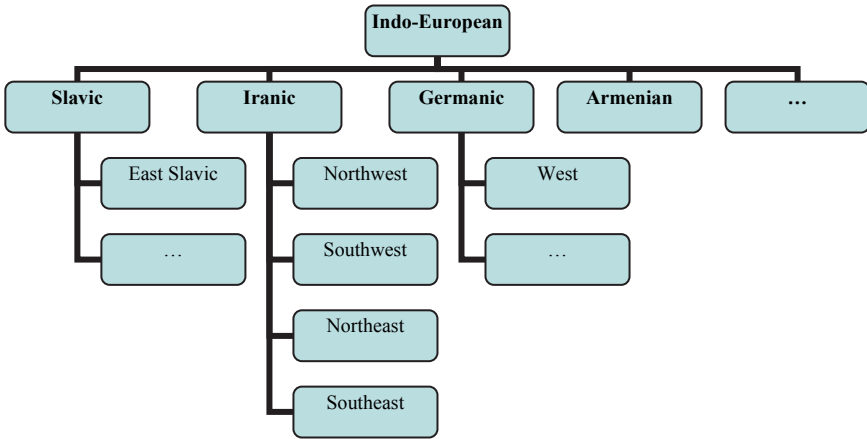


Figure 4.1. The Slavic, Iranian, Germanic, and Armenian family of languages belonging to the Indo-European family of languages. (Only Groups and Branches are named which are present in this study.)

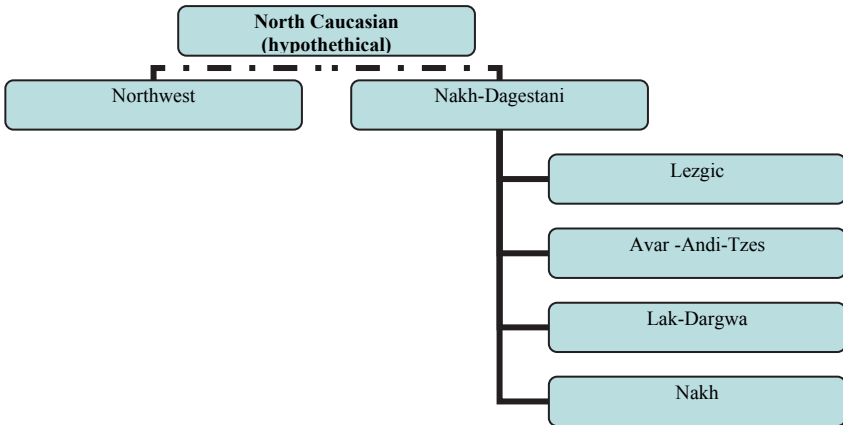
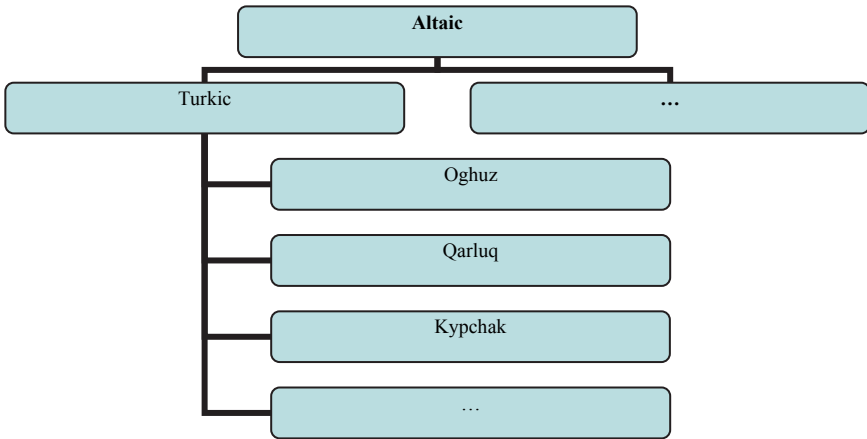


Figure 4.2. The Northwest Caucasian and Nakh-Dagestani families of languages.



*Figure 4.3. The Turkic languages, belonging to the Altaic family of the languages. (Only Groups and Branches are named which are present in this study.)*

## Chapter Five

# **5** Ethno-Territorial Groups and Encounters

The Caucasus, Central Asia, and Fereydan are all ethnically heterogeneous regions. However, not all ethnic groups can be labeled as ethno-territorial. In order to qualify as an ethno-territorial group, an ethnic group should live in a relatively compact area in which many largely ethnically homogenous villages, towns, or cities lie, and the ethnic group should be rooted. In other words, indigenous people, who have lived on a territory for generations and who have a historical claim of indigeneity on the land are ethno-territorial. In addition, when a people does not have a long historical presence in an area but is present in large numbers and inhabits many relatively homogeneous villages, towns, or cities in a contiguous area, they can also be labeled as ethno-territorial. The logic behind this is that because of their large number and ethnic concentration, they are able to lay potential claims on land. The criteria for identification of ethnic groups as ethno-territorial are described in the Chapter 4 (Methods).

Usually, ethno-territorial groups are peoples who get a color on maps of ethnic distribution. The making and correction of maps of ethnic distribution itself, however, requires time and skilled personnel, and in their absence certain reliable secondary sources. The best method for mapping ethnic distribution in an area is long-term fieldwork. However, due to the vast area covered by this study, this task is not possible in a limited time. I have relied on many sources in order to validate or correct and modify the available ethnic maps. In addition to my fieldwork, I have relied on information from other sources, such as other maps, books, statistical data, and documents, as well as information provided to me by experts and locals during my fieldworks in the regions. The best maps of ethnic distribution in the Caucasus and Central Asia so far have been from *Narody mira: Istoriko etnograficheskii spravochnik* [Peoples of the World: Historical and Ethnographic Directory], edited by the Soviet ethnologist, Bromley (1988), and those in *Atlas Ethnopoliticheskoi Istorii Kavkaza (1774–2004)* [Atlas of Ethnopolitical history of the Caucasus], by Artur Tsutsiev (2006). The maps of ethnic distribution in Central Asia



and the Caucasus made by the CIA also appear to be largely reliable and are in agreement with most other maps.<sup>81</sup> It appears that those maps were largely in accordance with Soviet-made maps (for example, those included in many Soviet-made encyclopedias), corresponded to the ethnic categories of the Soviet censuses, and implicitly took Soviet ethnic statistics for granted.

In this study, the last Soviet census (1989) is chosen as the main source of demographic data, and its ethnic categories are largely maintained. In a few cases, however, new ethnic categories are introduced, and in a small number of cases some ethnic categories are merged together. In general the Soviet categorization is maintained if the groups were smaller than 20,000. A good reason to separate groups from each other is when they differ in language, religion, or both. Having the same religion while speaking (nearly) the same language were reasons to merge the formerly separated groups. In addition, in all cases the subjective feelings of the ethnic population are regarded as a very important criterion. Furthermore, an attempt has been made to correct the numbers of many ethnic groups, as it appears that the numbers of non-titular ethnic groups in some republics were underestimated. Such a correction could potentially affect the results of the analysis. These operations, however, appear not to have significant effects on the results of the analysis of this study. In addition, arbitrariness in identifying ethno-territorial groups, and hence ethno-territorial encounters, has almost no effect on the Boolean analysis and only minor effects on the statistical analyses. The Boolean analysis in this study can only be distorted in very rare situations, which did not arise in this study. There is a large number of cases of ethno-territorial encounters, with identical scores on the variables. Therefore, despite the possible shortcomings in the identification of ethno-territorial groups and encounters and shortcomings in the modification of maps of ethnic distribution, the results of this study are highly reliable.

Intimately related to the type of ethno-geographical configuration is the number of ethno-territorial groups and encounters in an area. A large number of ethno-territorial groups and encounters in a relatively small area suggests a mosaic type of ethno-territorial configuration. In the larger region of Central Asia, there are relatively fewer ethno-territorial groups than in the smaller Caucasus. In Fereydan there is also a relatively large number of ethno-territorial groups, when one considers its small size. The same can be said about the number of ethno-territorial

---

<sup>81</sup> These maps are available online at the University of Texas Perry-Castañeda Library's Map Collection: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/> (Accessed 23 October 2011). On the website, it is stated that the maps there were produced by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, unless otherwise indicated.

encounters in each region. The map of the Caucasus, as well as that of Fereydan, is ethnically fragmented, as many ethno-territorial groups live there in relatively small pockets of ethnic concentration. On the other hand, in Central Asia relatively few(er) ethno-territorial groups (in comparison with the Caucasus) live over large areas. Aside from its southeastern part, the map of ethnic distribution in Central Asia is not as fragmented as is the case in the Caucasus and Fereydan. The mosaic type is the prevailing type of ethno-geographic configuration in the Caucasus, Fereydan, and the southeastern part of Central Asia, but not in other parts of Central Asia. The correction of the Soviet ethnic categories has decreased the number of ethno-territorial groups and encounters in the Caucasus. Nevertheless, the Caucasus still displays the mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration. The numbers of ethno-territorial encounters in the Caucasus, Central Asia, and Fereydan are presented in Table 5.1. The exact cases of ethno-territorial encounters are shown in Appendix 5, at the end of this book. This dataset (Appendix 5) specifies whether or not each encounter is situated in an area of the mosaic type of ethno-territorial configuration, measured by the criteria and instrument developed for that purpose (see the chapter on Methods, and Appendix 1). Except for a few minor cases, the maps of ethnic distribution represented in Chapter one (Figures 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4) show the location and encounters between the ethno-territorial groups in the region rather accurately.<sup>82</sup>

Many sources,<sup>83</sup> such as *The Red Book of the Peoples of The Russian Empire*, [further referred to as the *Red Book* (1991)],<sup>84</sup> *An Ethnohistorical Dictionary of the Russian and Soviet Empires*, [further referred to as *Ethnohistorical* (1994)],<sup>85</sup> *Natsional'nosti SSSR* (Kozlov

---

<sup>82</sup> These maps (Figures 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4) are based on the so-called CIA maps available online at the University of Texas Perry-Castañeda Library's Map Collection: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/>. I have modified and corrected them as much as possible, but there is still room for improvements.

<sup>83</sup> To name a few sources, other than those mentioned in the text, and different statistical services of different post-Soviet countries and different encyclopedias published in the former Soviet Union, the following sources were also consulted: Abazov (2007); Belozerov 2005; Bugay & Gonov (2004); Demoscope.ru; *Encyclopædia Iranica*; *Ethnologue* (2009, 16<sup>th</sup> edition); Isfahanportal.ir; MAR; Hovian (2001); Ilkhamov & Zhukova (eds) (2002); Minahan (2004); *Naseleniye Soyuznykh Respublik* [The Union Republics' Population] (1977); Sakaharov, Bugay, Kolodinkova, Mamraev & Sidorova (eds) (2006); Sepiani (1979); Sinelina (2006); Yunusov (2001; 2004; 2006); Wixman (1984).

<sup>84</sup> *The Red Book of the Peoples of The Russian Empire* is an encyclopedic book which lists and discusses the smallest ethnic groups of the former Soviet Union. Different entries are written by Margus Kolga, Igor Tõnurist, Lembit Vaba, and Juri Viikberg. It seems that its English online version, edited by Andrew Humphreys and Krista Mits, is a translation from the Estonian version published earlier. As its foreword is dated 1991, the source is referred to as *Red Book* 1991. As it is a source of encyclopedic nature, with a team of authors, the text of my study refers to the whole source rather than to the authors of each entry, followed by the name of the chapter. The names of the authors of each entry are not clearly mentioned, but can only be guessed from the initials placed after each entry. The links to different chapters are mentioned in the notes.

<sup>85</sup> *An Ethnohistorical Dictionary of the Russian and Soviet Empires* is an encyclopedic book which lists and discusses the ethnic groups of the former Soviet Union. It has short and long entries. The

1982), and *Atlas Etnopoliticheskoi Istorii Kavkaza* (Tsutsiev 2006), were consulted in order to determine whether a group is ethno-territorial or not, to obtain an accurate picture of their encounters, and to obtain information on their predominant native language and religion. All data about ethnic groups and their languages and religions are in accordance with these sources. In cases when these sources disagreed with each other, experts were consulted or an attempt was made to collect data from informants in and outside the field.

*Table 5.1. Ethno-territorial encounters in the Caucasus, Central Asia, and Fereydan*

<b>REGION/UNION REPUBLIC</b>	<b>NO.</b>
Armenia	5
Georgia	14
Azerbaijan	15
Russian Federation (the North Caucasian part)	46
<b>Total Caucasus</b>	<b>80</b>
Kazakhstan	11
Kyrgyzstan	7
Uzbekistan	9
Tajikistan	4
Turkmenistan	2
<b>Total Central Asia</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Total Fereydan</b>	<b>16</b>

Further on, this chapter discusses the ethno-territorial groups which form the basis of these ethno-territorial encounters. The ethno-territorial groups in each region and their dominant religion and language (as well as its linguistic affiliation) are listed in Tables 5.2, 5.3, and 5.4. There are 28, 13, and 7 ethno-territorial groups, respectively, in the Caucasus, Central Asia, and Fereydan (plus those ethno-territorial groups neighboring this region and forming ethno-territorial encounters with the Fereydani ethno-territorial groups). The attribution of either ethno-territorial or non-ethno-territorial label to most of the ethnic groups, especially the titular and larger ones, is evident. Below, however, a few cases are discussed which required clarification. In general, the ambiguities with regard to the ethno-territorial status of ethnic groups stems from three origins, and three questions should be answered: first, whether the Soviet census categories represented the (objective and subjective) reality on the ground; second, whether the numbers presented in the last Soviet census of 1989 were

---

book is edited by James. S. Olson, Lee Brigance Pappas, and Nicholas C. J. Pappas. The information in this book was collected and written by a team of authors. The text of my study refers to the whole source rather than to the authors of each entry, followed by the number of the page(s) on which the information can be found. I will provide in the footnotes the author of entries whenever they are mentioned below the entries in the dictionary.

correct; and third, whether each ethnic group living in those areas met the criteria of being an ethno-territorial group.

### ***Ethno-Territorial Groups in the Caucasus***

The ethnic landscape of the Caucasus is very fragmented. This ethnic fragmentation is higher in the North Caucasus, and notably in Dagestan, where many ethno-territorial groups live in a relatively small area. Twenty-eight ethno-territorial groups live in the Caucasus, rooted groups which form spatial ethnic concentrations and hence can be called ethno-territorial groups. Of these, no less than 20 live in the North Caucasus. (There are a few ethno-territorial groups who live both in the North and the South Caucasus.) Ethno-territorial groups in the Caucasus are listed in Table 5.2. Of the 129 ethno-territorial encounters, the Caucasus alone accounted for 80 ethno-territorial *encounters*.

As discussed earlier, the Soviet nationalities policies originated in the first years after the Revolution, but its territorial manifestations were largely consolidated in the later 1930s. The census categories, and hence the recognized ethnic groups, were also consolidated from the 1930s onwards and show a great deal of consistency (see e.g. Hirsch 1997; Hirsch 2005). In the last Soviet census (1989), some minor corrections were made and a few long-ignored ethnic categories were reintroduced. In this study, the last Soviet census (1989) is used to give an overview of ethnic diversity in the Caucasus. Only some minor corrections had to be made. These corrections related to the underestimation of non-titular groups in the Republic of Azerbaijan and also the issue of the Yezidis, as well as the Circassians and their Kypchak Turkic-speaking neighbors registered as Karachays and Balkars.

De Waal (2003: 133) quotes his communication with Valery Tishkov, in which he states: “[The Union Republics] behaved much more harshly to minorities than Moscow did. When the breakup [of the Soviet Union] is described all attention is on Moscow, but the biggest assimilators were Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Uzbekistan (Armenia less so only because it had fewer minorities.)” [brackets and parentheses are in the source]. In reality, the ethnic demographics of Georgia appeared not to be very distorted and the assimilations there appeared to be of a different nature than in the other two republics. Indeed, all Kartvelian groups and Tsova Tush were registered as Georgians. This, however, was not very strange because these people adhered to the Georgian Orthodox Church, were all bilingual (and many even mono-lingual) in Georgian proper, Kartuli, and used it as their literary language and identified themselves as Kartvelian, i.e. Georgian. It is, nevertheless, true that many of these so-

called ethnographic groups of Georgians have lost their language and adopted Georgian proper after they migrated to bigger cities such as Tbilisi. According to Pelkmans (2002; 2005; 2006), many Muslim Georgians in Adjara were Christianized, until recent years. My own observation shows that this process is still continuing. One notes that the Christian flag, with its crosses, is also included on the Adjaran flag, after the so-called Rose Revolution.<sup>86</sup> Although there is no maltreatment of fellow Muslim Georgians, the Georgian Orthodox Christianity is still perceived as a pillar of the Georgian national identity. Somewhat similarly, owing to similarity in religion and culture—and hence intermarriages—Armenians have assimilated a number of Assyrians, who were, nevertheless, not present in large numbers. The situation in Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan was very different and will be discussed in this chapter.

Using a wrong designation for an ethnic group is a form of inaccuracy and misrepresentation of ethnic categories. Such decisions are often politically motivated. The designation Azeri or Azerbaijani for the titular population of the Republic of Azerbaijan is not without its problems. The ethnonym Azerbaijani, for the predominantly Shi'ite Muslim, Turkic-speaking population of the South Caucasus, is a relatively modern designation (Tsutsiev 2006: 67). A 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian source describing the peoples of the Caucasus (Bronevskiy: 2004 [19<sup>th</sup> century]), does not use this ethnonym for this people. The area to the north of the river Araxes was not called Azerbaijan prior to 1918, unlike the region in northwestern Iran that has been called so since long ago (see Appendix 3). The areas to the north of the river Araxes were called Arran, Albania, Shirvan, Shervan, etc. (by different people at different times). Those areas were first called Azerbaijan during the briefly independent Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan, and the name was preserved after the Bolsheviks took over political power in that republic. Their choice was in agreement with the Cold War discourse, in which “North” (in the cases of Vietnam and Korea) was usually associated with communism and “South” with capitalism (Hunter 1997: 437). A similar Soviet naming trick was also applied in Moldavia and Ukraine (see Cowther 1997: 317).

However, despite the fact that this ethnic designation is not based on historically solid grounds, in this book the predominantly Shi'ite Muslim, Turkic-speaking people of the South Caucasus are called Azeris or Azerbaijanis. All in all, even if their territory's name has not been called Azerbaijan before, it is not too far-fetched to call its titular ethnic

---

<sup>86</sup> The Rose Revolution (2003) toppled Shevardnadze's presidency, after which Mikheil Saakashvili became president (2004).

group—who have cultural similarities with Azeris in Iran—Azeris or Azerbaijanis, for reasons of consistency with the (post)-Soviet era.

There is also controversy with regard to a few other ethnic groups in the Republic of Azerbaijan. The information offered by Yunusov (2001; 2006) suggests that the numbers of Talysh, Tats, Kurds, Georgians, and Lezgins were underestimated in the last Soviet census (and in that of the independent Republic of Azerbaijan), while the Shahdagh people, small ethnic groups who spoke languages and dialects related to Lezgian proper, were totally ignored as an ethnic group. Regarding the fact that the Shahdagh people were small ethnic groups who spoke languages related to Lezgian (proper), it was not very strange that they were registered as Lezgins (and a number also as Azeris). This was not detrimental to the situation of Lezgins, who claimed their numbers were underestimated in Azerbaijan. Indeed, many sources and generally many people in the Republic of Azerbaijan do agree that the number of minorities is underestimated there. They even proudly say: “Unlike in the *homogeneous Armenia*, many minorities live in Azerbaijan *without any problems*”. The truth is, however, that there were separatist or autonomist sentiments and movements among the Talysh (De Waal 2003: 215), Lezgins (Cornell 2001: 268-272; Cornell 2011: 75; Walker 2001: 339), and also to minor extent among the Avars (Walker 2001: 345), whose actions, nevertheless, do not qualify as ethno-territorial conflicts. Indeed, many members of minority groups do not feel quite content with their situation in the Republic of Azerbaijan and will voice their opposition towards their neglect in the mainly Turkic discourse of the republic’s affairs. The figures [i.e. higher population numbers claimed by many ethnic groups’ leaders] “are denied by the Azerbaijani government, but in private many Azeris acknowledge the fact that the Lezgin—and for that matter the Talysh or the Kurdish- population of Azerbaijan—is far higher than official figures” (Cornell 2001: 269).

The Tsarist era census data (in Yunusov 2004: 346-352, Tables 1-5) suggest that Yunusov (2001; 2006) is right about the underestimations. Although his estimations are still generally lower than most other estimations (e.g. *Ethnologue* 2009, 16<sup>th</sup> edition), the information provided by him enables us to come to estimations closer to the reality. Therefore, in this study, the numbers of these ethnic groups are corrected and, therefore, deviate from the numbers of the last Soviet census, and even somewhat from those in Yunusov 2001; 2006). Using the information offered in Yunusov (2006) and other sources, the following (rather modest) estimations can be made: Talysh (380,000–500,000), Tats (82,000), Kurds (41,000), Georgians (24,000), and Lezgins (260,000–410,000) (see Appendix 3).

In addition to the underestimation of numbers of ethnic population, the simple misrepresentation of ethnic categories was a practice in the Soviet Union. Besides the case of Azeris and somewhat dissimilar from it were the notable cases of Yezidis, Karachays and Balkars, and Kabardins, Adyghes and Cherkess, as well as Pamiris (in Central Asia), which will be discussed further in this chapter. Even though the division of cultural groups into clear-cut and mutually exclusive ethnic categories is an arbitrary process, this can be achieved by examining certain criteria consistently in all cases. The Soviet policy makers regarded language as the main denominator of ethnicity (see the discussion in Chapter 3), but even they were not consistent in that respect. In many cases the Soviet ethnic categorization was consistent with the pre-existing self-identification of the people involved or their identification by others. In many cases the Soviet policy makers succeeded in creating new ethnic categories which became accepted and socially internalized by the people involved (see e.g. the discussion on Uzbeks and Tajiks in Central Asia further in this chapter). Owing to the effects of the Soviet legacy on ethnic and national identification, this study attempts to maintain the Soviet categories as much as possible.<sup>87</sup> Nevertheless, there were notable cases in which the pre-existing self-identification was stronger, and people resisted the arbitrary categorization. These were usually cases when the policy makers disrespected the existing sense of belonging together of certain people, or religion had been ignored as an ethnic marker although the people involved had a sense of identity owing primarily to their religious orientation. Such a case is that of the Yezidis.

Yezidis are an ethno-territorial group in the Caucasus. They are a close-knit ethnic group who follow their own communal religion, Yezidism, internally known as *Sharafdin* [the religion of dignity], which can be simply described as a heterodox and syncretic religion. Although different experts differ on its origins and constituent elements, it shows resemblances to Zoroastrianism and pre-Zoroastrian Iranian religions, as well as heterodox Mithraism, Zurvanism, and elements from other religions such as Christianity and Islam (see e.g. Allison 2004; Arakelova 2001; Arakelova 2004; Arakelova 2010; Asatrian & Arakelova 2003; Asatrian & Arakelova 2004; Guest 1987; Guest 1993; Kreyenbroek 1995). As Arakelova (2010: 3) states:

The peculiarities of this religious system are not only limited to its syncretism, some elements of which could be traced in Sufism, a number

---

<sup>87</sup> The Soviet ethnic categories are maintained as much as possible. Only in cases in which two people differed in two ethnic markers—be it language and religion or some other more subtle, but subjectively more stressed marker—will the new ethnic category be considered.

of Extreme Shi'ite sects, substrate pre-Islamic beliefs, Gnosticism, etc., but they also include specific features solely characteristic of the Yezidi faith, which define the belonging of its followers to the Ezdikhana (Ēzdīxāna)—the esoteric community of the Yezidis. In this case when providing characteristics of the Yezidism in its current state, it is quite legitimate to speak of the unity of both the Yezidi (religious) identity and the Yezidi ethnicity. Since the given particular form of religion is practiced exclusively within the frames of the Yezidi community, then as much as the Yezidism as a religious system and, generally, that of a Weltanschauung, determines the definition of its bearers, the Yezidis, to the same extent it can be determined by virtue of the latter.

Yezidis were in 1989 (and still are) an ethno-territorial group in Armenia. The case of Yezidis requires special attention. They constitute the vast majority of the Kurdish-speakers in Armenia and Georgia. They have been present in the South Caucasus since the 18<sup>th</sup> century but came in larger numbers in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century from the Ottoman Empire (Komakhia 2005a; Szakonyi 2007; Asatryan (Asatrian) & Arakelova 2002). While the small community of (predominantly Shi'ite) Muslim (*Red Book* 1991: Kurds)<sup>88</sup> Kurds in Armenia resided mainly in the Azerbaijani enclaves, the Yezidis live(d) in ethnic enclaves and major urban centers in Armenia (Asatryan [Asatrian] & Arakelova 2002) as well as in major urban centers in Georgia (Komakhia 2005a). Yezidis were mentioned as a separate people in the Soviet census 1926 (*Red Book* 1991: Kurds), but after that date no Soviet censuses recognized the Yezidis as a separate category until 1989. Finally, in the 1989 census the Yezidi request was granted and the category Yezidi was introduced (Asatryan [Asatrian] & Arakelova 2002; IWPR 3 November 2006; Komakhia 2005a; Krikorian 2004), although they were apparently re-aggregated later in the all-Soviet census into the umbrella group of Kurds.<sup>89</sup> The result was that most Kurdish-speakers in Armenia identified themselves as Yezidis:

The Yezidi movement erupting in Armenia in 1988 appealed to the 3rd All Armenian Yezidi Assembly convened on 30 September 1989 (the two previous Assemblies occurred at the dawn of the Armenian Soviet Republic's history, in 1921 and 1923) to challenge the Government for the official recognition of their identity. As a result, the Yezidis were presented as a separate minority in the USSR population census of 1989. According to this very census, the total count of Yezidis in Armenia was

---

<sup>88</sup> *Red Book* (1991). Kurds. Available online: <http://www.eki.ee/books/redbook/kurds.shtml> (Accessed 7 April 2011)

<sup>89</sup> The Yezidi category seems to have been a question category, but in the published results of all-Soviet census they were regrouped as Kurds. I have seen no published results of the Soviet census of 1989 in which the Yezidis are mentioned separately. Professor Garnik Asatrian (Asatryan), however, provided me with an Armenian document in which Yezidis were included in the census. Possibly the reason behind introducing the Yezidi as a (question) category in the census of 1989 was not only to determine their actual numbers, but also to appease the Yezidi ethno-nationalists and ethnic enthusiasts.



52,700. Thus, of ca. 60,000 persons formerly classified among the Kurds of Armenia, 88% identified themselves as Yezidi. (Asatryan [Asatrian] & Arakelova 2002)

Nowadays, it seems that Yezidis have been successful in portraying themselves as an ethnic group. Independent Armenia recognizes the Yezidis as an ethnic group and calls them officially as such, and the Yezidis were included as a census category in 2002 in the first census of Georgia after its independence (*Georgia's State Department of Statistics* 2003: 111-113, Tables 21 and 22).

Although Yezidis, similar to Muslim Kurds, speak Kurmanji Kurdish language, they usually identify themselves as Yezidis rather than Kurds.<sup>90</sup> Although their religion makes them distinguishable from (other) Kurds, speaking the Kurmanji Kurdish language is a reason which advocates in favor of classifying them as Kurds. It seems to be fair to reach this conclusion in light of religious diversity (Sunni, Shi'ite, and heterodox sects such as Alevi, Yarsani, Ahl-e Haq, etc.) among different tribes of Kurds who, nevertheless, all identify as Kurds. There seems to be a division among Yezidis about their identity as either Yezidi or Kurds, even among the Yezidis in Armenia (Armenian News Network/ Groong 11 October 2006; IPWR 3 November 2006). Nevertheless, there seems to be political motives behind the self-identification of Yezidis either as Yezidi or as Kurds, since those who reject a separate Yezidi identity seem to be connected to Kurdish ethno-nationalist movements. Moreover, it seems that the main opposition which exists among Yezidis in Armenia is with regard to the name of their language; the recently invented name *Ezdiki* versus the traditionally accepted Kurmanji Kurdish (see the discussions in IPWR 3 November 2006; Armenian News Network/ Groong 2006, 11 October). Although *Ezdiki* is a pure Kurmanji Kurdish patois, the Yezidis are an ethno-religious group whose main orientation is religious (Arakelova 2001: 320-321; Arakelova 2010; Asatryan [Asatrian] & Arakelova 2002; WRITENET 2008: 1-6). Nonetheless, the fact that they speak Kurmanji Kurdish does not form a barrier to their not identifying primarily as Yezidis. "Today, the Yezidi Kurds are one of the

---

<sup>90</sup> I visited a Yezidi village, in Armenia (June 2008), where I had ample chance to (informally) interview and communicate with the Yezidi leader Aziz Tamoyan (the President of the National Union of Yezidis in Armenia) and other members of the Yezidi community in Armenia. They—and not only the leader(s) but also others—regarded themselves as a nation and did not want to be associated with Kurds. Asking them questions about the Kurds, one often got the response: "I do not know about the Kurds. You should ask them. We are not Kurds, but Yezidis".

It seems that this is also the position of Yezidis in Georgia. Once I went together with an Iranian colleague to Tbilisi's Old Town to eat some traditional Georgian food. Our Persian speech (and Georgian language of Iran full of Persian words) attracted the attention of the doorman, who asked us whether we were Iranians. Noticing that he had recognized some similarities in language, I guessed that he might be a native Kurmanji-speaker, something that he answered positively. I asked him, then, whether he was a Kurd. He did not say yes or no, but answered, "I am a Yezidi" (Tbilisi, June 2008).

rare [sic!] peoples whose religion plays an ethnically forming role” (Komakhia 2005a). “Yezidis in Armenia and Georgia are a distinctive ethnic group.... Because of their religious rites the Yezidis were despised by the rest of Kurds and lived in isolation” (*Red Book* 1991: Kurds) (see also Guest 1987; Guest 1993). There is a schism between them and Muslim Kurds owing to their religious affiliation. According to Asatryan (Asatryan) and Arakelova (2002):

The Yezidi identity, in the course of its multi-century development, has elaborated the two clearly recognizable components: the distinct delimitation from Islam religiously and from the Kurds ethnically. That may have been spurred by the permanent harassment of the Yezidis along with Christian communities (Armenians, Greeks, Assyrians) in the Ottoman Empire on the part of the Turks and the Kurds. The persecutions suffered by the Yezidis have been mentioned in many sources, including the messages by the Christian missionaries of the late Middle Ages reporting on the miserable life of the non-Muslim minorities. Resulting from these persecutions was the migration of the Yezidis to Transcaucasia in mid-19<sup>th</sup> and later – early 20<sup>th</sup> century to Armenia, and thence further to Georgia. Those two countries with a friendly Christian environment have become the homeland for this small nation.

The harassment and massacre of the Yezidis were factors which made Yezidis flee from the Ottoman Empire to the Transcaucasus (Szakonyi 2007: 5). Aziz Tamoyan speaks of genocide of Yezidis in the Ottoman Empire at the hands of Muslim Kurds and Turks (Armenian News Network/ Groong 2006, 11 October). According to the Yezidi leader Aziz Tamoyan (in Krikorian 2004): “Nobody has the right to say such things [that we are Kurds]. If we are Kurds, why were 300,000 Yezidis killed along with 1.5 million Armenians during the genocide [in Ottoman Turkey]? Why did the Turks and Kurds deport us? The Kurds are the enemies of both the Armenians and the Yezidis”. Their isolation from Muslim Kurds and their harassment owing to their religion (with its peak in their massacre in the Ottoman Empire) (*Red Book* 1991: Kurds; Szakonyi 2007: 5) are factors which contribute to their self-perception as a self-aware ethnic group.

Other cases which require attention are those of Kabardins, Adyghe, Cherkess, Karachays, Balkars, Chechens, and Ingush. The most notable cases are those of the first five. Circassians are an ethno-territorial group in the Caucasus, who were artificially divided into three different ethnic groups by the Soviet policy makers: Kabardin, Cherkes, and Adyghe peoples. The naming itself is quite remarkable, because the self-designation of all Circassian peoples is Adyghe, while Chrekes, Cherkez, or Circassain are names which are given to them by outsiders. The designation Cherkes, like Circassian, is derived from the Turkish and

Persian *Cherkez* or *Cherkes* as a designation for the Circassian people. There is a genuine native movement to recategorize the Circassian subgroups into one single Circassian ethno-national category (Goble 2010).

The Soviet categorization proceeded despite the linguistic and religious similarity and despite the historical and subjective feelings of belonging together. Before the Russo-Circassian Wars, during which a large number of Circassians were massacred or fled to the Ottoman Empire (see Allen & Muratoff 2011 [1953]; Brock 1956; Henze 1983; Henze 1992), Circassian tribes lived to the north of their Turkic-speaking Karachay and Balkar neighbors and in the hill-lands and lowlands of the northwestern Caucasus. They consisted of many different tribes. After the Russian-Circassian Wars (18<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> centuries), their numbers declined sharply and their settlements no longer formed a contiguous area. This and a *divide et impera* policy were probably the reasons which made the Soviet policy makers divide the Circassian ethnic group into three.

By the Circassian language is meant, in fact, the Circassian dialect continuum. The artificial, Soviet-made categories of Adyghe, Kabardin, and Cherkes do not correspond to these dialects. Adyghe is the self-designation of Circassian people, who call their language Adyghe. What in the Soviet Union was referred to as the Adyghe language was in fact a variant of many western Circassian dialects, while Kabardian was an eastern Circassian dialect (see e.g. Colarusso 1992; Kumakhov & Vamling 1998). What in the Soviet Union was called Cherkes was in fact the Besleney dialect of Circassian, a transitional dialect between Kabardian and western Circassian dialects but, nevertheless, closer to Kabardian.<sup>91</sup>

Also the Karachays and Balkars can be regrouped into one single ethno-territorial group. Karachays and Balkars speak closely related dialects of what can be regarded as the same language. Although Karachays and Balkar may have some Iranian Alan admixture, their language is a Turkic language of the Kypchak branch. Both ethnic groups are also Sunni Muslims. Karachays and Balkars are quite distinguishable from their Circassian neighbors. Although Minorities at Risks Project's data (MAR 2006a) claims that the ethnic group's cohesion is very low among Karachays and it is rather widely believed that ethno-nationalism is very low among Karachay and Balkars, they are easily distinguishable from Circassian peoples, who have historically a relatively great sense of collective identity (in any case since the Russian-Circassian Wars) and are quite recognizable as an ethnic group. In other words, the objective

---

<sup>91</sup> Personal communication by email with John Colarusso, an expert on Caucasian studies at Macmaster University (November 2008).

markers and denominators of ethnicity suggest that they are one ethnic group. The ethnic cohesion may be low, if one understands by ethnicity the artificial Soviet categories of Karachay and Balkar. Both Karachay and Balkar, as artificial ethnic groups, are composed of many subgroups. Therefore, the first level of identification of most Karachays and Balkars may be, indeed, these subgroups, and the second one may be these Turkic-speaking (Karachay/Balkar) subgroups as a whole (as opposed to their Circassian neighbors) (see MAR 2006a). Although there is certainly self-identification among the members of these tribes with their respective tribes and the Karachay-Balkar people as a whole, there is no such clear self-identification with the Soviet-made artificial ethnic categories. It seems that the reason behind this arbitrary ethnic categorization lay in the Soviet policy of *divide et impera*. This view is valid especially when one looks at the political map of the North Caucasus (see also Chapter 6).<sup>92</sup> According to the Minorities at Risk Project, discussing the situation of Karachays (MAR 2006a):

As part of the “divide and rule” strategy of the Communist rulers, two ethnically divided republics—Karachay-Cherkessia and Kabardino-Balkaria—were created in the 1920s. The Cherkess and Kabardins are closely related Circassian peoples living in the north of these republics, and the Karachay and Balkars are Turkic people living in the south. It would have been possible to create ethnically homogenous republics, but Stalin thought it better to create two divided republics<sup>93</sup> that would be easier to rule from Moscow. By doing so, he laid the foundations for ethnic strife that only began to assert itself with the first presidential elections in Karachay-Cherkessia in 1999.

The Ingush and Chechens are two ethno-territorial groups in the Caucasus. They are both the members of Vainakh ethnic groups, which means the Nakh-speaking branch of the speakers of Nakh-Dagestani-speaking ethnic groups. Despite their relationship they can best be categorized as two ethno-territorial groups. Vainakh roughly means “we the Nakh people”. The Vainakh people consist of the Chechens and Ingush in the North Caucasus. The Chechen, and Ingush, languages are closely related. Despite speaking a language belonging to the Nakh branch of Nakh-Dagestani family of languages, the Tsova Tush or Batsebi people in Georgia do not belong to the Vainakh group and are not considered as such by the Ingush and Chechens. The Ingush and Chechens are both Sunni Muslims. The Tsova Tush (Batsebi or Batsbi), on the other hand, are Orthodox Christians of the Georgian Orthodox Church and are either

---

<sup>92</sup> Svante E. Cornell (2001: 261-262) has a similar understanding of the Soviet policy regarding the Karachay/Balkars and Circassians.

<sup>93</sup> It is important to note that Karachayev-Cherkessia’s status was elevated to that of an autonomous republic only after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. It was an autonomous *oblast’* (AO) before.

bilingual in Tsova Tush and Georgian or monolingual in Georgian (*Red Book* 1991: Bats;<sup>94</sup> *Ethnologue* 2009, 16<sup>th</sup> edition).<sup>95</sup> In 1926, for example, only 7 individuals declared being Batsebi, while 2,459 still spoke their native language (Wixman 1984: 24). The Batsebi belong to the Georgian cultural domain and are culturally distinct from the Ingush and Chechens. They are being assimilated by Georgians and mostly identify themselves as Georgians. It is, therefore, appropriate to regard them as Georgians.<sup>96</sup>

Although a debate is ongoing about whether the Ingush and Chechens are two different ethnic groups or just two branches of the same ethnic group, their history and notably their recent political history shows that the Ingush and Chechens profile themselves clearly as two distinct ethnic groups. Generally it is argued that Chechens and Ingush are two distinct ethnic groups, not only due to the differences in their languages and histories but also because they have developed different political orientations over time, something which is tangible to date. “The Ingush and their eastern neighbors the Chechen are distinct ethnic groups with distinct languages, histories, and political identities” (Nichols 1997). According to The Minorities at Risks Project’s data (MAR 2006b; MAR 2006c), both Chechens and Ingush have strong internal ethnic cohesion, which indicates that the Chechens and Ingush consider themselves to be members of respectively the Chechen and the Ingush ethnic groups. It is often stated that the split between the Chechen and Ingush is of a strategic nature and lies in the fact that the Ingush, unlike the Chechens, needed Russia to deal with the Ossetians, hoping to get back the Prigorodny district from North Ossetia. Even though this argument may be true, it does not exclude the earlier evidence of the different political orientations between the Ingush and Chechens. The smaller Ingush, bordering the Christian Ossetians, who are traditionally favored by Russia, and the Chechens, who border the Muslim Dagestani peoples, would understandably develop different political orientations and strategies, and hence ethnic self-identification over the course of time.<sup>97</sup>

---

<sup>94</sup> *Red Book* (1991). Bats. Available online: <http://www.eki.ee/books/redbook/bats.shtml> (Accessed 23 December 2008).

<sup>95</sup> See *Ethnologue* report for Georgia. Available online: [http://www.ethnologue.org/show\\_country.asp?name=GE](http://www.ethnologue.org/show_country.asp?name=GE) (Accessed 23 December 2011).

<sup>96</sup> Although I have not met many members of the Tsova Tush community, those whom I met did identify themselves as Georgians. It should be said, however, that Tsova Tush, with a few thousand souls, are not a large group either. Estimates of their numbers are 3,420 in 2000 (*Ethnologue* 2009, 16<sup>th</sup> edition), and 2,500–3,000 in the 1960s. The fact that Batsebi’s (Tsova Tush) ethnic identification is a Georgian one is in accordance with the information given to me by Professor Merab Chukhua, a well-known Caucasologist. (29 November 2008, Malmö Sweden). In any case, as their numbers are lower than 20,000, I cannot modify the Soviet categorization.

<sup>97</sup> It is, nevertheless, important to note that the Ingush and Chechens might develop their political orientation in the opposite direction when other rationales are at stake, or when feelings of ethnic kinship get the upper hand.

The Avar and Georgian ethnic categories include subgroups who do not speak Georgian or Avar proper. Nevertheless, they speak related languages and dialects and confessed the same religion. In this book the Soviet categorizations of Avar and Georgians are maintained. One reason is that this book attempts to preserve the Soviet categorization when the potentially separate groups were smaller than 20,000 souls according to the last Soviet census (1989). Many small communities were registered as members of the Avar ethnic group. Although these small groups had and have their own languages and dialects, which were related but still distinct from Maarul (i.e. Avar proper), they were bilingual in it and in Avar proper, used Avar as their written language, and were registered as Avars.<sup>98</sup> In fact, they were politically represented as Avars in multi-ethnic Dagestan, where ethnic belonging was an important attribute in its (quasi-) consociational local politics. Similarly, Mingrelians, Svans, and a small group of Laz were registered as Georgians. These groups are often called ethnographic groups of Georgians, in Georgia. Mingrelians, Laz, and Svans spoke vernaculars related to Georgian proper but used Georgian proper as their written and literary language. Mingrelians and Svans were Georgian Orthodox Christians, and Laz were, similar to the Muslim Georgian Ajarians, predominantly Sunni Muslims. A lot of them, especially when they lived in areas other than their native areas, spoke Georgian proper as their vernacular. In these cases the Soviet categorization is also maintained, and these peoples are regarded as Georgians.

In brief, the Soviet categorization of Avars and Georgians is maintained and, in addition, the Karachays and Balkars are grouped together as a single Karachay/Balkar<sup>99</sup> ethnic group, and the Circassian subgroups of Kabardins, Adyghe, and Cherkes are grouped together as a single Circassian ethnic group. Although these mergers make the map of the Caucasus ethnically less heterogeneous, it still remains quite heterogeneous, and the ethno-geographic configuration still displays a mosaic type throughout the Caucasus.

Most ethnic groups in the Caucasus, except those who were migrants from other parts of the Soviet Union and lived mainly in the larger urban centers and scattered among larger ethnic groups there, have a long history of inhabitation in the Caucasus. Unlike Central Asia, the Caucasus was not a region to which many migrants from other parts of the Soviet Union arrived. It was not a receiver of deported peoples but itself

---

<sup>98</sup> Generally, multilingualism is very common in Dagestan. Most speakers of Nakh-Dagestani languages are trilingual in their native tongue, Russian, and another language spoken in Dagestan (see Grenoble 2010: 125-131 and 137-138).

<sup>99</sup> The designation Karachay/Balkar is preferred above "Mountain Tatar", because Tatar was a designation and served as an umbrella ethnonym for many different Muslim Turkic-speaking groups in Russia and the Soviet Union in general.

was a region from which many peoples were deported. These were the Ingush, Chechens Karachays and Balkars, and Meskhetians. Only Meskhetians were never formally rehabilitated and their re-settlement in their original living area in southern Georgia is not proceeding successfully.

*Table 5.2. List of ethno-territorial groups in the Caucasus and their main religions and languages*

<b>ETHNIC GROUP</b>	<b>MAIN RELIGION</b>	<b>MAIN LANGUAGE</b>	<b>LANGUAGE FAMILY</b>	<b>LANGUAGE BRANCH</b>
Abaza	Sunni Islam	Abaza	Northwest Caucasian	-
Abkhazian	Orthodox Christianity	Abkhaz	Northwest Caucasian	-
Agul	Sunni Islam	Agul	Nakh-Dagestani	Lezgcic
Armenian	Orthodox Christianity	Armenian	Armenian	-
Avar	Sunni Islam	Avar proper (Maarul)	Nakh-Dagestani	Avaro-Andi-Tsez
Azerbaijani	Shi'ite Islam	Azeri (Azerbaijani)	Turkic	Oghuz
Chechen	Sunni Islam	Chechen	Nakh-Dagestani	Nakh
Circassian	Sunni Islam	Circassian	Northwest Caucasian	-
Dargin	Sunni Islam	Dargin	Nakh-Dagestani	Lak-Dargwa
Georgian	Orthodox Christianity	Georgian (Kartuli)	Kartvelian	-
Greek	Orthodox Christianity	Urum (Anatolian Turkish)	Turkic	Oghuz
Ingush	Sunni Islam	Ingush	Nakh-Dagestani	Nakh
Karachay/Balkar	Sunni Islam	Karachay/Balkar	Turkic	Kypchak
Kumyk	Sunni Islam	Kumyk	Turkic	Kypchak
Kurd	Shi'ite Islam	Kurmanji Kurdish	Iranic	Northwestern
Lak	Sunni Islam	Lak	Nakh-Dagestani	Lak-Dargwa
Lezgin	Sunni Islam	Lezgin	Nakh-Dagestani	Lezgcic
Mountain Jew	Judaism	Tat	Iranic	Southwestern
Nogay	Sunni Islam	Nogay	Turkic	Kypchak
Ossetian	Orthodox Christianity	Ossetian	Iranic	Northeastern
Russian	Orthodox Christianity	Russian	Slavic	Eastern
Rutuls	Sunni Islam	Rutul	Nakh-Dagestani	Lezgcic
Tabasaran	Sunni Islam	Tabasaran	Nakh-Dagestani	Lezgcic
Talysh	Shi'ite Islam	Talysh	Iranic	Northwestern
Tat	Shi'ite Islam	Tat	Iranic	Southwestern
Tsakhur	Sunni Islam	Taskhur	Nakh-Dagestani	Lezgcic
Udin	Orthodox Christianity	Udin	Nakh-Dagestani	Lezgcic
Yezidi	Yezidism	Kurmanji Kurdish	Iranic	Northwestern

The ethnic groups who speak a language belonging to one of the Caucasian language families have historical roots in the region. Most of

those who speak Turkic, Armenian, and Iranic languages also have a long history of inhabitation in the Caucasus. Nevertheless, there are a few cases which need further discussion. The case of Yezidi Kurds and their inhabitation of the South Caucasus since the 18<sup>th</sup> century has already been discussed. Other cases which require attention are those of Russians, different groups of Jews, and Meskhetians.

Although Russians in the South Caucasus are relative newcomers and were concentrated mainly in the major urban centers there, they were present in the lowlands to the north of the Caucasus mountains as early as the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Gradually and after wars they expanded Russian authority more to the south of their original homeland and built new settlements (see. e.g. Bennigsen Broxup 1996: 1-11).

Most Jews in the former Soviet Union were urban dwellers and lived among other peoples. Russian-speaking Ashkenazi Jews resided mainly in the larger urban areas. The number of Jews was already dwindling before the collapse of the Soviet Union, owing to emigration which peaked in 1979 and the late 1980s (Gorlizki 1996: 447). The number of Georgian-speaking Jews in Georgia (mostly in the cities of Kutaisi and Tbilisi) was also dwindling. Another group of Jews in the Caucasus was the Mountain Jewish community, who were in material culture similar to their predominantly Muslim Caucasian neighbors. Dissimilar from other Jewish communities in the former Soviet Union, the Mountain Jews accounted for significant rural communities (see *Red Book* 1991: The Mountain Jews,<sup>100</sup> Saffron 1998). The Mountain Jews, recognized as a separate census category, are a group of Jews native in the Caucasus who speak the Tat language, a language close to archaic types of Persian. Similar to other Jewish groups, the number of Mountain Jews in the Caucasus was already dwindling before 1989. Nevertheless, there was a group of Mountain Jews in the Republic of Azerbaijan, who could be identified as an ethno-territorial group (see e.g. Saffron 1998).<sup>101</sup>

There is a question whether the Meskhetians are an ethnic group, are Turks, or are an umbrella group consisting of different ethnic groups, each with a different history of habitation in the Caucasus. Even though different theories exist about their origins, their own names and family history testify that they are of diverse ethnic origins and admixtures, mostly of Islamized (Sunni) Georgian origins (Baratashvili 1998: 5-9; Johanson 2001: 17), and that among them exist also many Kurds, Hemshin (Sunni Muslim Armenians), and Turkic-speaking groups

---

<sup>100</sup> *Red Book* (1991). Mountain Jews. Available online: [http://www.eki.ee/books/redbook/mountain\\_jews.shtml](http://www.eki.ee/books/redbook/mountain_jews.shtml) (Accessed 7 April 2011).

<sup>101</sup> It can be assumed that Mountain Jews were also an ethno-territorial group in Russia (notably in Dagestan) prior to their mass exodus from the region in the 1970s. On the other hand, it is not certain that they were an ethno-territorial group in the late 1990s, after their exodus from the independent Republic of Azerbaijan.



(Baratashvili 1998: 4-16).<sup>102</sup> They were deported in 1941, mainly to Central Asia, and were never formally rehabilitated. They were registered under the umbrella name Meskhetian. As there is still no mass resettlement of Meskhetians in their original living area, the problem of viewing them as a single ethno-territorial group or many different ones is somewhat premature.

Another ethno-territorial group in the Caucasus are the Greeks, often called Urums, who preserved their Christian Orthodox religion and spoke (and probably still speak) a Turkish dialect (Urum) as their language. Although, even in the earlier times, Greeks from the Byzantine Empire or even classical Greece may have moved to the Caucasus, the roots of the contemporary people are in Anatolia. Their migration to the Caucasus started in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Gachechiladze 1995: 93; Komakhia 2005b). These were Greeks who migrated to Georgia from the Ottoman Empire, from Gumushhane in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and from Erzurum Pashalik (the largest part) in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (1829–1830). The migration of Pontic Greeks proceeded later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Gachechiladze 1995: 93). The number of Greeks in Georgia exceeded 100,000 in 1989, forming a large majority of the population in the Tsalka area of central Georgia. All Ethno-territorial groups in the Caucasus are listed in Table 5.2.

## ***Ethno-Territorial Groups in Central Asia***

The largest ethno-territorial groups in Central Asia are the diverse ethnic groups who speak Iranian or Turkic languages. Slavic-speakers also formed large ethno-territorial groups in Central Asia, and there are a few other ethno-territorial groups speaking other languages. The ethno-territorial groups in Central Asia are listed in Table 5.3. In Central Asia, ethnic groups live spread over relatively large areas. Large areas remain uninhabited, while many areas (both urban and rural)<sup>103</sup> are ethnically heterogeneous. Ethnic groups also share large areas where none of them possess the overwhelming majority.<sup>104</sup> The ethnic heterogeneity in Central Asia is not only constituted by the indigenous ethnic groups of Central Asia but also by migrants from other parts of the former Soviet Union. Most migrants came to Central Asia in the Soviet period to work in

---

<sup>102</sup> Marat Baratashvili is the son of Latifshah Baratashvili, a Meskhetian leader pleading for their repatriation to Georgia. He is one of the founders of the Society of Georgian Muslims, KHSNA, and was the president of the NGO “Union of Georgian repatriants” at the time of the above-cited publication.

<sup>103</sup> In the reports about the minor (ethnic) clashes in Central Asia, it could be clearly read that the villages were quite ethnically heterogeneous. It should be noted that most non-titular, but non-Russian, rural populations live in southern parts of Kazakhstan.

<sup>104</sup> These are usually shown on maps by areas covered by stripes, composed of colors of two different ethnic groups, or are shown by the symbols of an ethnic group which lives dispersed over the area.

industry or agriculture. There are also migrants belonging to ethnic groups which were deported from the Caucasus and elsewhere in the 1940s. Although most of them left Central Asia after they were rehabilitated, small numbers, probably for the same reasons of livelihood and work, have stayed in Central Asia. Although there were deportees who were not rehabilitated (e.g. the Meskhetians), none of these deportees (except Germans) formed ethno-territorial groups in Central Asia (as they did not meet the criteria described in this study).

Kazakhstan, and to certain extent also Kyrgyzstan, were the main destinations for the deported “punished” peoples. The titular peoples in these two republics were nomadic and land was scarcely settled or cultivated. The land in those republics was also rich in minerals and had great economic potential. The reason behind these deportations was indeed to punish those peoples, but the choice for their destination seems to have been based on the Soviet desire to exploit these lands and probably also in order to create a model Soviet man (*homo Sovieticus*) in an ethnically diverse, and automatically Russianized, environment. This desire and the push towards its realization differed in different periods and among different Soviet leaders, but was generally not successful.

Russians and Ukrainians were two Slavic ethno-territorial groups in Central Asia. They (notably Russians, but also Ukrainians) were present in northern Kazakhstan as early as the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and their numbers grew rapidly in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century (see e.g. Abazov 2007: 16-17; Bohr & Crisp 1996: 385-387; Huskey 1997: 655-656; Olcott 1997: 550-551; Svanberg 1996: 319-32). Aside from northern Kazakhstan, also the Semirechye (Semirech’e) area located in the southeastern part of contemporary Kazakhstan and large parts of contemporary Kyrgyzstan (Zhetysu and Jetysuu in, respectively, the Kazakh and the Kyrgyz languages) was an area of early Russian Cossack, and later on peasant, settlement (see e.g. Bennigsen Broxup 1996: 5). The Kyrgyz and Kazakhs became largely sedentary in the 1920s and 1930a (Stalinist period), when they were forced to give up their nomadic life. As the Kyrgyz and Kazakhs were traditionally nomads, nearly all cities and towns in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, except those in the south, which were largely inhabited by Sarts (the sedentary ancestors of the modern-day Uzbeks and Tajiks), were founded by the Slavic migrants. After the abolition of serfdom (1861), Slavic migrants began to cultivate lands on the territory of what was later to be called Kazakhstan. Already by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, they had established more than 500 villages there (Svanberg 1996: 320). Some Russian nationalists, among whom Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn was internationally the most famous, argued that the northern parts of Kazakhstan were in fact southern Siberia and part of Russia (Zevelev 2009: 82).

In no union republics in the Caucasus and Central Asia, other than Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, had there been Slavs (Russians, and Ukrainians) present in such large concentrations prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The only two republics in which the percentage of Russians in the total population (1989) were higher than 20% were Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Russians (and Ukrainians) lived primarily in the urban centers in the republics of Central Asia and the Caucasus. There were, however, differences between Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan on the one hand, and other republics on the other. Only Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan had significant rural Russian populations. Only in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan was the proportion of Russians in the rural population relatively large and significant. The proportion of Russians in the rural population of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan (1989) were respectively 19.9% and 10.5% , as opposed to 0.5–1.9% elsewhere in Central Asia and the Caucasus (Grenoble 2010: 203, Table 30).<sup>105</sup> Only 70% and 77% of Russians in, respectively, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan were urban dwellers, while between 94% and 97% of Russians in other Central Asian republics were urban dwellers. Russians made up over 20% of the population in republican capitals in the Central Asian and most other republics and were usually confined to the largest cities of non-Russian republics (Aasland 1996: 479). Remarkably, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are also the only two republics in Central Asia (and the South Caucasus) that have retained Russian as an official (though not the state) language after their independence.

One of the “punished” ethnic groups that was deported to Kazakhstan were Germans, who settled largely in northern Kazakhstan, although they were present in Central Asia already before their deportation from the neighboring Volga German ASSR (abolished in 1941). The settlement of the first group of Germans in Central Asia goes back to the Tsarist era (1897). Their numbers grew gradually into significant numbers. Already in 1897 more than 7,000 Germans lived in the territory of modern-day Kazakhstan. Their number increased to more than 51,000 in 1926 (Diener 2006: 202). During the Second World War, the German ASSR on the Volga River was abolished by Stalin, and Germans were largely relocated to Central Asia, especially to the neighboring northern Kazakhstan in the so-called “special settlements”. The German ASSR on the Volga was never reestablished, and Germans were virtually forbidden to return to their towns there. It was also largely

---

<sup>105</sup> In Kyrgyzstan (August 2008), I asked where Russians live. People answered they are mostly in the cities, notably in Bishkek and in *Dolina* [valley] around Bishkek. By *Dolina* they meant the Chuy valley in northern Kyrgyzstan. This information was indeed consistent with most maps and other sources of information on Kyrgyzstan I had consulted until then. I myself was able to see rural Russian population there.

impossible because their homes had already been settled by others. They settled down, however, in the Central Asian towns (especially in northern Kazakhstan). During Gorbachev's era it was proposed to create a German autonomy within Kazakhstan. This idea was neither welcomed by the Kazakhs nor was largely supported by the German community (see Diener 2006: 202-204). Reportedly similar schemes of German autonomous territorial units were proposed in the 1960s but were denounced in 1967 (Hyman 1996: 467). Although they never formally formed territorial autonomies, Germans formed large concentrations in many northern areas of Kazakhstan, as well as in the neighboring Siberian territories of the Russian Federation (Klüter 1993). They also lived among other ethnic groups in the large urban centers of Kazakhstan and other Central Asian republics. There were about one million Germans in Kazakhstan in 1989, but their number reduced gradually in the 1990s after Kazakhstan's independence because of their emigration to Germany and elsewhere. The number of Germans in Kazakhstan is still quite significant (about 200,000) but has declined sharply in other Central Asian countries, especially in Tajikistan after the Tajikistani civil war began. As the integration of Central Asian Germans in Germany was problematic, Germany decided to invest in the German community in Kazakhstan, and as a result, German emigration from Kazakhstan is now reduced (Rezvani 2007: 167).

During the Second World War, there were many more deported ethnic groups in Central Asia. Most of their members, however, returned to their homelands after they were officially rehabilitated. Nowadays, members of these groups can be found in lesser numbers scattered all over Central Asia, especially in Kazakhstan. Among these groups were Poles, Chechens, Crimean Tatars, and Meskhetians. Meskhetians, who were mainly settled in the Fergana valley, were never formally rehabilitated. After the Meskhetian pogroms in 1990, most of the Meskhetians in Uzbekistan (Fergana Valley) left. Unlike the Germans, however, none of these newcomers in Central Asia can be recognized as ethno-territorial groups, according to the criteria discussed before.

Koreans are a group whose deportation to Central Asia goes back prior to the Second World War. Large number of Koreans from the Russian Far East were deported in 1937 to Kazakhstan and the rest of Central Asia. This was allegedly a "preventative measure", as they were suspected of being potential agents of the Japanese. Upon their arrival in Central Asia, they were predominantly rural and lived in the so-called "areas of compact living". Their pattern of settlement, however, changed later on. Although still visibly present, Koreans in Central Asia (the Koryo Saram), and their traditional areas of compact living, are nothing like they were before and they do not form an absolute majority of the

population even there (Diener 2006: 213; Kim 2004: 983-984; personal communication by email, with Professor German Kim, December 2008).<sup>106</sup> Therefore, they cannot be regarded as an ethno-territorial group as they do not meet the criteria for being such a group in this study.

In addition to these deportees, there are people in Central Asia originating from earlier waves of migration. Uyghurs and Dungans (Chinese Muslims) are natives of neighboring China who settled in Central Asia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Rezvani 2008b). Uyghur merchants have probably been present in China since long ago, but their migration and settlement to what was to be the Russian Empire's Semirechye area began in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. There were at that time more than 60 Uyghur settlements established, of which 45 still exist (Svanberg 1996: 325). Similarly, Dungans settled at that time in the Semirechye and Chuy area of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Dungans are related to the Hui people of China and have preserved their language and culture in Central Asia very well. Dungans in Central Asia prefer to live as segregated communities in relative seclusion from other peoples in all-Dungan villages (*Ethnohistorical* 1994: 203; Rezvani 2008b: 168-169). Both Uyghurs and Dungans meet the criteria for being ethno-territorial groups.

Two other ethnic groups in Central Asia are Kurds and Baluchis, two West-Iranic-speaking groups that can be found in southern Central Asia, mainly in Turkmenistan. Baluchis came to Khorasan and Turkmenistan in the 20<sup>th</sup> century searching for jobs and pastures and because of political turmoil. Although hypothetically possible, the lack of demographic data about them in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and their small number in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century suggest that there were most probably no Baluchi communities living in Turkmenistan prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. By 1917 their number was fewer than a thousand. Their number grew, however, between 1923 and 1928 (*Ethnohistorical* 1994: 102;<sup>107</sup> Wixman 1984: 25-26).

---

<sup>106</sup> I have contacted German Kim, a Kazakhstani Korean professor, who was working in Hokkaido University (Japan) at the time of writing. As a response to my question regarding the areas of settlement of Koreans in Central Asia, he stated: "As I have mentioned in my studies there are no any towns, cities, villages in Central Asia with a majoring share of Korean population. However, there are some places, residential areas with more or less visible Koreans. In Kazakhstan: the cities Usttobe and Almaty and Bakhbakty village. In Uzbekistan: Bektimir, Bekabad, former Politotdel Kolkhoz. In Kyrgyzstan: Bishkek. In Turkmenistan and Tajikistan: a small number group of Koreans are living in capitals" (communication by email, December 2008). It is notable that in Central Asia not only cities and large towns, but also small towns and villages and even Kolkhozes [collective farms] could be multi-ethnic. Also Professor Atabaki, Professor of Social History of the Middle East and Central Asia at the University of Leiden and Senior Research Fellow at the International Institute of Social History, who could localize Koreans as a dispersed ethnic group in his book (Atabaki & Versteeg 1994: 8), stated that he does not know any relatively homogeneous Korean settlements in Central Asia. He also noted that ethnicity has not been a criterion in the formation of Kolkhozes. (Communication by email, December 2008).

<sup>107</sup> The entry on Baluchis is written by Ross Marlay.

Unlike Baluchis, Kurds in Central Asia have rather deep roots in the regional history and are an ethno-territorial group in Turkmenistan. These so-called Khorasani Kurds are distinct from the Kurdish migrants and deportees from the Caucasus. The Kurdish migrants from the Caucasus are not a single group. Shi'ite Kurds came there mainly from Azerbaijan and Armenia. There are also Sunni Kurds, an unknown number of whom were registered under the umbrella name of Meskehtians. The Caucasian Kurds in Central Asia live scattered in Central Asia, mainly in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The Kurds in Turkmenistan are Khorasani Kurds and are related to those in the adjacent Iranian region of Khorasan. Three Iranian *ostans* still bear the name Khorasan. Khorasan, however, is the name of a rather large area, which also encompassed modern-day Turkmenistan. Khorasani Kurds are those Shi'ite Kurmanji-speaking Kurds, originally from eastern Anatolia, who were settled in Khorasan in the 17<sup>th</sup> century by Shah Abbas I in order to defend this region from hostile Sunni forces (Afghans, Uzbeks, and to some extent the Turkmens). They live in northeastern Iran, and in southern Turkmenistan<sup>108</sup> along the Iranian border (see *Ethnohistorical* 1994: 409;<sup>109</sup> Madih 2007;<sup>110</sup> Shekofteh 2008). Soviet statistics probably underestimated, or perhaps even intentionally obscured, the real number of these Kurds in Turkmenistan. It is difficult to give a reliable estimation of their numbers, especially because they may be confused with the Persian-speakers of Turkmenistan (often called Tats, but distinct from the Tats in the Caucasus), who are also Shi'ite Muslims. Also, they may hide their identity and identify themselves (for materialistic benefit) with the titular nation. The correction of their numbers, however, would not drastically change the ethnic picture in Central Asia. Kurds meet the criteria for being ethno-territorial. Baluchis, on the other hand, do not.

Although many (Ashkenazi) Jews arrived later from elsewhere, Central Asia also has a native Jewish community: the Bukharan Jews, who lived mainly in the city of Bukhara. Their presence in the region is

---

<sup>108</sup> A main Kurdish town in southern Turkmenistan is the town of Firoozeh (Firuze, Firuza, and other spellings are also used), which was under Tsarist Russian and Soviet control since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century but was disputed by Iran. Iranian governments had always protested the occupation of the city of Firoozeh by Russians and claimed it back. Finally, after the independence of Turkmenistan, Iran silently accepted Firoozeh as part of Turkmenistan's territory (see Aghai Diba 2008).

<sup>109</sup> The entry on Kurds is written by Ross Marlay.

<sup>110</sup> I met Abbas-Ali Madih, then the mayor of the Iranian city of Neyshabur, at a conference in Yerevan (June 2008). He was there to take part in a conference and present the statue of the Persian poet *Attar Neyshaburi* to Yerevan's Arya University. Although originally from Yazd in central Iran, he knows a lot about the Khorasani Kurds owing to his familial relationships. He also had an interesting hypothesis about the tolerance of people living in the Iranian desert and its outskirts, where his native city of Yazd is located, towards the Zoroastrian minority there, something which was not very visible towards the Yezidis in the Ottoman Empire. He said that the harsh arid climate of Yazd compels people to be tolerant and coexist peacefully. Although it is not my hypothesis, his logic is clear: conflict makes everyone a loser.

believed to date to the Achaemenid Persian Empire's era, when Cyrus the Great liberated them from their Babylonian captivity (Abazov 2007: 75). The Jews, whether the Ashkenazi or the Bukharan Jews, did not form an ethno-territorial group. As elsewhere in the former Soviet Union, the number of Jews was dwindling in Central Asia, and the few remainders were urban dwellers living among other ethnic groups.

Uzbekistan was one of the republics, next to the Republic of Azerbaijan, in which the number of non-titulars were underestimated. Unlike the case of Azerbaijan, this is not only a statistical matter. The Uzbek ethnic group itself is very diverse. A part is comprised of the sedentary Sarts, who were very often bi-lingual but among whom Persian language was more dominant than diverse Turkic languages. The other groups which were registered as Uzbeks during the Soviet era were the nomadic groups, who spoke Turkic but, nevertheless, were not homogeneous (Abazov 2007: 15).<sup>111</sup>

The contemporary standard Uzbek language is a newer version of the earlier Jaghatay (or Chaghatay) Turkic language. Nevertheless, there are other languages distinct from this language, spoken by the people who are registered and often also identify as Uzbeks. In some areas the local tongues reveal some Kypchak Turkic features similar to the languages of Kyrgyz and Kazakhs, while in Khorezmia the local tongue reveals Oghuz features, similar to the Turkmen language. According to E. Umarov (2002: 308-311), in the *Etnicheskiy Atlas Uzbekistana* [Ethnic Atlas of Uzbekistan] (Ilkhamov & Zhukova 2002), next to the Karluk dialects of Uzbek, upon the basis of which the Standard Uzbek language is defined, there exist also Kypchak and Oghuz dialects of Uzbek. As Karluk, Kypchak, and Oghuz are different branches of Turkic, not all these dialects, or more precisely, languages, belong logically to the same language. Of course, multilingual nations do exist, but it is impossible for a language to belong to several linguistic branches at the same time. It is, nevertheless, not far-fetched to view these Turkic varieties and the Tajik/Persian language in Uzbekistan (and Tajikistan) as a *Sprachbund*—that is, a collection of (genealogically unrelated) languages and dialects which, owing to geographical proximity, show many similar features.

Uzbekistan is one of the very rare cases in the former Soviet Union in which nation-building has proceeded mainly on a territorial basis rather than on an ethno-linguistic one. First a nation was defined, and then an official language was imposed upon it. It is understandable that the Uzbekistani population, at least the sedentary/ sedentarized population,

---

<sup>111</sup> According to Rafis Abazov (2007: 15), the Uzbek nation was formed by two groups: the sedentary population, which was Persian-speaking, and the nomadic pastoralist population, which was Turkic. Nevertheless, it is more likely that Turkic-speaking people also lived in the cities, where the Persian language was the dominant colloquial and literary language.

most of whom were known as Sarts, can be defined as a single nation. They are culturally very similar, and they may feel they belong to the same nation. Nevertheless, it is fair to acknowledge the multilingualism of this nation. As Abazov (2007: 15) puts it:

The Uzbek nation was formed by two quite different groups of people. The first group was the Persian-speaking settled population of Bukhara, Samarqand, and other large and small cities and towns in the valleys of the Syr Darya, the Amu Darya, and other rivers. The second group was the Turkic-speaking pastoral-nomadic population that lived largely to the north of the settled oases but, like all other Turks, traced their ancestry to the major Turkic tribal confederations.

In the central part of Uzbekistan, notably in the cities of Samarkand and Bukhara, the main language is Tajik/Persian. Many Tajik/Persian-speakers were registered as Uzbeks in the censuses and in their internal passports. Many Tajik/Persian-speakers may identify themselves as Tajiks, but many others as Uzbeks.<sup>112</sup> According to Namoz Hotamov (2001: 271), a self-aware ethnic Tajik historian from Uzbekistan registered as an Uzbek, there are three categories of people in Uzbekistan who could be registered as Tajiks but are, nevertheless, registered as Uzbeks. The first group consists of self-aware Tajiks. The second group consists of those who do not care much about their background and are often enrolled in political positions in Uzbekistan. They speak the Tajik language whenever they can or have to but at other times they identify with the Uzbek nation. The third group are those who are already assimilated into Uzbeks. It is fair to regard the first group as Tajiks and the third groups as Uzbeks. It is not very clear how to regard the second group. Many are culturally Tajiks but politically Uzbeks, in that they identify themselves with the Uzbek nation. The picture is even more complex, because many in Uzbekistan belong to the families of mixed marriages, and many whose origins goes back to the nomadic Turkic tribes speak both Tajik and Uzbek. Although there are higher estimates of the number of Tajiks in Uzbekistan, Hotamov's (2001: 264) numbers are closer to the reality. While the official 1989 Soviet census counts the number of Tajiks in Uzbekistan at slightly less than one million, according to Hotamov (based on many documents and insider information) the number of (self-aware) Tajiks in Uzbekistan could be between 3 and 3.5 million (see also Appendix 4).

---

<sup>112</sup> In 2008 in Kyrgyzstan I had communication about this with a scholar from Uzbekistan. Calling himself an Uzbek, he said to me in Persian that the language in those (central) parts of Uzbekistan is Tajik or Persian, but many would call themselves Uzbeks. He himself added that his grandmother was a Tajik from Bukhara. Indeed, Tajiks and Uzbeks, owing to similarities in culture and religion, often do intermarry. In my communications with them, many Tajiks and Uzbeks acknowledged having ancestors or family members other than the "nationality" they are registered as.



Pamiris, also called Ismailis and Badakhshanis, are an ethnic group that did not appear in the Soviet censuses since 1939. In the Soviet censuses prior to 1939, different Pamiri groups were listed separately, but after that date they were counted as Tajiks. Whereas in the literature they are called Mountain Tajiks, Tajiks themselves call Pamiris people of Pomir or Shughnis, the name of the most populous subgroup (*Red Book* 1991: The Peoples of the Pamirs).<sup>113</sup> Shughni is the largest Pamiri language spoken in Gorno-Badakhshan, and even though not a literary language it serves as a lingua franca in Gorno-Badakhshan among the Pamiris.<sup>114</sup> The categorization of the Pamiris as Tajik is very problematic. Unlike Tajiks who speak Tajik (a Persian dialect) belonging to the Southwestern branch of the Iranian languages, Pamiris speak East-Iranic (Southeastern branch) languages and dialects, which are unintelligible to Tajiks or Persians. In addition, unlike Tajiks, who are Sunni Muslims, Pamiris are Ismailis (a Shi'ite Muslim sect) that, unlike the Twelvers and Alevis, do not believe in twelve Imams [saints] but in seven Imams. Their speech, and notably their Ismaili faith in a predominantly Sunni environment, are sources of distinction and identity for them (see e.g. Dodikhodeva 2005; Monogarova 1972). Investments of the Ismaili Agha Khan foundation in this region is increasing and will continue to increase the Ismaili identity among the Pamiris.<sup>115</sup> It seems that the Soviet policy makers did regard them silently as a distinct ethnic group, because the Mountainous Badakhshan (Gorno-Badakhshan) province, where the Ismaili Pamiris made up an absolute majority of the population, was offered autonomous status (The Gorno-Badakhshan AO). Nowhere else in the Soviet Union were autonomies offered based on environment and habitats. Nowhere else in the Soviet Union were mountainous “subgroups of an ethnic group” offered autonomy. The creation of the non-ethnic autonomous units of Adjaran ASSR and the Nakhichevan ASSR were based on geopolitical motives: on the agreements between the Soviet

---

<sup>113</sup> *Red Book* (1991). The Peoples of the Pamirs. Available online: [http://www.eki.ee/books/redbook/pamir\\_peoples.shtml](http://www.eki.ee/books/redbook/pamir_peoples.shtml) (Accessed 10 December 2008)

<sup>114</sup> *Red Book* (1991). The Shughnis. Available online: <http://www.eki.ee/books/redbook/shughnis.shtml> (Accessed 10 December 2008)

<sup>115</sup> Many times Pamiri informants told me that although they are self-aware of their Ismaili identity, they do not appreciate it when the Indian Ismailis come to Gorno-Badakhshan and tell them what to do. However, as a result even this attitude has increased their Ismaili awareness, because of the fact that they try to keep their local Ismaili traditions. One of the projects of the Agha Khan foundation was the establishment of the University of Central Asia. The Agha Khan foundation also offers scholarship for research. All indications are that the Pamiri identity is strong in Gorno-Badakhshan. Once (August 2008) I met a young Kyrgyz man from Gorno-Badakhshan. He was a Sunni Muslim and spoke Kyrgyz and Tajik as well as some Pamiri languages, and he informed me that the Sunni Kyrgyz have a good relationship with the Ismaili Pamiris and largely also speak the Pamiri languages and dialects. I visited many Pamiris, in Central Asia and outside (2006–2008). All of them identified themselves as Ismaili Pamiris. The Tajik informants I met do not deny that the Pamiris are a distinct group, but they add to it that in Gorno-Badakhshan there live not only Pamiris, but also Tajiks.

Union and Turkey as well as on such motives as *divide et impera*.

Table 5.3. *Ethno-territorial groups in Central Asia and their main religions and languages*

ETHNIC GROUP	MAIN RELIGION	MAIN LANGUAGE	LANGUAGE FAMILY	LANGUAGE BRANCH
Dungan	Sunni Islam	Dungan Chinese	Sinic	(Mandarin) Hui
German	Western (mainly Protestant) Christianity	German	Germanic	Western
Karakalpak	Sunni Islam	Karakalpak	Turkic	Kypchak
Kazakh	Sunni Islam	Kazakh	Turkic	Kypchak
Kurd	Shi'ite Islam	Kurmanji Kurdish	Iranic	Northwestern
Kyrgyz	Sunni Islam	Kyrgyz	Turkic	Kypchak
Pamiri	Shi'ite Islam	Mainly Shughnani (with other Pamiri languages)	Iranic	Southeastern
Russian	Orthodox Christianity	Russian	Slavic	Eastern
Tajiks	Sunni Islam	Tajiks	Iranic	Southwestern
Turkmen	Sunni Islam	Turkmen	Turkic	Oghuz
Ukrainian	Orthodox Christianity	Ukrainian	Slavic	Eastern
Uyghur	Sunni Islam	Uyghur	Turkic	Karluk
Uzbek	Sunni Islam	Uzbeks	Turkic	Karluk

Although there are no precise data about the number of Pamiris, there have been some studies on them and certain estimations of their numbers are available. According to *Ethnologue* (2009, 16<sup>th</sup> edition)<sup>116</sup> (based on figures from 1975 until 1994), there were 98,000 Pamiris. According to Atabaki and Versteeg (1994: 80), there were approximately 152,000 Pamiris living in Tajikistan in 1989.<sup>117</sup> Hence, the Pamiris made up approximately between 61% and 95% of Gorno-Badakhshan's total population (160,900) in 1989.<sup>118</sup> The Tajik-speaking Vanji people in Gorno-Badakhshan were also Ismailis and spoke a Pamiri language before being incorporated into the Emirate of Bukhara and converted to Sunni Islam. The addition of their number to the Pamiris results in slightly higher numbers of Pamiris but does not affect the general picture significantly. Pamiris in Tajikistan meet all the criteria of being an ethno-

<sup>116</sup>See *Ethnologue* report for Tajikistan. Available online: [http://www.ethnologue.org/show\\_country.asp?name=TJ](http://www.ethnologue.org/show_country.asp?name=TJ) (Accessed 23 December 2011).

<sup>117</sup> According to Atabaki & Versteeg (1994: 80), 3% of the Tajikistan's population in 1989 were Pamiris. According to the Soviet census, the population of Tajikistan was 5,092,603 in 1989. A calculation of the number of Pamiris results in 152,778.

<sup>118</sup> As it appears from the results of fieldwork studies among Pamiris in Gorno-Badakhshan, the lower percentages apparently count only Pamiris inside the Gorno-Badakhshan AO. Other estimations, however, may also include Pamiris living outside the Gorno-Badakhshan AO.

territorial group.<sup>119</sup> All Ethno-territorial groups in Central Asia are listed in Table 5.3.

### ***Ethno-Territorial Groups in Fereydan***

Most ethnic groups in Fereydan have a long history of habitation and are in that sense ethno-territorial. Armenians and Georgians are relative newcomers, but even they have a long record of habitation in Fereydan. Armenians and Georgians lived in the territory of modern-day Iran even prior to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, but their mass settlement in Iran and specifically in Fereydan occurred in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (see e.g. Bournoutian 1998; Chaqueri 1998; Gregorian 1998; Hart 1998 [1932]; Hovian 2001; Muliani 2000; Rahimi 2000; Rezvani 2008a; Rezvani 2009a; Rezvani 2009b; Sepiani 1979). They have put their mark on the regional Fereydani history. Armenians, for example, have old churches in Fereydan, and Georgians fought against Afghan invaders there. Unless otherwise specified and certainly in this chapter, Fereydan in this book refers to the region of Greater Fereydan, including the Shahrestan-e Khwansar. This region consist of the *shahrestans* of Fereydan (proper), Fereydunshahr, Chadegan, and Khwansar. All these *shahrestans* belong to the Ostan-e Esfahan. Occupying the western part of that *ostan*, Fereydan is a medium-sized Iranian region.

Fereydan is in many aspects a model Iranian region, scoring an average in most aspects. It is neither rich nor poor, is similar to most other predominantly rural regions in Iran, not densely populated, and has produced many emigrants who left Fereydan searching for jobs. The religious, linguistic, and hence ethnic maps of Fereydan, however, are more heterogeneous than most other Iranian regions.

Today, Shi'ite Islam is the largest religion in Iran. Then follows Sunni Islam. Other religions are adhered to by relatively small numbers of people. Estimates of the proportions of Shi'ites, Sunnis, and adherents to

---

<sup>119</sup> The case of Pamiris is very different from the small groups of people who speak the Yaghnobi language in the Yaghnob Valley and are registered as Tajiks. They are bilingual in Tajik and Yaghnobi, a ortheast Iranic language and a remnant of Soghdian, the ancient language of Tajik's ancestors. They are a very small group, perhaps less than 3,000 souls, and decreasing in number. Similar to other Tajiks, Yaghnobi Tajiks are Sunni Muslims. In addition, emigration from their valley contributes even more to their assimilation into and identification with the mainstream ethnic Tajik people. While the Pamiris have a strong sense of Pamiri Ismaili identity, the Yaghnobis can best be defined as local Tajiks of the Yaghnob area. (A similar case is, perhaps, that of the Frisians in the Netherlands. They can be described as the local Dutch, despite their different language.) There are, however, contradictory claims. Even if Yaghnobis' peculiarities were enough reason to regard them as a distinct ethnic group, they could not be regarded as an ethno-territorial group in this study because, as a rule, the Soviet ethnic categories are maintained in this study as long as they are smaller than 20,000 persons.

other religions in Iran are respectively 89%, 9%, and 2%, according to the CIA (2009),<sup>120</sup> and 90%, 8%, and 2%, according to the Library of Congress Federal Research Division (2008: 5). My own estimates, based on the aforementioned method, also come close to these figures. Although the Shi'ite group is undeniably the largest religious group in Fereydan, the “remaining category” in Fereydan has been historically more prominent than in most other parts of Iran.

The most notable religious minority group in Fereydan are Armenians, who are Orthodox Christians. The overwhelming majority of Christians (about 300,000 in 2008)<sup>121</sup> in Iran are Armenians. The other Christian groups (for example, Assyrians) are smaller communities. The number of Armenians in Iran can be estimated at over 250,000.

There are many Christian churches in the Armenian villages of Fereydan. Regarding the date of construction of these churches and comparing them with those in Esfahan, one can conclude that Fereydan is one of the oldest Armenian centers in the central part of Iran. According to Vartan Gregorian (1998: 39-41), the Armenian settlement in Esfahan took place in the period 1603–1605, and the first Armenian church in Esfahan was built in 1606. According to Hovian (2001: 141-142), Armenians settled in Esfahan in 1605 and the first Armenian church in Esfahan was built in 1607. According to him, the oldest church in Fereydan, the Holy Hohanes (St. John) Church in the village of Upper Khoysan, dates not much later and was built in 1610 (Hovian 2001: 157). From the list of the Armenian churches in Iran offered by Hovian (2001: 156-157), it can be concluded that after Western Azerbaijan, no other predominantly rural areas in Iran have such a high concentration of (old) Armenian churches. The Holy Ghukas (St. Lucas) church in Zarne (Boloran) is among the oldest historical buildings in Fereydan (Isfahanportal.ir 2007a). The locals and people from Esfahan report that this church is visited during certain Armenian religious ceremonies by large numbers of Armenians from outside Fereydan, notably from Esfahan, and that the ceremonies and services are often broadcast by the Ostan-e Esfahan TV channel.<sup>122</sup>

Sepiani (1979) identified 17 Armenian villages and one mixed Armenian/Turkic-speaking village in Fereydan. Many villages which were identified by Sepiani (1979) as Armenian do not have an Armenian majority of permanent population any more.<sup>123</sup> Portal-e Ostan-e Esfahan,

---

<sup>120</sup> Although below the page was stated that it was last updated on 5 February 2009, the information offered is usually older.

<sup>121</sup> According to the Library of Congress Federal Research Division (2008), the number of Christians in Iran could be estimated at 300,000, and the number has been decreasing rather rapidly since the 2000s. Therefore, it seems that the number of Christians was larger in the late 1980s or early 1990s.

<sup>122</sup> Information obtained from locals and people from Esfahan (2000–2008).

<sup>123</sup> Even though many (former) Armenian villages are deserted, Zarne (Boloran) still remains

the website of Ostan-e Esfahan (Isfahanportal.ir 2007a), mentions 11 Armenian villages in Fereydan.<sup>124</sup> In 1856, Fereydan, with its 21 Armenian villages, was the second-largest rural Iranian Armenian center in Iran, after the region of Western Azerbaijan (Hovian 2001: 210). Of 70,000 Armenians in Iran in 1932 (or shortly before that date) approximately 13,000 lived in the rural areas around Esfahan (Hart 1998: 371). Fereydan is the largest rural Armenian area around Esfahan and, therefore, it can be assumed that most of those 13,000 persons were Fereydani Armenians. If we assume that the ratio of Fereydani Armenians in the total population of Iranian Armenians (>18.5%) has been stable over time, the number of Armenians with Fereydani Armenian origin can be estimated at over 45,000. Nevertheless, not all these persons are (permanent) inhabitants of Fereydan.<sup>125</sup>

Although the case of Armenians is more prominent, emigration from rural Fereydan, especially by the youth, is a common feature among all ethnic groups of Fereydan. This is somewhat similar to the case of the mountainous Caucasus (see Eldarov et al. 2007; Eldarov 2008; RREC 2005: 46; WRITENET 1995).

There have been historically notable communities of Jews and Bahais in Greater Fereydan. Khwansar has traditionally been one of the Jewish centers of Iran. Rabbi Davoudi, the former spiritual leader of Iranian Jews, was from Khwansar (*Khabarnameh-ye Khwansar* 2007). Similar to the number of Jews, the number of Bahais is also dwindling. Since Bahaism is a non-recognized religion in Iran, many Bahais left Iran after the Islamic Revolution (1979). Those who remained are concentrated in large urban areas such as Tehran, Esfahan, and Shiraz, where they can live in relatively more anonymity. Although it is hypothetically possible that there still live Bahais in Fereydan who deny their religious affiliation in public, it is more likely that the remaining Bahais converted to Shi'ite Islam after the Islamic Revolution. During my fieldwork in Fereydan, people, especially in those towns and villages that are known to have had

---

completely Armenian. In 2000 I even met Fereydani Armenians, who had lived for a time in Esfahan and had returned to this village, or those who had lived in Tehran but spent their summers in this village. Many Fereydani Armenians residing in other parts of Iran return to Fereydan during their summer vacation.

<sup>124</sup> These villages are: Qal'e-ye Gregor, Darabvard, Arigan, Movakkel-e Senegerd, Punestan, Zarne (Boloran), the Lower Khoysan, the Upper Khoysan, Khong, Haran [or Hadan?], Suran [or Savaran?], Namagerd, Milagerd, Shurishkan, and Sangbaran (Isfahanportal.ir 2007a).

<sup>125</sup> Fereydani Armenians are relatively active and aware about their culture. Two books which introduce their culture and dialect are those by L. Minasian (1998) and B. S. Ghazarian Senegerdi (1991). The first book is about Fereydani Armenian folklore and the second one is a Persian-Armenian dictionary, based on the Iranian-Armenian (Parskahayeren) dialect of Armenian, and contains many words used by Fereydani Armenians. Both authors are Fereydani Armenians. The first author, whom I know personally, is affiliated with the Armenian Museum of Esfahan, and the second one's name suggests that he is from Senegerd, an Armenian village in Fereydan.

significant Bahai populations, downplay or totally deny the historical existence of Bahais there.<sup>126</sup>

As there are no censuses or other official categorization of ethnic groups, the identification of ethnic groups in Iran requires a certain knowledge of Iranian ethnic and inter-ethnic realities. Ethnic categories in Iran are fluid and much hybridity exists. Consequently, the identification of ethnic groups, ethno-territorial groups, and hence also the identification of ethno-territorial encounters is difficult. There is no legal definition or delimitation of ethnic groups in Iran. Ethnic groups are not politicized but are a cultural category. The differences between tribes and ethnic groups are not always clear, not even in the colloquial or official languages. Self-awareness of different groups varies to a certain extent. It is not surprising that many people in Iran, especially in the larger cities, identify themselves simply as Iranian, without a clear reference to their ethnicity. Sometimes people refer to their ancestral locality. One will, for example, say: “Well, I am Shirazi”, which can also mean: “I am from Ostan-e Fars”. Many will say: “I am Shomali [Northerner]”, which may mean that he is from either Gilan, Mazandaran, or Golestan, and hence can be Gilaki, Talysh, Mazandarani, etc. It is not uncommon to refer to a region as a whole, even though that region does not correlate perfectly to a single *ostan*. For example, someone may say he is a Khorasani, Azerbaijani, or Larestani. The first two regions are divided into many *ostans*, while the latter is a region in Ostan-e Fars. It is not very uncommon to hear phrases such as: “I am Tehrani but my parents are Mashhadi”. In such a context it is not very uncommon to hear: “Do you know? I am Tehrani, but my father is Tabrizi and my mother is Shirazi. Her father was Hamedani. He was there for work when he married my grandmother”.

Indeed, intermarriages, especially between the members of the same religion, are very common. In particular, the members of Shi'ite ethnic groups—that is, mainstream Iranian society (virtually the same as “titular” group in the Soviet context)—very often intermarry. Intermarriages result in a lot of hybridity and uncertainty about people's local or ethnic affiliations. This uncertainty is especially found more with regard to locality than ethnicity. People do not know if they are Mashahdi or Esfahani if each of the parents are from either city. In these cases they will identify most likely with their own place of birth or residence, but as both parents are Persian-speakers, they will identify with that ethnic group. A person is, for example, an Azeri if both parents are. A more difficult case is, for example, if one's father is an Azeri and one's mother an ethnic Persian-speaker (a Fars). In such cases people will identify themselves by the place of birth or the language they speak. People will

---

<sup>126</sup> Information obtained by fieldwork (Fereydan 2000–2006).

also say they are ethnically mixed and are half Azeri and half ethnic Persian-speaker (or Fars).

Despite its fluid nature and ambiguity in many cases, ethnicity, even in the case of Shi'ites, is still traceable and identifiable to a high degree. Ethnic groups are cultural groups in Iran and are mainly defined and distinguished from each other on the basis of their language and religion (see Amanollahi 2005). Even though the ethnic identification of many individual persons may be hybrid, there is still general awareness of the fact that ethnic groups, as collectivities, exist in Iran. It is not very uncommon to hear someone is Lur, half Lur, Kurd (that is, Sunni Kurd), Khorasani (Shi'ite) Kurd, Azeri, Talysh, Tork (i.e. a Turkic-speaker, a general name for all Turkic speakers, except for the Turkmens), half Talysh half Gilaki, etc. Very often the ethnic categories used in colloquial encounters are those that are implicitly recognized by a large segment of Iranian society. Usually these ethnic categories are based on the groups' native language or an combination of the spoken language and religion.

A list of towns and villages and the number of their inhabitants and oral information given to me by Fereydan proper's Governorate (*Farmandari-ye Fereydan*), Sepiani's book (1979), and my fieldwork gave a good basis for the location of ethnic concentrations and, hence, encounters between ethnic groups in Fereydan. It is relatively easy to identify ethnic groups and hence ethno-territorial groups in Fereydan. Armenians, due to their distinctive religion, are very easily distinguishable from other groups there. They not only speak their ethnic language, but they also practice a different religion and are easily distinguishable from their neighbors in Fereydan, who are predominantly (almost 100%) Shi'ite Muslims. It is also not very difficult to distinguish ethnic groups from each other who speak different languages. Georgian is a very different language than Persian or Turkic, and hence they are easily distinguishable from each other. The Khwansari language is a Northwest Iranian language belonging to a dialect continuum of languages of central Iran.<sup>127</sup> Such languages were once widely spoken in central Iran before being supplanted by Persian and are called the "Median dialects" of Esfahan by the linguist Habib Borjian (2007). More difficult cases are when languages are close to each other. For example, Bakhtiari and Standard Persian are very close languages. Nevertheless, owing to the differences in lifestyles and of course memory, kinship, and familial ties, one can recognize one's own and others' ethnic affiliation.

Language can also be a basis of distinction even if one does not speak that language. Indeed, there are many people who do not speak their

---

<sup>127</sup> Asaturian (Asatrian) (2011: 12-17) regards the speakers of these languages as being each an ethnic (or ethno-linguistic) group.

ethnic language or are not very fluent in it. It is not uncommon that Georgians, Bakhtiari, etc. who are born or raised in large cities do not speak their ethnic language anymore; nonetheless, by virtue of kinship and their memory, they know to which ethnic group they belong.

In Fereydan, the cities, towns, and villages are still largely homogeneous. Shahrestan-e Chadegan, for example, is a mainly Turkic-speaking *shahrestan*, except for its *bakhsh* called Chenar-Rud, which is predominantly Bakhtiari. Shahrestan-e Fereydan (proper) is ethnically mixed. While its administrative center Daran and the town of Damaneh are Persian-speaking, its rural areas, with the notable exception of the Bakhsh-e Buin-Miandasht, are predominantly Turkic-speaking. That *bakhsh* and a large part of the *shahrestan* of Fereyduhshahr is inhabited by Georgians. Most large settlements in Shahrestan-e Fereyduhshahr are Georgian. Georgians are the largest ethnic group in that *shahrestan*, and they probably also constitute a large majority of its population, almost all speaking the Georgian language (Isfahanportal.ir 2007b). The mountainous southern part of Fereyduhshahr, however, is predominantly Bakhtiari. Despite its relatively large area, the southern part of Shahrestan-e Fereyduhshahr is sparsely populated.<sup>128</sup> Khwansaris are mainly concentrated in Shahrestan-e Khwansar.

Consequently, most ethnic groups in Fereydan live in more or less ethnically homogeneous settlements. There are only a few groups who do or did not. The number of Jews is dwindling. Like the other religious minority group in Fereydan, the Baha'is, and unlike Armenians, Jews lived mainly in towns and villages among other groups. As most newcomers to Fereydan and Khwansar are temporary residents (mainly students) in the larger urban centers, none of their respective ethnic groups are and have the potential to become an ethno-territorial group. Therefore, only the Fereydani Turkic speakers, Persian-Speakers, Bakhtiari, Khwansaris, Armenians, and Georgians are ethno-territorial groups (see Table 5.4). Despite not inhabiting Fereydan, another group forms ethno-territorial encounters with Fereydani groups: the Lurs of the neighboring Ostan-e Lorestan (Luristan). Therefore, Table 5.4 also includes these ethno-territorial groups. Next to these Lurs, there are also other ethno-

---

<sup>128</sup> Once a native of this area—whose aunt was married, by the way, to a Georgian from Fereyduhshahr—told me that his ancestral village, called Masil, is the largest village in those mountains and counts only 200 inhabitants. Many other people confirmed this, but others think there are larger villages there. Others, notably residents of large cities elsewhere in Iran, thought that although it is a small village and relatively unpopulated, still 200 inhabitants was a very small number. Such claims are not very strange in a country where people often claim that its capital has 15 million inhabitants, i.e. much more than Ostan-e Tehran's population altogether! Residents of large urban metropolitan areas in Iran often do not have a true picture of the reality in the rest of Iran, a relatively sparsely populated country. Still, they do recognize this lack of population in the "provinces" or "villages". Regardless of the veracity of this claim—which was and is not very difficult to investigate, by the way—it indicates that this area is indeed very sparsely populated.



territorial groups whose living areas border those of Fereydani ethnic groups. These are often the same ethnic groups as are found also in Fereydan itself. They are, notably, the Persian-speakers of Ostan-e Esfahan to the east of Fereydan and the Bakhtiari in the neighboring Ostan-e Chahar Mahal va Bakhtiari. All ethno-territorial groups in Fereydan and the Lurs of Luristan are listed in Table 5.4.

*Table 5.4. List of ethno-territorial groups in Fereydan and their main religions and languages*

<b>ETHNIC GROUP</b>	<b>MAIN RELIGION</b>	<b>MAIN LANGUAGE</b>	<b>LANGUAGE FAMILY</b>	<b>LANGUAGE BRANCH</b>
Armenian	Orthodox Christianity	Armenian	Armenian	.
Bakhtiari	Shi'ite Islam	Persian	Iranian	Southwestern
Georgian	Shi'ite Islam	Georgian	Kartvelian	.
Khwansari	Shi'ite Islam	Khwansari (Central Iranian)	Iranian	Northwestern
Lurs	Shi'ite Islam	Luri	Iranian	Southwestern
Persian-speaker	Shi'ite Islam	Persian	Iranian	Southwestern
Turkic-speaker	Shi'ite Islam	(Fereydani) Turkic	Turkic	Oghuz

## Chapter Six

# **6** Ethno-Territorial Conflicts in the Caucasus and Central Asia

Eight out of the 129 ethno-territorial encounters are, or were until recently, afflicted by ethno-territorial conflict. All these encounters are located in the (post-)Soviet space: the South Ossetian and Abkhazian conflicts in Georgia; the North Ossetian-Ingush conflict over Prigorodny and the Chechen conflicts in Russia; the Armenian-Azeri conflict over the Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan; the Osh conflict between the Uzbeks and Kyrgyz in Kyrgyzstan; and finally the Tajikistani Civil War, with the participation of Uzbeks and Pamiris in alliance with and against Tajiks. There were no ethno-territorial conflicts in Fereydan.

The aim of this chapter is to provide an analytical description of these cases of conflict. As the recent political, and more so territorial, histories of these region prior to the conflicts are important, these histories are also discussed. Although attention is paid to the histories of these ethno-territorial conflicts, chronological discussions of these conflicts are not within the scope of this chapter.<sup>129</sup> There will be a focus on the explaining conditions that were introduced in the previous chapters. However, the analytic descriptions are not restricted to these. The case study character allows for more in-depth analysis and provides opportunities to explore and discuss nuances and additional explanations.

---

<sup>129</sup> One can consult many sources in order to read more in depth about the histories of these conflicts and the regions in which they have occurred. History, for obvious reasons, has taken an important place in the understanding and explanation of the ethno-territorial conflicts in the Caucasus in many authors' works (e.g. Cornell 2001; Cornell 2011; Cheterian 2008; Hille 2010; King 2008a; De Waal 2010; Zürcher 2007). In addition, those who discuss the conflicts and political situations by focusing on the course of the current conflicts, whether in a chronological order focusing on the present or reporting from the field, do not fail to refer (occasionally) to past events and history (see e.g. Goltz 1999; Goltz 2003; Goltz 2009a; O'Ballance 1997; De Waal 2003). Even though Central Asia is not as much afflicted by ethno-territorial conflicts as the Caucasus is, many studies do discuss history and historical factors in the explanation and understanding of (post-)Soviet-era politics, which also include conflicts there (see e.g. Atabaki & O'Kane [eds] 1998; Bergne 2007; Jonson 2006; Khalid 2007).

## *Political-Territorial History of the South Caucasus*

The South Caucasus has been an arena of power struggle between the great powers for a long time. The Iranian, Ottoman, and later Russian empires have competed for dominance in this region, and periods of direct imperial rule, suzerainty, and local rule have followed each other in a disorderly manner.

Russia conquered the South Caucasus in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and its conquest and sovereignty in the South Caucasus was confirmed by two treaties with the Qajar Iran, which had lost a rather large part of its territory to Tsarist Russia (Bournoutian 1998: 59-67; Cornell 2001: 37; Hunter 1997: 437-438; Hunter 2006: 112). These two treaties, the Golestan (Gulistan) (1813)<sup>130</sup> and Torkamanchay (Turkmanchay) (1828),<sup>131</sup> were a beginning point for the new political realities in the region, and as they were very humiliating are referred to in Iran as *Nangin* or *Shum*, two Persian words with very negative connotations (see e.g. Hunter 1997: 437-438; Takmil Homayun 2001: 29-39). These two treaties were manifestation of a new geopolitical and ethno-political order. They marked the beginning of colonization of the South Caucasus by Russia and changed the demography and ethno-political power relations in the region. While Shi'ite Muslims were the favorites in the Iranian times, Orthodox Christians became the favorites of the Russians. Although after the Russian conquest the number of Armenians in the South Caucasus increased, the ethnic map of the region until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was still very different from what it was at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century—and from what is now. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Armenians lived mainly in the urban centers all around the Caucasus, in Georgia, and in the territories of the modern-day republics of Azerbaijan and Armenia. The predominantly rural Azerbaijanis, who at that time were called Tatars, Muslims, Shi'ite Turks, or even Persians by different people(s) and sources (see. e.g. Bronevskiy: 2004 [19<sup>th</sup> century]; Tsutstiev 2006), lived scattered throughout the southern part of Transcaucasia.<sup>132</sup>

---

<sup>130</sup> *Treaty of Golestan*. (Russian) (other spellings are also possible). Available online at the *Khronos* website: <http://www.hrono.ru/dokum/ruper1813.html> (Accessed 12 May 2011).

*Treaty of Golestan*. (English) (other spellings are also possible). Available online at *The Circle of Ancient Iranian Studies* (CAIS) website: <http://www.cais-soas.com/CAIS/Iran/golestan.htm> (Accessed 12 May 2011).

<sup>131</sup> *Treaty of Torkamanchay*. (Russian) (other spellings are also possible). Available online at the *Moscow State University M.V. Lomonosov, Faculty of History* website: <http://www.hist.msu.ru/ER/Etext/FOREIGN/turkman.htm> (Accessed 12 May 2011).

*Treaty of Torkamanchay*. (English) (other spellings are also possible). Available online at *The Circle of Ancient Iranian Studies* (CAIS) website: <http://www.cais-soas.com/CAIS/Iran/torkmanchai.htm> (Accessed 12 May 2011).

<sup>132</sup> The Turkic-speaking, predominantly Shi'ite Muslim people in Transcaucasia, who are now called Azeri or Azerbaijani, were before called Tatar, Turk, Muslim (Musalman), or Persian by different

The territory of modern-day Armenia was inhabited predominantly by Muslims, but changed rather rapidly in favor of Christian Armenians. From the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century until the end of 1989, however, there evolved a nearly ethnically homogeneous Armenia, in which Armenians constituted more than 93% of the population, in addition to Azerbaijan and Georgia, in which the titular groups constituted, respectively, more than 82% and 70% of their total populations, according to the last Soviet census (1989).

The Russian conquest of the Caucasus was an important event and needs more discussion, because it clearly shows the allegiances based on religions, but also qualifies this simple black-and-white picture. First, although Orthodox Christians were subordinated to Shi'ite Muslims, they were still tolerated and could get along rather well with their Shi'ite (and Sunni) neighbors, who shared similar culture. Russia was a foreign power and sought its own interests, which in some cases coincided with those of Christians and in other cases did not. As will be seen below, a significant part of the Christian Georgian population, both the nobility and peasants, were not quite happy with the Russian supremacy in their native lands.

At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Iran was weak, while a strong vital Orthodox Christian Russia was approaching Transcaucasia. The Georgian king, Erekle (Irakli) II of Kartli-Kakheti (Eastern Georgia), whose authority was also recognized by the west Georgian dynasts (Gachechiladze 1995: 26), signed a treaty by virtue of which his kingdom was to become a protectorate of Russia. His exact motive can be speculated about. In the context of a chaotic political succession in Iran and the devastating consequences of political rivalries in Iran, protection from an emerging Orthodox Christian and powerful Russia was a sensible choice. That does not necessarily mean, however, that Erekle II was anti-Iranian or anti-Muslim. Despite religious differences, the Georgian culture had a strong Iranian flavor (see Soudavar Farmanfarmaian 2009). He himself had served as an Iranian general in Nader Shah's conquest of India. Georgian rulers had many Muslim subjects and were generally tolerant and kind to them (Muliani 2000: 193 and 240).

Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar, 133 the Iranian king of the time, who was establishing his sovereignty over all the Iranian territories, had waged wars in many regions with success. In his Caucasian campaign, he

---

people and sources (see e.g. Bronevskiy: 2004 [19<sup>th</sup> century]; Tsutsiev 2006). It is true that their Turkic language is similar to that of the Azeris in Iran, who have been called Azeris for centuries, but the ancestors of the modern-day Transcaucasian Azeris were not called such; they were called Tatars in the Russian empire. Although there are a few references to them with ethnonyms similar to Azerbaijani at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the ethnonym Azerbaijani gained prevalence after the collapse of the Russian empire.

<sup>133</sup> Many Iranian military commanders and administrators were (Islamized) Georgians, and many members of Iranian royal families, notably of the Safavid dynasty and nobility, had Georgian blood. It is reputed that Agha Mohammad Khan from the Qajar tribe, who were related to the Safavids, had partially Georgian roots (see Muliani 2000: 193 and 206-294).

sacked Tbilisi (1795), reputedly at the instigation of Javad Khan Ziadoghlu Qajar, a prominent Turkic-speaking Shi'ite political figure and the powerful khan of the Ganja Khanate, who wanted to avenge earlier Georgian actions. Agha Muhammad Khan saw Georgia and, in general, the South Caucasus as part of his Iranian dominions. Whether his sack of Tbilisi was at Javad Khan's instigation or because of religiously based rivalry is debatable. Agha Mohammad Khan, a eunuch who did not enjoy much popular respect, is known to have been a cruel ruler. His infamous massacre of Kerman, a Shi'ite Persian-speaking city in Iran, was similar to or worse than that of Tbilisi. Tbilisi had a mixed cultural composition. Next to Christian churches there was always a Shi'ite mosque alongside a Sunni one (which was destroyed by Agha Mohammad Khan) (see e.g. Sanikidze 2008: 164-168). Although Agha Mohammad Khan did not particularly do his best to spare Tbilisi's Shi'ite Muslims either, Christians suffered enormously during his attack.

Javad Khan, the main Shi'ite Muslim political figure at the frontline of the Russian-Iranian front was a member of the Qajar tribe, as were the Iranian ruling dynasty. He sided with Iran and resisted the Russian rapprochement. After Agha Mohammad Khan's death in Karabakh (1797), Javad Khan in his letter (1803) to Pavel Tsitsianov, the Imperial Russian commander and head of the Russian troops in Georgia, wrote that he still regarded himself as loyal to Iran (Figure 6.1). Although he admitted in his letter that in a context of Iranian weakness, he was obliged to be subordinate to Russia, as his letter indicates, he believed in an Iranian victory and hoped to safeguard his and his constituency's position and declared war on Russia. He probably realized that with the erosion of Iranian sovereignty and the ascendance of Russia, the position of Christians would be enhanced at the cost of that of Shi'ite Muslims. After the Russian conquest of the South Caucasus, the social position of Shi'ite Muslims and Christians, notably Armenians, reversed. Javad Khan's hopes for an Iranian victory proved futile as he was killed one year later (1804) when Russians attacked and conquered the Ganja Khanate. Generally speaking, unlike Armenians, the Turkic-speaking Shi'ite Muslims of the Caucasus, who were later officially named Azeris supposedly for geopolitical reasons (see Chapter 7), entered the Russian Empire reluctantly and with bad grace.

The attitude of Georgian nobility was diverse and evolved generally to anti-Russian. After Erekle II died, his relatively pro-Russian son, Giorgi XII, ruled briefly (1798–1800) and was to be followed by his son David (known as David the Regent) (1800–1801), when Russia, allegedly requested by Giorgi XII, officially annexed Georgia instead of installing his son as the new king, disrespecting the earlier agreements, and abolished the Georgian Orthodox Church's autocephaly. Alexander

Batonishvili, a prince of the house of Bagrationi, was a throne pretender and was supported by Iran and some members of the Georgian nobility, whose efforts towards crowning him as the king of Georgia were to no avail (Bournoutian 1984; Bournoutian 1998: 75 note 38; Soudavar Farmanfarmaian 2009: 38; Suny 1994: 70-72). He was a companion of the Qajar prince Abbas Mirza, who was tasked with fighting against Russia and the re-conquest of the lost Iranian dominions in The Caucasus. The last plot to reinstall the Georgian monarchy, by the kingship of Prince Alexander, was nipped in the bud. In accordance with the Iranian tradition that the *vali* (that is, a governor with a high degree of autonomous capabilities) was also recognized by Iran as the king of Georgia, Alexander was regarded as the Georgian *vali in absentia* in his exile in Iran (Soudavar Farmanfarmaian 2009: 38). Nevertheless, Georgia was never again ruled by a Georgian king after Alexander died in exile in Iran.

Not only eastern Georgia, but also other Georgian lands and other areas in the Caucasus as far south as the Talysh and Nakhichevan areas were subordinated to Russia, whose sovereignty was confirmed by the two aforementioned treaties. “The Russian advance against Islam”, as Bernard Lewis (2002: 38) calls it, was already begun and was proceeding further.

The Russian domination altered the religious map of Transcaucasia. The Abkhazians, similar to their Circassian kinfolk, also went through a sad ordeal. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century Imperial Russia accused them of collaboration or sympathy with the Ottoman Empire, and compelled them to leave their lands and emigrate to the Ottoman empire. Accordingly, most Muslims left, but Christians stayed on (Gachechiladze 1995: 81). In the more southern parts of Transcaucasia, the Russian conquest also altered the religious demography. While Armenians of neighboring Iran and the Ottoman empire were encouraged to settle down in the newly conquered Russian territories, Muslims left. Today, family names such as Irvani, Nakhjevani, Qarabaghi, Shirvani, Lankarani, etc. are in abundance in Iran. These family names can be translated, respectively, as from Yerevan, Nakhichevan, Karabakh, Shirvan, and Lenkoran, all cities and areas located in the modern-day republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Armenians, in general, regarded Russia “as their liberator from the Muslim overlordship” (Swietochowski 1985: 39). Armenian support contributed to the Russian military successes:

Armenians of Ganja, Karabakh and Zangezur [in the southern part of modern-day Armenia and the western part of the modern-day Republic of Azerbaijan] openly sided with the Russians during the first Russo-Persian war. They were instrumental in the speedy Russian successes. In the conquest of those khanates in 1805.... During the second Russo-Persian

war [which ended in a Russian victory], the Muslim population of Karabagh and the Caspian region welcomed the surprise Iranian attack, which had caught the Russian command off guard and would have annihilated the Russian administration and garrisons had not the Armenians and their armed volunteers protected the latter until the arrival of the Russian army. (Bournoutian 1998: 66)

Russia returned the Armenian favor generously. Although the Russian supremacy in Transcaucasia enhanced the position of Christians vis-à-vis Muslims, it was notably more beneficial for Armenians than any other (Christian) ethnic groups there. Russia put an end to the maltreatment of Armenian merchants and craftsmen by the Georgian nobility (Suny 1993: 37). After the Russian conquest, initially the Georgian nobility's position vis-à-vis peasantry was enhanced, but later reform and the abolishment of serfdom gave more freedom to the peasants. While the Georgian nobility suffered under the Russian rule, even the peasants were not happy, because of the monetary obligations imposed upon them (Suny 1994: 112). Meanwhile, the Armenian merchants in eastern Georgia prospered. Georgians saw commerce as shameful and disdained Armenians who dominated the Transcaucasian urban economy (Suny 1993: 37-39). Although the Imperial Russian attitude toward the Armenian merchants and church was ambivalent and fluctuated, it was generally in favor of preferential treatment for Christians and notably Armenians (see Suny 1993: 34-41).

Armenians, a people with significant international connections, were influenced by European ideas about nationalism at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The idea of a national homeland, in the Transcaucasian lands where their ancestors lived, was certainly attractive to them.

Already in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Armenians had better socio-economic positions than the local Muslims, despite the latter's demographic predominance in the eastern part of the South Caucasus. A clear ethno-religious division of labor was visible in the oil industry in Baku. While Armenians profited from the oil industry, Muslims formed the bulk of the unskilled labor force (Ahanchi 2011: 7-9; Atabaki 2003: 417; O'Balance 1995: 29; Siwetoehowski 1985: 39). As Atabaki (2003: 416-417) puts it:

We have useful data on the ethnic composition of the workforce in the Baku oilfield.... In the case of the Baku oilfield, Iranian workers constituted the majority of unskilled foreign workers in the region.... The labour market in the Baku oilfield was initially segmented by race, with oil companies hiring mainly Russians and Armenians for jobs requiring skill and literacy, and Muslim workers, Iranians, local Tatars [i.e. Azerbaijanis] and Dagestanis for lower-paid unskilled jobs.

As a result of these social and economic discrepancies, Armenians were detested by their neighbors in the South Caucasus. Inter-ethnic clashes between Armenians and Muslims in the South Caucasus, even before the First World War, Armenian Genocide, and the mass migration of Armenian refugees from the Ottoman Empire. (The people who were later called Azerbaijanis were called Transcaucasian Tatars or simply Muslims by Russians and various peoples and sources.) These clashes first erupted after the Russian revolution of 1905, when various parts of the Russian Empire were struck by widespread unrest. The so-called Armenian-Tatar violence may have had a socio-economic rationale, but it soon transformed into purely ethnic and ethno-religious clashes, in which material gain also played a prominent role. As events showed in Nakhichevan, the Armenians there were not as wealthy as the Muslim elite, but Muslim-organized gangs still took advantage of the chaos, and possibly also of the Armenian stereotype elsewhere in the Caucasus, to kill and rob Armenians. As Luigi Villari wrote in 1906:

In 1829 Russia, after her last war with Persia, received Nakhitchevan, together with Erivan, by the treaty of Turkoman Chai. The Armenians played the same role in this conquest as they had done in that of other parts of the Caucasus, and it was largely through their action that the local princes were dispossessed. But if the khans no longer actually rule they are still very wealthy....it was only in trade that they [i.e. Armenians] had the advantage over the Tartars.... After the Baku outbreak in February the agitation among the Tartars spread to Nakhitchevan, and grew more and more acute.... [The Local Muslims] were all more or less armed, but their weapons were not always of the latest patterns. They set about to make good the deficiency, and through the early spring consignment after consignment of arms were smuggled in, chiefly from Persia.... The Armenians were completely taken by surprise; few of them had firearms, and there was no time to concentrate or organize resistance against this ferocious onslaught.... Out of 195 Armenian shops in the bazar, 180 were completely plundered, twenty safes were broken open and their contents stolen.... It was clear that although the original cause of the outbreak was racial hatred, the desire for plunder played no small part in bringing it about.... Out of a total of fifty-two villages with an Armenian or mixed Armeno-Tartar population, the official reports mention forty-seven in which Armenians were killed and wounded or their houses plundered and burnt. (Villari 1906: 266-272)

The violence spread all around Transcaucasia. In total, between 3,100 and 10,000 persons, mostly Muslims, died in the South Caucasus as the results of the Armeno-Tatar violence. “Indeed, all the available data suggests that the Muslims, who were usually on the attack suffered greater losses than the Armenians, though not overwhelmingly so” (Swietochowski 1985: 41). The fact that Muslims suffered higher losses than Armenians did is



evidence of the better organization and military superiority of the Armenians (Swietochowski 1995: 39-40).

The inter-ethnic violence erupted again a decade later, during the aftermath of the First World War and the Russian civil war (1917–1923). It is not surprising that the inter-ethnic violence in the South Caucasus has always emerged when the central authorities in the Russian Empire or the Soviet Union were weak or absent. Such violence occurred in the period following the Russian revolution of 1905, in the period of the First World War and the Russian civil war, and in the era of *glasnost*, *perestroika*, and the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

On 22 April 1918 an independent Transcaucasian Democratic Federative Republic was proclaimed with Tbilisi as its capital, which lasted until 26 May 1918. The short-lived state was proclaimed by the Transcaucasian legislature, called *Seim*, because the Georgian Mensheviks (a socialist-democratic party rival to Lenin's Bolsheviks) and the Armenian Dashnaksutiun (an Armenian nationalist and self-declared socialist party)<sup>134</sup> did not regard Lenin's Bolshevik regime as legitimate. Pressures from the Turkish military formed another reason to separate from Russia and declare independence. The Azerbaijani Musavat party (a political party with pan-Islamic and pro-Turkish flavor) "enthusiastically supported the decree of separation, but the Mensheviks and Dashnaks [i.e. the members of the Armenian Revolutionary Party, better known as Dashnakstutiun] took this step reluctantly" (Suny 1994: 191). Paradoxically, it was also because of Turkish military advances that the Transcaucasian Democratic Federative Republic dissolved. Azerbaijanis, "who had long felt victims of the Christian overlords and bourgeoisie in Caucasia" (Suny 1994: 191), welcomed the Turkish military advances. When the Turkish military attacked the Armenian parts of the Transcaucasian Democratic Federative Republic, Georgians knew that this republic was not viable. Seeking protection from Germany, they declared independence on 26 May 1918. Later, Azerbaijan and Armenia, the latter being in the middle of the battles of Sardar Abad (Armavir) and Qara Kilisa (Vanadzor), declared independence. The choice of the name Azerbaijan by the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic raised suspicions in Iran that this new republic would serve as a device for Turkey to separate the northwestern region of Azerbaijan from Iran. Therefore, the authorities of the newly born state used the term "Caucasian Azerbaijan" in their documents circulating abroad (Swietochowski 1985: 129-130). Later, the name Azerbaijan was consciously retained by the Soviet leaders (and other policy makers) for obvious geopolitical and expansionist

---

<sup>134</sup> Dashnaksutiun, or better, the Armenian Revolutionary Federataion (ARF), claims to be a socialist party. It is indeed a member of the "Socialist International", of which its bitter enemy, the Turkish Republican People's Party, a nationalist and Kemalist Turkish party, is also a member.

reasons, notably hoping to gain, or in any case have more influence in, Iranian Azerbaijan (see Appendix 3).

The capitals of the Democratic Republic of Georgia, the Democratic Republic of Armenia, and the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic were, respectively, Tbilisi, Yerevan, and Ganja (Baku was in the hands of Bolsheviks and their supporters). Already before the Transcaucasian Democratic Federative Republic was dissolved, Baku was conquered by the Bolsheviks headed by Stepan Shaumian (also spelt Shahumian), an Armenian. This episode, known as the “March Days”, re-discovered and popularized in Azerbaijani public opinion, forms an important element of the Azerbaijani anti-Armenian rhetoric of recent decades. In a well-calculated move, Dashnaks joined the Bolsheviks. The state of affairs turned tragic when the Armenian Dashnak allies of the Bolsheviks in Baku “took to looting, burning, and killing in the Muslim sections of the city” (Swietochowski 1985: 116). According to Shaumian, the casualties numbered 3,000 (Swietochowski 1985: 117). With the prospect of the Turkish military advances towards Baku, and the Bolsheviks being outvoted from the Soviet of Baku, the Armenian Dashnaks, along with the Social Revolutionary Party and the Mensheviks (the latter two being the Bolsheviks’ rivals), turned to the British forces in neighboring Iran and asked for their help. The British occupied Baku and supported a coalition of the aforementioned parties, called the Central Caspian Dictatorship. However, Baku soon fell, and the Turkish army, accompanied by Azerbaijani fighters, took their revenge on Armenians.

The three Transcaucasian republics went through their short years of independence in total chaos and rivalry. In addition to a war with the Ottoman Turks, Armenia engaged in wars with Azerbaijan over Nakhichevan, Zangezur, and Karabakh, and with Georgia over the Akhalkalaki and Lori regions in the southern Georgia and northern Armenia.<sup>135</sup> The battle over Karabakh was bloody, and both Muslims and Armenians committed atrocities. In the context of a defeated Ottoman Empire, Armenians took control over Karabakh. The British military, however, replacing that of the defeated Turks, chose a Muslim as the governor of Karabakh. The situation in Georgia was not very calm either. Initially, Abkhazia was given a degree of autonomy, but South Ossetia was not. The Georgian Menshevik party, which initially was tolerant towards Georgia’s minorities, grew too nationalistic in the eyes of many minorities:

---

<sup>135</sup> Detailed political maps of this period can be found in *Atlas Etnopoliticheskoi Istorii Kavkaza (1774–2004)* by Artur Tsutsiev (2006), and on the website *Ethnic Conflicts, Border Disputes, Ideological Clashes, Terrorism* (<http://www.conflicts.rem33.com>), a project founded by Andrew (Andreas) Andersen in 2002 and developing until now (2011).

In this situation, the Armenians, Ossetians, Abkhazians and other minorities, who had organized their own national soviets in 1917-18 began to fear they would be locked into a position of permanent inferiority. Social and economic resentments among non-Georgians combined with a newly discovered national consciousness that local Bolsheviks exploited, led to a series of armed conflicts with the Georgian National Guard. The revolts in non-Georgian areas, which entered Soviet mythology as resistance to Menshevik oppression, have become part of today's competing ethnic histories. (Jones 1997: 508)

Soon the three short-lived independent republics were conquered by the Bolsheviks. The first one was Azerbaijan (April 1920), followed by Armenia (November 1920) and Georgia (April 1921). In 1921 the Bolsheviks united the three republics as constituent parts of the Transcaucasian Federative Soviet Socialist Republics, which lasted until 1936 when the three republics separated and each became a national Soviet Socialist Republic. Nakhichevan ASSR and the Nagorno-Karabakh AO were assigned to the Azerbaijan SSR. Already in 1921 a treaty had been signed between the Bolsheviks and Turkey (Treaty of Kars) by virtue of which Adjara was transferred to the Soviet Union, and in exchange, Ardahan, Kars, and Ararat areas (which were claimed by Armenia) were transferred to Turkey. Adjara, Ardahan, and Kars belonged for a time to the Tsarist Russian Empire and its successors, the Democratic Republics of Georgia and Armenia, but were regained by Turkey in the aftermath of the First World War. The newly regained Adjara was assigned as an autonomous republic (Adjara ASSR) to the Georgian SSR. A new South Ossetian AO was created out of the Georgia proper's territory. Abkhazia was also assigned to Georgia. From 1921 until 1936 it was officially an SSR associated with Georgia and was therefore, together with Georgia, part of the Transcaucasian Federative Soviet Socialist Republic. In 1936, however, Abkhazia became a regular ASSR inside the Georgian SSR.

The cases of Nagorno-Karabakh AO and the Nakhichevan ASSR in the Azerbaijan SSR and of South Ossetian AO and the Abkhazian ASSR in the Georgian SSR were the only cases in which double autonomies were created for the ethnic groups who were awarded autonomy elsewhere in the Soviet Union. The case of Nagorno-Karabakh is a remarkable one. While the majority of its inhabitants (almost three quarters) were Armenians, it was not awarded to Armenia, where the Armenians enjoyed titular status, but was awarded to Azerbaijan, and awarded a relatively lower degree of autonomy (AO). Nakhichevan, which was predominantly inhabited by Azeris, was given a higher autonomous status (ASSR).

The (Soviet or already de-Sovietized) republics of Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia proclaimed independence in 1991 before the

official dissolution of the Soviet Union—or earlier, depending on how one evaluates proclamations of sovereignty. These proclamations, however, became factual only when the Soviet Union dissolved on 25 December 1991.

The ethnic homogenization of the republics of Azerbaijan and Armenia continued during Soviet times and afterwards. Previously more heterogeneous, Azerbaijan in Soviet times became more Azerbaijani, and Armenia became almost ethnically homogeneously Armenian (see Figure 6.2). For example, Baku had become a predominantly Azeri city in the late 1980s, while that city had contained a diverse population of local Azeris, Armenians, Russians, diverse European groups, and in addition Iranians (mostly Iranian Azeris who had migrated there to work in the oil industry in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries) (see Atabaki 2003). Although Georgia did not become homogeneously Georgian, even Georgia became more Georgianized during Soviet times. For example, Tbilisi (Tiflis), a city in which Armenians, Azeris, and Russians constituted a large part of the population, became a predominantly Georgian city after Georgians from various regions of Georgia settled there and large numbers of non-Georgians left the city, notably for their titular republics.

In a context in which the titulars identified themselves with their corresponding territory and in the context of a salience of ethno-nationalism after *glasnost* and *perestroika*, Georgia and Azerbaijan became involved in ethnic conflicts, which continued after their independence. In these republics the ethnic minorities that were titular in lower-ranked autonomous areas rebelled against the hosting states and demanded independence. After a relatively short period of fighting, they reached a ceasefire agreement with their host state. These are the cases of Armenian-Azerbaijani ethno-territorial conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, the Georgian-Ossetian ethno-territorial conflict over South Ossetia, and the Georgian-Abkhazian ethno-territorial conflict over Abkhazia. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has remained a frozen conflict since the corresponding ceasefire (1994), but the other two ethno-territorial conflicts re-erupted in an overt internationalized form more than a decade after their corresponding ceasefires (respectively 1992 and 1995). Allegedly after a period of planning and preparation (Cornell 2009; Cornell, Popjanevski & Nilsson 2008; Cornell & Starr 2009 [eds]). Russia invaded Georgia after hostilities re-emerged between the Georgian army and South Ossetian troops on 8 August 2008. All these three formerly autonomous territories have gained *de facto* independence. Nagorno-Karabakh is not recognized by any state. Even the position of Armenia towards it is ambiguous. South Ossetian independence is recognized by

Russia, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Nauru, and Tuvalu, and Abkhazia's independence is recognized by the aforementioned states plus Vanuatu.

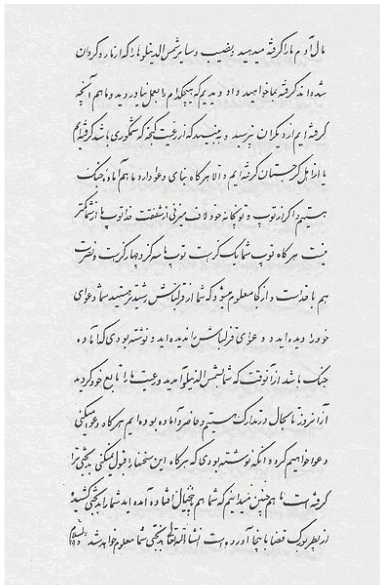
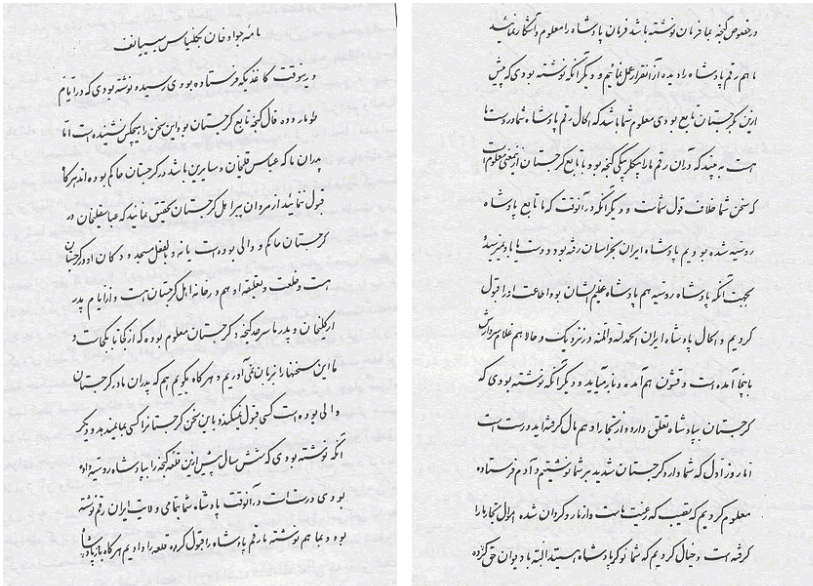


Figure 6.1. Javad Khan's Letter

## The Karabakh Conflict

The ethno-territorial conflict between the Azerbaijanis and Armenians in the Republic of Azerbaijan concerns the status of the formerly autonomous province (AO) of Nagorno-Karabakh. The war, however, has affected a wider region far beyond the former Nagorno-Karabakh AO, a region that can be justly called Karabakh. Nagorno-Karabakh, in fact, means mountainous Karabakh, while the war spread outside the borders of the Nagorno-Karabakh AO and affected the areas around it and lower Karabakh. In fact, it affected, more or less, the historical Karabakh. In this book the terms Nagorno-Karabakh and Karabakh are used interchangeably. Nagorno stems from the Russian *nagornyi*, which means “mountainous”. Karabakh is the Russianized version of the native word Qarabagh or Gharabagh, an Azeri/Persian word meaning black garden. The Armenians, however, also call the region by its ancient name, Artsakh.

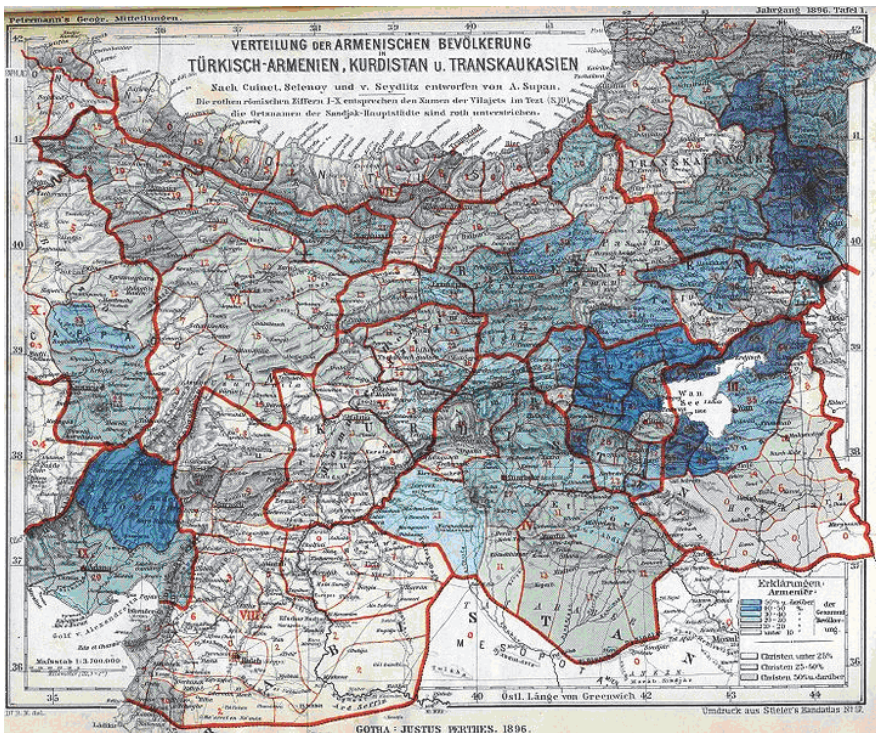


Figure 6.2. Armenian ethnic concentration in the Ottoman and Russian empires at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The darker an area, the larger is the proportion of Armenians in its population. Source: Petermanns Geographische Mitteilungen (1896).



The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict began with clashes in the late 1980s between Armenians and Azeris but later developed into a full-scale war until a ceasefire agreement was signed in 1994.

In the late 1980s, Armenian nationalists in Karabakh, with popular support, demanded the transfer of Nagorno-Karabakh from Azerbaijan to Armenia. The Supreme Soviet Council of Nagorno-Karabakh, ignoring its ethnic Azerbaijani members' concerns, voted in favor of such a territorial transfer. After a period of time, Armenia agreed, but Azerbaijan SSR and the Soviet Union did not agree with the transfer. In the beginning days of the conflict, the Soviet authorities tried to calm the Armenian demands by punitive actions, known as "Operation Ring", in the Shahumian area to the north of Nagorno-Karabakh, where a large number of Armenians lived and which is viewed as part of Nagorno-Karabakh by Armenians. Many also believe that pogroms against Armenians in Sumgait, a town to the north of Baku, and elsewhere in Azerbaijan have been orchestrated by the Soviet authorities, either local or even central ones. An oft-heard argument is that the Soviet troops were not sent in a timely manner to the area when their presence was urgently required, and the Soviet Azerbaijani police acted inefficiently or even reluctantly. These were times when a large number of ethnic Azerbaijanis (and Shi'ite Muslim Kurds) left or, in fact, had to leave Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, and many Armenians did the same from Azerbaijan. Many rumors circulate that the pogroms against Armenians in Sumgait was committed by Azerbaijanis who were evicted from Armenia. Others believe that they were instigated when people roused the Azeri mobs with rumors that Azeris were killed or raped in the Zangezur area of Armenia. Whatever the reasons may have been, the conflict shifted to Nagorno-Karabakh itself, where Armenians were successful in the military sphere. Aside from the notable exception of Khojali, where a whole town was massacred allegedly by Armenian irregulars, the Armenian militias gained easy victories without much resistance. Of course, the political geography counts. The areas between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh were vulnerable and not easily defendable and hence were occupied by Armenian forces and subsequently ethnically cleansed.

The issue of Nagorno-Karabakh's status is uncertain. The Republic of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh), *de facto* independent, is still legally part of Azerbaijan even though it has not been part of it since its independence. Azerbaijan proclaimed its independence before the official end of the Soviet Union. In August 1991 it declared its independence, and in December of that year the Azerbaijanis voted in favor of independence in a referendum. Earlier that month, however, Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh had held their own referendum and voted in favor of independence. In September 1991 the Azerbaijani parliament had voted to

abolish the autonomous status of Nagorno-Karabakh. Although one-sidedly, and illegally in the Azerbaijani viewpoint, Nagorno-Karabakh had already separated itself from Azerbaijan before the effective Azerbaijani independence from the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, not all occupied territories were already under the Karabakh Armenian control at that date. The war continued after the collapse of the Soviet Union, resulting in major Armenian victories and ethnic cleansing of Azerbaijanis and Shi'ite Kurds from occupied territories. Meanwhile, the pan-Turkist-minded regime of President Elchibey was toppled, and Heydar Aliyev, a Soviet-era experienced politician, was elected as the president of Azerbaijan in October 1993. In May 1994 a ceasefire agreement was signed between Azerbaijan, and Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia, with Russian blessings. The ceasefire has been respected since that time, even though there have been many incidents of skirmishes. Many efforts to resolve the final status of Karabakh, mainly by the OSCE, have proven to be in vain. A cold war continues between Azerbaijan and Armenia that supports the Armenian separatist government in Karabakh, and the conflict is a frozen conflict since 1994.

The Karabakh conflict is the bloodiest ethno-territorial conflict in the former Soviet Union and its successor states, after the conflicts in Tajikistan and Chechnya. Most estimates put the number of casualties at 20,000 to 25,000. The Azerbaijani scholar Arif Yunusov (2007a: 11-12; 2007b: 11), however, puts the number at 17,500 (11,000 Azerbaijanis and 6,500 Armenians). The numbers of disappeared or killed prisoners of war are not included in these numbers. According to Thomas Goltz, who was a first-hand witness of the war between 1991 and 1994, the "operative number" of those killed on both sides was approximately 35,000, with the vast majority being on the Azerbaijani side. "Some want that number higher, some lower--but 35,000 is what I and various colleagues from diverse NGOs managed to cobble together from visits to local cemeteries, official numbers, etc." (personal communication by email, with Thomas Goltz, October 2009). In the preface of his book, Goltz (1999: X) estimates the number of the casualties of the Karabakh War (prior to 1998) at over 30,000. All in all, and regarding the available estimates, a number of 25,000 souls is a fair estimate of the number of casualties of the Karabakh War.

According to De Waal's (2003: 286) calculations, 13.6% of the Republic of Azerbaijan's territory is now controlled by the separatist Armenian forces (see Figure 6.3). In addition to a very large part of the former Nagorno-Karabakh AO, the Armenian separatists have also occupied many other areas of the Republic of Azerbaijan proper, causing a huge number of internally displaced persons (IDP). Yunusov (2007a: 12; 2007b: 12) estimates this number at about 740,000 persons. The



Karabakh conflict is the bloodiest, the most protracted, the most frozen, and at the same time the most emotionally heated ethno-territorial conflict in the South Caucasus. As Hunter (2006: 114) states:

One of the thorniest of ethno-territorial disputes in the South Caucasus is that between Azerbaijan and Armenia regarding Nagorno-Karabagh.... The Nagorno-Karabagh conflict derives from the region's checkered historical legacy, from the misguided nationalities and territorial policies of the Soviet era, from the mismanagement of the ethnic problems during the Gorbachev years, and from the impact of post-Soviet regional and international rivalries.

The adjective “misguided”, however, does not adequately describe the Soviet nationalities policies. The Soviet practice of territorial division was only partially consistent with the Soviet understanding of national self-determination and the accompanying official Soviet policy that ethnic groups, called “nationalities”, deserved to have their own homeland, the territorial delimitation of which should be on the basis of the largest concentration of these ethnic groups. There have been many evident inconsistencies between the Soviet theory of national self-determination and the practice of ethnic territorialization. These inconsistencies, among which the Nagorno-Karabakh is a notable one, can be explained in general by the geopolitical motives and geopolitical calculations of Soviet decision-makers. The Nagorno-Karabakh decision was influenced by the positive Soviet attitude towards the emerging Turkish Republic, regarded initially as a potentially progressive and anti-imperialist ally (see Pasdermajian 1998: 502-506; Suny 1998: 118-19). In addition to the generous concessions made to Turkey by respecting her request not to assign Nakhichevan and Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia, placing an autonomous province inhabited by a historically Christian loyal people within the borders of Muslim Azerbaijan, as well as dividing the Azerbaijan SSR in two by Armenia, was an attractive strategy to the Soviet Center.

In the first Soviet designs, Nagorno-Karabakh bordered Armenia, but later there were territorial adjustments by which Nagorno-Karabakh was totally encircled by Azerbaijan proper and lost its border with Armenia. This border is seen on a map in the Great Soviet encyclopedia of 1926, but the maps from 1930 onwards show Nagorno-Karabakh without any borders with Armenia (Cornell 2001: 74). Nevertheless, Nagorno-Karabakh could be regarded as contiguous to Armenia. Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh were separated from each other by the Lachin Corridor, which, is about ten kilometers long.<sup>136</sup> This area was occupied

---

<sup>136</sup> The distance between the Armenian border and Nagorno-Karabakh varies depending on which two points one takes.

by Armenian separatists during the Karabakh conflict and officially incorporated into the self-proclaimed Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh (see Figure 6.3). The Karabakh Armenian authorities, backed by Yerevan, have announced that they will not return this area even if they ever manage to reach an agreement with the Azerbaijani authorities (Cornell 2001: 121-127; Potier 2001: 88).

The Soviet authorities chose the name Azerbaijan for the Soviet republic in the southeastern part of Transcaucasia. Arran or Aran was the true name of this region, but the Soviets retained the toponym Azerbaijan in order to be able to dominate the neighboring region of Azerbaijan, located in the northwestern part of Iran. Therefore, it seems logical that they did not award Nakhichevan to Armenia, despite the fact that it was separated by the Armenian SSR from the Azerbaijan SSR proper, and all of the routes of transportation and communication naturally related the Nakhichevan region rather to Armenia than to Azerbaijan proper. This design meant that the Azerbaijan SSR was dependent on the Armenian SSR for the transport between its two constituent parts. The Nakhichevan ASSR as a constituent part of the Azerbaijan SSR meant a long borderline between the Azerbaijan SSR and the Iranian region of Azerbaijan. This could contribute to the geopolitical imagination that the Iranian Azerbaijan and the Soviet Azerbaijan were both parts of one contiguous region, which was divided only for some political reasons. This choice was also in agreement with the Cold War discourse, in the sense that it could be associated with the communist North Korea and North Vietnam versus the capitalist South Korea and South Vietnam (Hunter 1997: 437). Iran was an ally of the West in those days. Therefore, the analogy of North versus South was very useful in the way that it was associated with the battle between communism and capitalism, between the East and the West, and between North Vietnam and North Korea versus South Vietnam and South Korea. According to this logic, ideally, capitalism had to be defeated, the Eastern Bloc had to be victorious over the Western Bloc, and the southern parts should reunite with their northern counterparts, which in fact meant that they were to be brought under communist rule and Soviet supremacy.

In line with the Soviet and post-Soviet ethno-nationalistic historiographies, both the Azerbaijani and Armenian historiographies attribute Karabakh or Artashk to Azerbaijani or Armenian historical legacy. According to the Azerbaijani historiography, the area was inhabited by Caucasian Albanians, whom they regard as one genealogical component of the Transcaucasian Azerbaijani people.<sup>137</sup> The Armenian

---

<sup>137</sup> The Azerbaijan region of Iran was not inhabited by the Caucasian Albanians and was called Azerbaijan or ancient varieties of it (i.e. Atropatena, Aturpatakan, etc.) since ancient times. Caucasian Albanians were linguistically related to the Dagestani Lezgi group and, like Armenians, were

historiography states that the Caucasian Albanians were Armenians because they, similar to Armenians, adhered to a Gregorian Church, which they most often call the Armenian Church. They also claim that Caucasian Albania was dependent on Armenia. In reality both the historical Armenia, certainly the Transcaucasian parts of it, and the Caucasian Albania, like most other Transcaucasian territories, were most of the time dependencies or integral parts of the successive Iranian empires. In their absence or in face of their weaknesses, Armenia has enjoyed (*de facto*) independence to a certain degree or has been conquered by other empires, such as the Byzantine and the Ottoman Empire. The Armenian claim that the Caucasian Albanians were assimilated into Armenians makes sense: owing to their religious similarity they are likely to have been Armenicized. The only remnant of the ancient Christian Caucasian Albanians are the Udi people. The Islamicized Caucasian Albanians, however, are most likely a genealogical component of the Transcaucasian Azerbaijanis. Therefore, both Armenian and Azerbaijani claims can be true, but as their politicians know, these claims do not bestow on them any legal rights over the disputed territory. The facts are that the territory was legally part of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic, enjoyed an autonomous status (AO), and was three-quarters inhabited by Armenians.

Although the Armenian ethnic identity shows a great degree of continuity since the Armenian conversion to Christianity, it is incorrect to say, as many Armenian nationalists claim, that the Azerbaijani identity was an artificial one. Cornell (2001: 32) states that the Azerbaijanis, unlike their Armenian and Georgian neighbors, were missing a sense of national identity in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Overall, he is not fair in his statement because he himself points to an Iranian connection. An Iranian identity, however, is itself a national identity. Explaining his assertion, he points to the varying levels of controls of their khans by the Iranian Shahs as the only sense of national identity. This is untrue; Armenian and Georgian rulers also stood under varying levels of control by Iranian Shahs. He is correct, however, about the Iranian connection. The Muslims of Transcaucasia were predominantly Shi'ite Muslims and had an Iranian culture. Like the Turkic-speakers of Iran, they spoke an Oghuz Turkic language with an extensive Persian vocabulary, identical (or at least very similar) to the language spoken in the Iranian region of Azerbaijan, and had used Persian as a literary language. In fact, they were mainstream Iranians, unlike the Transcaucasian Georgians and Armenians, who,

---

adherents of Gregorian Orthodox Christianity. Iranian Azerbaijan was first called Media Minor and was inhabited by people who spoke a Northwestern Iranic language prior to their lingual Turkification.

despite the absence of independence for centuries, had developed a sense of national identity, mainly due to their “national” Christian churches.

It is also true that the Iranian identity in the South Caucasus has been eroded because of the Russian and Soviet efforts and to the salience of pan-Turkism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (see e.g. Yunusov 2004: 113-132). Nevertheless, the Iranian element in the culture of the predominantly Shi’ite Muslim and Turkic-speaking people of southern Transcaucasia, and their accompanying material culture (e.g. dress, cuisine, architecture, etc.) was so strong that it still holds today and is not likely to be erased soon. In addition, the dispute about the name of their republic does not mean that the predominantly Shi’ite Muslim Turkic-speakers of Transcaucasia should have no historical claims over the disputed territory. Since many nationalists regard historical antiquity as a sound basis for territorial claims, they try to deny the “Other” by advancing such (historical) arguments. Similar senseless claims were advanced with regard to the right of Bosnian Muslims to Bosnia. Identity, solid or confused, does not matter; a people has the right to “live” on the land it inhabits.

Nevertheless, attributing the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict to religious motives and ancient hatred is very superficial. “We can assert that the conflict was not caused by ancient hatred: Armenians and Azeris have much in common in the cultural sphere; until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century they lived peacefully side by side” (Garagozov 2006: 150). Moreover, if the Shi’ite Muslim Azeri culture and the Christian Orthodox Armenian culture, or identity, or character, etc. have been inherently conflicting, the Armenians could not live in neighboring Iran with their Shi’ite Azerbaijani (and other ethnic) neighbors there. If a religious ancient hatred was a prominent factor explaining ethno-territorial conflict in the South Caucasus, then a Shi’ite-Sunni rivalry would be more likely than an Armenian-Shi’ite one. While Sunnis and Shi’ites were bitter enemies, Christian Armenians and Shi’ite Muslims often cooperated against (their common enemy) the Sunni Turks, Lezgins, and other Dagestani tribes. Notable are the events of the massacre of Shi’ites in the city of Shamakhi by Sunnis, and the pact (1724) between the Armenians of Karabakh and the Shi’ite Muslims of Ganja to assist each other in the face of attacks by Turks and Lezgins (Yunusov 2004: 78-80).

In modern times, Christian Armenians and Shi’ite Muslim Azeris and other ethnic groups coexist peacefully in Iran. The Iranian Azeris (as well as other Iranians) regularly visit Armenia and many even live there. Yerevan’s Shi’ite Blue Mosque has been reopened with the assistance of Iran. In Georgia also, Armenians and Azerbaijanis live peacefully and even share businesses (interview and personal communications with Tom

Trier in Tehran and Tbilisi 2007 and 2008).<sup>138</sup> Such an area of coexistence and peaceful interaction between Azerbaijanis and Armenians is the town of Sadakhlo in Georgia. I noticed that the Armenian passengers en route to Armenia call the local Azerbaijani women there “sister” (Sadakhlo, summer 2008). As one Azerbaijani inhabitant, working there as a railroad worker, stated: “This family is Armenian. We have lived together in peace for many years. Armenians are faithful comrades”. The fact that Azerbaijanis living in Georgia express their resentments more about Georgians than about Armenians or any other ethnic minorities reflects the logic and nature of (post-)Soviet ethno-politics and interethnic relations between the titulars and non-titulars, rather than the prevailing stereotypes. Already in 2007 in Mtskheta, an ancient town near Tbilisi, I was told by two Georgian policemen, originally Azerbaijani refugees from Nagorno-Karabakh, that Azerbaijanis and Armenians live peacefully together in Georgia. This peaceful interaction could not be seen, however, in northeastern Armenia, an area I visited by car (summer 2008). Ijevan, a town close to the Azerbaijani and Armenian border, had a lively vending market. That market, which in Soviet times was visited by a large number of Armenian and Azerbaijani villagers, was now totally Armenian. No Azeri was visible there, at least not manifestly.

According to De Waal (2001: 272-273), the conflict is not born of ancient hatred, but nevertheless history and “hate narratives” serve as tools in order to mobilize masses for the conflict:

[A]s has been shown, this [i.e. the Karabakh conflict] is not a conflict born of ancient hatreds. Before the end of the nineteenth century, Armenians and Azerbaijanis fought no more often than any other two nationalities in this region. Even after the intercommunal violence of the early twentieth century, the two nationalities have generally gotten along well.... [Nevertheless]...the Nagorny Karabakh conflict makes sense only if we acknowledge that hundreds of thousands of Armenians and Azerbaijanis were driven to act by passionately held ideas about history, identity, and rights.... The ideas expanded inside the ideological vacuum created by the end of the Soviet Union and were given fresh oxygen by warfare. The darkest of these convictions, the “hate narratives”, have taken such deep root that unless they are addressed, nothing can change in Armenia and Azerbaijan.... Hateful impulses coexist with conciliatory feelings in the same person. Armenians and Azerbaijanis can be simultaneously enemies and friends. They are torn between aggression and conciliation, personal friendships, and the power of national myths.

Although not an *ancient* one, such an event used by the Azerbaijani authorities and nationalists is the event known as the March Days. The

---

<sup>138</sup> Tom Trier (from Denmark) was at that time the director of the Caucasus office of the European Centre for Minorities Issues (ECMI).

Azerbaijanis estimate the number of Muslim Azerbaijani deaths substantially higher and use it as a tool to mobilize Azerbaijani public opinion against the Armenian enemy.<sup>139</sup>

Even though the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is a political conflict and does not stem from the inability of Armenians and Azeris (or for that matter Shi'ite Muslims) to cooperate and live together, the power of “hate narratives” and “collective memories” and “symbols and myths” should not be dismissed totally. They are unlikely to be the roots causes of ethno-territorial conflicts; nevertheless, they do function as catalysts in combination with more pressing and real factors that are more immediately at stake, e.g. (alleged) discrimination and demands for independence. In fact, the conflict may have other root causes, but the memory and memorization of these events adds to the “security dilemma”, especially when the patterns of recent violence are viewed as similar or related to those of the olden days. There is no need for the recent violence to have similar causes to those in the olden days; the fact that they get associated with them evokes fears among ethnic groups that something more and worse may happen and that their ethnic opponents are their “natural” enemies and have been such for a long time. Naturally, the catalyzing power of such events is greater when they are more traumatic, more recent, felt by more people, and are still memorized and remembered by more people. Such a powerful catalyst is the Armenian Genocide, a very traumatic event in the Armenian collective memory:

It is impossible to exaggerate the significance of the *mets eghern* (great slaughter) for contemporary Armenian thinking, both in Armenia and in the diaspora. The genocide virtually eliminated Armenians from nine-tenths of their historical territories in Turkey, leaving them only the small fragment in the Russian Transcaucasus to call their own. Throughout the Middle East, Europe, and North America, it created new or vastly enlarged diaspora communities, where the memory of the genocide served as a virtual “charter of identity”, even for those who had not directly experienced it. (Dudwick 1997: 475)

Although the Armenian Genocide occurred in the Ottoman Empire and not in the Caucasus, it was nevertheless relevant to the events in the South Caucasus. As noted above, while Armenians fought the invading Turkish army, the Musavat party and Azerbaijani fighters allied, or in at least sympathized, with them. In addition, a large number of inhabitants in the

---

<sup>139</sup> Many Azerbaijani ethno-nationalist and political activists call the clashes between Azerbaijanis and Armenians the infamous “March Days”, the Azerbaijani Genocide. Genocide is a fashionable word in the Caucasus, but it is not surprising that they apply this word only selectively to the misdeeds of Armenians, their enemy by now, while they do not in this way label the numerous and more widespread killings of Azeris, truly a genocide, by the Ottoman Turks during the Iranian–Ottoman wars.

modern-day Republic of Armenia are the descendants of the genocide survivors. They account for possibly more than a quarter of the population.<sup>140</sup> The first Armenian republic was born in a difficult situation: it was involved in war with three of its four neighbors, thousands of refugees poured into the republic, famine and malnutrition were widespread, and “20 percent of the population died during the first year of its independence” (Dudwick 1997: 471). In such a context, the Bolsheviks ceded large parts of the territories claimed by (and fought for by) the Democratic Republic of Armenia to Turkey (Treaty of Kars 1921). Apparently, Turkey at that time was seen as a progressive and potentially anti-imperialist Soviet ally. These were areas that Armenia had inherited from the Russian Empire and were heavily populated by Armenians (see Figure 6.2).

These territories not only covered those conquered previously by Imperial Russia against the Ottoman Empire but also included the Surmalu area around Mount Ararat, which was conquered earlier, in a war against Iran (Treaty of Torkamanchay 1828). Mount Ararat (also called Masis) has a symbolic meaning for the Armenians. They believe that it is the place where the ark of Noah landed. It was even depicted in the Armenian SSR’s coat of arms (see Figure 6.4). Mount Ararat can be seen by the naked eye from Yerevan and a large part of Armenia. It is not too difficult to imagine how sad it is for Armenians to realize that this mountain is now located in Turkey, a country that, as the heir to the Ottoman Empire, refuses to recognize the Armenian Genocide.

The relationship of Armenians towards the Soviet Union was one of love and hatred. Unlike the case in Imperial Russia, Armenians were certainly not the favorites of the Soviet Union. This fact was obvious during the course of the Nagorno-Karabakh war, when the Soviet authorities openly sided with Azerbaijan. On the one hand, Armenians were still content with the fact that they enjoyed a certain type of quasi-statehood and the protection of their culture to a high degree within the Soviet Union. On the other hand, it was difficult to forget what the Bolsheviks had done to them.

The Nagorno-Karabakh issue remained a major source of Armenian dissatisfaction during the Soviet period. In fact, it was the main issue around which the Armenian dissatisfaction manifested itself. Even before *glasnost* and *perestroika*, Armenians had many times requested in vain that Nagorno-Karabakh be incorporated into Armenia. *Glasnost* and *perestroika*, however, provided an opportunity to pose ethnic and ethno-territorial demands, an opportunity that had not been seen before in Soviet history. As a result, street rallies were organized in Stepanakert, Nagorno-

---

<sup>140</sup> This was what I was told in Armenia during my stay there in the summer of 2008.

Karabakh's capital, and elsewhere in support of the separation of Nagorno-Karabakh from Azerbaijan and its inclusion into Armenia, especially after the Soviet rejections of such demands in earlier petitions and other efforts in support of this territorial transfer. Such large-scale demonstration of dissent was unlikely prior to *perestroika* and *glasnost*.

Kaufman (2001: 49-74) states that the conflict was not initiated by the authorities. Boris Kevorkov, the Armenian head of the Nagorno-Karabakh AO, was in fact nothing of a nationalist and, in the words of Kaufman (2001: 59), he was "a man slavishly loyal to his superiors in Baku". Nevertheless, as Kaufman describes in his book (2001: 54-76), the later leaders of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Nagorno-Karabakh sympathized or did in any case make concessions to the nationalists and their demands. Very early on, on 20 February 1988 "the Supreme Soviet (legislature) of the Mountainous Karabagh autonomous Region, endorsed the request [to be incorporated into Armenia], ignoring the concerns of its Azerbaijani members, who were boycotting, and of Azerbaijan's Communist Party boss Kamran Baghirov, who had come to Stepanakert to lobby" (Kaufman 2001: 60). Mobilization never occurs without its leaders, be it the official authorities or informal popular leaders. In this case the nationalist popular leaders were followed first by the latter, and then the official authorities themselves took over the nationalist discourse or were nationalists themselves.

Melander (2001) argues that the war over Karabakh was not inevitable and would not have gone so far if the Soviet Union had not collapsed. Nevertheless, the general pattern in the Soviet Union, *perestroika* and *glasnost* as opportunity structures, and the weakness of the Soviet state at the end of its life were enough to unleash serious ethnic strife and clashes. Rather early on, Dostál & Knippenberg (1988: 607) observed references to *glasnost* and *perestroika* on the placards of the Armenian demonstrators.

Neither the Soviet nor the Azerbaijani authorities ever agreed with the separation of the Nagorno-Karabakh AO and its incorporation into Armenia. Needless to say, most states are not very eager to lose territory. On the other hand, the Armenian separatism in Nagorno-Karabakh was uncompromising and intransigent. Two episodes need to be mentioned here: the proclamation of independence by Nagorno-Karabakh (1991) after Azerbaijan declared its independence, and the Volskiy administration's period. Nagorno-Karabakh's proclamation of independence predates the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Immediately after Azerbaijan proclaimed its independence from the Soviet Union, Nagorno-Karabakh proclaimed itself independent. At that time, the Soviet Union was not still officially dissolved. This is an argument in favor of the Armenian separatists, who assert that Nagorno-Karabakh never formed



part of an independent Azerbaijan. On the other hand, after a period of direct rule by Moscow (from 20 January 1989 until 28 November 1989), led by Arkady Volskiy, Nagorno-Karabakh was returned to the Azerbaijan SSR. The Soviet Union's position was clear that this province should belong to the Azerbaijan ASSR, but it was intended to offer the province a package of cultural and economic investments, or even a higher degree of autonomy as an ASSR. All these concessions were not enough for the Armenian separatists, who only wanted one thing: freedom for Nagorno-Karabakh, which meant for them separation from Azerbaijan.

In a paper written relatively early in the course of the ethno-territorial conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, Yamskov (1991) emphasizes mainly the economic factors in his explanation of this conflict. Nevertheless, even he points to two interesting points: (economic) life is better in Armenia (Yamskov 1991: 640); and Baku had placed restrictions on cultural contacts between the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh and those of Armenia, and generally the Armenian cultural life in Nagorno-Karabakh was less thriving in comparison with that in Armenia (Yamskov 1991: 643). It is debatable whether the economic situation in Nagorno-Karabakh was better or worse than elsewhere in Azerbaijan SSR. It was certainly worse than in Baku, but it is unfair to say that it was worse than most other rural areas or small-sized urban areas in that republic. All evidence indicates that economic motives were far less important than the issues of identity and the ownership of territory.

The Karabakh conflict is an ethno-territorial conflict and territorial conflicts are very difficult to resolve. Reaching an agreement is easier if the conflict is about economic benefits. States, however, are not particularly eager to concede territory. This conflict has brought about other events which have contributed to their own logics and are used as material for the hate narratives. Such events are the anti-Armenian pogroms (notably in Sumgait) and the massacres of Azeris in Khojaly, the (forced) migration of Azeris and Kurds from Armenia and that of Armenians from Azerbaijan, and the loss of a significant part of Azerbaijan's territory under the presidency of the pan-Turkist-minded Elchibey. Both societies have developed fervent ethno-nationalisms, correctly labeled "mirroring nationalisms" by Cornell (2001: 92). Genuine and legitimate grievances also exist in both societies. Notably, genuine grievances exist among the refugees from Nagorno-Karabakh, grievances which are difficult to disregard and which should not be confused with hate-mongering of ethno-nationalists. For example, in 2008 a very gentle Azerbaijani young man, a refugee from Aghdam, who has lived in a refugee camp since his childhood, told me honestly that he has no problems living together with Armenians but not with the Dashnaks (by

which he meant all ethno-nationalist militants), who have killed his family.

Owing to the consequences of the conflict and the incompatibility of the demands and desires of the parties to the conflict, it is very difficult to reach a solution. Even relatively more moderate politicians have not been able to do so. When Heydar Aliyev, an experienced politician and ex-communist, replaced the aforementioned Elchibey, he was able to reach a ceasefire agreement in 1994 with Armenians. Since then, the subsequent leaders of Armenia (e.g. Ter-Petrossian, Kocharian, and Sargsian), Azerbaijan (Heydar Aliyev Sr. and Ilham Aliyev Jr.), and Nagorno-Karabakh (Kocharian, Ghukasian, and Sahakian) have been unable to reach an agreement.

The willingness of the Republic of Azerbaijan to offer Nagorno-Karabakh a high degree of autonomy does not satisfy Armenians. One argument often brought forth is that Armenians already had autonomy within Azerbaijan, but went through a *white genocide*, by which is meant the preceding de-Armenization of Nagorno-Karabakh caused by the emigration of Armenians and immigration of non-Armenians (Zürcher 2007: 155-157; Kaufman 2001: 55).<sup>141</sup> The Karabakh Armenians, having won a war, are not satisfied with any solutions which put them under the Azerbaijan Republic's overlordship. Probably they and the Azerbaijani authorities will not agree even to the so-called horizontal design of a "common state", in which both Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan proper have equal status within a horizontal confederal relationship, as what exactly this would mean in detail and in the legal sense is still very vague (see Cornell 2001: 118-119; Cornell 2011: 142-143). The arguments of the Republic of Azerbaijan are based on its right to territorial integrity, while the Karabakh Armenians and Armenia itself, holding an ethnic view of national self-determination, argue that the Karabakh Armenians have the right to their independence or to join Armenia, based on the right of national self-determination. Armenia maintains an ambiguous position: it does not recognize the independence of Nagorno-Karabakh, but it does support the rights of Armenians there. It does not regard Nagorno-Karabakh as legally part of Armenia, but has *de facto* incorporated it. It is noteworthy that the contemporary and the former presidents of Armenia, Sargsian and Kocharian, were both Karabakh Armenians. Perhaps the relationship between Armenia and the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh is the best example of a "common state". If so, then it does not seem very likely that the Karabakh Armenian authorities will agree with such a mode of relationship between them and the Republic of Azerbaijan.

---

<sup>141</sup> As an example of "white genocide", Armenians refer to the Nakhichevan, which became almost homogeneously Azerbaijani during the Soviet era, despite the fact that historically it has had a rather large Armenian population.

As Turkey has had its own issues with Armenia, the recent rapprochements between Turkey and Armenia—and hence the deterioration of Turkish-Azerbaijani relations<sup>142</sup>—even though not as significant as it was thought before, may weaken the position of the Republic of Azerbaijan. But it remains to be seen whether this can lead to a resolution in the favor of Armenia or not. Russia, as the most powerful regional player, has its own interests in preserving the balance of power there.

Hypothetically, solutions can be found if ethno-nationalism subsides. As a legacy of the Soviet Union, ethno-nationalism in the Soviet successor states has a territorial dimension. The only solution to the conflicts in the post-Soviet space is a replacement of the rigid type of “*Blut und Boden*” nationalism with civic nationalism and an awareness that ethnic nations and states do not necessarily have to be congruent.



1= Territory of the former Nagorno-Karabakh AO controlled by the Republic of Azerbaijan proper.

2=Territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan proper claimed by the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The area colored light grey is the territory of the former Nagorno-Karabakh AO.

The area colored dark grey is the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan occupied by the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh.

*Figure 6.3. Territorial consequences of the Karabakh conflict*

<sup>142</sup> Armenian–Turkish relations suffer traditionally from the Armenian demands for the recognition of the Armenian Genocide by Turkey. The recent rapprochements between Armenia and Turkey have brought about angry reactions in the Republic of Azerbaijan. In addition to the pulling down of Turkish flags in the Republic of Azerbaijan, eyewitnesses report that Turkish flags were thrown into garbage cans there. The Republic of Azerbaijan, which has enhanced its cooperation concerning energy transfer with and to Russia, also threatened to stop delivery of cheap oil and gas to Turkey. Although it seems that Turkey has been susceptible to these threats, there is no guarantee that Turkey will continue to be manipulated by Baku, as Ankara has many other sources of energy, notably from its new ally, Iran.



Figure 6.5. The depiction of Mount Ararat on the coat of arms of the Armenian SSR

## ***Ethno-Territorial Conflicts in Georgia: South Ossetia and Abkhazia***

In the last two decades, Georgia has been the scene of two ethnic conflicts—in South Ossetia and Abkhazia—a civil war and a revolution, and a war with Russia in 2008. The latter war was not a civil war or an ethnic conflict (Cheterian 2009) in the narrow sense of the word. It stemmed from the complications of once “frozen” ethnic conflicts, indeed separatist wars, over South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The August 2008 war made prominently visible the formerly “hidden Russian hand” (see Goltz 1993).<sup>143</sup> Although these conflicts have not led to as many casualties as those in Chechnya and Tajikistan, they have still produced tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of refugees, amongst whom the largest number are Georgian refugees from Abkhazia. The Abkhazians, South Ossetians, and Georgians on each front have suffered significant numbers of casualties—that is, hundreds if not thousands.<sup>144</sup>

In Georgia, two types of explanation are often heard as the explanations for the conflicts in Georgia and the Caucasus in general. On the one hand, many believe that these conflicts are about “our land”, “our language”, and “our religion”. On the other hand, many more believe that the root of all conflicts in the Caucasus is Russia (by which many also mean the Soviet Union).

The first, and more popular, explanation has its roots in Ilia Chavchavadze’s thinking. Ilia Chavchavadze was a Georgian nobleman, whose struggle was against the Russification of his native Georgia and aimed at the revival of Georgian identity. He maintained that the three pillars of Georgian identity were land, language, and religion. It is clear that by language and religion, Chavchavadze meant ethnicity, as these are the main denominator of ethnic identity. By land, however, he meant a people’s right to govern their land, free of tutelage by another (superior) people and their state. Similar popular explanations and ideas existed elsewhere, notably in the North Caucasus, and the nationalism of Gamsakhurdia in Georgia and of Dudayev in Chechnya probably stemmed from such an ideology.

Although there exists a certain amount of truth in each explanation, they are rather naïve explanations for these conflicts. This section will also discuss to what extent these popular explanations can explain the ethno-territorial conflicts in Georgia. First, the history of these

---

<sup>143</sup> On Russia’s role, see also Goltz 2009a: 250-292; Goltz 2009b; Gordadze 2009; King 2008b; Makedonov 2008a; Makedonov 2008b; Mitchell 2009: 171.

<sup>144</sup> Owing to the nature of these conflicts and their high propaganda value, it is impossible to give any reliable or generally accepted estimations.

conflicts will be reviewed, and then the search for explanations will assess these popular explanations.

Recent Georgian history has been the most turbulent of the three countries in the South Caucasus. During the last years of the Soviet Union, Georgia was the scene of nationalism. The Baltic republics are often regarded as the most independence-loving and anti-Russian republics of the former Soviet Union, but Georgia was not far behind them in this respect. Even in the Caucasus, a region famous for its nationalisms, Georgians were one of the most nationalistic peoples. Georgian nationalism always evoked fear among minorities in Georgia, and these fears became even stronger after Georgians pushed for independence. On 9 April 1989 a pro-independence demonstration in Tbilisi was broken up by the authorities, as a result of which many Georgians were killed or wounded. Many regard this event as a major milestone in Georgian history, after which its relationship with the Soviet Union was irreparable.

Most Georgians associated the Soviet Union with Russia and Russians, with whom they had uneasy relations since the incorporation of Georgia into the Russian Empire. Too often the minorities' calls for more cultural rights and more autonomy were perceived by Georgians as minorities being gullible and being agents of Russia (see Figure 6.6).

In 1989 thousands of ethnic Abkhazians signed a petition demanding that Abkhazia be granted the status of a full union republic, after which clashes occurred between Abkhazians and Georgians in Abkhazia, resulting in many casualties. On 25 August 1989 the Abkhazian Supreme Soviet proclaimed itself independent from Georgia, although it left a door open to restructuring its relationship with Georgia on an equal (con-)federative basis, by which Abkhazia would only be associated with Georgia. South Ossetia followed suit and proclaimed itself a sovereign republic on 20 September 1989. The Georgian Supreme Soviet annulled both proclamations. South Ossetia reacted in turn by declaring itself sovereign and withdrawing from Georgia on 10 December. Georgia responded by abolishing the South Ossetian autonomous status.

The referendum in March 1991 on preserving the Soviet Union formed an important milestone in the Georgian relationship with its autonomous ethnic territories. While Georgia, asserting its view that it was neither part of the Soviet Union nor wanted to be part of a restructured Union, boycotted the referendum, Abkhazia and South Ossetia both participated and both voted in the majority for the preservation of the Soviet Union. On 9 April 1991 Georgia proclaimed itself independent. After many smaller clashes between Georgians and Ossetians in South Ossetia, hostilities began to escalate between them.

Meanwhile, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, a nationalist, was elected as the Georgian president. Son of a famous novelist, he was a rather popular figure among Georgians at that time. Although it is true that in those days there were more extreme nationalist figures in Georgia, nevertheless, Gamsakhurdia's nationalism made ethnic minorities anxious about their future in an independent Georgia. In addition, Gamsakhurdia showed "erratic behavior" (Cornell 2001: 168), which contributed to his loss of power when he alienated himself from his once allies. According to Stephen Jones (1997: 522), Gamsakhurdia was paranoid and accused his political opposition of conspiracy with Russia. He also compared himself to the French General, Charles De Gaulle. To be fair, it was not Gamsakhurdia but his Chechen ally Dudayev who could be compared to De Gaulle. Both men, however, resembled each other in their perception of Russia as an imperialist power and in their support for Caucasian unity (although under their own specific terms). Their semi-authoritarian traits and the way they treated their opposition also resembled each other. They accused their opposition, sometimes justly and sometimes unjustly, of being Russian agents. Gamsakhurdia, however, was less successful than Dudayev and was deposed from his short tenure of power.

A ceasefire agreement was reached in South Ossetia (1992) when the warlords Tengiz Kitovani and Jaba Ioseliani rebelled and replaced the (moderate) nationalist Gamsakhurdia with the ex-communist Shevardnadze. The agreement split the territory between Georgia proper and the Ossetian separatists. Georgia retained a significant part of South Ossetia (see Figure 6.5).

The situation in Abkhazia, however, worsened because the fight between the Georgian warlords and Gamsakhurdia's loyalists (called Zviadists) in western Georgia spilled over into Abkhazia. Accusations of collaboration between the Abkhazian authorities and the Zviadists were made by Georgia, and in turn Abkhazia accused Georgian troops of looting in Abkhazia. It became clear again that Abkhazian authorities did not want to be under the overlordship of Tbilisi. They reacted by military action and expelled the Georgian militias. The military hostilities cost many human lives, both Georgian and Abkhazian, and produced a significant number of internally displaced persons as many Georgians fled and took refuge elsewhere. Having lost the larger part of Abkhazia, Shevardnadze signed a ceasefire agreement with the separatist Abkhazian government in 1995. The ceasefire was violated many times, notably in 1998 when the Abkhazian armed forces set fire to the houses of returning Georgian refugees in the Gali district and forced them to flee again. In 1999 Abkhazia held a referendum, by which a large majority of its population—Georgian and other refugees excepted—voted for independence.

After the Rose Revolution (2003) and the election of Mikheil Saakashvili as the president of Georgia (2004), the relationship between Georgia and Russia as well as the separatist regions deteriorated. Before the Georgian-Russian War of 2008, the situation between Georgia and the separatist regions had been tense. This situation was especially conspicuous with regard to South Ossetia, where the relations between Georgians and Ossetians had initially been relaxed in the late 1990s. In 2004, however, a military stand-off developed between Georgian and South Ossetian (para-)military troops, and the Ergneti Market, a major source of income and provision of basic goods for South Ossetians, was closed by the Georgian authorities. This event deteriorated Georgian-South Ossetian relations. In addition, the appointment of Sanakoyev, an ethnic Ossetian who had collaborated with separatists before, as the head of the parallel loyal-to-Georgia South Ossetian administration by Georgia, was seen as a provocation by South Ossetian.<sup>145</sup>

Russia invaded Georgia on 8 August 2008, allegedly after a period of planning and preparation (Cornell 2009; Cornell, Popjanevski & Nilsson 2008) and after hostilities re-emerged between the Georgian army and the South Ossetian troops the same day. According to Russian sources, Georgia began the hostilities by shelling the territory held by South Ossetia. A closer look at the chronology of events shows, nevertheless, that the hostilities had already begun earlier when the South Ossetian separatists allegedly attempted to assassinate Sanakoyev, Saakashvili's ally and the head of the loyalist pro-Georgian South Ossetian administration. Russia soon forced the Georgian troops out of South Ossetia, and Georgia lost the territory it controlled there and in Abkhazia (Kodori Gorge). After the Georgian–Russian War of 2008, South Ossetia and Abkhazia were recognized as independent republics by Russia, followed by Venezuela, Nicaragua, Nauru, and Tuvalu (while Vanuatu has recognized only Abkhazia so far).

In his interview with *Russian Analytical Digest* (*Russian Analytical Digest/Chirikba* 2008), Chirikba accused the West,<sup>146</sup> particularly the USA and Israel, of being responsible for the August 2008 wars, as the Georgian government was advised by American and Israeli advisers and as the Georgian army had acquired weapons from them both (see e.g. Cheterian 2009: 158; *Russian Analytical Digest/ Chirikba* 2008:

---

<sup>145</sup> I was invited by the Georgian government to attend the festivities around the day of Georgian independence in 2007. I remember Sanakoyev—he was pointed out to me—sitting next to President Saakashvili during the latter's speech at the Marriott Courtyard Hotel in Tbilisi.

<sup>146</sup> The accusation of Western involvement in instigation of the conflict is prevalent among Abkhazians and South Ossetians. According to Paula Garb (2009: 140), “Abkhazians and South Ossetians not only blame Western countries for stimulating the conflict, but also accuse them of not caring about their fate”.



9).<sup>147</sup> Chirikba referred to a meeting in Abkhazia on 25 July 2008, in which he, as the Abkhazian presidential adviser on foreign policy, and Stanislav Lakoba, the secretary of Abkhazia's security council, met with the American Assistant Deputy Secretary of State, Matthew Bryza, and the American ambassador to Georgia, John Teft. During that meeting, "Bryza said that the situation was very tense and that they were afraid that the 'hot-headed boys' in Tbilisi would *do things*, and that if there were no immediate talks, *August would be hot*" (*Russian Analytical Digest/Chirikba 2008: 8*).

The Georgian desire to become a NATO member is often referred to as the (or a) main reason behind the eruption of the August 2008 war (Chirikba 2004: 343-348; Chirikba 2008: 15; Closson 2008: 2; Gegeshidze 2008: 12-14; George 2009: 141; Jones 2009: 94; *Russian Analytical Digest/Chirikba 2008: 8-9*; *Russian Analytical Digest/ Gegeshidze 2008: 12-14*; Suny 2009: 91). Indeed, Georgia had taken a pro-Western and increasingly anti-Russian course ever since the Rose Revolution and had made clear its desire to become a member of NATO. A simple and facile explanation of the August 2008 war is that it was a Russian punitive reaction to the Georgian desire.

There is, however, another reason why a Georgian NATO membership may be relevant: Georgian leaders were aware of the fact that NATO did not want to import unresolved conflicts into its realm. Indeed, at the NATO Bucharest Summit (3 April 2008), Germany clearly stated that Georgia should not be admitted to NATO as it has unresolved territorial issues (Cornell, Popjanevski & Nilsson 2008: 8; *Russian Analytical Digest/Gegeshidze 2008: 12*). Possibly this determined a Georgian desire to show NATO (and the rest of the world) that Georgia is capable of restoring its territory.

South Ossetia was an easier target in that regard: it was surrounded on three sides by Georgia proper, and many villages there still stood under Georgian control. In addition, Georgia obviously feels more uneasy about its lack of control of South Ossetia than of Abkhazia. Unlike the peripherally located Abkhazia, South Ossetia is located in central Georgia, close to the Georgian capital city and core areas.

The military operation was a fiasco. It remains rather bizarre that the Georgian army's efforts were focused on taking the South Ossetian capital, Tskhinvali, and not very much on South Ossetia's northern part in order to close the Roki tunnel (see e.g. Cheterian 2009: 162), especially when they suspected the Russian army's presence, or invasion from, there. Shelling villages and towns does not serve the military purposes of

---

<sup>147</sup> The Georgian Minister of Defense during the August 2008 War, Davit Kezerashvili, holds Israeli citizenship.

territorial restoration. “Kezerashvili [the Georgian Minister of Defense at the time] admitted that Georgian forces used the GRAD BM-21 multiple rocket system to target administrative buildings in Tskhinvali. When used in an urban environment, GRAD rockets inevitably cause collateral damage; which translates to simply killing peaceful residents of the town” (Haindrava 2008: 7).<sup>148</sup>

Kezerashvili was sacked, but this could not undo the fact that Georgia lost control over the villages and towns it had controlled in South Ossetia (Figure 6.5) and Upper Abkhazia. Soon after the Georgian defeat, the South Ossetian militants, allegedly under Russian eyes or assisted by them, plundered Georgian villages and set them on fire. The August 2008 war resulted in many deaths and thousands of Georgian refugees (IDPs) from South Ossetia. Russia’s swift and disproportional military action cost many civilian lives. “Russian military used internationally-banned cluster munitions and SS-26 missiles against civilian populations multiple times” (*Russian Analytical Digest*/Gegeshidze 2008: 12).

The pro-Georgian role of the West should not be exaggerated. It is true that the French president, Nicholas Sarkozy, made a deal with Russia according to which Russia could operate far beyond South Ossetia and Abkhazia but had to retreat from Georgia after a period. However, it was never clear from the Russian actions that it ever wanted to remove Saakashvili from power. It is now obvious that the West did not care much about Georgia, as they have still not admitted Georgia into NATO three years after the 2008 war, while they did admit such countries as Croatia and Albania. Moreover, the West is not interested in confrontations with Russia for the sake of Georgia.

The recognition of Kosovo by the West is also believed to be a reason for the (rather hasty) Georgian operation. It is speculated that the Russian recognition of Abkhazia’s and South Ossetia’s independence was a reaction to the recognition of Kosovo’s independence by the West. Russia was against the violation of the territorial integrity of Serbia, its Christian Orthodox, Slavic ally in the Balkans. Traditionally, Russia has been against any recognition of separatist entities, as it may endanger its own territorial integrity. The most worrisome case, Chechnya, was under firm Russian control at that time, however. Such speculations may, or may not, be explanations for Russian’s recognition of these break-away territories after the August war, but they cannot explain the eruption of the August 2008 war.

There are, however, more reasons to believe that Kosovo’s independence was a trigger to the eruption of the August 2008 war. It

---

<sup>148</sup> Ivlian Haindrava, at the time of his publication (2008), was the Director of the South Caucasus Studies Program at the Center for Development and Cooperation—Center for Pluralism (Tbilisi, Georgia) and the foreign policy spokesman of the Republican Party of Georgia.

created fear among the Georgian leadership that Kosovo's recognition by most Western countries might create a precedent and that Abkhazia and South Ossetia might be the next to be recognized. And, simultaneously, it gave separatists a boost, who proceeded to announce their desires ever louder than before (Chirikba 2008; Chirikba 2009; Closson 2008: 2; Garb 2009: 242; King 2008b: 7; Markedonov 2008a: 6).

*Russian Analytical Digest*<sup>149</sup> published a special issue on the “frozen” conflicts in Georgia, which were identified as “boiling” (Closson 2008) or “unfreezing” (Gegeshidze 2008), already shortly before the August 2008 war. In that issue (May 2008) and another issue, published shortly after the war (September 2008), many analytical articles and interviews were published from scholars, amongst whom were those representing either a Russian, Abkhazian, or Georgian perspective. They tried to explain the emergence of the South Ossetian and Abkhazian conflicts in Georgia by referring to their root causes. As these scholars (or officials) held top positions, their perspectives were very close to the hegemonic perspectives in their polities.

The Georgian perspective is very well verbalized by Archil Gegeshidze, a senior fellow at the Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies in Tbilisi. Gegeshidze's (2008: 12) explanation of the conflicts points to three mechanisms. First, these conflicts emerged at a time when the political environment of Georgia (and the Soviet Union in general) was affected by salient ethno-nationalism. Second, the cultural divisions within Georgia were manipulated by outside forces in order to maintain control over Georgia. And third, the leaders of those minorities possessing territorial autonomy, aware of their opportunity, sought independence from Georgia. This explanation is consistent with the nature and mechanism of the Soviet nationalities policy. That policy had created an ethno-political system in which the Center (Moscow) was regarded as a balancer between the different territorial autonomies and as a protector of the lower-ranked ethnic groups (with lower-level autonomies) vis-à-vis the union republics (SSRs). This system enhanced ethno-nationalism, which was manifested increasingly in the late 1980s and the early 1990s in the aftermath of *glasnost* and *perestroika* and ultimately the Soviet collapse.

The Soviet nationalities policy's territorial manifestation was a hierarchical ethno-territorial system. Although the union republics (SSRs) were regarded as internal states, the Center (Moscow) placed lower-

---

<sup>149</sup> *Russian Analytical Digest* is a bi-weekly publication and a forum for interesting analytical articles about Russia and post-Soviet space. It is produced jointly by the Research Center for East European Studies (Forschungsstelle Osteuropa) at the University of Bremen and the Center for Security Studies (CSS) at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich (ETH Zurich).

ranked ethnic territorial units (AOs and ASSRs) inside them as highly explosive hot-spots which could explode at a moment when the time was ripe. Interestingly, the Georgian scholar and diplomat, Revaz Gachechiladze (1995: 33), calls these lower-ranked autonomous ethnic territories “delayed-action mines”.

This Georgian perspective is in essence consistent with the Russian perspective announced by Sergey Markedonov, the head of the Department of Inter-ethnic Relations at the Institute of Political and Military Analysis in Moscow. According to Markedonov (2008a: 4) these conflicts were caused by attempts at the redefinition of former Soviet borders. Many (formerly) lower-ranked autonomous ethnic territories desired independence. Such moves were not welcomed by their hosting Union Republics (or host states), and hence violent conflicts erupted.

Next to these (more or less) institutional explanations, there are those by the Abkhazian and South Ossetian separatists and activists, whose discourse touches a great deal upon discrimination and repression, as well as the right of national self-determination. Although the Abkhazian and South Ossetian perspectives are very similar in nature, there are a few minor differences between them. The most important difference is that Abkhazia has always been univocal about its desire for independence, while in South Ossetia a unification with North Ossetia and hence incorporation into the Russian Federation has been also a serious option (Cheterian 2009: 165; Garb 2009: 236; Skakov 2011: 1-5). In one thing, however, they are very similar: the desire for independence from Georgia.

The separatist perspective is clearly announced by Viacheslav Chirikba (2008), who regards the Abkhazians and South Ossetians as entitled to independence, especially after the recognition of Kosovo by many Western countries. In an interview by the *Russian Analytical Digest* shortly after the August 2008 war, Chirikba, then the Abkhazian president’s advisor on foreign policy and now the Abkhazian Minister of Foreign Affairs,<sup>150</sup> verbalizes the Abkhazian perspective very well:

History plays a crucial role in the Caucasus, and Abkhazians regard their right to independence as historically justified. Abkhazia is an ancient country, as ancient as Georgia itself. It has its own history, specific language, which is unrelated to Georgian, and its own distinct culture, identity and political aspirations. The majority of Abkhazians are (Orthodox) Christians, though there are also Sunni Muslim Abkhazians.... In the past, Abkhazia was a kingdom and a principality. In 1810 it came under the Russian protectorate, quite independently from the neighboring Georgian provinces of the time. With the Sovietization drive after the

---

<sup>150</sup> I know Viacheslav Chirikba personally as an able linguist and Caucasologist, from whom I have had language lessons when he was working at Leiden University in the Netherlands.

collapse of the Russian Empire in 1917, Abkhazia entered the USSR, again, independently from Georgia. Until 1931 Abkhazia enjoyed the status of a Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR), on an equal footing with the Georgian SSR. The troubles started in 1931, when Abkhazia was included into Georgia as an autonomous republic by Joseph Stalin against the will of its people. The ensuing years saw the repression of Abkhazian culture by Georgian rulers.... After the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, Abkhazia proposed to establish federative relations with Georgia. But instead of negotiations on its political status, on 14 August 1992 Georgia under Eduard Shevardnadze unexpectedly attacked Abkhazia militarily. During the war of 1992–1993 Georgians killed four percent of the entire Abkhazian population.... Miraculously, David won over Goliath. In September 1993 Abkhazia won the brutal and devastating war with Georgia. Since that time it exists as an independent polity. The independent Georgian republic is thus 16 years old, and the independent Abkhazian republic is 15 years old. (*Russian Analytical Digest/Chirikba* 2008: 10-12)

It is obvious that Chirikba regards the autonomous territorial units, and hence also South Ossetia and Abkhazia, as forms of statehood. As he puts it, “within the Soviet constitutional framework, the Abkhazian ASSR was regarded as a State: it had state symbols, a government, elected parliament and ministries” (Chirikba 2009: 2). Already before its limited recognition as an independent state, Chirikba (2004: 341) asserted that Abkhazia was a state as it possessed all “attributes of a state (territory, distinct borders, a permanent population, authorities exercising control over the territory of the state, the ability to enter into international relations, the absence of foreign control, etc.), minus recognition, which, from the point of view of the Declarative Theory, is relevant for its qualification as a state”. He regarded Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states because they held a territory and ruled over it, and had a state apparatus. He opposes the term “self-proclaimed state”, as any state is self-proclaimed, and in his view recognition by others is irrelevant (Chirikba 2004: 341). Therefore, in his view, the Russian recognition of the Abkhazian and South Ossetian independence was welcome but irrelevant.

Although there is truth in many of Chirikba’s statements, the objective reality is more complex and, therefore, a few qualifications and remarks are necessary. His statement about Abkhazia possessing statehood already in the Soviet period is in many respects in accordance with the nature of the Soviet nationalities policies, which attached ethnic nationality to a territory and gave a sense of statehood. One problem, however, is that the Soviet nationalities policy had a hierarchical territorial nature and placed the lower-ranked autonomous units under the tutelage of union republics. Abkhazia, as an autonomous republic, was placed within the territory of Georgia. The 15 union republics were considered as the highest form of “internal statehood” within the Soviet

realm. After the disappearance of that realm, they were recognized as the Soviet successor states and admitted to the United Nations. The argument that Abkhazia possessed the status of a union republic (SSR) prior to its downgrading to an autonomous republic in 1931 does not make it any different. The territorial division of the Soviet Union underwent changes many times prior to its dissolution. For example, Karelia (under the name Karelo-Finnish SSR) had enjoyed the status of a union republic from 1940 until 1956, after which it was reincorporated into Russia. Karelia was not recognized as an independent state after the Soviet Union's dissolution. Only the legally accepted territorial situation and borders of the Soviet Union before its collapse were recognized as the starting point for its dissolution, and so only the union republics existing at that point of time were recognized as independent states.

It is true that the ethnic Abkhazians suffered deportation and hence had become a minority in Abkhazia. Their painful ordeal, however, was caused by Russia and not by Georgia or Georgians. It is also true that Abkhazia's status as a union republic was lost during Stalin's era. It is incorrect, however, to see this as an example of Georgian dislike of ethnic Abkhazians. First of all, Stalin is not representative of the Georgian people; and secondly, Stalin also implemented policies elsewhere which were not favorable to ethnic groups. For example, in his time the Chechens and Ingush were deported and their autonomous republic was dissolved, and the Pamiris became the subject of assimilation into Tajiks.

Although most Georgians have a different outlook on (ethno-) historical issues, it is not totally justifiable to accuse them of discriminating against the Abkhazians and trying to assimilate them. The assimilation of ethnic Abkhazians, as shown by the use of language in Abkhazia, has been more a case of Russianization than Georgianization. Abkhazia was one of the richest territories in the former Soviet Union, and the people there had quite a high standard of living. The ethnic Abkhazians were one of the better-off ethnic groups there.<sup>151</sup>

Most Georgians do not agree with Chirikba when he says that for the Georgian policy makers, "Abkhazia had to become Georgia, and Abkhazians had to become Georgians" (*Russian Analytical Digest/Chirikba* 2008: 10). In fact, Georgians have always regarded Abkhazia as part of Georgia and many regarded ethnic Abkhazians as Georgians. Abkhazians and notably South Ossetians were most often regarded as Georgians, much more so than were other ethnic minorities in Georgia, and more or less in the same fashion as were the Georgian local groups (for example, the Mingrelians, the Khevsurs, etc.). For Georgians,

---

<sup>151</sup> This is true even if one does not consider the informal economy and only bases such an argument on the consecutive Soviet statistics.

Abkhazia and South Ossetia were parts of Georgia and should remain as such: ethnic Abkhazians could be Georgian citizens with full cultural rights and even with full autonomy, but nothing more than that. For ethnic Abkhazians, however, Abkhazia was always Abkhazia, even when it was incorporated into Georgia; hence, they regard Abkhazia as entitled to its independence. Although the Soviet nationalities policies was divisive, many Georgians still regarded the indigenous ethnic groups in Georgia simply as Georgians. On the other hand, the existence of Georgian theories that the early Abkhazians were in fact a Georgian tribe and that only later emigration (of Circassians) from the North Caucasus produced the modern-day ethnic Abkhazians—who speak a non-Georgian language related to Circassian—gives many Abkhazians the feeling that Georgians do not have any respect for a separate Abkhazian ethnic identity.

Chirikba is correct in that interview (*Russian Analytical Digest*/Chirikba 2008: 10) that a large number of Georgians were moved to Abkhazia and hence Abkhazians became a tiny minority in Abkhazia. Remarkably, he fails to speak of the main cause of the Abkhazian demographic problem: the Abkhazian exodus to the Ottoman Empire, forced by Tsarist *Russia*. Although the number and proportion of Abkhazians in Abkhazia would have been much larger if so many had not been deported, it is certainly not true that all Georgians in Abkhazia were colonists; members of the Georgian Svan tribe have lived in the Kodori Gorge since long ago, and the southern district of Gali has long been populated by Mingrelian Georgians, who also inhabit the bordering Mingrelia (Samegrelo) in Georgia proper.

Ethnic Abkhazians constituted only about 17% of the population in Abkhazia, while about 45% of the population was composed of Georgians (mainly Mingrelians). In addition, there were also immigrants from other ethnic groups, such as Armenians, Greeks, and Russians. Ethnic Abkhazians were a minority in their homeland and feared assimilation and extinction as an ethnic group. The memories of their extinct kinfolk, the Ubykh, may have contributed to this fear. As noted earlier, the Abkhazians, similar to their Circassian kin, went through a tragic ordeal. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Imperial Russia compelled the Abkhazians to leave their lands and emigrate to the Ottoman Empire. As a result most Muslim Abkhazians left, but Christians stayed on. According to Gachechiladze (1995: 81), the number of Abkhazian emigrants in the 1860s is unknown, but referring to 19<sup>th</sup> century statistics, he states that 32,000 left and 13,000 stayed. In addition, Gachechiladze (1995: 81) quotes from Zurab Anchabadze's book (1976: 86), in which he holds the Imperial Russian authorities responsible for the distribution of the vacant land to peasants from other ethnic groups. All in all, the migration or, more accurately, the deportation in the 19<sup>th</sup> century is an issue to which

Abkhazian ethno-nationalists refer very eagerly in order to give their entitlement to their homeland a legitimate character. They often frame this “loss of homeland” in a very emotional way. Thomas Goltz (2009a: 26), in his conversation with Ardzinba, the former Abkhazian president, was informed that the ethnic Abkhazian diaspora in the Middle East does not eat fish anymore, because they associate the sea with the corpses of their loved ones thrown into it during their flight from their homeland.<sup>152</sup> Regarding the fact that the Abkhazian flight to the Ottoman Empire occurred in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, however, it is unlikely that even the elderly experienced it or knew anyone who had experienced it. The demographic problem of ethnic Abkhazians now exists to such an extent that even after the separation from Georgia, the eviction of many Georgians, and the exodus of many members of other ethnic groups, ethnic Abkhazians still do not constitute the majority of the population in Abkhazia.

The Abkhazian and Ossetian fears and accusation of Georgia’s genocidal intentions (Garb 2009: 238; *Russian Analytical Digest/Chirikba* 2009: 9-10) do not rest on solid grounds. The conflicts have indeed resulted in human casualties, but there is generally no Georgian hatred towards ethnic Abkhazians and Ossetians. It is noteworthy that not only Abkhazians and Ossetians but also Georgians have suffered a lot. The Georgian population of the breakaway territories have been targeted many times and expelled. As there are many types of Georgians—sensible and tolerant individuals but also “racist” and narrow-minded ones—harassment and discriminatory behavior towards Georgia’s minorities cannot be totally excluded. Nevertheless, many years after the emergence of the separatist wars, there still live significant numbers of Abkhazians and Ossetians in Georgia proper—about 3,500 Abkhazians and 38,000 Ossetians (not much fewer Ossetians than those in South Ossetia). These are not small numbers knowing that these ethnic groups are small ethnic groups.

The conflicts in Georgia are the best examples of the fact that neither religion nor ancient hatred can be regarded as necessary or sufficient factors in explaining ethno-territorial conflicts. Since Abkhazians and Ossetians, similar to Georgians, are predominantly Orthodox Christians (with a Muslim minority), theses such as the “Clash of Civilizations” cannot explain the conflict between them. They have interacted for centuries and their nobilities have often intermarried, and among ordinary people intermarriages were also not uncommon. For example, it is believed that Stalin, a Georgian from Gori, also has certain

---

<sup>152</sup> I was informed about the issue by the members of Circassian community of Jordan, who have experienced a similar ordeal. Accordingly, they eat fish, but they do not eat fish from the Black Sea.



Ossetian roots. Christian Ossetians were present in Georgia at least since the 17<sup>th</sup> century and are mentioned in the Persian chronicle *Tarikh-e Alam-ara-ye Abbasi*, (Eskandar Beyg Monshi 1998 [17<sup>th</sup> century]: 1445), which describes the events in the Safavid empire. Ossetians, notably the southern Ossetians, have been influenced in many ways by Georgians. Christianity among Ossetians is rather old and has a Georgian origin. For example, *Dzvvari* as an Ossetian designation for a certain type of Christian sanctuary, is very similar to the Georgian word for cross, *Jvari* (see Kaloev & Tsalagova 2005: 39-43). It is also notable that Ossetians call Tbilisi “Kalak”. *Kalaki*, or *Kalak* (after omitting the final “i”, which is a nominative case-ending in Georgian), is a Georgian word meaning “city”. In fact, for Ossetians in Georgia, who lived much more dispersed before the establishment of the Ossetian AO, Tbilisi was “*The City*”, the main urban center. Apparently, *Tskhinvali*, called *Tskhinval* or *Ch'reba* by Ossetians these days, is a Georgian word derived from *Krtskhinvali*, meaning an area full of hornbeams. The folkloric dance called *Osuri*, literally meaning Ossetian, belongs to the standard repertoire of Georgian dances. Similar things can be said about Abkhazians and Georgians. In the medieval period, the name of western Georgia was Abkhazia. For example, the poet Khaqani Shirvani, from what is now the Republic of Azerbaijan, wrote in his Persian poem that he fell in love with a beautiful woman, settled down in Abkhazia, and began to speak Georgian. Remarkably, the land is called Abkhazia although its language is called Georgian. Many Abkhazians claim that the Georgian royal dynasty of Bagrationi were ethnic Abkhazians. Although such claims conflict with other claims about the Bagrationi origin, such as their descent from the Parthian dynasty, there is still a good possibility of intermarriages between the Georgian and Abkhazian nobility and aristocratic families. The fact remains that the relationship between the Georgian, Abkhazian, and especially Ossetian peoples has generally been warm and cordial until the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Cultural factors cannot explain the conflicts in Georgia. These conflicts have a purely political-territorial character rather than anything else. Indeed, “land” is a very emotional subject all over the Caucasus and particularly in Georgia. Very often in discussions with Georgians about the conflicts, they mention that although many Abkhazians and Ossetians live there, it is “our” land, by which they mean it belongs to Georgia.

Land is a scarce commodity in the Caucasus, which is predominantly mountainous. The multitude of ethnic groups and their relatively high concentration in a relatively small area creates emotional attachments to the locality. In comparison with the North Caucasian people, Georgians are a large ethnic group and live over a larger area. Nevertheless, northern Georgians resemble the North Caucasians in their

material and non-material culture, and especially their relationship with land and the way they use it. Even though the numbers and areas of dwelling of Georgians (and Armenians, for that matter) are larger than those of North Caucasians, they are still much smaller than those of their southern neighbors. Georgia (in cultural terms) has traditionally been a transitional area between the South, the Iranian sphere (see e.g. Sanikidze 2008; Soudavar Farmanfarmaian 2009), and the mountainous culture of the North. In addition, the ancient roots of Orthodox Christianity make Georgia a very unique place. Although it was often a suzerainty of the Persian, Ottoman, and Russian empires, it was a metropolis of its own kind in the Caucasus. Its influence is manifested in the fact that the Christianity of Abkhazians and particularly Ossetians, and even the earlier Christianity among the Avars and Chechens, originated from Georgia. Its distinct Christianity in the Muslim empires has given Georgians a distinct ethno-national identity and pride.

Even though the sense of national pride, and perhaps superiority, among Georgians has deep roots, Georgia has traditionally been home to many non-Georgian ethnic groups, who spoke different languages and confessed different religions. Georgia has traditionally been famous for its multicultural character and its ethno-religious tolerance.

Nevertheless, the Soviet nationalities policies complicated the situation. It cherished the concept of ethno-nationality and attached it to territory in a hierarchical way. It was divisive and disintegrative in areas where groups of different ethnic origins were already integrated into a single cohesive society. Ethno-nationalism and ethnic competition, and latent ethnic conflict, were inherently part and parcel of the Soviet nationalities policy (see, for example, Bremmer 1997; Brubaker 1994; Martin 2001a; Martin 2001b; Slezkine 1994). The bomb of ethno-nationalism, however, did not explode loudly until after *glasnost* and *perestroika*, which deteriorated the inter-ethnic relations in a collapsing empire. In such an environment, minorities in union republics felt insecure. The Abkhazians and Ossetians in Georgia were no exception.

This does not mean, however, that Abkhazians, Ossetians, and Georgians are “in essence” unable to coexist peacefully. Although Abkhazians and particularly Ossetians live(d) in other parts of Georgia, the violent conflicts were concentrated only in the former autonomous territories.<sup>153</sup> South Ossetians from the seceded territory had fruitful business relations with Georgians until 2004, and ethnic Abkhazians and Ossetians residing in Georgia proper coexisted peacefully. Chirikba, a fervent proponent of Abkhazian independence, has stated that “in an

---

<sup>153</sup> In the 1990s there were a few clashes outside the autonomous territories, but there have been no reliable reports of such clashes in 2008, either prior to, or in the aftermath of, the August 2008 war.

independent Abkhazia all citizens regardless of their ethnic background will enjoy equal rights of citizenship” (Rezvani 2005: 61). When already appointed as the Abkhazian Minister of Foreign Affairs, he wrote to me: “I hope Abkhazia will restore its friendly relations with the Georgian people after Georgia recognizes Abkhazia” (personal communication by email, November 2011). A similar statement was also made by him earlier: “When/if Georgia comes to its senses and recognizes both Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent nations, these three can, no doubt, build up their relations on a new basis, that of equality and cooperation, which will be beneficial for all sides”. All these statements indicate that the South Ossetian and Abkhazian conflicts in Georgia are territorial conflicts about the political status of these territories and not about (ancient or modern) ethnic hatreds and cultural incompatibilities.

The popular explanation of “our land, our religion, and our language” is, thus, partially correct as an explanation of conflicts in Georgia. Land, or more accurately, territory, is the main issue around which these conflicts have emerged. Cultural factors are much less important—if at all—than the political-territorial factors in explaining these conflicts.

Out of the many ethnic groups in Georgia, only the Abkhazians and Ossetians engaged in separatist wars. Why was this so? The answer lies in the key phrase: ethno-territorial autonomy.

As already discussed, part of the Abkhazian grievances stem from the fact that they were expelled from their homeland by Tsarist Russia and their land was settled by many newcomers belonging to many different ethnic groups. Remarkably, they accuse Georgians, and not other ethnic groups, of wrongdoings against them. Why are Georgians different from the many other ethnic groups who also lived in Abkhazia? Why is the Abkhazian aversion one-sidedly directed towards Georgians? The answer lies in the fact that by taking the Georgians as the “Other” and as their main adversary, the Abkhazians protest their subordination to Georgia. Georgians are the titular nation in the whole of Georgia. The Abkhazians view them as their main rival in preserving their status and position in Abkhazia. As Giorgi (Yuri) Anchabadze—a member of a famous Georgian-Abkhazian aristocratic family, a scholar and a peace activist—maintained:

In the Soviet Union the titular nations on the republican level (in addition to Russians) occupied the better political and economic positions. On the level of lower-ranked autonomous territorial units, however, the lower-ranked titulars competed over these with the titulars of the union republic. All other ethnic groups were not much involved in these politics. In

Abkhazia specifically the competition was between the Abkhaz and Georgians. (interview and personal communication, Tbilisi 2008)<sup>154</sup>

In addition, both South Ossetia and Abkhazia were atypical cases in the former Soviet ethno-territorial delimitations. Ossetians enjoyed a double autonomy: a North Ossetian ASSR within the Russian Federative SSR and a South Ossetian AO within Georgia, contiguous to each other. Although ethnic Abkhazians were a minority in it, Abkhazia was given a higher autonomous status (ASSR) than the South Ossetian AO, in which the Ossetians did constitute a majority of the territory's population. Abkhazia was contiguous to the Karachay-Cherkess AO and very proximate to Kabardino-Balkarian ASSR and the Adygheyan AO, where their Circassian kinfolk lived. The Ossetian and Abkhazian connection with their North Caucasian kinfolk, therefore, may have played a role in their feelings of dissociation from Georgia and their desire for political separation (even to go to the extent of joining the Russian Federation).

It is no secret that many Ossetians and Abkhazians collaborated with the Bolsheviks against the nationalist Menshevik government of the Georgian Democratic Republic. Their connections to their North Caucasian kinfolks, who supported the Bolsheviks, probably contributed to this political behavior, and the Bolshevik offering or at least tolerance of their self-declared autonomy most probably stems from this. Nevertheless, these facts cannot be seen as explanations for the ethno-territorial conflicts in South Ossetia and Abkhazia in the early 1990s. Armenia(ns) fought a war against Georgia in 1918. In addition, among the "rooted" minorities, Armenians (and not the Abkhazians or Ossetians) have suffered the most negative stereotype in Georgia (see Figure 6.5). If a past conflict can determine a new conflict, then why did Armenians and Georgians not go through a new war? The answer lies probably in the fact that Armenians, unlike the Abkhazians and Ossetians, did not possess territorial autonomy in Georgia.<sup>155</sup>

In the 1990s the organization *Javakhk* (the Armenian name of Javakheti) and its military wing *Parvana* tried in vain to mobilize local Armenians for independence or even autonomy in Javakheti (Hin 2003:

---

<sup>154</sup> Although it happened without prior appointment, my communication with Giorgi Anchabadze had the character of a formal interview. Not being successful in finding a number of famous Georgian peace activists, I was lucky enough, thanks to Professor Giorgi Kipiani, to find Giorgi (Yuri) Anchabadze in June 2008 in Tbilisi. Anchabadze was kind enough to answer each of my questions in turn.

<sup>155</sup> According to Armenian informants, the Georgian police fired on the Armenian protestors in the Javakheti district in southern Georgia. In my meeting with Giorgi Kheviashvili, the Georgian Minister of Refugees and Accommodation (May 2007), I raised this issue. A top official informed me that the police only fired in the air to deter the mob. The Armenians, apparently, did not agree with the Georgian government's decision that Georgian language should be an obligatory subject in the school curricula all around Georgia.

81). According to local experts,<sup>156</sup> the Georgian state did not have much control in Javakheti in the early 1990s; nevertheless, the situation did not develop into a violent conflict. The reason lies in the fact that Javakheti did not possess autonomy. During the chaotic times, *Javakhk* could be informally in charge in Javakheti, but they did not have any institutional or legal structure to be so. Georgia had all the opportunity to restore its control over the area once the chaos was over.

The territorial autonomous units were generally designed according to the Soviet interpretation of right of national self-determination and were seen as national homelands. In addition to the ability of local autonomous authorities to mobilize local people, these territorially (nearly) clearly defined units may evoke psychological and moral appeals of “separateness” and “distinctness”, and hence also independence. The fact that Javakheti did not possess territorial autonomy is probably the main reason for the lack of Georgian violent reaction. The lack of such structure in Javakheti probably made the Georgian authorities realize that separatism in Javakheti had few real chances as well as less psychological and moral appeal (inside and mainly) outside Javakheti.

Remarkably, no separatist war emerged in Adjara, another autonomous republic (a former ASSR) in Georgia. The Adjaran president, Aslan Abashidze, governed Adjara as his personal fiefdom and enjoyed a good relationship with Russia. He was toppled after the Rose Revolution. In that sense, his removal was not much different from that of other pre-revolutionary politicians and administrators.

Part of the explanation for the absence of a separatist war in Adjara is that Adjara was not an *ethnic* autonomy. Adjarans are ethnic Georgians. As this territory belonged to the Ottoman Empire for a long time, it had a large Muslim Georgian population when it was transferred to Soviet Georgia in 1921. Although Adjara belonged for a time to the Tsarist Russian Empire and the Democratic Republic of Georgia, it was briefly regained by Turkey in the First World War before being placed under British control. Adjara transferred to the Soviet Union as a result of the Soviet-Turkish Treaty of Kars (1921). The Turks demanded autonomy for Adjara as it had a large Muslim population at that time. The religious composition of Adjara has changed since then, and Orthodox Christians are now the majority in Adjara and were probably already so in the last decade(s) of the Soviet era. In addition, Muslim Georgians also have a Georgian identity and were regarded as titulars in Georgia, a label which was accompanied by many formal and informal privileges. Moreover, religion has not been a factor in conflicts in Georgia.

---

<sup>156</sup> I leave them anonymous for obvious reasons.

The situation in South Ossetia and Abkhazia were very different. These autonomous territorial units were designed as ethnic homelands for the Ossetians and the Abkhazians. They were distinct ethnic nations (*natsional'nosti*) according to the Soviet categorization, while they were subordinated to Georgians. The possession of territorial autonomies served as an opportunity structure for them in order to get mobilized for separation and independence from Georgia.

It is a fact that many Georgians regard Russia and Russians as the main adversary and the instigator of separatism. This is only correct if they associate Russia and Russians with the Soviet Union and its nationalities policy. Otherwise, such a statement is not a solid one. The recognition of the independence of Abkhazia and Ossetia does not serve any vital Russian geopolitical interest. It would be more attractive for a manipulative Russia to have its say in the break-away territories as parts of Georgia, and by that also to have a say in the Georgian internal affairs. Recognition of these territories' independence means that Russia is bereft of its opportunity to "manipulatively" meddle in Georgia's internal affair. Russia had already punished Georgia in the form of embargoes, and it would have done more so even if the August 2008 war had not erupted. Nevertheless, it is not very likely that it would recognize these territories as independent if the conflict had not re-erupted. After the war the prospects of reintegration of these territories into a unified Georgia no longer seemed realistic, at least not in the near future. Therefore, Russia's best move was to recognize their independence as yet another punishment for an anti-Russian Georgia. Nevertheless, it was not very likely that Georgia, whether under Saakashvili or even under a Russian-friendly leadership, would ever agree to cede territory.<sup>157</sup> States are usually not very eager to cede territory.

Georgia on one side and Russia and the Abkhazian and South Ossetian separatists on the other side accuse each other of provocations prior to the August 2008 war. Russia had lifted the economic blockade on Abkhazia and was engaged in relationships with both break-away territories, a fact which was regarded by Georgia as a provocation. In fact, Russia could not do otherwise as the northern kinfolk of South Ossetians as well as the Circassian and Abazinian kinfolks of Abkhazians actively lobbied and expected Russia to do so. Russia did not want to jeopardize its own security and stability in the North Caucasus (Chirikba 2004: 344 and 347; Markedonov 2008a: 8; Markedonov 2008b: 4; Mitchell 178-179; Skakov 2011: 1). Russia had offered a large proportion of the population of these republics' Russian citizenship (as they had no globally recognized

---

<sup>157</sup> Usually states are not very eager to cede territory. Hypothetically, they may; nevertheless, it is not very likely in the short run in the current post-Soviet Caucasus, with its strong ethno-nationalist tradition.

passports). Distribution of passports can be called *ethno-geopolitical engineering* as it makes humans a politicized item and extends a state's political influence and also responsibilities beyond its borders. Russia and its proponents claim that Russia was obliged to interfere actively in the conflicts between Georgia and the Abkhazian and South Ossetian separatists in order to protect its own citizens (see e.g. Cheterian 2009: 156; Chirikba 2004: 343-344; Closson 2008; Garb 2009: 236; George 2009: 135; Markedonov 2008a: 7; Rezvani 2005: 61; *Russian Analytical Digest/ Gegeshidze* 2008: 12). Although Russia, particularly after August 2008, emerged as a protector of South Ossetia, the relationship between them is more complex than one might want to believe. For example, certain circles in South Ossetia and Russia profiting from the current situation regard a formal Russian supervision as a nuisance to their corrupt business. In addition, the increasingly emerging idea of a united Ossetian independent statehood is certainly a dissonant jarring sound in the mighty Russian bear's ears (see e.g. King 2008b: 6; Skakov 2011).<sup>158</sup>

On the other hand, Russia and the Abkhazian and South Ossetian separatists regard the installment of parallel loyal-to-Georgia administrations for South Ossetia and Abkhazia as a Georgian provocation. These are, indeed, signals to the separatists that Georgia is intent on re-conquering its lost territories. They may provoke vigilance in these territories but they cannot be regarded as unacceptable: Georgia had never given up its claim on the whole Georgian territory as it was in Soviet times.

In reality, however, *all* sides have violated agreements by engaging in brief military stand-offs or by disrespecting demilitarized zones. In particular, Russia's bombing of Georgia's Pankisi Gorge, where the Kisti, ethnic Chechens of Georgia, live, was a blatant violation of international law. This latter action stemmed from Russia's troubles in the North Caucasus, and Chechnya in particular. Generally, all these acts which are labeled as provocations are nothing other than securing of interests in ethno-territorial conflicts by different parties with seemingly incompatible interests. Georgia does not want to formally lose its territory; the separatists do not accept anything less than independence from Georgia; and the ethnic situation in the Russian North Caucasus compels Russia to take a position more inclined towards the Abkhazian and South Ossetian demands.

---

<sup>158</sup> Once a North Ossetian "colleague" (in the broad sense of the word) told me shortly before the August 2008 war that Russia uses Abkhazia and South Ossetia as bargain chips with Saakashvili. He said the fact that the Adjaran president Aslan Abashidze, an adversary to Saakashvili, left Adjara for Russia was due to an order from Russia which was meant as a signal to Saakashvili. According to him, Russia wanted to tell Saakashvili: "Here you have Adjara. Take this as a gift and a sign of goodwill. You will also get back South Ossetia and Abkhazia, if you behave as we want you to". It is difficult to evaluate this statement, but it clearly shows that Russia did not enjoy full Ossetian trust.

A narrow emphasis on Western–Russian rivalry when explaining the August 2008 war obscures the roots of the conflicts, which are ethno-territorial in nature and decades old. The Abkhazian and South Ossetian conflicts are related to the collapse of the Soviet empire and Georgian independence, but in turn these conflicts have their roots in the almost century-long Soviet nationalities policy. In the perception of the autonomous territories’ leaders and the bulk of their population, if a union republic had the right to independence, then the autonomous territories, fearing a worsening of their position in the newly independent state without any supervision from the former empire, also had the right to secede themselves from that republic and become independent. Geopolitical and geostrategic motives are only secondary and did not play a very essential role until recently. The aversion towards Russia goes hand in hand with these conflicts. Georgia’s pro-Western orientation has also had a good deal to do with its frustration with Russia. Accession to NATO and the recognition of Kosovo by many countries only made Georgian leaders act hastily. These global geopolitical events may have triggered the August 2008 war, but they were not its root causes. Even if the August 2008 war can be regarded as (an) ethno-territorial conflict(s), it cannot be understood and explained without referring to the earlier ethno-territorial conflicts in Georgia: the South Ossetian and Abkhazian conflicts in the early 1990s. In this sense, global geopolitical factors can only explain their re-eruption but not their emergence in the first place. The wars and conflicts in Georgia are about “land” and not about the “big powers’ geopolitical games”.



Figure 6.5. Georgian-controlled areas in South Ossetia before the August 2008 war. Source: International Crisis group (2007).





*Figure 6.6. A Bolshevik monster from the Soviet Union has put its hand on South Ossetia and is biting Abkhazia, injuring Georgia. It seems that the monster is standing on a tree, which appears to be Armenia. (Courtesy of Munchehr Shiva; description is mine.)*

## *Political-Territorial History of the North Caucasus*

Although there exist more ethnic tensions in the North Caucasus with a territorial dimension, the only two cases that have resulted in full-scale wars are the Chechen war of separation from the Russian Federation and the Ingush-Ossetian conflict over the Prigorodny district (*Prigorodnyi Rayon*). Chechnya is the only case in the Russian Federation where a full-scale separatist war has been going on for years. Although ethno-political strife has not been rare in other territorial units of the Russian Federation—for example, in the Tatarstan and Tyva republics (see. e.g. Dunlop 1997; Fondahl 1997; Frank & Wixman 1997; Graney 2010; Shaw 1999; Toft 2003)—only the war in Chechnya meets the criteria for a separatist ethno-territorial conflict. The other case of ethno-territorial conflict in the North Caucasus, the Prigorodny conflict, is also an odd case, in the sense that it is the only case in which two ethnic groups that possessed lower-ranked autonomous units came into ethno-territorial conflict with each other.

The roots of these conflicts lie partly in the nature of ethno-politics and hence ethno-territorial policies in the Soviet era (especially in the 1940s) and to some extent the late Tsarist era. Especially the punishments of many North Caucasian peoples by Stalin, in the form of systematic and organized deportation in which large numbers of members of these ethnic groups perished, form historical traumas in the collective memories of these peoples and can be held at least partially responsible for the outbreak of these ethno-territorial conflicts in the North Caucasus. As Bruce Ware (1998: 338) correctly comments about the ethnic situation in the North Caucasus: “[The] present tensions in the Caucasus, which threaten Russia’s further fragmentation, may be viewed, in part, as deriving from the history of Russo-Soviet policies of separatism, federalism, and ethnic nationalism”. Therefore, it is appropriate to discuss briefly the turbulent political history of the North Caucasus before the ethno-territorial conflicts there are discussed.<sup>159</sup>

The treaties of Golestan (Gulistan) (1813) and Torkamanchay (Turkmanchay) (1828) between Qajar Iran and Tsarist Russia confirmed the latter’s supremacy and sovereignty in (parts of) the South Caucasus at the expense of Iran. The full possession and pacification of the North Caucasus, however, was to be a more difficult task for Russia. Although they were by-passed in order to reach Transcaucasia, the pacification of the North Caucasian Muslims took a long time. The so-called Caucasian

---

<sup>159</sup> The text of this section, “Political Territorial History of the North Caucasus”, and that of “The Ossetian-Ingush Conflict over Prigorodny” section overlap largely with my published paper titled “The Ossetian-Ingush Confrontation: Explaining a Horizontal Conflict” (Rezvani 2010).

military highway, a mountain pass which crossed through modern-day North Ossetia into Georgia provided Russians a path of entry into Transcaucasia. Ossetians are an Orthodox Christian people and, therefore, are suspected of having been sympathetic to the Russian advances. While it is not totally illogical that a people might ultimately facilitate its subjugation to a religiously similar powerful outsider, it is more logical to assume that it was the Russians who regarded their co-religionist Ossetians as reliable and favored them over the Muslim North Caucasian ethnic groups, and not vice versa. The fact also that Ossetians have resisted subjugation by Russia from time to time is evidence for this.

An important Russian achievement in the conquest of the North Caucasus and the subjugation of its inhabitants was the war against the Circassians in the 1860s, as a result of which large numbers of Circassians were killed and many fled to the Ottoman Empire. The Circassians, in contrast to most other North Caucasians, lived in the lower foothills and plains to the north of the Great Caucasus ridge and were therefore an easy target. In addition, their assumed affiliation with the Ottoman Empire along with their fertile lands were more reasons for Russia to subjugate them. Their early subjugation and pacification, however, meant that Circassians (and Ossetians) were largely spared the hardships experienced by their mountain-dwelling ethnic neighbors, and in contrast to the Ingush, Chechens, and Karachay-Balkars they were not subjected to deportation and punishment in the 1940s, under allegations of having collaborated or sympathized with Nazi Germany.

The political history of the mountainous Caucasus, however, was more turbulent. It was one of continuous and incessant resistance. The resistance and rebellion in the mountainous Caucasus, particularly in its eastern parts, re-erupted after a while many times after being suppressed by Tsarist Russia or the Soviet Union. Already in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, North Caucasian mountain dwellers were able to wage resistance against Russia. A Chechen leader, Sheikh Mansour, was able to unite a number of Muslim mountain peoples around himself in a struggle against Russia, until he was captured in 1791. Subsequently, the Avar leader, Imam Shamil (Figure 6.7), was able to lead the struggle (called *Ghazawat*) against Russia, until he was captured in 1859. Even after his capture the rebellions and opposition to Russia did not subside. In addition, the fate of the Circassians did not deter the mountain peoples. After 1878, the Russian authorities took a harder line vis-à-vis the mountain dwellers. Russian actions were harsh and brutal. Members of Sufi brotherhoods, who were not killed in the violent suppression of rebellions, were either executed or deported to Siberia. Russia was unable to pacify the mountainous Caucasus, however, even using these harsh measures. As Cornell (2001: 29) puts it:

Thus Russia expected to have drastically reduced the potential for further uprisings on the southern flank. However, they were mistaken. Sufi brotherhoods...became underground organizations, which ... managed to include over the half and in some areas almost the entire male population of Chechnya, Ingushetia and Dagestan.... Thus it seems fair to say that Russia occupied the northeast Caucasus without succeeding in truly incorporating it into its empire.

It was not surprising, therefore, that the Muslim mountain dwellers of the Northern Caucasus tended to support the Bolsheviks against General Denikin's White Army during the Russian civil war during and in the aftermath of the Bolshevik Revolution (1917–1920). This time also the Christian Ossetians fought together with their Muslim neighbors against Denikin's White Army. The Whites were associated with the Tsarist empire and its brutal policies against the mountain peoples and particularly its Muslim population. On the other hand, Lenin intended to offer the mountain peoples autonomy and supported their right to national self-determination.

Nevertheless, rebellions soon broke out against the Bolsheviks, and Bolshevik policies were not much different from the Tsarist ones with regard to the mountainous North Caucasus. The Caucasian rebellion was suppressed by a disproportionate use of military force in 1921. In that year the Bolsheviks abolished the Mountainous Republic of the Northern Caucasus, the leaders of which had cooperated with the Bolsheviks earlier, and established the Mountainous Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic within the Russian Federative SSR.

The Mountainous Republic of the Northern Caucasus possessed the territories which are located today in the territories of Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, North Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, and Karachayevo-Cherkessia. Dagestan, however, was not included in the territories of the Mountainous Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, which itself was divided into ethno-national districts. This republic was subjected to disintegration, as new territorial designs were made by which it lost its territories to the newly designed territorial units. Chechens, the kinfolk of the Ingush, were separated from them, and a Chechen autonomous *oblast'* was created, while Ingush and North Ossetian districts remained part of the Mountainous Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, until its abolition in 1924 and the establishment of separate Ingush and North Ossetian autonomous *oblasts*.

The final territorial design of the North Caucasus remained intact with the exception of a short, late-Stalinist period. This final territorial design included four ASSRs—Dagestan, Checheno-Ingushetia, North Ossetia, and Kabardino-Balkaria—and two AOs—Adygheya and

Karacheyvo-Cherkessia. In 1992, Ingushetia separated from Chechnya as an autonomous republic. Also Karachayev-Cherkessia's and Adygheya's statuses were elevated from AO (autonomous province) to autonomous republics in the independent Russian Federation. North Ossetia has adopted the epithet Alania after North Ossetia, in order to emphasize the Alan ancestry of Ossetians.

In the 1940s the names of Karachays and Balkars were removed from their corresponding autonomous territories after they, along with the Chechens and Ingush, were deported. The Chechen-Ingush ASSR was then totally abolished. After Stalin's (Figure 6.8) death these territories were rehabilitated by Khrushchev and remained intact until 1992. These fatal deportations, during which a large number of people perished, were important events and are still vividly present in the collective memories of these "punished" peoples. As their victims are still alive today and these deportations targeted whole ethnic groups—even those who were fighting for the Soviet Union during the Second World War—the Stalinist-era deportations had a profound impact on the punished peoples' political behavior. According to Tishkov (1997: 166):

The deportation of peoples, including Chechens and Ingush, had a dual influence on the fate of ethnic communities. Of course, there was the enormous trauma (in terms of physical scope, and socio-cultural and moral dimensions) for hundreds of thousands of people on both the collective and personal levels. Cruel and aggressive actions aroused the desire for vengeance among the victims; first as a curse, then as a means of political survival, and finally, at present stage as a form of therapy (catharsis) from the unspeakable trauma—a means to reinstate and mend collective and individual dignity. Deportation never managed to annihilate the collective identity; indeed it further strengthened ethnic sentiment by drawing rigid borders around ethnic groups, in many cases borders which had not existed in the past. Deportations provoked feelings of ethnicity....

The legacy of the turbulent and arbitrary territorial delimitation process of the North Caucasus, in addition to the punishment and deportation of many mountainous North Caucasian ethnic groups in the 1940s, and the problems arising after their rehabilitation, have contributed in certain ways to the eruption of ethno-territorial conflicts in the North Caucasus.

The recent re-eruption of conflicts in Georgia and Kyrgyzstan raises the question of whether conflicts in the Russian Federation may re-erupt again. The Chechen conflict is already transformed into an Islamist resistance and Wahhabi/Salafi terrorism by militant Sunni extremists in large part of the North Caucasus, which, although directed against Russian dominance, is not directly linked to the ethno-national aspirations of the Muslim North Caucasian peoples. Although the volatile situation in the

North Caucasus suggests that the re-eruption of ethno-territorial conflicts are possible, Russia's firm control over the political establishments in its North Caucasian republics makes it rather unlikely (Rezvani 2010: 427).



*Figure 6.7. Imam Shamil, the legendary North Caucasian resistance leader (1834–1859)*





*Figure 6.8. Stalin (Ioseb Besarionis dze Jughashvili), the Soviet Leader (1924–1953)*

## ***The Ossetian–Ingush Conflict over Prigorodny***

The Ingush–Ossetian conflict in the North Caucasus is the only case in the post-Soviet space in which two ethnic groups possessing territorial autonomy came to overt warfare with each other.<sup>160</sup> According to Tishkov (1999: 578, table 2), it cost about 1,000 human lives. In addition to Armenians, Ossetians were another people in the Caucasus that possessed a double autonomy: the North Ossetian ASSR in the Russian Federation bordered the territorially contiguous South Ossetian AO in Georgia.

It is often said that the Ingush and Ossetians are culturally incompatible. Indeed, there does exist a difference in the languages they speak and in the religions most of them confess. While the Ingush speak a Nakh language close to Chechen, Ossetians speak an Iranian language (the Northeastern branch) and are believed to be the descendants of Scythian (Sarmatian and Alan) tribes. Language, however, is unlikely to serve as a potential conflict-instigating factor, as both people were able to communicate in other languages, notably in Russian. A more important cultural factor is thought to be religion. Indeed, religion and religious difference are factors that seem to affect ethnic groups' alliances and political actions. As will be seen below, religious difference has also played its part in the Ossetian–Ingush conflict. Nevertheless, it is rather naive to assume religious difference as a sole determinant of ethno-territorial conflict between the Ingush and Ossetians. Ossetians are also engaged in a protracted ethno-territorial conflict with Georgians over the former South Ossetian AO in Georgia, even though both peoples are Orthodox Christians.

The dispute over the *Prigorodnyi Rayon* (Prigorodny District) is the reason behind the ethno-territorial conflict which occurred between the Ingush and Ossetians in the early 1990s. This conflict manifested itself in a short period of overt warfare but was less bloody in comparison with the other conflict in the North Caucasus (Chechnya). Nevertheless, the ethno-territorial nature of this conflict is evident, and it should be noted that the dispute has had a longer history.

The Prigorodny district is a district in the southeastern part of modern-day North Ossetia. It belonged to the Chechen–Ingush ASSR, which had emerged after the merger of the Chechen AO with the Ingush AO in 1934 and its elevation into an ASSR in 1936. In 1944 Stalin gave orders to deport the Ingush and Chechens, and their ASSR was abolished. The Prigorodny district was transferred to the North Ossetian ASSR. Although the Ingush and Chechens were rehabilitated and the Chechen-

---

<sup>160</sup> The description of the Ossetian–Ingush conflict in this chapter overlaps largely with my published paper, “The Ossetian–Ingush Confrontation: Explaining a Horizontal Conflict” (Rezvani 2010).



Ingush ASSR was restored by Khrushchev in 1957, the Prigorodny district remained part of the North Ossetian ASSR. The deportation has burned itself into the Ingush collective memory and has influenced their political actions.

After the Ingush returned en masse from their exile, they sought justice from the authorities. Already in the 1970s the Ingush had petitioned the Soviet government, asking for the return to them of the Prigorodny district (Ormrod 1997: 107). After *perestroika* and during the process of dissolution of the Soviet Union which proceeded afterwards, Chechnya, under the leadership of Johar Dudaev, announced its independence, but Ingushetia preferred to remain part of the Russian Federation, hoping that this would benefit its negotiating position vis-à-vis North Ossetia.

Aside from the Ingush's desire to remain within the Russian Federation, their particular relations with the North Ossetians, their distinct language, and their *compactly-settled* territory have contributed to their willingness to split the former Republic of Checheno-Ingushetia. In 1988–1989, before Chechnya had undertaken to separate from the Russian federal structure, 60,000 Ingush citizens signed a petition calling for the formation of an autonomous Ingush Republic. On 8 January 1992 the Chechen parliament announced the restoration of the 1934 border between Chechnya and Ingushetia. (Ormrod 1997: 107) [Italics are mine]

Boris Yeltsin, campaigning for his presidential election (1991), expressed his support for the Ingush claim at a rally in Nazran in Ingushetia. As early as 1990, a Russian commission (the Belyakov Commission) that was set up to investigate the Ingush claim on the Prigorodny district concluded that it was well-founded. Ingushetia was one of the most pro-Yeltsin territorial entities in Russia, while the North Ossetian leadership sympathized with the hardliner communists (who organized the August 1991 coup against Gorbachev) (Cornell 1998b: 412; Cornell 2001: 254).

Yeltsin's pro-Ingush attitude was also evident in the Russian federal decree "On the Rehabilitation of Repressed Peoples" (April 1991)—which aimed at social and territorial rehabilitation of deported peoples—and in the official Russian declaration of a separate Ingush Republic within the Russian Federation (4 June 1992).<sup>161</sup> Nevertheless,

---

<sup>161</sup> The political history of the Ingush (and Ingushetia) created a situation which requires special attention. In the dataset (Appendix 5), the identification and filling in of the data of most cases was relatively easy. The only ambiguous cases were those of encounters in which one pair of the dyad (i.e. encounter) were the Ingush. The complex political development of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR and its territorial effects are discussed in this book. The more numerous Chechens controlled the autonomous institutions in the ASSR. The Ingush, relatively early after their separation from the Chechens, came into conflict with the Ossetians, and hence the Russian authorities mediated. In addition, the Ingush could not develop well-functioning autonomous institutions early enough to pose a separatist challenge to the Russian Federation, even if they had wanted to. Therefore, only their encounter with

despite Yeltsin's sympathy to the Ingush claims, substantial Russian support was absent when it was critically needed.

In the aftermath of Ingush activism and the resulting Ingush-Ossetian tensions, the North Ossetian Supreme Soviet took a decision that suspended the right of the Ingush to live in North Ossetia. The Ingush resisted this decision and set up self-defense militias, resulting in an escalation of tensions. It was clear that the possession of territorial autonomy did matter. Even though the Ingush could arm themselves, "the Ossetians were in a more favorable position, as they could make use of their republican administration to legitimize the existence of rogue paramilitary units as different kinds of militia" (Cornell 2001: 256).

After a time of tensions and skirmishes between the armed Ingush and Ossetians, large-scale violence broke out on 30 October 1992. Although Russian troops were already present on 31 October, the violence continued. The largest number of people (over 450 persons) were killed in a short period between 30 October and 4 November 1992. According to official sources, 644 people had been killed by June 1994 (Cornell 1998b: 415; Cornell 2001: 258).

Despite the fact that the large-scale violence subsided, there have been armed clashes and tensions between the Ingush and Ossetians ever since. In this light, the hostage-taking in the Beslan school requires special attention. The motives of the hostage takers were not ethno-national in nature, being related rather to the Wahhabi/Salafi insurgents in the North Caucasus. Moreover, the Islamist Chechen leader Shamil Basayev took responsibility. In addition, the hostage-takers consisted of many ethnic backgrounds from within and outside the post-Soviet space (notably of Arab origin). Nevertheless, a number of Ingush took part in the hostage-taking drama, and the fact remains that the logical route to Beslan from the Chechen mountains passes through Ingushetia. Also, the bomb blast (9 September 2010) in the North Ossetian capital Vladikavkaz was a blow to the troubled Ossetian-Ingush relationship. There is no claim that the Ingush leadership or a large part of the Ingush population supported these terrorist actions; nevertheless, these actions have contributed to anti-Ingush feelings among the Ossetians (and vice versa, as a reaction).

Despite Yeltsin's initial pro-Ingush positioning, Russian support for the Ingush has never materialized. On the contrary, the Ingush complain about the Russian support for their fellow Orthodox Christian Ossetians (Cornell 1998b: 416-417; Cornell 2001: 258-259). The reason for the

---

the Ossetians is codified on the basis of the situation *after* they had separated from Chechens. Their encounters with Chechens and Russians are codified on the basis of the situation *before* they had separated from their Chechen kinfolk. The different situations (before and after their separation) affect the variable "Demographic dominance in the autonomous territorial unit" (D). In the Chechen-Ingush ASSR, the Ingush had no demographic majority ( $d=0$ ), but in the mono-titular Ingushetia the Ingush comprised the majority of the population ( $D=1$ ).

Russian “inconsistency” may lie in the fact that the actions of Russian armed forces do not always reflect the policy of the Center. In the view of the Russian military, Ossetians are loyal Orthodox Christians, while the Ingush are a disloyal people like their ethnic kinfolk, the Chechens. It is also argued that the Russian military pro-Ossetian attitude may be a strategic maneuver to get the Chechens involved in the conflict on behalf of their Ingush kinfolk. The Chechen war itself began in 1994, and it seems plausible that there were elements in the Russian military (or leadership generally) who sought a reason to invade Chechnya even before that date. According to Cornell (2001: 259):

The main evidence supporting this hypothesis is that the Russian forces, who entered the Prigorodny from the West and North, actually crossed the border to Ingushetia, pushing eastward towards the still undemarcated Chechen Ingush border, where they were countered by the Chechen forces.... An operation against Chechnya was halted by the threat of mobilization of the Confederation of Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus, which could have at that point led to a full-scale regional confrontation.

As evident from the above quote, ethnic kinship was a factor which the Russian leadership and military were aware of in their policy-making. The Confederation of Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus is an organization which assertively defended the North Caucasian peoples against outsiders. It has supported the Chechens against the Russian Federation and the Abkhazians against Georgia. Although this organization still exists, it is largely inactive now. The importance of ethnic kinship is also reflected in another fact. The Georgian-South Ossetian conflict in the neighboring South Ossetia had already broken out before the open warfare between the Ingush and North Ossetians began. Russia was latently pro-Ossetian until 2008, when it openly supported the South Ossetian separatist claims. Even if Russia was an honest and neutral peacekeeper and mediator, its passive involvement in the South Ossetian-Georgian conflict gave it a strategic foothold in the South Caucasus and hence brought Russia and Ossetians together. North Ossetia, which needs space to accommodate refugees from South Ossetia, does not want to give away the Prigorodny district, and Russia’s interests are in preserving its internal borders between the autonomous subjects, thus preventing chaos in the country.

In 1994, Yeltsin brokered a deal between the North Ossetian and Ingush presidents of the time, respectively Galazov and Aushev. The Russian mediation resulted in an official renouncement of the Ingush claims on the Prigorodny district, while North Ossetia agreed to allow the Ingush refugees to return to their homes. Nevertheless, neither side has been committed wholeheartedly to the agreement. The North Ossetian authorities attempted to hinder resettlement of the Ingush in North

Ossetia, and it is unlikely that the Ingush have given up their claims on the disputed district. Even though there were threats of secessions during the Yeltsin era (Ormrod 1997: 107-116), it is unlikely that either North Ossetia or Ingushetia will undertake to separate from the Russian Federation in the post-Yeltsin period. Putin's and Medvedev's Russia, unlike Yeltsin's, is a stable and economically strong country. North Ossetians, who benefit from Russia's policy in support of their ethnic kinfolk in South Ossetia and are *de facto* the victors of the Prigorodny conflict, do not have much reason to separate. As for the Ingush, they are likely to regard the Russian Federation's mediating role as welcome, especially when neighboring Chechnya is plagued by Wahhabi/Salafi militant groups. In fact, although there exists sympathy for their Chechen kinfolk, Chechnya's destiny is an example for other North Caucasians to avoid.

### ***Wars in Chechnya***

The Chechen conflict has been, and arguably still is, the most protracted and the most deadly ethno-territorial conflict in the post-Soviet space and one of the most deadly in the whole Eurasian continent. This conflict had already begun before the collapse of the Soviet Union but led to large-scale violent warfare in 1994 and, after a truce, again in 1999. After the installation of a Chechen local government loyal to the Russian Federation in 2000 and presidential elections and the adoption of a Chechen constitution in 2003—which regards Chechnya as an integral part of Russia—the Chechen conflict seems to be resolved. Even though the political status of Chechnya was settled in favor of Russia, there still remains a hardcore Chechen rebel movement, which is accompanied by other Caucasians and relatively small numbers of (partially) Caucasian “diaspora” from Turkey and Arab countries, as well as Arabs, Pakistanis, and Turks, all of whose ideology derives not from ethno-nationalism but from the radical Sunni Wahhabism/Salafism. Their aim is not merely the national liberation of Chechens from the Russian yoke, but the establishment of an Islamic (read Wahhabist/Salafist) emirate in the Caucasus and the defeat of the infidel Russia in a holy war (*jihad*). According to Russia and the Chechen government, the counterterrorism operation in Chechnya was terminated in 2009 (BBC 16 April 2009). Nevertheless, it is obvious that Russia has not yet been able to put an end to the mainly Wahhabist/Salafist-originated terrorism and insurgency in the North Caucasus.

The course of the Chechen conflict can be divided into several phases. The first phase was the aftermath of the “Chechen Revolution” and the declaration of Chechen independence up until the Russian military

invasion of 1994. The second phase was the so-called First Chechen War of 1994–1996. The third phase was the phase of truce and the *de facto* recognition of the Chechen rebel government. The fourth phase was the so-called Second Chechen War of 1999–2000 (or arguably until 2003). The fifth phase was the installation of a new Chechen government and a constitution which defines Chechnya as an integral part of the Russian Federation.

The Chechen conflict began as a vertical ethno-territorial conflict. It was first a war of independence by Chechen separatists against Russia, supported by a large share of the Chechen population. It was initially a war with an ethno-national character. Later on, the nature of the war became diffused when radical Islamists—or more precisely, Wahhabists/Salafists—hijacked the war. They merged with and were supported by a few Chechen militant groups and warlords, but were opposed by many others. Later, particularly with the intervention of these radical Islamists, the conflict spread to neighboring areas in the North Caucasus.

Many analysts and journalists often speak of the “First” and the “Second” Chechen wars, referring to the corresponding first (1994–1996) and second (1999–2000) Russian military interventions. Such thinking and classifications, however, do not account for the number of deaths and the human suffering which have been inflicted upon the Chechen population in the years when active warfare was absent. Even before the first Russian intervention, and again in the period of truce between the first and the second war, the situation in Chechnya was not calm and peaceful. And even after the second war and the installation of Ahmed Kadyrov as the head of an interim Chechen government, and his election as president of Chechnya (as an integral part of the Russian Federation), the violence did not subside. As Thomas Goltz (2003: 5) puts it:

Actually, most Chechens do not make any distinction between “first” and “second” wars. They tend to regard the entire period from the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 down to today as being a long continuum of cold, cool, warm, and hot conflict with Russia, often expressed as merely the most recent attempt by Russians, repeating approximately every 50 years, to eradicate the Chechens from the face of the earth.... And given their communal experience over the past ten years, with over 100,000 civilians and combatants killed and virtually all survivors forced into refugee status or reduced to a troglodyte life in the shattered ruins of their cities and towns and villages, it is difficult to blame them for believing so.

The Chechen conflict, which has cost more than 100,000 human lives (Cornell 2005c: 255; Goltz 2003: 5), has been going on for more than 20 years, of which at least four were years of large-scale conventional warfare. It has even surpassed the war in Tajikistan in both duration and

casualties. The estimations of the casualties of the Chechen war by the Society for Russian-Chechen Friendship are shocking. This was a human rights NGO monitoring human rights violations in Chechnya, which was closed down by the Russian Supreme court in 2007 (Ria Novosti 23 January 2007). According to the Society for Russian-Chechen Friendship, basing its estimations on many reports:

Estimates indicate that during the first and second war in Chechnya, on a Chechen population of 1 million, 150,000–200,000 civilians died or disappeared. This amounts to 15% – 20% of the entire population. About 30,000–40,000 children died and 20,000–40,000 Russian soldiers lost their lives during the same time. Casualties between the Chechen forces might be comparable.... [B]ombardments and artillery shelling throughout Chechnya, in apparent disregard for the physical security of the civilian population..., caused an unnecessary loss of tens of thousands.... Chechnya is one of the world's deadliest areas for mines. More than 5,600 people were killed by mines in Chechnya in 2002 alone.<sup>162</sup>

The murdered critical journalist and human rights activist Anna Politkovskaya (2003) wrote a book which discusses the extremely brutal and harsh nature of the Chechen conflict, of which the English title is *A Small Corner of Hell: Dispatches from Chechnya*. It should be noted that not all human deaths were the results of the Russian army's aggression. A number of deaths can be attributed to the inter-Chechen fighting between the different Chechen factions and between them and the Wahhabist/Salafist forces, among whom are many foreign, mainly Arab, fighters. Although the Russian army has been the biggest violator of human rights in the Chechen conflict, it should be noted that it itself has suffered heavy losses, especially as a result of the First Chechen War, not necessarily in the material sense but even more so in the sense of reputation and self-confidence. The Russian army was indeed humiliated in Chechnya, particularly during the first Chechen war.

Surprisingly (or perhaps not) the Russian army's invasion of Chechnya took place relatively late (1994), already three years after the Chechen Revolution and declaration of Chechen independence (1991). The so-called Chechen Revolution is associated with one prominent name: General Johar Dudayev. In fact, it was not a revolution in the classical meaning of this word but an accession to power by Chechen ethno-nationalists and the sidelining of the officially recognized Chechen regional government headed by Doku Zavgayev.

General Dudayev was one of the very few Chechens who reached a high position in the former Soviet Union. He had lost a number of his

---

<sup>162</sup> The Society for Russian-Chechen Friendship. Human Rights Violations in Chechnya. Available online: <http://web.archive.org/web/20070821110222/www.hrvc.net/main.htm>. The report has no date, but obviously it is from before 2007. (Accessed 20 December 2009)

family members during the genocidal deportation of Chechens (Cornell 2001: 198) and was deported as an infant to Kazakhstan, where he spent his youth. After the rehabilitation of Chechens, he returned to Chechnya in 1957. He furthered his education in Vladikavkaz (North Ossetia) and then entered the military high school in Tambov and Yuri Gagarin Air Force Academy. There is a rumor that Dudayev introduced himself as an Ossetian when he applied there in order to be admitted more easily (Cornell 2002a: 37). Dudayev served in the Soviet military in Afghanistan, and after being promoted as a general he was appointed as the head of an important bomber division in Tartu, Estonia (Cornell 2001: 206). Support for Dudayev from the Baltic countries stems not only from their anti-Russian ideological affinity but also from Dudayev's attitude towards, and services to, Baltic nationalism. In fact, Dudayev was not much of an anti-Russian; he had married a Russian woman and was well-integrated into the Russian-dominated Soviet Air Force. He wanted to maintain a good relationship with Russia, but he also wanted independence for Chechnya. Already in 1988 he had allowed the Estonian flag to flutter over the Tartu air base and held an open day for the public in 1990. In 1991 he denied the incoming Soviet planes landing permission at the base. The planes were carrying soldiers in order to crush the Baltic separatist movements. Dudayev refused "to allow the use of force against a democratically elected government" (Cornell 2001: 207).

He resigned himself, before getting fired, from his function, and returned to Chechnya, where he was elected in 1990 as the leader of the Chechen National Congress, an umbrella organization which united several emerging nationalist (and democratic) groupings, similar to the popular fronts which emerged nearly at the same time in the Baltic and Transcaucasian states (Cornell 2001: 205-206). In addition, it was agreed that the Ingush, who were co-titulars in the Checheno-Ingush ASSR, but were left out of the developments in the republic, establish their own republic.

The Chechen Revolution occurred when the Congress stripped off the formal bodies of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR and its head Doku Zavgayev, who was accused of having sided with the conservative "putschists" of the August 1991 coup d'état, or in any case of cowardice and treachery. Despite the fact that Zavgayev was known as a reformist, he did not condemn the coup d'état and remained silent at the time, suggesting that he had sided with the conservatives. This became the ground for Dudayev to depose him from power. Possibly Dudayev expected support from Moscow and Yeltsin. Paradoxically, as in the case in Tajikistan, Moscow and Yeltsin ultimately chose the side with their alleged former enemies and against the pro-reformist forces. The reason was probably that certain circles were not really happy with the rapid and

obstinate manner of Dudayev's political actions and his not having consulted first with Moscow. It was the independent character of Dudayev's actions that were detested by Moscow. Contrary to what later was said about him, he was neither a criminal nor an Islamist. He can be characterized as a moderate nationalist, similar to Gamskhurdia, his Georgian colleague, with whom he maintained a fraternal relationship (Goltz 2009a: 196).

Disobeying the Russian order to postpone the presidential election in Chechnya, the Chechen National Congress went ahead and organized the election. Dudayev was elected as the Chechen president and later, on 2 November, Chechnya's independence was proclaimed.<sup>163</sup> "Yeltsin reacted to the declaration of independence by refusing to recognize Chechnya, something Dudayev returned in kind, by refusing to recognize Russia" (Cornell 2001: 210).

Contrary to the general belief that Russia reacted relatively late (1994), the Russian response was prompt, but ineffective. No later than 9 November 1991 Yeltsin issued a decree and instituted a state of emergency in Chechnya. On that day he sent troops to Chechnya and ordered the arrest of Dudayev. Yeltsin's move, however, was fruitless and caused his humiliation. Chechen gunmen occupied Grozny Airport and forced the incoming Interior Ministry troops to leave. In addition, the Russian parliament ordered the troops' withdrawal, as it considered the emergency law in Chechnya illegal because Yeltsin had not consulted the parliament first. This was a boost to Dudayev and the Chechen independence movement.

Dudayev was a brilliant strategist but was not an economist or a statesman, and the conditions of economic and social life in Chechnya were poor. Dudayev could blame this situation on the Russian embargo. Although Georgian public sentiments remained generally very pro-Chechen and anti-Russian, Georgia also closed its borders to Chechnya because Dudayev had given asylum to the deposed president of Georgia, Zviad Gamsakhurdia (Cornell 2001: 212; Cornell 2002a: 166; Goltz 2009a: 18 and 196; O'Ballance 1997: 111). Meanwhile, the Russian leadership tried to depose Dudayev by supporting the opposition. This effort was without much effect, however, because many opposition factions also supported Chechen independence, and because each coup attempt increased Dudayev's popularity, which indeed needed a boost at that time. In addition, in 1992 there was a Russian army attempt to "tease"

---

<sup>163</sup> Different sources refer to different dates of Chechnya's independence. Indeed, separatist conflicts' timelines may be confusing, as different persons and entities, at different times, may make declarations and statements in different versions, official, semi-official, and unofficial. In this case, however, Cornell (2001: 210) as well as a number of other sources give 2 November as the date of Chechnya's declaration of independence.



the Chechens into war, when it pushed against Chechnya's undefined western borders when they were to intervene in the Ingush-Ossetian conflict. During this time of *de facto* independence (1991–1994), more and more ethnic Russian civilians left Chechnya, as they felt threatened (Cornell 2001: 212; O'Ballance 1997: 170; Ormrod 1997: 105; Soldatova 1995: 87).<sup>164</sup> Attacks on ethnic Russians in Chechnya became more common and tolerated, as there were many assaults on Chechens and other Caucasians in Chechnya and other areas in southern Russia by local Russians (particularly Cossacks), often instigated by Moscow (Cornell 1997: 204; Cornell 1998b: 421-422; Cornell 2001: 264). In such a situation the ethnic groups became polarized, and relations between Chechens and Russians were tense. Inter-Chechen relations were also very tense. Although there was a genuine desire for independence among Chechens, Dudayev did face opposition, and the situation in Chechnya was chaotic.

The chaotic and lawless situation in Chechnya had its own impact on Russian public opinion in favor of a military intervention in Chechnya. Especially when the Russian media began to turn anti-Chechen and anti-Caucasian, blaming the Caucasians for criminality in Russia in a more or less racist and disrespectful fashion, or labeling them as terrorists and Muslim fundamentalists (Cornell 2001: 213; Ormrod 1997: 105).<sup>165</sup> Accusations of Chechens being Islamic fundamentalists and terrorists will be discussed later. It suffices now, however, to mention that although Chechen criminals contributed their share, it is unfair to point the finger at them as the main culprits for crime in Russia. As the Russian scholar Victor M. Sergeev (2001) discusses, criminal behavior and corruption were prevalent in Russia in the 1990s, and Chechens and North

---

<sup>164</sup> Descriptions of the ethno-demographic situation in the North Caucasus over time can be found in *Etnicheskaya Karta Svernogo Kavkaza* [The Ethnic Map of the North Caucasus]. In that book Vitaliy Belozеров (2005) provides facts and evidence that the proportion of ethnic Russians in the population of the autonomous regions in the North Caucasus had been decreasing since the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, long before the outbreak of the Chechen conflict. The only notable exceptions are the proportions of Russians in the autonomous republics of Kabardino-Balkaria and North Ossetia, which (compared with 1989) increased very slightly in 1994. This trend is summarized and illustrated in Table 5.9 of the aforementioned book (Belozеров 2005: 247). As Walker (2001: 345-346) notes, between 1959 and 1989 the proportion of Russian population in Dagestan fell by more than half and declined further in the 1990s, while a large number of Chechen refugees came to settle, at least temporarily, in Dagestan. It should be added, however, that the outmigration of indigenous population from the autonomous republics of the North Caucasus should also be considered. Nevertheless, no phenomenon has changed the ethno-demographic map of the region so dramatically as the Russian military intervention in Chechnya, as it made hundreds of thousands of people into refugees. More general information on the developments and changes in 1990s in the Northern Caucasus can be found in Bugay & Gonov (2004).

<sup>165</sup> It is notable that in *Terrorizm, Ekstremizm, Separatizm* [Terrorism, Extremism, Separatism], written by General-Polkovnik Valeriy Zhuravel' (2005), Chechens and in general North Caucasians are too often—duly but also often unduly—associated (implicitly and explicitly) with terrorism and extremism. Also, the title is interesting. It disregards the association of separatism with ethno-national liberation, while stressing its connection to “extremism” and “terrorism”.

Caucasians were by no means alone in this. In any case, whether the accusations against Chechens were false or valid, there were sufficient reasons for Russia to intervene.

Russia, just like any other state, is likely to take military action against organized separatism. The question is, however, why did the Russian intervention occur relatively late, only in 1994?

Although states tend to act rather promptly and vigorously to attempts at separatism, it is not always so. For example, the Armenians in the Armenian-populated Javakheti area in southern Georgia, and the Talysh and Lezgins, respectively in the southeastern and northern parts of the Republic of Azerbaijan, undertook separatist (or at least illegal and extraordinary autonomy-seeking) attempts against Georgia and Azerbaijan in the early 1990s. The Azerbaijani and Georgian governments did not react resolutely with military action, and hence large-scale bloodshed was avoided. This in fact was the reason that these conflicts did not escalate into full-scale warfare. It can be said that these republics were not able to intervene because of their internal problems; but the main reason these cases were neglected and remained largely unnoticed, I argue, is because the aforementioned areas had no autonomous status and no autonomous regional governmental bodies. Hence, neither could the separatists easily create an image of legitimacy which could be recognized internationally or regionally, nor could they mobilize the population there effectively. In the end, as the situation in the republics of Azerbaijan and Georgia stabilized, these areas were again placed under the effective sovereignty of their respective states. As described above, Chechnya was a totally different case. Chechen separatist ethno-nationalists had seized the power and occupied the political organs of the self-declared independent Chechnya.

The question remains, therefore, why the Russian military invasion came so late. The answer should be sought in the intra-Russian political realities of power. It is a fact that Yeltsin had bad relationships with the Russian parliament, which he disbanded in 1993. After that event the more conservative elements gained more prominence and power. Whether or not it was mainly due to Ruslan Khasbulatov, the Russian parliament speaker at the time, that Russia did not attack Chechnya earlier than 1994 is doubtful. As noted earlier, it was the Russian parliament that rendered Yeltsin's first abortive intervention attempt in Chechnya illegal. Khasbulatov was himself an ethnic Chechen and normally did not want bloodshed and destruction in his homeland. Yeltsin and Khasbulatov were, indeed, not well-attuned to each other, as Yeltsin's stand-off and shelling of the Russian parliament (1993) made clear. Nevertheless, it does not mean that Khasbulatov favored Dudayev, as he showed his opposition to Dudayev in many instances. Moreover, he had already been

removed from his position, more than one year before the military invasion of Chechnya, in October 1993 after Yeltsin's victory over the parliament. It makes more sense to regard Sergey Shakhrai (a Terek Cossack), the Russian Minister of Nationalities and Regional Affairs and deputy prime minister at that time, as the mastermind behind the large-scale Russian military invasion of Chechnya in 1994.

It is often thought that the Russian military intervention in 1994 had much to do with oil politics. However, the oil factor cannot be regarded as a major factor around which the Chechen conflict was formed. Oil production and refinement could not make Chechnya a viable state, nor was oil production in Chechnya worth an expensive and bloody war on the Russian side. The major reason to suppress Chechen separatism was indeed to establish Russian sovereignty and to prevent Chechnya from becoming a precedent and a model for other territorial subjects to follow.

Nevertheless, there are speculations that oil politics (co-)determined the timing of this intervention. In the fall of 1994, the Baku oil consortium was signed. Accordingly, the Azerbaijani state signed an agreement with many Western oil companies on extracting oil from the Caspian Sea. As the issue of exploitation and export of the Caspian Sea oil became more serious, oil companies began to think about the possible routes through which the Caspian Sea oil could be exported into international markets. The most logical way was through Iran to the Persian Gulf or the Gulf of Oman. Iran has an extensive existing oil infrastructure which could be adjusted to this purpose, and, in addition, oil swapping was a possible option. Oil swap would cut the costs in transport and security. Iran could use the Caspian oil for its internal market and sell its "southern oil" in the Persian Gulf on behalf of the other Caspian littoral states. Although this option was attractive to many oil companies, including the American ones, it did not have much chance of realization, owing to the political situation and the American politics of isolation and boycotting of Iran. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline was another serious option. It could transport the Caspian sea oil through the potential or existing conflict spots such as Turkey's Kurdistan and southern Georgia where there was serious danger of Armenian ethnic strife at that time, or through areas which were proximate to the three Caucasian ethno-territorial conflict areas, Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia, and Abkhazia. Russia's desired option was another one. Russia wanted the Caspian sea oil to be transported through an existing Russian oil pipeline. This oil pipeline carries Caspian Sea oil to the Black Sea port of Novorossiysk. There was, however, one major problem: it passed through Chechnya. Hence Cornell's (1997: 205; 2001: 222-223) assertion that the

signing of the Baku oil consortium was the direct prelude of, and determined, the Russian military intervention in Chechnya.

Although the abovementioned reasoning makes sense, it also has its flaws. The existing oil pipeline, which passed through, and in proximity to, Chechnya, was not designed for the transportation of large amounts of oil. In addition, gas and oil pipelines and their accompanying technical support need permanent maintenance. It is not difficult to realize that, because of the war in Chechnya and the overall poor state of infrastructure in the former Soviet Union, this pipeline also needed serious maintenance and renovation. It was not difficult, therefore, to imagine that investment in laying new pipelines, which would circumvent Chechnya, was a cheaper option for Russia than war. It is true that a troubled and chaotic, let alone totally seceded, Chechnya would make trouble for the entire North Caucasus, especially for Dagestan, the main railroads to which passed through Chechnya. But again, the counterargument is that laying new railroads which circumvented Chechnya would have been cheaper for Russia than war.

In addition, it is not too far-fetched to ask the question whether Russia was even interested in keeping the North Caucasus within the Russian Federation's realm in the first place.

According to Cornell (2001: 222), another reason that Russia wanted Chechnya back under its own sovereignty was the strategic importance of the Caucasus in general and Chechnya in particular. This statement also should be qualified. The Caucasus has been of strategic importance for Russia, but for a Russia which wanted to reach the open seas of the south (the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean) and extend its sphere of influence in the Islamic world. The Russia of the early 1990s was oriented towards the West. As one could observe, Yeltsin was not upset about the collapse of the Soviet Union and was in fact very eager to disengage from the Soviet southern periphery, Central Asia and the Caucasus. The North Caucasus was hardly something a Western-oriented Russia desired. It was, in fact, only nominally Russia. In fact, it was a continuation of the South Caucasus into the North. Unlike other regions of the Russian Federation, Russians did not constitute the majority of population there, and it was amongst the poorest, least developed, and least urbanized regions in the Russian Federation (see e.g. Shaw 1999: 152-235). The fact that the North Caucasus is predominantly Islamic makes this region less attractive for a Russia which wanted to be associated with a liberal West, one which has been traditionally (latently) Islamophobic.

Uwe Halbach (2005: 11) maintains that the Caucasus is Russia's *Schicksal Region*, that is, its region of destiny, and can decide the fate of Russian unity. It is true that the Caucasus is often thought to be of

strategic importance for Russia. Although this statement is a little bit exaggerated, it is nevertheless true—but only for a Eurasianist Russia and not for a Western-oriented Russia. Already in the first half of the 1990s (1993 or 1994), the Russian *Weltanschauung*, or geopolitical orientation, had shifted from a Western orientation towards Eurasianism (Kerr 1995; Smith 1999; Tsygankov 2007; Morozova 2009). Eurasianism is considered to be Russian imperial nationalism or imperialism (Khazanov 2002;<sup>166</sup> Laruelle 2004). It can be so; nevertheless, I argue that regarding Russia's geographical position in the world, its ethnic and religious diversity and its political and political territorial history, a Eurasianist geopolitical orientation is the most natural one for Russia.<sup>167</sup> According to Trenin (2002: 14): “[T]he Russian Federation cannot exit from the ‘old [Eurasian] empire’ without risking its territorial integrity, and not just in the borderlands”. I argue that the reverse of this statement is also true: a Eurasian Russia does not want to and cannot permit itself to lose its territories in the North Caucasus. The question is, however, whether there is any country which is eager to lose territory.<sup>168</sup> In fact, as stated before, no state is eager to lose territory. An unstable and geopolitically confused Russia was a temporary exception to the general rule. The revival of Eurasianism may indeed have urged Russia to take back Chechnya, but it was the early Yeltsin-era adventure of Russian “Westernism” that caused apathy among the Russian agenda-setters about taking prompt action and bringing Chechnya back into the Russian realm.

The Russian military intervention, or more accurately, invasion, began on 31 December 1994. It was bloody and cruel. Grozny was devastated by bombardments; a once vivid city became a ruined (ghost)

---

<sup>166</sup> Khazanov (2002: 1) states: “The only thing that prevents me from stating that Russian nationalism is nowadays turning away from the West is that its mainstream was always anti-Western. There is nothing new in this respect”.

<sup>167</sup> For more background information and different views on Eurasianism, see also Shlapentokh (1997; 2007a), Trenin (2002), and Tsygankov (2003; 2005). I do not agree with Tsygankov (2007; 2005) that the new Russia is deviating from the “traditional” Eurasianism and is becoming a normal super-power (Tsygankov 2005), or that it is shifting towards a liberal Eurasianism called “Euro-East”. In addition, Trenin’s thesis of “End of Eurasia” seems too sensationalist and void of reality. Not only the two wars in Chechnya but also the Russian attack on Georgia in 2008 support my argument. I argue that Putin’s and post-Putin Russian Eurasianism is the solidification of Eurasianism. It is not a deviation of Eurasianism, but simply a logical development of Eurasianism in a stabilized and powerful Russia.

<sup>168</sup> The granting of independence to colonies by the Western imperial powers does not apply here, because the North Caucasus is contiguous with Russia proper and is part of the Russian integral territorial body. Also not applicable is Monica Duffy Toft’s (2003: 26-27) argument that bi-national states may be willing to lose territory non-violently. Czechoslovakia, an oft-mentioned example, does not fit this picture, because in addition to Czech and Slovak ethnic groups, it was also host to relatively large Hungarian and (less large) German-speaking ethnic groups. Moreover, she cannot explain then why Sri Lanka did not consent to the secession of Tamil-inhabited areas. The reality, as also mentioned in the text of Chapter 5, is that no state is eager to lose territory. An unstable and geopolitically confused Russia, as well as any other such state, was only an exception to the general rule.

city. Although the estimates vary, thousands of civilians lost their lives in the bombing of Grozny. As O'Ballance (1997: 190) asserts:

[O]n 31 December, the [Russian] Defence Ministry had quoted its own losses in Chechnya as 50 dead and 132 wounded, a considerable underestimate. Later, on the [January] 8<sup>th</sup>, Khamzat Yarbiev, the Chechen deputy speaker, cited the Chechen civilian casualties as 18,000 killed of whom 12,1210 had died in Grozny, which was thought to be an overinflated figure. The Red Cross's estimate of refugees was about 350,000, of whom at least 15,000 had fled Grozny.

According to Cornell (2001: 226), citing Ingmar Oldberg (1995: 17), over 20,000 civilians were killed in the battle of Grozny. "Russia's Human Rights' Commissioner, Sergei Kovalyov, has said that 24,000 civilians were killed just in Grozny (Yevsyukova 1995)". The invasion of Chechnya was thus not to become a painless *blitzkrieg*. The Chechen population, and also the Russians, suffered severely under this war. It also damaged the Russian army's reputation enormously. As Svante. E. Cornell (2001: 229) writes:

To recapitulate, the war in Chechnya led to the total destruction of Grozny and many other Chechen towns and villages. According to estimates, the death toll in Chechnya ranges between 45,000 and 60,000 people. Compared with the Afghan war, the Chechen war was far more lethal for the Russian army. 1984 was the worst year for Russia in Afghanistan, with almost 2,500 soldiers being killed. In Chechnya, the Russian losses surpassed this number within four months of the intervention, a figure which shows all too clearly just how deadly the war was for Russia. At its most intense, the shelling of Grozny, counted by the number of explosions per day, surpassed the shelling of Sarajevo by a factor of at least fifty. Any visitor to Sarajevo will see that the city is largely already rebuilt and that most buildings are only lightly damaged. By contrast, Grozny has literally been razed to ground.<sup>169</sup>

Indeed, the Chechen conflict, especially the so-called First Chechen War, dealt a strong blow to the myth of Russian invincibility. The Russian army was unable to defeat the Chechen rebels, and the Russian government under Yeltsin had to recognize unwillingly the rebel government in Chechnya, although in an ambiguous way to save its face as much as it was still possible (see the discussion further on). The brutality of the Russian army in Chechnya exceeded that of the Serbian militia's in Bosnia and may be comparable to Baathist Iraqi brutality against Shi'ite and Kurdish Iraqis and Iranians, that of the Soviet army in Afghanistan, or

---

<sup>169</sup> Only recently, after the end of the Second Chechen War, and with the economic improvement in Russia, has Grozny been undergoing restoration and renovation and the urban life been getting back (nearly) to normal.

the American brutality in the Vietnam War. Yet the humiliation inflicted upon the Russian army was far worse than that inflicted upon the Soviet army in Afghanistan.

The First Chechen War lasted until 1996 but did not bring the desired outcome for Russia. Despite the devastations it brought about, the Russian army was not able to topple the rebel government in Chechnya. In fact, the mighty Russian army was halted by Dudayev's rebel army, which was perhaps only 15,000 men strong at its height (Cornell 2001: 230).<sup>170</sup> It is this humiliation of the Russian army's brutality that has inspired Anatol Lieven's (1998) book, *Chechnya: Tombstone of Russian Power*. Johar Dudayev was killed in a Russian helicopter attack. His deputy, the acting president at that time, Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, lost the presidential election in 1997 to Aslan Maskhadov, the Chechen prime minister of that time. Unable to subdue the Chechen liberation movement, Russia reached a peace agreement with the Chechen rebel government on 31 August 1996 in Khasavyurt (Dagestan). It was signed by Aslan Maskhadov, chief of staff of the Chechen armed forces at that time, and General Alexander Lebed, respectively for the Chechen rebel government and the Russian Federation.

Later in Moscow, on 12 May 1997, a formal peace treaty was signed between Boris Yeltsin and Aslan Maskhadov, the Chechen president at that time. The term *Dogovor o Mire* [literally "the Treaty on Peace"] was used (see Bugay 2006: 212).<sup>171</sup> *Dogovor* [treaty] is a term which is used for international treaties. The terms for domestic agreements are either *soglashenie* or *kompakt*. Another exception to this rule was Tatarstan, a republic which insisted on being a sovereign state, but nevertheless wanted to remain within the realm of the Russian Federation. Hence, the *dogovor* in this case meant its voluntary association with the Russian Federation (see e.g. Toft 2003: 45-64; Walker 1996). Unlike Tatarstan, however, Chechnya had no desire to remain part of Russia, nor was it *de facto* part of Russia. The final status of Chechnya's (in)dependence was to be decided by 2001. The peace treaty was signed by the presidents of the Russian Federation and the *Chechen Republic of Ichkeria*. Cornell (2001: 243) regards the addition of "Ichkeria" to the Chechen Republic's name as a "face-saving variant of the Chechen independence" among "certain high circles" in Russia. I have to disagree with this. Although the Russian name of the republic was

---

<sup>170</sup> Cornell (2001: 230) writes: "According to Western military observers, Dudayev commanded a regular army of perhaps 15,000 fighters at its height, especially during large operations such as the reconquest of Grozny". He refers to Oldberg (1995: 17). Regarding the fact that the Chechens were a relatively small ethnic group of less than one million, this number of fighters is a respectable number.

<sup>171</sup> Both documents, the agreement on ceasefire and the peace treaty, are provided in Bugays' (2006) well-documented book, *Chechenskaya Respublika: Konfrontatsia, Stabil'nost', Mir*. [The Chechen Republic: Confrontation, Stability, Peace], on pages 186 and 212 respectively.

*Chechenskaya Respublika Ichkeria*, its Chechen name was *Nokhchiyn Respublika Nokhchiycho* (see Bugay 2006: 436),<sup>172</sup> which in fact means the “Chechen Republic of Chechnya”. *Ichkeria* was used, therefore, as an equivalent for Chechnya and could not serve as a face-saving strategy for Russia; or else, these “high circles” in Russia were suffering from self-deception. This peace treaty was a victory for the Chechens and a humiliation for Russia. The peace treaty was welcomed in Chechnya as a victory, as it really was. The mighty Russia could not subdue the small Chechen nation. This was indeed a case of “giant-killing”.

In the so-called interbellum period (1997–1999), or the “recognized” *de facto* independence of Chechnya, the internal situation worsened and Chechnya destabilized more and more. As Maskhadov said, Chechens won the war but lost the peace. A main reason for this situation was the intrusion of Sunni militant Wahhabis/Salafis into Chechnya. Wahhabism/Salafism was exogenous to the Caucasus. Islam in Chechnya has been traditionally associated with the Qadiri and Naqshbandi Sufi *tariqats*. The Wahhabists/Salafists took advantage of the situation and hijacked the Chechen conflict. The Wahhabis/Salafis often engaged in terrorist activities. The Chechen war of liberation always had an Islamic character. This is not surprising because it was associated with the earlier resistance of North Caucasian Muslims against imperial Russia and the Bolsheviks, and above all, Islam is a source of identity for the Chechens. This Islam, however, is traditional Sufi Islam (see e.g. Jaimoukha 2005: 106-122; Khasiev 2004: 110-112; Swirszcz 2009: 63-65; Ten Dam 2010: 344-347; Ten Dam 2011: 241-246; Vatchagaev 2005b). On the other hand, Wahhabism/Salafism does not enjoy much support among Chechens, and opposition to it is very strong, because “many Chechens see it as imposing an alien way of life not corresponding to Chechen tradition” (Cornell 2001: 247).<sup>173</sup> One should not be misled by the sensationalist and often ignorant accounts of Western and Russian journalists and publicists, who get nervous at the very mention of *jihad* and *sharia*, and who do not distinguish between Wahhabism/Salafism and

---

<sup>172</sup> Bugay (2006: 436) has provided a document from the Chechen “Ministry of Foreign Affairs” from 1997. On the document is written in Arabic, “In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful”, and in the text the Chechen name of the republic is written in a Turkish-like, Latin alphabet. It is also remarkable that the title in English is “Chechen Republic *Ichkeria*”, rather than “the Chechen Republic of *Ichkeria*”. If it is not a grammatical mistake and was done intentionally, it is another piece of evidence that *Ichkeria* is not meant as a territorial entity other than Chechnya, but simply as a name for Chechnya.

<sup>173</sup> This was also said to me by all Chechens whom I interviewed. There were, however, those who said that there is a small minority of native Chechens with these Wahhabi/Salafi backgrounds; nevertheless, the people I interviewed were very unhappy about the foreign Wahhabi/Salafi fighters who were using their homeland and the whole Caucasus as a battleground, worsening in this way the security situation in the Caucasus and often triggering another violent Russian action in retaliation.



other forms of Islamism. *Jihad* is a general term and can mean any violent or non-violent attempt for a cause which is perceived to be good. In the context of the North Caucasus, it refers to the wars of liberation from Russian imperialism. *Sharia* simply means Islamic law. Nevertheless, different Islamic schools think differently about the concrete laws of *sharia*. In addition, the Sufi tradition has inherent inconsistencies with *sharia*. In the Chechen tradition there exist both *adat* (customary law) and *sharia* (Islamic law). They are not necessarily always opposed to each other but could be so in many cases and respects.

There were many terrorist acts and insurgencies in the interbellum period. Even though Maskhadov appeared to condemn Wahhabism/Salafism, he could not halt it. Terrorist activities expanded beyond the borders of Chechnya. For example, in 1999 a Wahhabist/Salafist group associated with two infamous Wahhabi/Salafi field commanders, Basayev and Khattab, had invaded Avar (in fact its Andi subgroup's) villages in neighboring Dagestan in order to establish an Islamic state through the union of Chechnya and Dagestan. They faced opposition from the local villagers with whom they clashed. As a result, Dagestani public opinion became even further distanced from the Wahhabi/Salafi field commanders (Cornell 2001: 245). Many terrorist acts, such as the incursions into Dagestan, as well as the apartment bombings in Moscow, formed a prelude to the new Russian invasion of Chechnya in 1999. Although most terrorist and militant acts in Chechnya and elsewhere in southern Russia were claimed by the terrorists, the bombings of residential apartments in Moscow (1999) were not. The accusation that Chechen terrorists were the culprits seems doubtful, because it served no military purpose and moreover affected public opinion about them negatively. Although there was no sound evidence against Chechens, Vladimir Putin, then acting as the Russian prime minister, used this as another reason to invade Chechnya in 1999.

The Second Chechen War could save Russian face because it restored the Russian Federation's sovereignty over Chechen territory, but it nevertheless could not whitewash the brutal face of the Russian army. However, as there were more "bad guys" active in the Second Chechen war, the Russian army and their proxies were not the only ones to blame for the violations of human rights and crimes against civilians. The Wahhabi/Salafi rebels could also be, and should be, blamed for such crimes.

The Second Chechen War changed the political status of Chechnya. A stable and powerful Russia could this time bring Chechnya back under its sovereignty. Nevertheless, it could not bring an end to the Chechen resistance. The so-called Chechenization policy of Russia diffused and confused the political alliances in the Chechen resistance. A

Sufi Islamic leader, Ahmad Kadyrov, was first appointed and then elected as the Chechen president. Many former liberation fighters joined him. Ahmad Kadyrov, as well as his son, Ramzan, opposed Maskhadov's Ichkeria republic, which they had once supported and defended in the 1994–1996 war, because they, as proponents of traditional Chechen Sufi Islam, were shocked by the Wahhabi/Salafi hijacking of the Chechen conflict. Putin, who tried to “Chechenize” the conflict by co-opting Chechen leaders, orchestrated Ahmad Kadyrov's election as the Chechen president on 5 October 2003. Ahmad Kadyrov was later assassinated by the opposition in 2004. After the brief intermezzo of Alu Alkhanov's presidency (2004–2007), his son Ramzan Kadyrov followed him into the presidency and is still the Russian-backed president of Chechnya. Maskhadov, the main non-Wahhabi/Salafi leader of the Chechen resistance against Russia, was killed in 2005. After his death the Wahhabi/Salafi movement became the main opposition to the Russian-backed Chechen government. Kadyrov governs Chechnya as an Islamic state and fights against the Wahhabis/Salafis. The fact that the predominantly foreign Wahhabi/Salafi opposition do not enjoy much support from the Chechen population does not mean that Ramzan Kadyrov enjoys full support from the Chechen population either.

After their take-over of the once ethno-nationalist Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, the Wahhabis/Salafis abolished that republic and incorporated it into a larger self-proclaimed Emirate of the Caucasus in 2007, with Doku (Dokka) Umarov, the main Chechen opposition leader and the president of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria at that time, as its first Emir. Umarov's aim is to unite the North Caucasus in a Wahhabi/Salafi state called the Emirate of the Caucasus. This is certainly a deviation from the main aim of the Chechen liberation movement, which sought independence for Chechnya.

Umarov had become the president of Chechen Republic of Ichkeria after Abdul-Halim Sadulayev was killed (2006). Sadulayev had become briefly the president of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria (2005–2006) after Maskhadov was killed. He tried to unite the Chechen separatists with different Islamist groups in the Caucasus. This is evidence of the proceeding Wahhabization/Salafization of the once ethno-nationalist Chechen movement to the extent that it ceased to exist. The abolition of a self-proclaimed independent Chechen Republic of Ichkeria and establishment of a self-proclaimed Emirate of the North Caucasus by Wahhabis/Salafis is the ultimate evidence for the hijacking of the Chechen conflict by the Wahhabis/Salafis.

Owing to the fact that they do not enjoy much support from the local population and are supported externally (mainly by “certain circles” from Saudi Arabia and Pakistan), and owing mainly to the fact that their

main motive does not relate to ethnicity or territoriality but rather to their religious ideology, the Wahhabi/Salafi insurgency cannot be regarded as an ethno-territorial conflict.

There was certainly a tendency, even before 9/11 and the so-called war on terror, among many Western journalists and political analysts to downplay the Wahhabi/Salafi force as an extra-systemic nuisance in the conflict. The general Western attitude was that Chechens are Muslims. Westerners rarely distinguished between the extremist Sunni Islamist Wahhabi/Salafi movements and the Chechen desire for national liberation, a desire in which Islam had its own place merely as a component of the Chechen identity. The Arab, and to some extent also the Turkish, media behaved in a very apologetic fashion, as if the Chechen people themselves asked for these foreign Wahhabi/Salafi (and other extremist Islamist) elements to use their homeland as a battleground. Conversation with Chechen people teaches otherwise. Chechen people do not support Wahhabis/Salafis and are not happy to have these elements in their homeland. The truth is that not only Wahhabism/Salafism as an ideology, but also many of their ideologues, warlords, and fighters are in fact “imported” into Chechnya. Among the Wahhabis/Salafis are many foreign fighters, such as Pakistanis, Turks, and particularly Arabs.<sup>174</sup> It is worth mentioning that the Wahhabi/Salafi clandestine parliament is dominated by Arabs: “The meeting of Arab-dominated Majlis-ul-shura held in July 2005 was an important milestone in the history of the terrorist movement: Shamil Basaev was the only Chechen of its 12 members; the others were Arabs” (Dobaev 2009).

In addition to Arabs, there are also many Chechens from Middle Eastern countries, such as Jordan and Turkey, who support the Chechen resistance. It is not certain that the latter’s motivation is to spread Wahhabism/Salafism in Chechnya. There are certainly many members of this group who have played a key role in the Wahhabi/Salafi movement. For example, Sheikh Fathi (Al-Shishani) from Jordan is (at least partially) of Chechen descent, or at least represented himself as such (Swirszcz 2009: 76; Vatchagaev 2005a). Khattab is rumored to be of (partial) Chechen or Circassian descent from Jordan. But these rumors appear to be false; according to an interview with his brother (2002), Khattab was a Saudi (Islamawareness.net 2002). All in all, the proportion of the

---

<sup>174</sup> According to Cornell (2001: 235-236), the Turkish far-right organization Grey Wolves supported the Chechen resistance and shipped arms to Chechnya. Similarly, the Grey Wolves organization was involved in the war and political action in the Republic of Azerbaijan. On the main Wahhabi/Salafi website about the North Caucasus, there are sections in Arabic and Turkish. In addition to Jordan, Turkey is also host to large Circassian and to a lesser extent Chechen ethnic groups. There is, however, no indication that the Wahhabis/Salafis from Turkey are North Caucasians only, nor is there strong evidence that the Wahhabi/Salafi ideology is popular among the North Caucasian communities in Turkey.

members of the Caucasian community from the Middle East in the Wahhabi/Salafi militant movement appeared to be small in comparison with that of the Arabs.<sup>175</sup> The fact is that the Wahhabis/Salafis who have hijacked the Chechen conflict do not have a North Caucasian ethno-national basis and do not pursue an ethno-nationalist goal, and they present an ideology alien to the Caucasus..

According to Shlapentokh (2007b; 2011), the Islamic resistance in Chechnya was “Jihadized”. He is correct if he means by “Jihadization” the process of Wahhabization/Salafization. However, in this kind of “Jihadization”, (Chechen) ethnicity is not a decisive factor. If it was so, then the northwestern part of the Caucasus, inhabited by Circassians, should be more afflicted by Wahhabization/Salafization than Chechnya is, because the number of Circassians in the Middle East is far larger than the number of Chechens there. As Circassians constitute a significant part of the Jordanian population and are exposed to this ideology from Saudi Arabia, it would have been more logical to target Circassian republics as the hubs of Wahhabization/Salafization in the North Caucasus. The fact is that the proportion of Wahhabis/Salafis in the Circassian (and Chechen) population in the Middle East is relatively small, and the North Caucasian population are not very hospitable to the Wahhabis/Salafis. The Wahhabis/Salafis, nevertheless, could take their opportunities when Chechnya was in chaos

Chechens have often been portrayed as criminals and terrorists by the Russian media. The many terrorist actions by Bassayev and Khattab and other radicals have only strengthened these images, and the Chechens and North Caucasians in general suffered from these images even in the recent years. The rhetoric related to 9/11 and the “War on Terror” provided yet another justification for anti-Chechen and anti-Caucasian sentiments in the Russian media and society.<sup>176</sup> After 9/11 and the “War on Terror”, a rather dominant Islamophobic discourse emerged in the West, in which different Islamist movements were lumped together, practically undistinguished from each other (see e.g. Roy 2007: 61-88, especially 62-65). Needless to say, such a discourse proved to be useful

---

<sup>175</sup> In 2007 my student and I undertook research and investigation on the role of the ethnic Chechens in Jordan in the Wahhabization/ Salafization of the conflict in Chechnya. We came to similar conclusions. It should be said, however, that at time, we assumed that Khattab was a Chechen from Jordan, but after investigating more, it seems doubtful.

<sup>176</sup> According to Sinelina’s (2006: 20, Table 2) data, the share of the Russian Federation’s population (actively) identifying itself was constant (7%) each year from 1993 until 2002. The notable exceptions were 1999 (6%) and 2000 (9%). Although speculative, one explanation for these exceptions might be out of self-protection in a context of Islamophobia after the 1999 bombings, and an assertive reactions of Muslims one year later against the horrifyingly brutal Russian actions against their co-religionists in Chechnya. A similar pattern was also visible in Western Europe: one could see that the proportion of girls wearing Islamic headdress increased after Islamophobic discourse became salient in the 2000s.

for Russia's justification of its harsh actions in Chechnya and the rest of the Caucasus.

There are indications that the Wahhabi/Salafi militants in the North Caucasus and elsewhere in the post-Soviet space are involved in drug trafficking and other clandestine criminal activities (Björnehed 2004: 313; Cornell 2005a; Cornell 2005b; Cornell & Swanström 2006: 20; Dobaev 2009: 53; Halbach 2007: 27). As many Islamist militants and particularly the Wahhabis/Salafis in the post-Soviet space have connections with Afghanistan, it is not difficult to imagine that such accusations do exist. Drug-trafficking and criminal activity, next to financing from abroad, may be their sources of income. True or not, the mere fact that post-Soviet politicians and a significant share of the population believe in these accusations is enough reason for policy makers to take action against the (alleged) Wahhabis/Salafis. Moreover, the careers of many of the main Wahhabis/Salafi figures show that accusations such as having connections with Islamist terrorist groups in Afghanistan do not rest upon pure fantasy. For example, Khattab and Sheikh Fathi have been to Afghanistan. It is also very likely that other foreign terrorists in the North Caucasus have a similar curriculum vitae. Drug-trafficking and other criminal activities, as well as alleged financial support most probably from Saudi Arabia, provide material resources for the Wahhabists/Salafist in order to finance and continue their activities in the North Caucasus.

As a militant Sunni sect, the Wahhabi/Salafi groups often fight against traditional Islamic institutions and civilians. The Chechen population themselves (and other North Caucasians) are more often victims of Wahhabi/Salafi terrorism than its perpetrators. It is not surprising that the Wahhabists/Salafists seek to establish an Islamic Emirate instead of an independent Chechen republic, because Dudayev's goal has almost been fulfilled by Kadyrov; although not independent, there is an Islamic Chechen autonomous polity with a high degree of policy-making capabilities in internal affairs, which can absorb ethno-nationalists. "Moreover, the lavish Moscow subsidy provided to Kadyrov looks almost like a tribute that Russia pays the victorious Chechnya" (Shlapentokh 2010: 118). Therefore, in this context in which many of the ethno-nationalists' goals are realized and in which Russia is more stable and stronger than ever after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, another ethno-nationalist war does not seem realistic.

The question that remains is why it was only Chechens, as the sole ethnic group in the entire Russian Federation, who undertook a (rather successful) war of liberation against Russia—a so-called vertical ethno-territorial conflict, in the terminology of this study.

One argument is that the presence of natural oil (petroleum) resources in Chechnya and its strategic location made it a “viable state” (Cornell 2001: 205). The booming oil business in Chechnya is mentioned by many authors (e.g. Cornell 2001: 205; O’Ballance 1997: 162). Nevertheless, as mentioned before, this is an exaggeration. Chechnya does not possess much oil of its own. It was indeed a main hub for refinement of oil and production of oil products; however, this did not make it a viable state. Chechnya is surrounded on all sides, except to the south, by Russia. To the south it borders Georgia in a mountainous area. It is unlikely that an independent Chechnya, a land-locked country, could export its products to Russia or use Russian territory for its transport. The oil would have to be transported from the Caspian Sea, through the territory of a hostile Russia. The border with Georgia is mountainous, and laying pipelines in such a high altitude mountainous terrain is not easy. Moreover, before the war, Dudayev wasted this hypothetical opportunity by giving asylum to Zviad Gamsakhurdia, the former dissident president of Georgia.

As was mentioned above, although skeptically, the transportation of oil from the Caspian Sea through Chechnya might have been a motive to invade Chechnya, but this certainly does not mean that Chechnya was a viable state. Chechnya was not an economically viable state; it was viable neither during the wars nor before them, nor would it be after them. Oil products cannot be produced without crude oil. It is unlikely that Russia would transport its own oil into a separated Chechnya. Other states’ oil might be transported via Azerbaijan and Georgia into Chechnya; nevertheless, this option is not very likely because no state would jeopardize its relationship with mighty Russia for the sake of small Chechnya. And the important question is this: why would these states transport their oil for refinement to Chechnya at all if they have their own refineries? In addition, exporting oil products from Chechnya would have been very difficult because of its land-locked position.

Other arguments which have been advanced relate to the Chechen culture and their military prowess. Chechen values may indeed have played a role in their resistance against the Russian imperialists. Nevertheless, North Caucasian values are similar all over the North Caucasus. Other ethnic groups in the Caucasus, notably the Avars and the Circassians, have also had a history of resistance against, and bloodshed with, the Russians. Nevertheless, it was only Chechnya who undertook a war of liberation against Russia.

This not to say that history has not left deep scars in the Chechen collective memory and national awareness. It obviously has. As Thomas Goltz said, in an interview with the University of California TV (2005) about his understanding of the Chechen conflict: “History is deep! Is

deep!”<sup>177</sup> The Chechen deportation of 1994—a genocidal deportation, in fact—made a deep impact on Chechens. Chechens were accused of supporting the invading Nazi Germans and were deported eastwards, mainly to Kazakhstan but also to a lesser extent to elsewhere in Central Asia and Siberia. It is noteworthy to mention that many Chechen key figures, such as Maskhadov, Yandarbiyev, and Ahmad Kadyrov were born in exile in Kazakhstan. Dudayev was deported as an infant to Kazakhstan. The Chechen-Ingush ASSR was abolished and was re-established only in 1957, after Khrushchev denounced the Stalin-era deportations and after Chechens returned en masse to their homeland, using their meager personal and familial means. The deportation and exile were designed and engineered in such a harsh way that many Chechens perished:

People were fooled into gathering at certain locations, and loaded up on the 12,000 train carriages that were waiting.... Needless to say, the deportation was accompanied by cruelties of an unimaginable character. The train carriages on which the deportees were loaded had no sanitary arrangements; people were often fed only once during the week that the transport took; the result was epidemics of typhoid, and people dying of starvation or cold. The most outrageous examples of atrocities was the high mountain areas from where the NKVD found it impossible or too difficult to deport the people, because the Studebaker trucks that were used could not reach the isolated locations or for other reasons. In such areas, for example the Khaibakh area near the Georgian-Chechen border, the people that were too old, sick, or otherwise unable to walk were considered “untransportable” and subsequently burnt alive in a stable. Among the people burnt in this locality were some inhabitants from the small settlement of Yalkhoroi; an interesting detail that surfaced only later is that the grandmother, aunt and two cousins of Chechnya’s first president Johar Dudayev were killed in Khaibakh.... Among those that were loaded on the cattle-wagons, up to 60 per cent of certain individual groups are believed to have perished from cold or malnutrition and generally a third of the Karachai-Balkars, and over a quarter of the deported Chechens and Ingush are estimated to have died within five years of the deportations, as it was upon arrival in the harsh climate of Kazakhstan that the worst suffering took place. First of all the deportees were not adequately allocated the food rations and other supplies necessary for life, and as a result many,, in particular children, died as a result of undernourishment and disease. Moreover the local people in the areas of destination had been psychologically “prepared” that traitors, rebels, and even supposedly wild tribespeople, incidentally cannibals, were to be relocated there. (Cornell 2001: 198-199)

---

<sup>177</sup> University of California TV (2005). *Conversations with History: Chechnya*, with Thomas Goltz, 24 January 2005. Available online on the website of *University of California Television*, at: <http://www.uctv.tv/search-details.aspx?showID=8999> (Accessed 20 September 2007). Minute 31, Second 30.

Chechen, as well as other, deportees, were ill-treated; it is generally estimated that over 100,000 Chechens lost their lives. This is a very large number for an ethnic group that numbered approximately 400,000 souls in those years. When the loss of growth is taken into account, the demographic damage of the deportation was even more severe. Although he admits that it is speculative and the number of losses calculated in this way may have been even greater, Cornell (2001: 199) maintains that “the direct and indirect (from absence of growth) losses of Chechens actually amount to over 200,000”.

Already in 1942, before the deportations, the Soviet Air Force had bombed the Checheno-Ingush Republic. The accusation of Chechens having collaborated with the Nazi Germans seems baseless. There was indeed a Chechen resistance against the Soviet authorities, but this had already begun before the Nazi German advances into the Soviet Union, at a time when the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany were still allies. Only a small number of Chechens, perhaps 100 souls, collaborated with the Germans. “By contrast 17,413 of Chechens had sought enlistment in the Red Army in three separate voluntary mobilizations in 1942–1943. Hence it seems safe to say that the claim of collaboration with Germany was by any standard a fabricated reason” (Cornell 2001: 200). It should be mentioned that 17,413 young men out of a nation of about 400,000 souls is a large proportion. The Chechen deportation, hence, was a clear example of a case in which the whole ethnic group was targeted indiscriminately. Membership of the Chechen ethnic group was a sufficient criterion for a Chechen to be deported.

All in all, it is understandable that the genocidal deportation made a deep impact on the Chechen collective memory and national awareness, and they associated the Soviet Union with Russian imperialism and also with Russia and Russians. Nevertheless, they were not the only ethnic group to undergo such an ordeal in the Soviet Union. Yet, no other ethnic group waged a war of liberation against Russia, as the Chechens so successfully did. The deportation, therefore, is not a sufficient factor in explaining the eruption of ethno-territorial conflict in Chechnya.

Another argument which is advanced is that Chechens, with about 900,000 souls, were the largest North Caucasian ethnic group and constituted a *critical mass*. There were also other large ethnic groups in the North Caucasus: the number of Avars was about 600,000, and Ossetians and Circassians each numbered around 500,000. All these ethnic group, Chechens included, were relatively small peoples which were not a serious match for mighty Russia, and not even for Russians whose number was tens of times more than each. In addition, larger Muslim ethnic groups—for examples Tatars and Bakshkirs—existed in Russia who did not engage in armed struggle.



Demography, however, did matter, although in another way. Chechens had a dominant demographic position in the Chechen-Ingush ASSR (about 58% of the population) and an even greater proportion (probably more than 90%) in the Chechen Republic separated from Ingushetia and void of its Russian population. According to Monica Duffy Toft (2003: 64-84), this was the main factor that explains the peculiarity of the Chechen case. She maintains that the Chechens were a concentrated majority (in Chechnya); not only they were the absolute majority in Chechen-Ingush ASSR and Chechnya, but they were also concentrated there. The number and proportion of Chechens elsewhere was relatively small (less than 20% of the total number of Chechens before the outbreak of the war). According to the latest Soviet census (1989), 84.2% of the Chechens in the Soviet Union resided in its “national” territory (Belozero 2005: 100, Table 2.13). Accordingly, this demographic position legitimized the Chechen claim, and I would add to that that it also made the Chechen mobilization easier. As Toft (2003: 86) puts it:

In the Chechen interaction, both Moscow and Chechnya viewed the issue [of Chechen independence] as indivisible [i.e. non-negotiable]. Moscow’s views have been explained [i.e. prevention of a precedent for other potential separatist movements in Russia], and Chechnya’s can be explained as by the widespread notion that *Chechnya must be ruled by Chechens* and the fact that Chechens believed they had an obligation to defend their territory. The 1994 violence was interpreted as a continuation of a three-hundred-year-old struggle. Moscow and ethnic Russians would forever be viewed as outsiders, imperialists who had no right to conquer and control the Chechen people or their homeland. [Italics are in the original]

Toft’s (2003) explanation, however, disregards the issue of territorial autonomy. As most conflicts in the (post-)Soviet space erupted in the regions which enjoyed territorial autonomy, Cornell’s (1999; 2001: 41-56; 2002a; 2002b) notion that autonomy played a crucial role in the emergence of these conflicts certainly makes sense. The possession of territorial autonomy can serve as an opportunity structure and can make the mobilization of the population easier. Moreover, it more easily helps the imagination of an independent state, as its bases and frameworks are already existent in the form of a territorial autonomy. The possession of an autonomous territory facilitates ethnic mobilization especially when the titular ethnic groups possesses the demographic majority of its autonomous homeland. In all cases of ethno-territorial conflict in the (post-)Soviet space—except Abkhazia—in which the ethnic groups involved possessed an autonomous homeland, they constituted also the demographic majority of the population in their territories. In addition to Chechens, also the Ingush and Ossetians constituted the majority of

population in their autonomous homelands in the Russian Federation. Although the Ingush and Ossetians were not engaged in a separatist war against Russia, they were engaged in an ethno-territorial conflict with each other over Prigorodny. Therefore, neither possession of territorial autonomy nor demographic dominance therein is a sufficient factor in explaining ethno-territorial conflict. They cannot explain satisfactorily ethno-territorial conflict because there are many cases of ethno-territorial groups in the (post-)Soviet space that enjoy territorial autonomy and a dominant demographic position therein, but nevertheless have not waged a war of independence. Apparently, in addition to their demographic dominance in their autonomous homeland, the burden of trauma caused by their genocidal deportation as well as a certain peculiarity of the Caucasus—probably its mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration—are crucial factors, which in combination can explain the Chechen conflict.

### ***Political Territorial History of Central Asia***

Central Asia has always been a crossroads between many cultures and civilizations. Both sedentary and nomadic peoples have lived (and still live, to a lesser extent) in Central Asia. Nomadic–sedentary relations in the past have been complex. There have been periods of violence between nomads and the sedentary population. In most of such cases nomadic tribes harassed and pillaged the sedentary population. The most notable case is the Mongol invasion of Central Asia. On the other hand, the relations between the nomads and the sedentary population were not always violent. Needless to say, the nomadic pastoralists and the sedentary agriculturalists saw more benefits in peaceful coexistence and mutual trade of their products than in fighting each other.

Central Asia was also visited and influenced by many merchants as it was the heart of the Silk Road. Many peoples have migrated and settled there peacefully. Central Asia was conquered and suffered under many conquerors. All these events and interactions have contributed to the political history of Central Asia in one way or another. Parts of Central Asia have been parts of many ancient and medieval empires, kingdoms, emirates, and khanates. To name but a few, parts have belonged to the Achaemenid, Kushanid, Samanid, Mongol, Timurid, and Afsharid empires. The cultural orientation and political affiliation of Central Asia, like the Caucasus, were more towards the south than the north. This situation changed drastically, however, in the last few centuries, and particularly from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

The northern parts of Central Asia, which consisted of vast steppes inhabited by nomadic tribes, were gradually conquered and settled

by Russians during the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, Russia was inclined to conquer the southern part of Central Asia, which has a long tradition of urban settlement and (native) statehood. Russian completed their conquest by subjugating the Turkmen tribes and conquering the Pamirs. Russia was involved in an expansionist type of geopolitical rivalry with the British Empire, known as the Great Game (Hopkirk 1994). The most famous early usage of the designation “Great Game” for this Russian-British geopolitical rivalry is most probably that of Rudyard Kipling, a British writer born in British India, who in his book (1901) *Kim* wrote: “Now I shall go far and far into the North, playing the Great Game...”. The Russian desire to reach the open seas of the South and the British desire not to lose its Indian dominions resulted in the Russian conquest of Central Asia, while Afghanistan became a buffer-zone between the two empires. As Rafis Abazov (2007: 35) puts it:

The situation changed, however, in the middle of the nineteenth century. The Russians became increasingly interested in reaching the Central Asian market for their goods, securing the land trade routes with Persia and India, and halting the British advance from their bases in northern India toward Afghanistan and Central Asia. This race for influence in Central Asia and the associated bitter British-Russian rivalry became known as the Great Game. British strategists argued that the Russians might advance to Afghanistan and Persia, thereby threatening the maritime trade routes in the Middle East, and that they might stir up mutinies in the Indian colonies in order to weaken the British Empire. Russian strategists, in turn, saw great economic and military benefits in advancing into Central Asia and further to the south and considered that from this base they could project their military power into the British colonies and dependencies in case Russian-British relations turned sour.

Directly prior to the Russian conquest of southern Central Asia in the mid- and late-19<sup>th</sup> century, there existed three political units that controlled much of the sedentary centers of Central Asia. Nomadic tribes were to varying degrees subjugated to them. Many nomadic tribes were only nominally subjugated to them and many more, especially in the northern part of Central Asia, were totally independent of them. These three political units were the Emirate of Bukhara, the Khanate of Khiva, and the Khanate of Kokand. Next to the establishment of a Russian Turkistan governorate in Central Asia, the first two retained a degree of semi-independence and became Russian protectorates. The Khanate of Kokand, on the other hand, was abolished in 1876 after a short period of vassalage since 1869 and was incorporated into Russian Turkistan.

Kokand was a khanate in which the Sarts<sup>178</sup>—ancestors of modern-day Uzbeks and Tajiks—dominated and held firm control over the sedentary southern part of Kyrgyzstan, in which the Osh region is located. Many Kyrgyz tribes were incorporated into the Tsarist Russian Empire already before the abolishment of the Khanate of Kokand. October 1963 was officially proclaimed by Soviet historiography as the voluntary incorporation of Kyrgyz into Russia (Bohr & Crisp 1996: 404, note 4). While Soviet historiography may have exaggerated the voluntary character of the Kyrgyz incorporation into the Russian Empire, post-Soviet historiography should be careful not to exaggerate the opposition towards it (Huskey 1997: 655). The fact was, however, that the arrival of the technologically advanced Russians could mean a liberation from, or at least could balance the power of, the Kokand rulers, who governed the Kyrgyz with increasing brutality. The predominantly Sart-inhabited areas in the Fergana Valley were incorporated into the Russian Empire only after the defeat and hence abolishment of the Khanate of Kokand.

The political arena (particularly the southern part) of Central Asia was marked by the *Jadidi* movement in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Jadidis were (followers of) Muslim thinkers who proposed a modern Islam suitable for the political realities of the day, opposed Russian colonial rule, and had a nationalist slant (see e.g. Khalid 1998). As they opposed the Tsarist regime, the Bolsheviks initially found allies among them. Nevertheless, similar to the North Caucasus, the alliance between Bolsheviks and the local elites did not solve the problems. Central Asia was then struck by the Basmachis' revolts. Basmachi, a Turkic word which means “bandit”, is referred as an umbrella term to different pockets of resistance against Bolshevik domination of the region, who apparently had little connection to the Jadidis:

The Jadids had little connection with the Basmachi revolt in Ferghana, which began in 1918 and continued for several years, by which time it had

---

<sup>178</sup> Sarts was the name for the sedentary population of Central Asia, and they were composed of Iranian and Turkic elements. They were one component of the modern Uzbek and Tajik ethnic groups. According to Akiner (1996: 335), *Sart* is derived from Sanskrit and means a trader. A Sanskrit etymology for this part of the world sounds, nevertheless, very improbable. My hypothesis is that this ethnonym is derived and is a corrupted form of *Sughd* or *Soghd* (Sogdian), the ancient East Iranian natives of this part of Central Asia. Another explanation is that it is derived from *Sary It*, which means “the yellow dog” in the Turkic languages. Another explanation is that it is derived from *Shahrlyk*, which is then corrupted as *Saartyk* and ultimately *Sart* in the Kypchak Turkic. According to this logic, this word means “city-dweller” and derived from the Iranian *shahr*, which means “city”. Although such an explanation makes sense, still, this explanation is somewhat problematic. Not only the word is phonetically far from its origin, but also the local Iranian word in Central Asia for “city” was *kand*, or *kent*, rather than *shahr* (which became prevalent in the western part of Iran relatively late). *Shahr* in Middle Persian Pahlavi, which was spoken prior to the Islamic era, meant “country” rather than “city”.

also spread to eastern Bukhara. Conventional wisdom connects the Basmachi to the destruction of the Kokand Autonomy. Soviet historiography saw in them the force of counterrevolution, acting in unison with every reactionary force in the region to nip Soviet power in the bud. Non-Soviet scholarship has generally accepted the romanticized émigré view of the Basmachi as a guerrilla movement of national liberation. Both views place a greater burden on the Basmachi than historical evidence can sustain. Instead, the revolt was a response to the economic and social crisis produced by the famine,...requisitions and confiscations on the part of “Soviet authorities”. The Basmachi represented one strategy of the rural population to cope with this dislocation.... [T]he movement was embedded in local solidarities, which remained alien to the more abstract visions of national struggle espoused by those who sought to coopt it to their goals. (Khalid 1998: 285-286)

Bolsheviks initially had a hard time quelling the Basmachi revolt. Nevertheless, once the Bolshevik power established itself, Central Asia remained relatively peaceful and obedient to communist rule until *glasnost* and *perestroika* (Schoeberlein-Engel 1994b). The Soviet policy makers tried to secure their positions in Central Asia (similar to the case in the Caucasus) by isolating them and severing their populations’ interactions with those of the neighboring countries, Iran, Afghanistan, and China (see e.g. Shaw 2011).



Figure 6.9. Central Asia in 1922. Source: Allworth (1967). A similar map is also available in Shaw (1999: 36).

In the early Bolshevik period, three republics were established in the southern part of Central Asia (see Figure 6.9). The Bukharan People's Soviet Republic and the Khorezm People's Soviet Republic were the successors of, respectively, the Emirate of Bukhara and the Khanate of Khiva. The rest of southern Central Asia became the Turkistan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, with Tashkent as its administrative center. The territorial demarcation of the territorial units in Central Asia were subject to change in the ensuing years.

In 1924 the issue of "optimal design" was raised (Gleason 1997: 573). In that year the Politburo issued a resolution, "On the National Redistricting of the Central Asian Republics". When national territories were designed, present-day Kyrgyzstan was incorporated into the Russian Federative Soviet Socialist Republic (1924) as Kara-Kirgiz Autonomous *Oblast'*—Kazakhstan was initially named Kirgizistan, as Russians at that time called Kazakhs and Kyrgyz, respectively, Kirgiz and Kara-Kirgiz. One year later the Kara-Kirgiz Autonomous *Oblast'* was renamed as the Kirgiz Autonomous *Oblast'*. In 1926 its status was elevated to an ASSR within the Russian Federative Socialist Republic and to an SSR in 1936, the direct predecessor of the modern-day independent Kyrgyzstan. The predominantly Uzbek-inhabited areas such as the cities Osh Jalal Abad and their vicinities in Fergana Valley, became part of the Kirgiz SSR instead of the neighboring Uzbek SSR (which was established in 1924).

The creation of Uzbekistan was a remarkable case and dissimilar from most other cases in the former Soviet Union. In certain ways the modern Uzbek nation and Uzbekistan is a product of Bolshevik concession to a Jadidi leader, Abdulrauf Fitrat, apparently a Persian-speaker with pan-Turkist inclinations. The Uzbek nation was a blend of different Iranic- and Turkic-speaking groups (see Chapter 6). In fact, a territorial Uzbek nation was first made and then a language based on Jaghatay (Chaghatay) Turkic was imposed on them.

Tajikistan was first included in Uzbekistan as an ASSR in 1929. The Tajik ASSR did not include the Leninabad (Khujand) region. It gained that region only when it became a separate SSR in 1929. There were also demands that Samarkand and the region of Surkhan Darya (Surkhondaryo) be transferred to the new Tajik SSR, but these demands were refused on the basis that Uzbekistan would lose its border with the non-Soviet outside world—that is, its border with Afghanistan (Masov 1996). The basis of these demands was that these areas are Persian-speaking and hence they should be recognized as Tajik. The fact remains that, to date, a large population of Persian speakers has gone into the Uzbek nation-building project. This, in addition to the similarities in material and non-material culture, is yet another fact which makes the

ethnic boundary between Uzbeks and Tajiks blurred and the distinction between them debatable and artificial at times.

Finally, Uzbekistan was enlarged by the incorporation of the Karakalpakstan ASSR in 1936. In that year Kazakhstan (called Kyrgyzstan until 1925) was promoted from an ASSR within the Russian Federation to a separate SSR. It lost Karakalpakstan to Uzbekistan, however.

The “national” delimitation of Central Asia was complete in 1936. However, its ethnic composition changed further afterwards. During the course of the Second World War, many Caucasian ethnic groups such as the Ingush, Chechens, and Meskhetians were deported to Central Asia, where there were earlier communities of deportees or forced migrants such as Kurds and Koreans. Many other people moved seeking jobs, or were moved, to Central Asia, particularly Kazakhstan. After the independence of these republics, the proportion of non-Central Asian migrants decreased. This was most visible in Tajikistan, which was struck by a bloody civil war.

### ***The Tajikistani Civil War and the Role Played by Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Pamiris***

The Tajikistani civil war is the name of the war, or more precisely, the series of conflicts that occurred after the presidential elections in Tajikistan in 1992 and lasted until 1997, when a peace was reached between the different factions. In fact, it began earlier in the pre-independence era and lasted until a little later, as a warlord, Mahmud Khudoiberdiyev, rebelled until 1998. This war was one of the bloodiest and longest wars in the successor states of the former Soviet Union. It cost more than 50,000 human lives and resulted in approximately 1.2 million refugees or IDPs (UN 2004). Barnes and Abdullaev (2001: 8) summarized the nature of the Tajikistani civil war succinctly:

In comparison with many of the “internal” wars of the late twentieth century, the inter-Tajik conflict is notable both for its rapid escalation to war in 1992 and for its relatively quick conclusion through a negotiated settlement reached in June 1997.... [T]he civil war ... originated primarily in the dynamics of a power struggle between a new class of “political entrepreneurs” rather than in deep social divisions. With the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, Tajikistan unveiled a vibrant array of political movements. They were formed at a time of great social and economic insecurity and were able to attract many activists. In addition, as Roy [2001] points out, inter-regional competition during the Soviet period generated tensions that fuelled the conflict; fighting was most intense where it intersected with localized antagonisms.

Although ethnicity played a role in this civil war, its main causes were not related to ethnicity or ethno-territorial disputes. It was primarily a war about political power in Tajikistan. It is often said that groups' origin from and loyalty towards their localities played a role in the conflict. One's group's locality, however, overlapped in a few cases with its ethnicity. The different political clans, with their strongholds in different localities of Tajikistan, competed with each other in order to maintain or change the realities of power which had been established in the Soviet era. Clan in this sense is not a genealogical concept, but by it is meant a political formation of elites with strongholds in a certain part of the country. In the course of the Tajikistani Civil War, certain political movements were associated with certain areas of the country. In other words, different political movements had different clan backgrounds. People in these regions were not necessarily all sympathetic to the local movement's ideology, but the very fact that the leaders of these movements had strongholds in these areas enabled them to mobilize combatants for their cause.

During Soviet times the top political positions were in the hands of the political clan from Leninabad (Leninobod). This is the northernmost province of the country, now called Sughd after the ancient Sogdians. Its capital was Leninabad (now renamed Khujand after its ancient name). It was the area that was still part of Uzbekistan proper when Tajikistan was still part of the Uzbek SSR as an ASSR. Tajikistan acquired this province when its status was elevated to an SSR in 1929. A major part of the population of this province are Uzbeks, and owing to its geographical location the province was, in Soviet times, more orientated towards Uzbekistan (see Figure 6.10). This province was (and still is) well connected to Uzbekistan, and the mountainous routes to southern Tajikistan are often closed in the winter time.

Next in the hierarchy stood the Kulobi political clan from. Their stronghold was the former province of Kulob—also spelled Kulyab in a Russianized way—now part of the newly formed Khatlon province. The former Qurghonteppa province (*oblast'*)—also spelled as Kurgan-Tyube in a Russianized way—is now the western part of the Khatlon province (*viloyat*). It is interesting to note that Qurghonteppa was a stronghold of opposition in the Tajikistani civil war, and its merger with the loyal Kulob province probably serves as a strategy of control of the area.

Similarly, the former Karotegin province, another stronghold of the opposition in the Tajikistani civil war, was in an area which is now called the "Region of Republican Subordination". That area consists of many districts which are governed directly from the Tajikistani capital of Dushanbe. This area is the homeland of the Gharmi people. Gharmi



people are a sub-group of Tajiks. In Soviet times large numbers of Gharmis were relocated to Qurghonteppa. Gharmis were largely excluded from any important positions during Soviet times and supported the opposition groups in the Tajikistani Civil War. They are especially associated with the Islamist groups. The *Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan*, not to be confused with the nationalist *Tajik Renaissance Party (Rastokhez)*, was their main political party.

Another disadvantaged group were the Pamiris or Badakhshanis. They are the local inhabitants of the Gorno-Badakhshan autonomous province. The bulk of the area was not a part of the Emirate of Bukhara. After the Tajik ASSR was formed inside the borders of the Uzbek SSR, the area was transferred from the former Turkestan ASSR to the newly emerged Tajikistan. They were quite distinguishable from Tajiks by the fact that they spoke their own East Iranian languages and dialects and were traditionally Ismaili Shi'ites. Even though the official Soviet policy was apathetic towards the religion, they were traditionally seen as heterodox and even as infidels by many Sunni Muslims, even in the Soviet times. Owing to its mountainous character, the largest area of this province was not really suitable for agriculture and was not industrially developed either. The local Pamiri people had to endure more privations during Soviet times. "In the 1960s the government imposed taxes on the orchards and as a result the apricot trees, mulberry trees, walnut trees, etc. were cut" (*Red Book: The Peoples of the Pamirs*).<sup>179</sup> Owing to the fact that there were more disadvantaged rural regions in the Tajik SSR, it is difficult to prove that there existed an official policy of discrimination against Pamiris. Nevertheless, in light of the policy record of the authorities, such a conclusion is certainly possible. Even if not the case in the economic sphere, Pamiris were certainly discriminated against in the cultural sphere. After the 1939 census they were not registered separately and the Soviet policy towards them was generally assimilationist:

Soviet policy toward the Pamiri peoples was assimilationist, with education and publications generally being available in Tajik or Russian but not in the Pamiri languages. This began to change in the final years of the Soviet era, but the stereotyping of Pamiris as supporters of the opposition during the civil war prompted a retreat from such concessions. (Atkin 1997: 608)

There existed an opinion that Pamiris are a backward people and the best thing that could happen is that they would assimilate into Tajiks (or Russians). There were plans made to evacuate many Pamiri villages, allegedly because they were located in the high mountains or were too

---

<sup>179</sup> *Red Book* (1991). The Peoples of the Pamirs. Available online: [http://www.eki.ce/books/redbook/pamir\\_peoples.shtml](http://www.eki.ce/books/redbook/pamir_peoples.shtml) (Accessed 10 December 2008).

small. Large numbers of Pamiris were resettled in southwestern Tajikistan in the Qurghonteppa province, especially in the Vakhsh Valley, in order to work on the cotton farms (*Red Book: The Peoples of the Pamirs*). During the Tajikistani civil war a relatively large number of Pamiris were killed. Pamiri migrants outside Gorno-Badakhshan were also targets of assaults and murders.

The main party of Pamiris during the Tajikistani Civil War was the Pamiri nationalist party called *Lali Badakhshon* [The Ruby of Badakhshan]. Gorno-Badakhshan proclaimed independence in 1992 during the Tajikistani Civil War, but renounced it later (Minority Rights Group 2008a). Together with Gharmis, the Pamiris were part of the Tajik united opposition, a more or less loose coalition of different nationalist, liberal democratic, and Islamist parties.

According to Minority Rights Group (2008a), violence against Pamiris has been largely suspended, but they still complain about discrimination. Nevertheless, projects founded by the Agha Khan Foundation have revived the economy of Gorno-Badakhshan somewhat. The Agha Khan Foundation is named after Agha Khan, the spiritual leader of Shi'ite Ismaili Muslims, and is now very active in Central Asia—and also in Sunni areas. They have established universities in Gorno-Badakhshan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan (University of Central Asia). The Agha Khan's project may affect the public image of Pamiris positively, but nevertheless, as late as 2012, Pamiris complained about lack of understanding and many still feel discriminated. A frequently heard complaint is that while in the newest census of Tajikistan the different Turkic Uzbek subgroups are recognized, Pamiris are still unrecognized and still registered as Tajiks.<sup>180</sup>

Aside from the local Tajiks, notably the Kulobis, these displaced Gharmis and Pamiris had another neighbor in western Tajikistan: the Uzbeks. In addition to the northern Uzbeks in the aforementioned province of Leninabad (or Sughd), Uzbeks were concentrated in western Tajikistan, notably in the Hisor Valley. Like Kulobis and Khujandi (Leninabadi) Tajiks and Uzbeks, these Uzbeks are also known to have been supporters of the Tajikistani (communist) government during the Tajikistani civil war, but they complained about discrimination in the latter years of the war. This was most probably because the regional political balance of power had been shifted in Tajikistani politics since 1994. As the role of Uzbeks and their position in Tajikistan is intimately related with the course of the civil war, this will be discussed after a brief overview of the war.

---

<sup>180</sup> Interviews and communications with Pamiris during the first regional CESS (Central Eurasian Studies Society) conference in Bishkek and Chok Tal (Issyk Kul), Kyrgyzstan, August 2008.

A few remarks should be made in order to understand the Tajikistani Civil War better. It is often stated in a Euro-centrist way that Central Asians had no national identity and that nationalism and demands for reforms were not common there, unlike the European parts of the Soviet Union. Such a view is certainly wrong with regard to Tajikistan. In fact, nationalism and demands for reforms are at least partially, if not fully, responsible for the outbreak of the Tajikistani Civil War. *Glasnost* and *perestroika* affected Tajikistan more or less in the same way as they affected other republics. The Tajikistani political movements were in contact with those from other republics (Atkin 1997: 603). The nomadic people of Central Asia identified more or less with their tribal affiliations rather than with a territory or a territorial state in the past. This is not surprising as they were nomads. The case is very different in the case of Tajiks and Uzbeks, who were traditionally urban-dwellers or agriculturalists.

Tajik and Uzbek nationalism claimed legacy from many kingdoms in the past and a civilization that had produced many scientists, poets, and philosophers. The association of the contemporary Uzbek nation with either the Turkic and Turco-Mongolian conquerors, or with the Iranian, and Turco-Iranian states of the past is somewhat difficult, as the Uzbeks were initially a nomadic Turkic tribe and the ancestors of contemporary Uzbeks were not called Uzbeks in the past. The case of Tajiks is very different. The Tajiks have preserved the Persian language of the medieval Central Asian kingdoms, and they can claim their legacy with more justification. Indeed, there is some continuity between the modern Tajik national identity and the past kingdoms, especially the Samanid one, as the language of that kingdom is still intelligible to Tajiks and the works of medieval poets are still taught in the educational curricula in Tajikistan.

Tajiks had experienced statehood until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Emirate of Bukhara, although it had become a Russian protectorate, was a state and was self-governing to a large degree. Although its population was a mixture of Turkic-speaking and Persian-speaking people, Persian was the dominant language there. The controversy arose over the fact that during the course of national delimitation in Central Asia and its aftermath, the large Persian-speaking—read Tajik—cities of Samarkand and Bukhara were allocated within Uzbekistan (proper).<sup>181</sup> This has undeniably affected the national feelings of Tajiks.

The fact that the Tajikistani political arena was characterized by localism does not mean that the Tajikistani sense of national identity was absent and that nationalism had no place in the Tajikistani political arena

---

<sup>181</sup> The political territorial history of Tajikistan is discussed in detail by Masov (1996).

and society. In fact, the expression of Tajik nationalism was a prelude to the emerging warfare in Tajikistan. In contrast to the Soviet rhetoric, Tajik nationalists did not see their nation as a “formerly backward people” (Atkin 1997: 606). In this light it is more painful for the Tajik nationalists to realize that their republic was one of the most underdeveloped republics of the former Soviet Union and the smallest Central Asian republic, deprived of medieval Tajik cultural centers such as Samarkand and Bukhara.

The first notable events arising from nationalism after *glasnost* and *perestroika* were the so-called Dushanbe riots in February 1990. The main cause of these riots was the rumor that Armenian refugees from the Republic of Azerbaijan had arrived in Tajikistan and that they would get affirmative treatment in housing. This angered the Tajiks, who already complained about housing and about the general living conditions in Tajikistan. The rumor was only a trigger. These feelings of dissatisfaction and anger already existed and were not directed specifically against Armenians or any other ethnic groups but against the Soviet system and, in particular, the Tajikistani authorities. The riots became even more widespread after the forces of the Ministry of Internal Affairs opened fire on the protesters. The Dushanbe riots triggered an outflow of non-indigenous population from the republic.

Despite the fact that Tajik nationalists and reform-minded intellectuals were influenced by events in other parts of the Soviet Union, *glasnost* and *perestroika* did not have much effect on the Tajikistani leadership, who continued to rule the republic in an authoritarian way. The Tajikistani leadership in fact supported the hardline communist 1991 coup in Moscow. When the coup failed, Qahhor Mahkamov, the Communist Party’s first secretary and president of Tajikistan, was ousted and the Communist Party of Tajikistan was briefly suspended. After independence, however, the communists ousted Qadriddin Aslonov, who had assumed the office of presidency of Tajikistan shortly before, and installed the old-style communist Rahmon Nabiyev, who had been ousted as the first secretary of the Communist Party back in 1985 after an alleged corruption scandal.

Nabiyev stepped down briefly from the presidency owing to the pressures on him during the campaign for the presidential elections. He won the elections in 1992. This gave rise to large-scale protests by the opposition and was in effect the beginning of the Tajikistani Civil War.

The Tajikistani Civil War was a bloody protracted war, in which the Tajikistani conservative ruling elite was assisted by Uzbekistan, which had a similar-minded political ruling elite, and paradoxically also by the Russia of the Yeltsin era. The ruling elite saw rural people as susceptible to Islamic fundamentalism and were suspicious of most civil initiatives. In

fact, this was not an idle fear, since Tajikistan shares a rather long border with Afghanistan and many citizens of Tajikistan had served in the army during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan.

Nabiyev is often accused of having provoked the conflict by his harsh and reckless performance. On the other hand, it is not certain what would have happened if the opposition had seized the political power. It was inconceivable that different local clans and different ideologies, nationalists, liberal democrats, etc. could cooperate with the Islamist elements. In any case, although he wanted it very much, Nabiyev was unable to reaffirm the power of the old Soviet-time elite in an authoritarian country. He failed, while President Karimov in Uzbekistan was successful.

Later that year Nabiyev was detained at Dushanbe airport and forced to resign. He retreated to his hometown of Leninabad and died in April 1993, reportedly of a heart attack. Rumors are prevalent that he shot himself or was assassinated. Emomali Rahmonov of the Kulobi clan held *de facto* political power at the time and in 1994 was elected as president.

The war continued until 1997, when a peace agreement was signed between the government and the United Tajik Opposition, by which some government posts were assigned to the latter. Nevertheless, as late as 1998, an Uzbek warlord rebelled and the position of Uzbeks deteriorated in western Tajikistan. The role of Uzbekistan, and Tajikistani Uzbeks and their position in Tajikistan will be discussed below.

It is often argued that Uzbekistan as an external player in the conflict was not interested in the position of Uzbeks in the country. It is true that Uzbekistan was primarily interested in its own domestic security, and its involvement in the Tajikistani Civil War was primarily in order to prevent a spill-over into Uzbekistan and to hinder the precedent of an Islamist government in Central Asia, which would then trigger an Islamist takeover of power in Uzbekistan (see e.g. Fumagalli 2007; Horsman 1999). Nevertheless, it is untrue to say that Uzbekistan was not at all interested in Uzbeks in Tajikistan.

Uzbeks are the largest ethnic group in Central Asia and comprised about a quarter of Tajikistan's population before the Tajikistani Civil War—now they comprise approximately 16% of Tajikistan's population. They were a demographic source to be reckoned with in Tajikistani politics. In the early days of the civil war, “[t]he government of Uzbekistan encouraged anti-Tajik sentiments among the Uzbek inhabitants of southern Tajikistan” (Atkin 1997: 609). This is not surprising because these were Uzbeks, who were the neighbors of the oppositional political clans in Qurghonteppa. During the civil war these Uzbeks clashed frequently with the opposition.

Uzbekistan assisted the conservative government directly and indirectly. It is rumored that the late Nabiyeu was in fact an Uzbek. Given his Asiatic facial features and phenotype, it is more likely that he was indeed an Uzbek rather than a Tajik. However, this is not necessarily so, as many Tajiks also have the same facial features. Uzbek and Tajik identities are blurred, especially in Uzbekistan (see Schoeberlein-Engel [1994a; 1997] for an in-depth description of Uzbek and Tajik identities).

Nabiyeu was from Leninabad. The fact is that Leninabad province was heavily populated by Uzbeks and was orientated towards Uzbekistan. As it was the home base of the conservative ruling elite, who were assisted by Uzbekistan, Leninabad during the Tajikistani Civil War became even more orientated towards Uzbekistan, to which it was better connected by means of transportation and communication than to the rest of Tajikistan.

From 1994 onwards, however, there was a shift of policy visible in the attitude of Uzbekistan towards the Tajikistani Civil War. From that time Uzbekistan supported negotiations between the opposition and the conservative government. According to Horsman (1999: 43-44), this was because the Uzbekistani government thought of its position as already consolidated, having used the Tajikistani Civil War as a legitimate reason to crack down on the opposition in Uzbekistan. The Andijon events in 2005 showed that there are still some challenges to Uzbekistan's ruling elite, especially from the Islamist opposition. Nevertheless, the Uzbekistani ruling elite is consolidated enough in order to resist these challenges. I argue that the shift in the Uzbekistani attitude towards Tajikistan was also due to another fact. In 1994 the balance of power in the government forces shifted in favor of the Kulobi political clan at the expense of the Leninabadi one which was more orientated toward Uzbekistan. This shift of power coincided with the complaints of discrimination by Uzbeks. According to the Minorities at Risk Project (MAR 2010a) in 1994:

Many Uzbeks in Panj complained before representatives of Human Rights Watch that they had been illegally detained for more than twenty-four hours in the headquarters of the special forces. Some were detained for a few days, other were detained for longer periods and permitted only sporadic family visits. Many of the detainees were beaten while in detention. When asked by Human Rights Watch why Uzbeks in Panj were suddenly being targeted by their former allies, the pro-government Tajiki forces, Uzbeks unanimously responded that the Tajiks who had previously been enemies (i.e. Kulabis and Gharmis) were now uniting in an effort to push Uzbeks out of Tajikistan.

What the above quotation indicates is that the shift of power had brought about new realities of power. In 1994 the Kulobi clan, which was

previously the second-ranked after the Leninabadi clan, became the dominant force in the country. In order to maintain its position it is conceivable that the Kulobi clan will accommodate its former enemies in order to remain at the top. This way the former opposition will get a relatively inferior position while they will be on top at the expense of the former Leninabadi overlords and their Uzbek allies. I argue that the peace deal and the willingness of the new government to negotiate with the opposition follows the same logic.

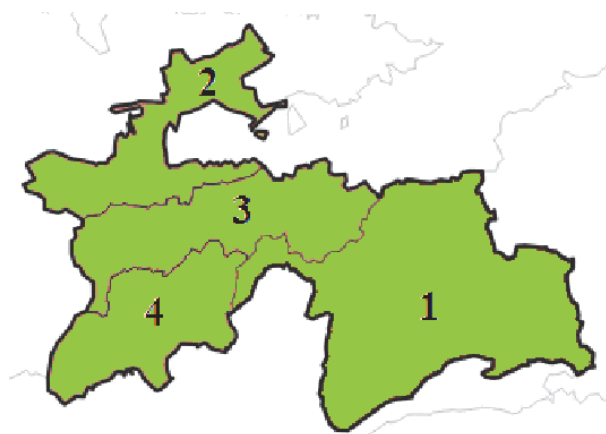
Uzbeks in Tajikistan complain that the government has not rewarded them for their support during the civil war. Uzbeks have come into clashes with the Tajik returnees who have claimed back their homes, lands, and properties. Regarding the fact that these Tajiks were associated with the supporters of the opposition in Qurghonteppa, the feuds of the civil-war era still play a role. The Tajikistani government has instead disarmed the Uzbeks. In fact, the government made a plan to disarm everybody in this area, but Uzbeks believed that this policy was especially targeted at them.

In 1998 the Tajikistani Uzbek warlord Mahmud Khudoberdiev, once an ally of the government, rebelled against the new government in the northern province of Sughd (former Leninabad). He demanded better government positions for the northerners (i.e. the Leninabadi political clan and the Uzbeks there). This probably caused the new Tajikistani government to be even more suspicious of Uzbeks.

According to Minorities at Risk Project (MAR 2006d) and Minorities Right Group (2008b), Uzbeks face discrimination in Tajikistan. While the former source states that the risk of rebellion by Uzbeks is low in Tajikistan, the latter source maintains that the tensions between Uzbeks and Tajiks have increased since 2006. The question of discrimination and rivalry between Tajiks and Uzbeks remains unclear, as the ethnic boundaries between the two people are blurred. In fact, it is often stated that Tajiks and Uzbeks are one people who speak two languages.

Although at peace and making progress, post-conflict Tajikistan still faces many challenges (Heathershaw 2011). It is conceivable that the issues of economic well-being and political representation in Tajikistan remain sensitive issues in Tajikistani politics and could be a source of tension between different local and ethnic groups in the (near) future, despite the fact that Tajikistan has not had major upheavals and unrest in recent years. Even though the recent events in Kyrgyzstan (2010) show that Central Asia is still not free of ethnic tension, and despite the fact that relations between Uzbeks and Tajiks are reportedly soured more than before, in post-conflict Tajikistan the challenges from Islamic fundamentalism remain a more pressing issue than ethnic rivalry in Central Asian politics. Even though expressions of political Islam are

generally not tolerated in Central Asia (Mateeva 2006: 28), and even though a widespread apolitical mood prevails in post-conflict Tajikistan (Heathershaw 2011: 78-79),<sup>182</sup> still the danger of violent conflict initiated by Wahhabi/Salafi militants is real. The many recent incidents of this nature are, indeed, evidence for such a possibility. As Tajikistan borders Afghanistan, which is an unstable state plagued by militant Sunni Islamist insurgency with links to Wahhabi/Salafi (or as many would say, Deobandi) groups in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, it remains vulnerable to such an Islamist-inspired violent conflict; in any case, much more than purely inter-ethnic conflicts. As recent events show in Taliban-era Afghanistan (1994–2001, and even thereafter), Bahrain (2011, Saudi invasion), Iraq (2003–2011 post-Saddam instability), and the many attacks on Shi'ites in Pakistan, a strong Wahhabi/Salafi presence is often accompanied by the massacre of Shi'ites and liberal Sunni Muslims. Such a scenario may lead to reactions among the Pamiri Ismaili Shi'ites, which in turn may cause a new war in Tajikistan. This scenario, however, remains hypothetical only.



- 1= Kuhistani Badakhshan Autonomous Province (Gorno-Badakhshan AO)**
- 2= Sughd (formerly Leninobod)**
- 3= Region of Republican Subordination (formerly Karotejin)**
- 4= Khatlon (formerly Kulob and Qurghonteppa Provinces)**

*Figure 6.10. Territorial divisions of Tajikistan*

<sup>182</sup> According to John Heathershaw (2011), in the post-conflict Tajikistan the popular discourse of peace at the local level is framed around the discourse of *tinji* (a word meaning "peacefulness" and "wellness" in the Tajik language). Heathershaw identifies an element of anti-politics in the latter discourse, which I would rather call apolitical (see Rezvani 2011: 471).



## ***Uzbek–Kyrgyz Conflict in Southern Kyrgyzstan***

Southern Kyrgyzstan was in June 2010 again the scene of ethnic conflict between the Kyrgyz and Uzbeks. Aside from the civil war in Tajikistan, Central Asia had been free of large-scale violence after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The recent (summer 2010) violence in Kyrgyzstan between the Uzbek and Kyrgyz has shocked many, particularly those who thought that the hostility between these two ethnic groups was already lost in the darkness of history. The former Uzbek–Kyrgyz conflict in Kyrgyzstan was often blamed on the post-*perestroika* deterioration of the socio-economic situation in the former Soviet Union. Most analysts, certainly those in the West, thought that even though ethnic stereotypes existed between the Kyrgyz and Uzbeks similar to those between other ethnic groups worldwide, violence and hostilities had already subsided in 1990 after order was re-established.

Arguably, the 2010 conflict was a re-eruption of the former conflict in 1990, which had remained dormant after violent hostilities subsided. Although the 2010 conflict was fought only over a short period of time, it is rooted in a longer history. Like many other ethno-territorial conflicts elsewhere in the former Soviet Union, its roots go back to the establishment of the Soviet Union and its nationalities policy and national territorial (re)divisions. As a result of these divisions, a large Uzbek population now lives in the territory of Kyrgyzstan contiguous to the Uzbekistani border.

Asanbekov (1996) calls this conflict a Turkic self-genocide. Without approving his wording, this labeling is insightful because lingual and religious affiliations are often wrongly thought to be determinants of ethnic conflicts. Although belonging to different branches, Uzbeks and Kyrgyz both speak a Turkic language and both are Sunni Muslims.

Traditionally, Uzbeks were largely sedentary while the Kyrgyz were traditionally nomadic. Although there have been periods in which nomads attacked and pillaged the sedentary population, the relations between the nomadic Kyrgyz and the sedentary Sarts—i.e. the ancestors of modern-day Uzbeks and Tajiks—were not always violent as they saw benefits in peaceful coexistence and trade and exchange of their products. Nevertheless, Soviet—and to some extent earlier imperial Russian—policies vis-à-vis these peoples ultimately contributed to a situation in which the interests of Uzbeks and Kyrgyz seemed to be incompatible and hence came into open violent conflict with each other.

During the Soviet era, and in conformity with the situation elsewhere in the Soviet Union, the Kyrgyz as the titular ethnic group held most, and the most important, positions in Kyrgyzstan. Hence, the highest officials and the militia in the Osh region and the rest of Uzbek-inhabited

southern Kyrgyzstan were ethnically Kyrgyz. The Uzbek majority predominated in the agriculture and service sectors.

Although Uzbeks were a minority in Kyrgyzstan, with approximately half a million souls, and only comprised 13% of the total population, they formed a majority of the population in many southern areas adjacent or close to the Kyrgyzstani–Uzbekistani border. In addition, the Uzbek demographic weight in Central Asia was large. Uzbeks were the largest ethnic group in Central Asia, regardless of whether we take the official numbers of the Soviet census or the unofficial numbers which count the number of Uzbeks much lower. Large numbers of Uzbeks lived in all other Central Asian republics. Uzbeks in Uzbekistan outnumbered the Kyrgyz (in Kyrgyzstan or elsewhere) by a factor of more than three.

In the late 1980s and after Gorbachev's policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika* were initiated, there was more room for opposition and dissent. Kyrgyzstan was one of the poorest republics, and unemployment and underemployment were rampant, with the ethnic Kyrgyz moving steadily to the cities and in serious need of housing (Huskey 1997: 660-661).

The issue of housing for the ethnic Kyrgyz, in addition to the issues of revival and assertion of Kyrgyz language and culture, became one of the main aims of the Kyrgyz nationalist movements and organizations that began to emerge. In the Osh region the ethnic Kyrgyz organization *Osh Aimagy* was established, which demanded land for the housing of Kyrgyz in this predominantly Uzbek area. The Kyrgyz-dominated regional authorities allotted 32 hectares of fertile agricultural land belonging to a predominantly Uzbek collective farm for the housing of ethnic Kyrgyz.

On the other side, the ethno-nationalist Uzbeks had organized themselves in the Adolat [justice] Organization, which aimed at more Uzbek cultural rights, autonomy, and even separatism and incorporation of parts of southern Kyrgyzstan into Uzbekistan (Asanbekov 1996; Huskey 1997: 662). These demands were not only advanced by the separatist groups such as Adolat, but also by the “well-to-do” Uzbeks and Uzbek *oqsoqols* (elders with social prestige). Declarations of autonomy of and support for separatism of the Uzbek-inhabited areas in southern Kyrgyzstan also appeared in Uzbekistan, even among scholars (Asanbekov 1996).

The Kyrgyzstani authorities failed to appease the local Uzbeks, and violent ethnic conflict erupted (4–10 June 1990) in the Osh region, notably in Osh and in Uzgen cities. The Uzbeks were supported by their co-ethnics “from Uzbekistan, who crossed the republican border in the

early stages of the fighting” (Huskey 1997: 662). Asanbekov (1996) states that according to a KGB report:

The opposing sides, especially Uzbeks, had long been preparing for this conflict. The Uzbeks had probably begun preparations in February 1990 [four months before the conflict]. Some of the Uzbek population in Osh began to drive out Kyrgyz tenants from their lodgings, prompted by the threats of Uzbek extremists to set fire to their houses if they did not expel their Kyrgyz tenants. The result was the appearance of some 1.5 thousand young Kyrgyz men in Osh who joined Osh Aimagi.

The estimates of human casualties of this ethno-territorial conflict remain modest, varying between slightly less than 200 (Tishkov 1995: 134-135; Tishkov 1997: 137) and slightly more than 300 (Asanbekov 1996). Nevertheless, given the fact that the actual fighting took place over only a few days (4–10 June 1990), this ethno-territorial conflict can be regarded as one of the most violent ones in the former Soviet Union. Approximately 5,000 criminal acts occurred during this conflict, many of which had an extremely brutal character (Tishkov 1995: 135; Tishkov 1997: 135-154).

This ethno-territorial conflict was one of the few cases in the former Soviet Union in which the rebelling minority did not possess an autonomous status in the host republic. In this respect, this conflict resembles the Transnistrian conflict in Moldova. Kaufman’s (2001) classification of the conflicts in and over South Ossetia, Abkhazia, and Nagorno-Karabakh as mass-led mobilization is not totally justified because in Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan nationalists ultimately seized the political power. However, the conflict in Osh (not discussed by Kaufman) can certainly be seen as such a case. In this case, nevertheless, ethno-nationalists were not successful in their separatist aims. In contrast to the unresolved conflicts in the Caucasus, violence subsided after the authorities announced a military curfew and a treaty of friendship was signed between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan in March 1991. Nevertheless, tension still remains between Uzbeks and Kyrgyz in this part of Kyrgyzstan (Eurasianet.org 24 January 2006; MAR 2010b).

The first president of independent Kyrgyzstan, Askar Akayev, did much in order to appease the Uzbeks, but the situation worsened after he was removed from office after the so-called Tulip Revolution (2005). Already before the Tulip Revolution there were signs of deterioration in the inter-ethnic situation. According to Nick Megoran (2005: 568-574), in the late 1990s and early 2000s, generally a xenophobic discourse existed among the opposition, viewing foreign forces, as well as the ruling elite, as a threat to Kyrgyzstan’s security, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. “After domestic chongdor [i.e. the Kyrgyz elite], the terrorist threat from

the [Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan] IMU was named as a major danger. Much reference was made to foreign capitalists—Turkish and Chinese traders and ‘Western’ capitalists. These were sometimes described as being in cahoots with the Kyrgyz chongdor, and were together draining the wealth of Kyrgyzstan” (Megoran 2005: 573). Even Akayev’s government, which was renowned for its orientation towards a civic model of the Kyrgyzstani nation and had initially resisted and opposed the opposition’s Kyrgyz ethno-nationalistic discourse, fell ultimately into a (ethno)-nationalist discourse on border disputes when the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan penetrated the Batken area in southern Kyrgyzstan in 1999 (Megoran 2004: 752-758).

The “Tulip Revolution”, however, was the major turning point. It shifted the balance of power in Kyrgyzstan in favor of the “southern” Kyrgyz. After the Tulip Revolution Kurmanbek Bakiyev, with his stronghold in southern Kyrgyzstan, seized political power. As in Tajikistan so also in Kyrgyzstan: clans and locality play a role in political affairs. After the Tulip Revolution, the ethnic competition between the southern Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan gained salience.

After Akayev and his government were removed from office, Uzbeks complained increasingly about discrimination and blamed the new, i.e. Bakiyev’s, government for being insensitive to inter-ethnic relations (Eurasianet.org 24 January 2006; Ferghana News 19 March 2007; MAR 2010b). During Askar Akayev’s presidency Uzbeks were represented in the local authorities in southern Kyrgyzstan in areas where they constituted a majority of the population. Following the famous Soviet phrase, “Soviet Union is our common home”, Akayev’s government was chanting “Kyrgyzstan is our common home”. This fact suggests Akayev’s orientation towards a civic model of nationalism, even if half-hearted since he simultaneously also spoke about Kyrgyz statehood (Suleymanov 2008: 21). In any case, his policies of appeasing and accommodating Uzbek demands had positive effects on the inter-ethnic situation in southern Kyrgyzstan.

After the Tulip Revolution, too many Uzbek officials were reportedly replaced by southern Kyrgyz, who were genealogically and ideologically close to President Bakiyev.<sup>183</sup> Already on 24 January 2006, not very long after the Tulip Revolution, Eurasianet.org reported:

The increasing view among Uzbeks is that the March 2005 revolution that ousted former president Askar Akayev and installed Bakiyev was not a beneficial development for their community. Akayev, during the last years

---

<sup>183</sup> I remember this issue was mentioned to foreign scholars by my Kyrgyz colleagues during my fieldwork and a conference in Kyrgyzstan in August 2010. At that time not many believed in a re-emergence of ethnic conflict in southern Kyrgyzstan, despite the warnings of deterioration in inter-ethnic relations in southern Kyrgyzstan.

of his administration, courted Uzbek support by espousing a policy called “Kyrgyzstan is our common house”. Uzbeks also used the People’s Assembly, a formal association of ethnic minorities established by Akayev, to represent their interests. Uzbek leaders say that Bakiyev has shown little interest in continuing the Akayev line on inter-ethnic relations, noting that the People’s Assembly has lost much of its former influence. Uzbeks have been alarmed by the nationalist rhetoric employed by Bakiyev administration officials. (Eurasianet.org 24 January 2006)

Although it is unfair to claim that all Kyrgyz in southern Kyrgyzstan were his supporters, it is true that Bakiyev had his stronghold among the Kyrgyz there. Therefore, it is fair to blame the deterioration of the inter-ethnic situation in southern Kyrgyzstan on the policies implemented during Kurmanbek Bakiyev’s presidency. It was conceivable that a privileged position of southern Kyrgyz, accompanied by a deterioration in Uzbeks’ position, would lead to much grievance among the latter.

As Bakiyev’s government was brought down by another revolution, the shift of political power also aggrieved the southern Kyrgyz, who feared they would lose their privileged position. Due to the legacy of Soviet nationalities policy and its practice of the allocation of resources by central government, the southern Kyrgyz possibly began to realize that the aggrieved Uzbeks’ animosity towards Kurmanbek Bakiyev might receive a welcoming ear from the northern Kyrgyz. Whether this was the reality or their own (mis)perception, the southern Kyrgyz’s fear was understandable.

Although usually not leading to inter-ethnic clashes, negative stereotypes of Uzbeks are widespread among the Kyrgyz and also among other ethnic groups elsewhere. The demographic dominance of Uzbeks in the region makes them a despised ethnic group in Central Asia, especially among the nomadic groups such as the Kyrgyz, who traditionally were almost absent in the cities in (what is now) their country. Certainly Uzbeks were seen as capable of posing serious separatist and irredentist demands, such as the first Osh conflict (1990), and meddling in the internal affairs of neighboring countries, as they did during the Tajikistani Civil War (see e.g. Horsman 1999). According to Tishkov (interviewed by De Waal 2003: 133), Uzbekistan was another ethnic assimilator, in addition to Georgia and Azerbaijan. Stereotypes of Uzbeks being chauvinists who suppress the minorities in Uzbekistan are common in Kyrgyzstan as well as in other Central Asian countries, particularly in Tajikistan. Nevertheless, ethnic competition in the materialistic sense is a pressing issue only in southern Kyrgyzstan, near the Uzbekistani border (Fergana Valley) where the Kyrgyz and Uzbeks encounter each other. Other areas in Kyrgyzstan are almost void of Uzbeks.

The disorder and chaos resulting from the “new” revolution and removal of Bakiyev is a factor which has increased the opportunity for unleashing hostilities. Similar to the 1990s, when the whole Soviet Union was in disarray, the situation in Kyrgyzstan became chaotic after Bakiyev was removed from office, and Otunbayeva, together with many members of the opposition, came to power. In this chaos and power vacuum Bakiyev relied on his supporters in southern Kyrgyzstan. Criminal gangs could also carry on and prepare themselves for a potential conflict, be it against the new government or against Uzbeks, whom they mistrusted and viewed as supporters of the new government.

Although the conflict in 2010 between the Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in southern Kyrgyzstan is, in certain respects, the re-eruption of the 1990 conflict between them,<sup>184</sup> still it is unfair to say that this was a “frozen” conflict which “melted” again. The Kyrgyz–Uzbek conflict in Kyrgyzstan is not similar to “frozen” conflicts in the Caucasus—that is, Ossetian–Georgian, Abkhazian–Georgian, or Azerbaijani–Armenian conflicts. The first Kyrgyz–Uzbek conflict in the 1990s was terminated when the violence stopped. Kyrgyzstan was one of the few (post-)Soviet republics that moved (half-heartedly) towards a civic model of nationhood. Unlike most other Soviet successor states, which implemented firm nationalist policies, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, for example, have retained Russian as an official language in the republic. The demographic position of the Kyrgyz and Kazakhs in, respectively, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan was simply not large enough to make negligence of ethnic minorities a viable option. This situation, however, had largely changed since the Tulip Revolution, to the detriment of Uzbeks in southern Kyrgyzstan.

On the other hand, the new eruption of conflict *was* in way a continuation of the 1990 ethnic conflict: it was a revenge on Uzbeks. It requires more detailed investigation and is difficult to state with certainty, but it is quite possible that the Kyrgyz mob which attacked Uzbeks in June 2010 were relatives of the victims of the 1990 conflict, the memory of which was still vivid in the minds of citizens in southern Kyrgyzstan.

Uzbeks were the underdog during the second conflict in 2010. This was especially so during the first days of the conflict, but the situation seems to have changed later on. This is obvious from a few facts. The course of the conflict, and its related news, could be followed on the official website of the Kyrgyzstani news agency, “Aki Press” (Akipress.com and Akipress.org). In the first few days of clashes, the situation was chaotic. As a result, tens of people died and many people fled the towns. However, it seems that the situation returned to relative

---

<sup>184</sup> During my visit to Kyrgyzstan (August 2008) I noticed that the negative ethnic stereotypes of the “Other” still exist among the Kyrgyz and Uzbeks.

calm after many were arrested. The night of 13 to 14 June, a few days after the atrocities began, was reported as being calm in Osh (Akipress 14 June 2010a). The number of casualties increased dramatically from 77 (Akipress 12 June 2010) to 192 (Akipress 18 June 2010), after 203 persons crossed the border from Uzbekistan into Kyrgyzstan (Akipress 14 June 2010b). Therefore, the increase in the number of casualties may relate to an Uzbek revenge. This is supported by the Kyrgyz minister's claim that refugees were not only Uzbeks but also Kyrgyz; the latter sought refuge in the mountains. It is true that the Uzbekistani president Karimov had taken an isolationist stance in regional politics after 2006. The Uzbek-Kyrgyz border is officially difficult to cross. However, the borders are not totally closed. Uzbek networks operate on both sides of the Uzbekistani–Kyrgyzstani border. The Uzbekistani government uses these informal networks, particularly in order to contain and counter (alleged) radical Islamist (Wahhabi/Salafi) activists (Fumagalli 2007: 115). Certainly, 203 militants, who may have crossed the border into Kyrgyzstan, are more than enough to account for the sharp rise in the number of casualties.

This conflict has officially cost between 400 and 500 human lives and has resulted in 400,000 refugees (Akipress 3 May 2011; Akipress 3 June 2011; Reuters 17 June 2010). According to Roza Otunbayeva, the (interim) Kyrgyzstani president (at the time of conflict), the number of casualties could be estimated at 2,000 (BBC 18 June 2010; BBC 3 July 2010; *The Guardian* 18 June 2010; *The Independent* 19 June 2010; Ria Novosti 18 June 2010; Ria Novosti 3 July 2010; VOA 16 August 2010; *The Washington Times* 18 June 2010). Although the official accounts provide a smaller number than 2,000, Otunbayeva's estimates do not seem far-fetched if one realizes the brutal nature of this conflict. The initial number of deaths was much lower but rose as the seriously injured unfortunately died from their injuries. In addition, there was and still is much uncertainty about the exact number of casualties at that chaotic time. One thing, however, is certain; this conflict (2010) was a bloody one, especially for Uzbeks. Compared with the conflicts in the Caucasus and Tajikistan, the number of casualties in such a short time is evidence of the brutal and fatal character of this conflict. Despite the fact that it was not a conventional war between armies, a number of machine guns and other weapons were used in this conflict.<sup>185</sup> According to the Kyrgyzstani National Security Service, about 300 automatic weapons and 1,500 Molotov cocktails had been used in the clashes in Osh. (Akipress 15 June 2010).

---

<sup>185</sup> This can be clearly read in the news provided by Akipress.com.

It is not totally justified to regard this conflict as terminated, because its root causes still remain. On the other hand, it is conceivable that this conflict's potential will cease to exist as time goes on, and the (current type of) ethno-nationalism—a product of the Soviet nationalities policy—may erode. Conscious state policies will certainly help create a civic model of the Kyrgyzstani nation and hence may reduce the chances of similar conflicts in future.

## ***Conclusion: Patterns of Ethno-Territorial Conflict***

After having described them earlier in this chapter, below the ethno-territorial conflicts will be compared with each other. By doing that, an attempt will be made to find patterns and draw conclusions. The findings of this chapter confirm many theoretical assumptions discussed in Chapter 2. These findings and conclusions are discussed below.

All conflicts have originated at a time when the respective host country was in political chaos. All ethno-territorial conflicts in the Soviet Union and its successor states have emerged after *glasnost* and *perestroika*, before the collapse of the Soviet Union, or shortly thereafter. In every case, the first signs of conflict were visible already before the Soviet Union's dissolution.

The times of eruption of all conflicts confirm the fact that the political instability of the host country is a background condition that enables the eruption of ethno-territorial conflicts. This is true about all ethno-territorial conflicts discussed, including the Kyrgyz–Uzbek conflict in summer 2010, but with the exception of the South Ossetian and Abkhazian conflicts in August 2008 that could better be seen as international wars.

The conflict between the Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in southern Kyrgyzstan in summer 2010, similar to the first conflict there in 1990, occurred in a time of political chaos. The political situation in Kyrgyzstan was indeed chaotic in June 2010. Ex-president Kurmanbek Bakiyev was deposed in May 2010, while Roza Otunbaeva's presidency was not yet legitimized. There were many riots and much discord, especially in the south of country, at that time.

The first conflict between the Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in southern Kyrgyzstan occurred in the aftermath of *perestroika*, at a time when the Soviet Union was disintegrating and when ethnic nationalism was salient all over the former Soviet empire. Roughly during the same period many other ethno-territorial conflicts—the South Ossetian, Prigorodny, and Nagorno-Karabakh conflicts—occurred in the (post-)Soviet Caucasus and



Central Asia. Although the dispute about Nagorno-Karabakh had begun earlier, it evolved into a violent conflict roughly at the same period of time as the aforementioned conflicts. This was also a time when Chechens voiced their desire for independence from Russia for the first time. The only conflict which can be typified as an ethno-territorial conflict in the (post-)Soviet space outside the Caucasus and Central Asia began also at the same period of time: The Transnistrian conflict began in Moldova in 1990, and the Gagauz minority there demanded autonomy. One year earlier (1989), the pogrom against Meskhetians occurred in Fergana Valley in Uzbekistan, not very far from Osh.

Comparing the cases of conflicts teaches us that religious difference does not seem to be a necessary factor for the emergence of these ethno-territorial conflicts. Half of the ethno-territorial conflicts in these regions were fought by ethnic groups who adhered to different religions. On the one hand, the predominantly Orthodox Christian Ossetians and Abkhazians fought against the predominantly Orthodox Christian Georgians; and the Sunni Muslim Uzbeks were involved in conflicts with fellow Sunni Muslim Kyrgyz and Tajiks. On the other hand, the Sunni Muslim Chechens and Ingush fought against, respectively, the predominantly Orthodox Christian Russians and Ossetians; the predominantly Orthodox Christian Armenians fought against the predominantly Shi'ite Muslim Azeris; and the Sunni Muslim Tajiks fought against the Ismaili Shi'ite Muslim Pamiris. However, there were many more ethno-territorial encounters between ethnic groups adhering to different religions that were not afflicted by conflicts.

No ethno-territorial conflict was fought by ethnic groups who spoke closely related languages. This is also true in the case of Uzbeks and Kyrgyz. Although both Turkic languages, Uzbek and Kyrgyz belong to different branches of the Turkic languages. Nevertheless, as will be discussed further on, ethnic kinship may have had an impact on the emergence of ethno-territorial conflicts in these regions, and, therefore, linguistic difference or similarity may also have had such an impact on them.

Remarkably, all the ethno-territorial conflicts reviewed have occurred in areas which can be typified as the mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration. The whole Caucasus, as well as the southeastern part of Central Asia, can be typified as such. One might argue that the Caucasian political culture, and that of southeastern Central Asia for that matter, is more ethno-nationalistic than other regions and, therefore, the eruption of ethno-territorial conflicts are more likely in these regions. However, the prominence of ethno-nationalist sentiments may itself be the result of the "mosaicness" of the ethno-geographic configuration there. The prominence of ethno-nationalism may have many

causes; nevertheless, a mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration probably contributes to it, especially in the context of politicized ethnicity in such ethno-political systems as that of the Soviet Union.

The ethno-territorial conflicts in the (post-) Soviet space, with the exception of the North Ossetian–Ingush (Prigorodny) and the partial exception of the Tajikistani Civil War, are in essence separatist wars fought by ethnic separatists and fit Gurr’s (1993; 1994; [ed.] 2000) description and phrases of “Peoples versus States”, “Peoples against States” and “Minorities at Risk”. In the terminology of this current study, these were *vertical ethno-territorial conflicts* in which one *ethnopolitically subordinated ethnic group* fought against the host state which was dominated by a certain titular ethnic group. As the host states or republics in the (post-)Soviet space were dominated by one titular ethnic nation, these wars were, in reality, between minorities and the titulars in a republic. On the other hand, there were many more cases in which subordinated ethnic groups did not fight separatist wars against their respective host states.

The titular status of an ethnic group determines to a great extent its ability and success in ethnic politics, be it of separatist or more moderate nature such as cultural preservation or representation in official governmental bodies. Especially after *glasnost* and *perestroika* the position of titular groups in different republics improved (Tishkov 1991: 610). According to Tishkov (1995: 133), the violence in the (post-)Soviet space was instigated by titular groups, who attacked minorities in their republics. His argument that the titular groups had well-established cultural institutions makes sense. These groups also had the best representations in the governmental and administrative bodies (see Bremmer 1997; Tishkov 1991). His examples—Uzbeks against Meskhetians in Uzbekistan, and the Kyrgyz against Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan—also make sense. Nevertheless, the initiation of violence should not be confused with the initiation of ethnic strife. In many cases, the better-equipped and often numerically superior titular groups may attack first, but this is often a reaction to the minorities’ actions. The minorities are often the ones who initiate a conflict by making autonomist or separatist claims. The minorities may even actively initiate an armed conflict. Secondly, minorities may also be well-equipped and have governmental institutions at their disposal. Many minorities in (post-)Soviet republics are a titular nationality in a neighboring republic or elsewhere. In addition, many minorities possess autonomous territorial units within (post-)Soviet republics. These autonomous structures increase the likelihood of successful separatism because they function well in the mobilization of population, as well as in making (pseudo-)legal declarations. Like the (post-)Soviet union republics, the autonomous units

are often named after an ethnic group and are regarded internally and externally as its ethnic homeland.

The possession of territorial autonomy seems to be important. Most ethno-territorial conflicts in the Caucasus and Central Asia are fought between ethnic groups who possessed territorial autonomies. Many studies have pointed to territorial autonomy as a factor that enables or facilitates ethnic mobilization, separatism, and hence conflict. Cornell (1999; 2001: 41-56; 2002a; 2002b), for example, maintains that autonomy in the context of the Soviet legacy contributes to ethno-political separatism. Indeed, the Armenians in Azerbaijan, the Abkhazians and Ossetians in Georgia, the Pamiris in Tajikistan, and the Chechens in Russia all possessed territorial autonomy. The Ingush and Ossetians, who were involved in a horizontal conflict in the North Caucasus, also possessed territorial autonomies. Remarkably, the Ossetians, who possessed a better-functioning territorial autonomy than the Ingush, were better able to mobilize armed groups, and their military actions were more organized than those of the Ingush, whose recently obtained territorial autonomy, understandably, did not function well enough at that time.

There are also indications that the host states react more vigilantly and resolutely against separatist claims from the autonomous units than against similar claims elsewhere in their territory. For example, the republics of Azerbaijan and Georgia reacted resolutely against separatism in Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia, and Abkhazia. On the other hand, Georgia did not react militarily against the Armenian separatism in Javakheti (called Javakhk by Armenians), while Azerbaijan did not do much either about the Lezgin (Lezgistan) and Talysh (Talysh Mughan Republic) separatism. Armenians were numerous and formed an absolute majority of the population in Georgia's Javakheti region, and the Talysh and Lezgins were concentrated and formed a majority of the population in, respectively, the southeastern and northeastern part of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Nevertheless, in contrast to the Abkhazians and Ossetians in Georgia and the Armenians in Azerbaijan, the Armenians in Georgia and the Lezgin and Talysh in Azerbaijan did not possess any autonomous territories in Georgia and Azerbaijan.

Although ethnic competition and the prevailing ethno-territorial hierarchy in the Soviet ethno-political system make separatist wars by those ethnic groups possessing territorial autonomy an understandable option, not all such peoples have taken such attempts. In addition, one has to agree with Toft's (2003) conclusion that a demographic dominance of the titular group inside the territorial autonomy enhances the likelihood of separatism. In all territorial autonomous units subject to ethno-territorial conflict, with the notable exception of Abkhazia, the corresponding lower-ranked titulars constituted a demographic majority of the population in

their respective territorial units. This is also true for the only horizontal ethno-territorial conflict reviewed: although in the Prigorodny conflict there was no separation from Russia at stake, both ethnic groups had the demographic majority of the population in their autonomous homelands, Ingushetia and North Ossetia, similar to the Chechens in Chechnya.

Although ethnic competition does exist in the North Caucasus as a legacy of the Soviet nationalities policy (Bremmer 1997), and clashes and tensions do exist between different ethnic groups, they have not resulted in large-scale conflicts and wars, as autonomous territories in the North Caucasus, with the exception of Chechnya, Ingushetia, and North Ossetia-Alania, are not territories in which a clear majority of a certain ethnic group exists. The inter-ethnic rivalries between the ethnic groups inside those autonomous territories take the upper hand, giving the central government the role of mediator and balancer, and hence mitigating the likelihood of separatism. Remarkably, the Ingush came into conflict over Prigorodny with North Ossetia-Alania only after their separation from the Chechens. The Ingush were first hampered by the more demographically dominant Chechens in Chechnya, who had occupied the most important political positions in the republic and who had different political projects. Many truly believe that the separation of the Ingush from their kinfolk Chechens was, in fact, due to their desire to undertake more decisive action with regard to the status of the Prigorodny district.

Although the cases studied by Toft (2003) concerned ethnic minorities who possessed territorial autonomy, still many elements in her theory could apply to Uzbeks who despite not possessing territorial autonomy in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan were concentrated, and constituted a large majority of population, in certain areas there. Despite not being titular there, Uzbeks in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan mobilized themselves for, and in, ethno-territorial conflicts. Uzbeks, however, were in both cases titular in a neighboring republic, Uzbekistan, where their population was three or more times as large as the Tajiks in Tajikistan or the Kyrgyz in Kyrgyzstan. The Uzbek demographic dominance in Uzbekistan and in the region as well as the contiguity of the Uzbek minorities in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to their co-ethnics in Uzbekistan had probably an effect on the emergence of ethno-territorial conflicts there. Their territorial contiguity along with their transborder dominance may have compensated for their lack of territorial autonomy inside their host republics.

Transborder dominance brings about external support from the kinfolk, which may or may not deter the titular ethnic group in the host state from initiating an ethno-territorial conflict with such a subordinated ethno-territorial group. Even if the external support is fictional, its hypothetical possibility creates fear among ethnic opponents and may

even trigger them to come into conflict preemptively. This fictional fear apparently still existed, even though the Uzbekistani–Kyrgyzstani border was less permeable in 2010 than it was in 1990.

Uzbeks are the largest ethnic group in the whole of Central Asia and outnumber most other ethnic groups by many times. The demographic dominance of such ethnic groups does not make them popular and causes them to be mistrusted in the host states/republics and perceived as potential separatists. The situation in Uzbekistan does not help either: Uzbekistan has pursued a very nationalistic and, in many ways, chauvinistic ethnic policy. Already in its early years as a Soviet republic, many Persian-speaking groups and unrelated Turkic groups who either spoke an Oghuz Turkic or Kypchak Turkic variety were registered as Uzbeks, despite the latter being a mainly Qarluq Turkic-speaking ethnic group. In fact, in contrast to the Soviet nationalities policy, which identified ethnic nations mainly on the basis of language, Uzbeks were defined as a territorial nation. The task of Uzbek nation-builders (or “chauvinists” as they might be called) was then to make Uzbeks out of diverse ethno-lingual groups, with various degrees of success. This has contributed to the image of Uzbeks as the oppressors of ethnic minorities and has added to the negative stereotypes about them.<sup>186</sup> It is not very surprising in the (post-)Soviet space, where ethnic nationalism is (still) highly salient, that these “primordial” feelings of “*Stay away from my ethnic kin, otherwise...!*” exist. Apparently, the fact that Uzbeks and Kyrgyz are both Turkic-speaking Sunni Muslims does not exclude such feelings and stereotypes.

Not only transborder dominance but simply contiguity to ethnic kinfolk may also matter. Contiguity to ethnic kinfolk mattered most prominently in the South Ossetian and Nagorno-Karabakh conflicts, in which Ossetians and Armenians were supported by their ethnic kinfolks respectively from North Ossetia and Armenia. The expression of a desire to unite with their ethnic kinfolk in a neighboring union republic/state was heard in all these cases. Nagorno-Karabakh is *de facto* associated with Armenia. Although it proclaims its independence, it is attached to Armenia and forms part of it in most aspects. Moreover, although the Abkhazian authorities, and presumably most of their subjects, no longer wish to be officially incorporated into Russia—where their Circassian and

---

<sup>186</sup> It was notable that in northern Kyrgyzstan in August 2008, nearly two years before the re-eruption of the Kyrgyz–Uzbek conflict, driving from the Manas airport to Bishkek, my taxi-driver, an “average” Kyrgyz, directly after the sentence “Uzbeks and Kyrgyz cannot be friends”, added, “Did you know that many Kyrgyz in Uzbekistan are forced to be registered as and become Uzbeks?” Also following the news on TV channels such as *K+*, it is striking to see that a dispute over water resources and a hydro-electrical power plant has led to “nationalist-oriented” demonstrations in Tajikistan, where Uzbeks do not have a popular image either. It was remarkable that Tajik flags were waved during these demonstrations.

Abaza kinfolks live—these sentiments were voiced in the past. In addition, similar to the case of South Ossetia and Ossetians there, Abkhazians possess Russian passports, and Abkhazia and Abkhazians are patronized by the Russian Federation, where their ethnic kinfolks live.

Materialistic explanations of the (post-)Soviet conflicts should be regarded with skepticism. Toft (2003) and Kaufman (1999) have discussed and rather convincingly proven that materialistic (or economic) explanations of ethno-territorial conflict in the (post-)Soviet space are weak and unconvincing. There is, in general, no correlation between welfare and incidence of ethno-territorial conflict in the former Soviet Union. For example, Georgia was a republic with a relatively high standard of living, while Tajikistan scored the lowest on most indicators of welfare and development in the whole Soviet Union. Both republics, however, were afflicted by ethno-territorial conflicts. Similarly Abkhazia and the ethnic Abkhazians were among the economically better-off, and Gorno-Badakhshan and Pamiris were among the most underprivileged and poorest regions and ethnic groups, respectively in Georgia and Tajikistan and perhaps in the whole Soviet Union. Both ethnic groups were involved in ethno-territorial conflicts. Nevertheless, apparently in Central Asian conflicts the materialistic factors did matter in a certain way. The first conflict in southern Kyrgyzstan began when the Kyrgyz authorities assigned fertile lands of an Uzbek farmland to a housing project which would benefit the ethnic Kyrgyz. As in Tajikistan, where the aggrieved and deprived Gharmis and Pamiris came into conflict with the better-off Khujandi and Kulobi factions (Atkin 1997), the southern Kyrgyz who felt vulnerable in their “own republic” in comparison with the Uzbeks came in conflict with the latter, who dominated in business in the southern parts of Kyrgyzstan (see Asanbekov 1996).

Like the other Central Asian conflict—the Tajikistani Civil War—and unlike the conflicts in the Caucasus, the sub-ethnic factions played an important role in the Uzbek–Kyrgyz conflict in southern Kyrgyzstan. Regionally based factions, often called political clans, fought each other in Tajikistan. Similarly, regional background, rather than ethnicity as such, mattered more in the Uzbek–Kyrgyz conflict. It was primarily the southern Kyrgyz who fought against Uzbeks, not the Kyrgyz as a whole as an ethnic group. In Tajikistan the Khujandis controlled the political life and in alliance with Kulobis and Uzbeks fought the aggrieved Gharmis and Pamiris (Atkin 1997). The situation was very different in the Caucasus: there ethnic groups and not sub-ethnic factions were the main parties of conflict. Even in Georgia, afflicted by a civil war after the removal of president Gamsakhurdia, the sub-ethnic factions did not matter much. Gamsakhurdia was from Mingrelia, a region in western Georgia that speaks its own Georgian-related language. He had many supporters in

Mingrelia. Nevertheless, he was a fervent Georgian nationalist and not a Mingrelian (sub-)ethnic activist. His adherents were from all over Georgia. Since Soviet-style economic planning included the allocation of resources to different regions and localities, it is reasonable to believe that in the relatively poor and deprived Central Asia, locality or sub-ethnicity was a relevant category, in addition to ethnicity, which determined to a large degree one's access to resources, and, therefore, sub-ethnic groups were more likely to be a party to potential conflicts.

The Tajikistani Civil War differed in many aspects from other conflicts in this study, but it shows certain similarities with them—particularly with the conflicts in Kyrgyzstan and Georgia. The dynamics and character of conflict in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan differed. While Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan, certainly in the first conflict there, had separatist (or autonomist) motives, their motives were obviously less so in Tajikistan. One might argue that Uzbeks in Tajikistan were just trapped into a civil war initiated by Tajiks. Nevertheless, one should also ask oneself why Uzbeks did not remain unpartisan and neutral during this war, as most other minorities did. Apparently they participated actively in the war because they wanted to protect or enhance their “place”, interests, and position in Tajikistan. Although in terms of welfare and economic development Georgia was among the better-off and Tajikistan among the worse-off Soviet republics, conflicts in both republics show certain similarities: both republics were afflicted by civil wars and conflict among different factions over the control of central authority, as well as by multiple ethno-territorial conflicts. However, the ethnic dimension was more pronounced in Georgia than in Tajikistan, whereas the intra-ethnic local dimension was more pronounced in Tajikistan. The cases of ethno-territorial conflicts in Georgia were obvious. Those in Tajikistan, however, were blurred and overlapped with the general pattern of the civil war there. Nevertheless, it is fair to speak of Uzbek–Tajik and notably Pamiri–Tajik ethno-territorial conflicts, in addition to many other intra-Tajik conflicts, in Tajikistan.

Traumatic peak experiences also seem to have played a role in the emergence of many ethno-territorial conflicts. Such traumas are usually still vivid in people's collective memories. They are also reminded by the narrations of history by ethno-nationalist-minded politicians, journalists, propagandists, and even scholars. Stuart J. Kaufman (2001) maintains in his book *Modern Hatreds: the Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War*, in which he also discusses the conflicts in the South Caucasus, that although the recent conflicts' roots go back to earlier events in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the conflicting ethno-national historical myths and symbols contribute to the mobilization of, or the spontaneous mass-led, animosity between the conflicting ethnic groups (see also Grigorian & Kaufman 2007; Kaufman

2006). Indeed, collective memory and the trauma of past events, in addition to the way people memorize and narrate these, are often stated to be contributing factors to the conflicts and tensions (e.g. Cheterian 2008; Garagozov 2002; Garagozov 2005a; Garagozov 2005b; Garagozov 2006; Garagozov 2008a,<sup>187</sup> Garagozov 2008b; Garagozov 2008c; Garagozov 2008d; Garagozov 2008e; Garagozov 2008f; Garagozov 2008g; Garagozov 2009; Garagozov 2010,<sup>188</sup> Garagozov & Kadyrova 2011; Hovannisian 1994; Hovannisian 1999; Ismailov & Garagozov 2007; Miller 1999; Zargarian 1999). The imprints of traumatic peak experiences are still visible on collective memories of many peoples in the Caucasus, such as the Ingush, Chechens, and Armenians, and hence could bring about justice-seeking political behavior. The Armenian Genocide may have been a factor which contributed to Armenian separatism in Nagorno-Karabakh. As with the Soviet territorial concession to Turkey in the aftermath of the Armenian Genocide, Armenians were not pleased with the Soviet awarding of Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijan, with whose titular population they had clashed before, accusing them of having had sympathies with Turks. The impact of Stalin-era genocidal deportations on the emergence of the Prigorodny conflict is obvious as the disputed area was transferred to Ossetians after the deportation of the Ingush. It is also remarkable that the Chechens, the only ethnic group who waged a war of separation from Russia, were subjected to these genocidal deportations. Therefore, it seems plausible that these traumatic events have indeed contributed to the emergence of ethno-territorial conflicts in the Caucasus.

A review of and comparison of ethno-territorial conflicts with each other confirm many theoretical assumptions relating to the factors discussed before. Next to the political instability which was common throughout the Soviet Union, these factors are ethno-political subordination, religious and linguistic differences, the possession of territorial autonomy as well as demographic dominance therein, transborder dominance and contiguity to a titular ethnic kinfolk, a mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration, and traumatic peak experiences. However, the impacts of religious difference and also linguistic difference, albeit to a lesser extent, on the emergence of ethno-territorial conflict seem doubtful. In order to assess their impact on the emergence of ethno-territorial conflicts more

---

<sup>187</sup> Garagozov is spelt as Karakezov in this Russian publication (2005a).

<sup>188</sup> Garagozov (2002; 2005a; 2005b; 2006; 2008a; 2008b; 2008c; 2008d; 2008e; 2008f; 2008g; 2009; 2010) speaks of the role of collective memories and national historiography in the conflicts in the post-Soviet space (see also Garagozov & Kadyrova 2012; Ismailov & Garagozov 2007). This way of thinking is similar to that of Jenny Edkins (2003), who in her book *Trauma and the Memory of Politics* speaks about the impact of trauma and memory on politics, without a specific focus on the Caucasus.



systematically, all these factors should be taken into systematic analyses, which also include all other cases—that is, cases of co-existence in the regions covered in this study. Only then one can speak of their impact on the emergence of ethno-territorial conflicts with more certainty.

## Chapter Seven

# 7

## Analysis: Searching for Explanations

In Chapter 6 analytical descriptions were presented of eight cases of ethno-territorial conflict. The present chapter aims at systematic analyses of all ethno-territorial encounters by statistical and qualitative comparative analyses in order to answer our main research questions: “Why are certain ethno-territorial encounters afflicted by conflict and others are not?”; “What are the conditions that lead to ethno-territorial conflict?”; and “To what extent can the mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration explain the emergence of ethno-territorial conflict?” To answer these questions, the following explaining conditions and corresponding hypotheses (in italics) were selected:

- Ethno-political subordination (S):

*The chances of ethno-territorial conflict are higher in ethno-territorial encounters in which one group is ethno-politically subordinated to the other than in ethno-territorial encounters in which no group is ethno-politically subordinated to the other.*

- Religious difference (R):

*The chances of ethno-territorial conflict are higher in ethno-territorial encounters in which the groups adhere to different religions than in ethno-territorial encounters in which both groups adhere to the same religion.*

- Linguistic difference (L):

*The chances of ethno-territorial conflict are higher in ethno-territorial encounters in which the two groups speak native languages that are not intimately related to each other than in ethno-territorial encounters in which their native languages are intimately related.*

- Traumatic peak experience (T):

*The chances of ethno-territorial conflict are higher in ethno-territorial encounters in which at least one group has had a traumatic*

*peak experience than in ethno-territorial encounters in which neither group has had such an experience.*

- **Autonomous setting (A):**

*The chances of ethno-territorial conflict are higher in ethno-territorial encounters in which both groups are titulars, at the same or different levels of hierarchy, than in ethno-territorial encounters in which one group is not titular or both are not.*

- **Titular demographic dominance (D):**

*The chances of ethno-territorial conflict are higher in ethno-territorial encounters in which both groups constitute the majority of the population in their respective titular territories than in ethno-territorial encounters in which one group does not constitute the majority or both do not.*

- **Contiguity to titular kin (G):**

*The chances of ethno-territorial conflict are higher in ethno-territorial encounters, located in a country/republic, which is territorially contiguous to the titular territory of a kinfolk of one or both groups than ethno-territorial encounters where no such contiguity exists.*

- **Transborder dominance (B):**

*The chances of ethno-territorial conflict are higher in ethno-territorial encounters, located in a republic/country, in which the ethno-politically subordinated group is contiguous to a neighboring titular territory of their kinfolk whose number is at least three times larger than the number of their overlords in their host republic/country than where no such transborder dominance exists.*

- **Mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration (M):**

*The chances of ethno-territorial conflict are higher in ethno-territorial encounters located in areas that can be typified as a mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration than ethno-territorial encounters located in areas which can be typified as other types of ethno-geographical configuration.*

To answer the research questions (and test the hypotheses), a dataset of 129 ethno-territorial encounters was constructed. On the basis of fieldwork, literature, and governmental and non-governmental statistical

data, this dataset was filled. Needless to say, there were many problems and many arbitrary decisions were taken.<sup>189</sup>

The 14<sup>th</sup> century Persian poet Hafez of Shiraz wrote: “*Jang-e haftad-o do mellat hame-ra ozr bene; chon nadidand haqiqat rah-e afsane zadand*”. which can be interpreted roughly as follows: “Forget about the war between the 72 peoples; as they did not see the truth, they wandered in the myths”. Although not claiming to establish the absolute truth, this chapter attempts to uncover some explanations for the ethnic wars and show the falsity or veracity of many prevailing myths, such as “ethnically diverse regions are conflict-prone”, “minorities have a great risk of getting into conflict with their hosting state”, or “differences in religions causes wars between their adherents”.

The next section will present first a statistical testing of the hypotheses mentioned above, followed by a Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA). Finally, the conclusions of both analyses will be summarized. Before that, the assumption that Central Eurasia, especially the Caucasus, is conflict-prone will be brought under scrutiny and discussed.

## ***The Myth of Shatterbelts***

Shatterbelts are regions of the world which are persistently afflicted by conflict and in which conflict and warfare are highly expected. Central Asia and particularly the Caucasus are regions in which many people have suffered greatly from ethno-territorial conflicts. Similar to the Balkans, Central Africa, the Horn of Africa, and West Africa, the Caucasus and Central Asia are among the regions of the world which were afflicted by protracted and bloody conflicts in recent decades (Kaldor 1999: 128; Kaldor 2001:9). Central Asia and the Caucasus are regarded by many as conflict-prone regions (e.g. Huntington 1993; Huntington 1997;<sup>190</sup> Kaldor 1999: 128; Kaldor 2001: 9; Kaplan 2000a; Kaplan 2000b; Longworth 1998; O’Loughlin & Raleigh 2008: 497; O’Sullivan 2001: 31-47; Salomons 2005: 21; Vichos & Karampampas 2011).

The vast majority of the conflicts in our study, and in the post-Soviet space in general, have emerged in the Caucasus. They represent five out of the eight ethno-territorial conflicts in our study and five out of the nine in the post-Soviet space in general—the Transnistrian conflict in

---

<sup>189</sup> Mistakes in codifications may affect the results of statistical analyses only insignificantly and are unlikely to affect the results of Qualitative Comparative Analyses at all.

<sup>190</sup> Discussing “Islam’s Bloody Borders”, Huntington mentions explicitly the Caucasus and Central Asia as fault-line wars, which are characterized as protracted and fatal (Huntington 1997: 253 and 255).

Moldova (Moldavia) is the only ethno-territorial conflict in the (post-)Soviet space outside the Caucasus or Central Asia.

O’Loughlin and Raleigh (2008: 497) explicitly call the Caucasus a shatterbelt region: “Shatterbelt regions, such as the Caucasus, are defined as areas with a globally significant natural resource, ethnic diversity, external intervention and a history of local conflict”. As written, this definition of shatterbelt is too broad. Very often different scholars, journalists, policymakers, etc. mean different things by the word shatterbelt.

Shatterbelt, meaning conflict-prone, is a relative concept. The Caucasus is more conflict-prone compared with most other regions of the world. Nevertheless, it is an exaggeration to label the Caucasus and Central Asia as shatterbelts if one looks at the number of ethno-geographical encounters, and hence potential cases of ethno-territorial conflicts, in these regions. Out of the total 129 ethno-territorial encounters, only eight (6.2%) are marked by ethno-territorial conflicts. Despite its ethno-religious similarities with the Caucasus, the Iranian “little Caucasus”, Fereydan, is free of ethno-territorial conflict. The proportion of conflicts as a percentage of total ethno-territorial encounters is rather modest in Central Asia and the Caucasus. Relatively fewer ethno-territorial encounters are afflicted by conflict in the Caucasus (6.3%) than in Central Asia (9.1%) (Table 7.1).

*Table 7.1. Ethno-territorial encounters (E) and conflicts (C) in absolute and relative numbers*

REGIONS	NUMBER OF E	NUMBER OF C	PERCENTAGE OF C IN TOTAL NUMBER OF E	PERCENTAGE OF C IN TOTAL NUMBER OF C
<b>The Caucasus</b>	80	5	6.3%	62.5%
<i>North</i>	46	2	4.3%	25.0%
<i>South</i>	34	3	8.8%	37.5%
<b>Central Asia</b>	33	3	9.1%	37.5%
<b>Fereydan</b>	16	0	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	129	8	6.2%	100%

These percentages are similar to, and often do not exceed, the proportions of conflict in the many datasets which are used in peace and conflict studies. The proportion of armed conflicts as a percentage of total cases in different datasets using different definitions of armed conflict vary between 5.9% and 13.0% on an annual basis, and between 10.1% and 22.2% in a time period of 5 years (Montalvo & Reynal-Querol 2005: 809, Table 3).

## ***Testing the Explaining Conditions Separately***

The first step in testing the hypotheses is to see whether there is any positive correlation between each condition and ethno-territorial conflict (C). As these conditions are dichotomous variables, their presence and absence are represented by 1 and 0, and hence the correlations can be calculated. In Table 7.2 the correlations between the variables and ethno-territorial conflict (C) are presented. Table 7.2 reveals that titular demographic dominance (D) correlates strongly and very significantly with ethno-territorial conflict (C). Transborder dominance (B) correlates rather weakly but significantly with ethno-territorial conflict (C). The correlations between ethno-territorial conflict (C) and ethno-political subordination (S) and autonomous setting (A) are weak but significant. The correlations between ethno-territorial conflict (C) and all other variables are weak and not significant at all.

*Table 7.2. Correlations between ethno-territorial conflict (C) and independent variables*

<b>INDEPENDENT VARIABLES</b>	<b>CORRELATION COEFFICIENT<sup>***</sup></b>	<b>SIG. (2-TAILED)</b>
Ethno-political subordination (S)	.229**	.009
Religious difference (R)	.055	.536
Linguistic difference (L)	.104	.243
Traumatic peak experience (T)	.111	.210
Autonomous setting (A)	.201*	.022
Titular demographic dominance (D)	.706**	.000
Contiguity to ethnic kinfolk (G)	.092	.301
Transborder dominance (B)	.281**	.001
Mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration (M)	.126	.155

\* = Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\* = Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation coefficients Phi, Cramer's V, and Pearson correlations measure the same when the variable is a dichotomous one.

Next, in order to test the effect of the selected conditions on ethno-territorial conflict, the ethno-territorial encounters that fulfil these conditions are compared with those that do not (Table 7.3).

All hypotheses prove to be valid: encounters that fulfil the condition have more chance of conflict than encounters that do not fulfil the condition. However, not all conditions seem to be equally important.

Titular demographic dominance (D) proves to be the most important condition: 83.3% of the encounters in which both ethno-territorial groups constitute the demographic majority in their respective

titular territories are afflicted by ethno-territorial conflict. Only 2.4% of the encounters without titular demographic dominance are afflicted by such conflict. A second important condition proves to be transborder dominance (B): 40% of the ethno-territorial encounters in which the ethno-politically subordinated group possesses transborder dominance are afflicted by conflict, while only 4.8% of ethno-territorial encounters in which it is absent are afflicted by such conflict.

The mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration (M) and linguistic difference (L) also prove to be important. While only 7.7% and 7.2% of the encounters in which, respectively, a mosaic configuration and linguistic difference are present are afflicted by conflict, no ethno-territorial encounters in which they are absent are afflicted by conflict. Below, the effects of each condition on ethno-territorial conflict will be discussed further. (All encounters are listed in Appendix 5.)

*Table 7.3. Percentage of ethno-territorial conflict (C) in ethno-territorial encounters (E) in which a condition is absent and in which it is present*

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	PERCENTAGE OF C IN THE E IN WHICH THE CONDITION IS ABSENT	PERCENTAGE OF C IN THE E IN WHICH THE CONDITION IS PRESENT
Ethno-political subordination (S)	1.4%	12.5%
Religious difference (R)	5.1%	7.8%
Linguistic difference (L)	0.0%	7.2%
Traumatic peak experience (T)	4.9%	11.1%
Autonomous setting (A)	2.5%	12.5%
Titular demographic dominance (D)	2.4%	83.3%
Contiguity to ethnic kinfolk (G)	3.6%	8.1%
Transborder dominance (B)	4.8%	40.0%
Mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration (M)	0.0%	7.7%

### ***Ethno-political subordination (S)***

The wars in the (post-)Soviet space—with the exception of the horizontal conflict between the Ossetians and Ingush over Prigorodny (Rezvani 2010) and the partial exception of the Tajikistani Civil War—are separatist wars fought by ethnic separatists, who in most cases are correctly classified as “ethnonationalists” by Barbara Harff and Robert Ted Gurr (2004: 23-25 and 198)<sup>191</sup> and fit Gurr’s (1993; 1994; [ed.] 2000)

<sup>191</sup> It is, nevertheless, awkward and not at all clear why they have classified Chechen rebels as an indigenous group, while most others are (correctly) classified as ethno-nationalists (see the Appendix

descriptions and phrases of “Peoples versus States”, “Peoples against States”, and “Minorities at Risk”.

Even though the (post-)Soviet regions are, or were, notorious for the salience of ethno-nationalism, still most minorities have not come into ethno-territorial conflict with their host states or “majorities” there in order to “liberate themselves”. Although most ethno-territorial conflicts are marked by the ethno-political subordination of one ethno-territorial group to the other—a *vertical case* in our terminology—not all cases of ethno-political subordination lead to ethno-territorial conflict.

### ***Religious difference (R)***

It is often said that in regions where different religions are practiced and adhered to, the chances of clashes between them are higher. The most prominent voice of this theory or assumption was the late Samuel Huntington (1993; 1997), the theoretician of the “Clash of Civilizations” and the author of a homonymous book. Huntington explicitly referred to the Caucasus as a region in which a fault line of civilizations exists and hence is conflict-prone. Huntington identified civilizations with religions, believing that most civilizations are built around a (world) religion and that major religions are the basis of at least one civilization. As his examples show, he regarded religious difference as a major conflict-generating factor.

The thesis of the “Clash of Civilizations” (i.e. religions) cannot be supported, neither in the Caucasus nor in other regions of this current study. The results of this study are consistent with Cornell’s (1998a: 61) statement that religion is not a decisive factor in the explanation of the Caucasian conflicts. Such a conclusion is also valid for the wider region covered in this study.<sup>192</sup> Of the eight ethno-territorial conflicts, only half are marked by religious difference. The conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh, Gorno-Badakhshan (Pamiris in Tajikistan), Chechnya, and Prigorodny are between ethnic groups with different religions. The South Ossetian, Abkhazian, Uzbek-Tajik (in Tajikistan), and Kyrgyz-Uzbek (in Kyrgyzstan) conflicts are fought between ethnic groups that adhere to the same religion.

Examining all ethno-territorial encounters, the very weak effect of religious difference on ethno-territorial conflict becomes even clearer. While there are many encounters marked by religious difference, only a small proportion thereof are afflicted by conflict.

---

in Harff & Gurr 2004: 197-204).

<sup>192</sup> Somewhat similarly, Svensson (2007: 944) concludes: “Conflicts with parties belonging to different religious traditions are not more difficult to settle than conflicts where parties belong to the same religious tradition”.



### ***Linguistic difference (L)***

A remarkable finding is that ethnic kinfolks, as measured by the intimacy between their languages, have not come into ethno-territorial conflicts with one another. All ethno-territorial conflicts, in all regions, are fought by ethnic groups whose native languages are not intimately close to each other. On the other hand, there are many cases of peaceful coexistence between groups that speak unrelated languages. Only a modest proportion of such encounters have come into conflict.

The reason behind this observation is certainly not inability to communicate due to language difference, because members of all ethnic groups, at least the young and middle-aged males, speak Russian and can communicate with each other. Moreover, because of our operationalization of the variable, speaking only intimately related languages is considered as no linguistic difference.

The lack of ethno-territorial conflict between ethnic groups with similar languages can be interpreted as the absence of ethno-territorial conflicts between ethnic kinfolks. In this study linguistic similarity is a very good indicator of ethnic kinship. The operationalization of linguistic difference in this study implies that those ethno-territorial encounters marked by no linguistic difference are encounters by ethnic groups whose languages are very intimately related. Therefore, only intimately related groups, i.e. ethnic kinfolks, do not fight with each other. Ethnic groups belonging to the same wider language family may fight. For example, both the Kyrgyz and Uzbeks speak Turkic languages. Nevertheless, their languages do not belong to the same branch and are not, therefore, intimately related.

In summary, it appears that although linguistic difference does not necessarily lead to ethno-territorial conflict, all ethno-territorial conflicts are fought by ethnic groups whose languages are dissimilar to each other. In addition, ethnic kinfolks—that is, those ethnic groups whose languages are intimately related—do not come into ethno-territorial conflict with each other. This observation is consistent with the ideas of primordialism and ethnic nepotism.

### ***Traumatic peak experience (T)***

Not all ethno-territorial encounters in which at least one group has experienced a traumatic peak experience are afflicted by ethno-territorial conflict. On the other hand, all ethno-territorial conflicts in the North Caucasus and one of the three in the South Caucasus are between ethno-territorial groups one of which has had a traumatic peak experience.

Although the effect of a traumatic recent past on the emergence of an ethno-territorial conflict cannot be totally disregarded, still a relatively small share of all such encounters marked by traumatic peak experience are afflicted by ethno-territorial encounters. Their share is, nevertheless, relatively larger in the North Caucasus than anywhere else. This is a result of the Stalin-era deportations of so many Muslim North Caucasian ethnic groups. Nevertheless, even there, not all traumatized peoples have come into conflict. Although the North Caucasus is marked by a significant number of “traumatic encounters”, it is not as much afflicted by conflict as one would have expected, most probably because of (the absence of) other conditions.

### *Autonomous setting (A)*

In general two views exist on the effect of territorial autonomy on the emergence of ethno-territorial conflict. Many view it as a mitigating condition, while many others view it as a condition which enhances the probability of the emergence of ethno-territorial conflict. Referring to the discussion in the theoretical chapter of this book, it is more likely that in a context of a state in disarray (Van der Wusten & Knippenberg 2001), territorial autonomy rather enhances the chances of ethno-territorial conflict than reduces them. The Soviet Union in its last years of existence, after *glasnost* and *perestroika*, was politically and economically very unstable and could be regarded as a state in disarray. Consequently, it is expected theoretically that possession of territorial autonomy enhances the likelihood of the emergence of ethno-territorial conflicts.

According to Svante E. Cornell (1999; 2001; 2002a; 2002b), the possession of territorial autonomy enhances the probability of separatist wars in the former Soviet Union. Cornell (2002a) concluded, from the comparison of a limited number of the larger ethnic groups in the South Caucasus, that ethnic groups who possess territorial autonomy are more likely to engage in a separatist war than those who do not.

Indeed, six out of eight or 75.5% of all ethno-territorial conflicts have occurred in autonomous settings, either in a situation in which the ethno-politically subordinated group possessed a lower-ranked autonomy (ASSR or AO) inside a union republic/state (vertical cases), or in a situation in which both ethno-territorial groups possessed territorial autonomy and were at the same level of hierarchy (a horizontal case). The vertical ethno-territorial conflicts which emerged in an autonomous setting are the wars in Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Nagorno-Karabakh, Gorno-Badakhshan, and Chechnya. The only example of a horizontal ethno-territorial conflict—that is, is the conflict between the Ingush and Ossetians in the North Caucasus—occurred in such a setting too.

The condition autonomous setting is present in all ethno-territorial conflicts in the Caucasus, but only in one third of them in Central Asia. All ethno-territorial autonomous territories in the South Caucasus are afflicted by ethno-territorial conflict. Adjara and Nakhichevan are exceptions: the titulars of the union republics, respectively Georgians and Azerbaijanis, are also the lower-ranked titulars in these autonomous territories. It is important to remember that in the current study these are not the territorial units but the ethno-territorial encounters that are the units of analysis. There must be two different ethno-territorial groups with a different or equal level of autonomy in order to speak of an encounter marked by autonomous setting. The possession of different levels of autonomy may refer to the possession of fully independent states, union republics (SSRs), autonomous republics (formerly called ASSRs), or autonomous provinces (AOs). Consequently, to be precise, all ethnicity-based autonomous territorial units in the South Caucasus, in which an ethnic group other than the union republican/state-wide titular group is titular, are afflicted by ethno-territorial conflicts. In the North Caucasus, however, most encounters marked by autonomous setting remain peaceful. The reason is, probably, that many North Caucasian autonomous territories are shared by two or more titulars. Only one of the two encounters marked by autonomous setting has led to conflict in Central Asia. In total, in only one of the three ethno-territorial conflicts in Central Asia is the condition autonomous setting fulfilled. Two of the three ethno-territorial conflicts have occurred outside the context of an autonomous setting. That condition is, therefore, neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for the emergence of ethno-territorial conflict.

While only 2.5% of the encounters which do not fulfill this condition are afflicted by ethno-territorial conflict, 12.5% of those which do fulfill it are afflicted by such conflict. Therefore, without being either a necessary or sufficient condition, the presence of the condition autonomous setting in an ethno-territorial encounter makes the chance of conflict higher. However, looking into all cases, it can be concluded that this condition's effect seems to be rather moderate.

### ***Titular demographic dominance (D)***

Discussing autonomous setting (A) above, it became obvious that despite it being a conflict-generating condition, not all encounters in which this condition is present are afflicted by ethno-territorial conflict. This was particularly the situation in the North Caucasus. It is remarkable that in the North Caucasus many autonomous territorial units are bi-titular, and Dagestan belongs to many official (read titular) ethnic groups. In such cases titular groups share their autonomy. Consequently, the internal

competition within those autonomous territories takes priority over separatism. Moreover, a bi- or multi-titular territory is much less associated with one ethnic group than a mono-titular one is. Ethno-nationalist mobilization is more difficult in such autonomous territories than in mono-titular ones. The main reason lies in the demographic situation in these territories. In these bi- or multi-titular territorial units, one ethnic group rarely constitutes the majority of population. The only such case was the Chechen-Ingush ASSR, in which the Chechens had an absolute demographic majority. In none of the other North Caucasian bi- or multi-titular autonomous territories did one of the titulars constitute a majority of the population. Even in Adygheya in the North Caucasus and Karakalpakstan in Central Asia, their respective titulars did not constitute the majority of the respective territories' population, despite being mono-titular autonomous territories.

Titular demographic dominance—that is, the possession of a demographic majority by a titular group in a certain autonomous territory—enhances the titular group's policy-making capabilities and hence also ethnic mobilization. Moreover, in such cases the territory is more associated with the titulars by outsiders and insiders. Toft (2003) believes in a similar mechanism when she speaks about indivisibility of territory. According to her, being concentrated in a certain territory and possessing the demographic majority there creates a sense of (exclusive) entitlement to the territory by that titular group and hence enhances the chances of separatism. Although she did not explicitly investigate the impact of autonomy, all cases included in her study (Toft 2003) were autonomous territories. The analysis of her cases (Toft 2003) generally supported this theoretical explanation. The only exception was Abkhazia. Indeed, in Abkhazia the ethnic Abkhazians do not constitute a majority of the territory's population, but the Abkhazians have waged a successful separatist war against Georgia. Either in the South Caucasus, or in Georgia specifically, the possession of autonomy (being accompanied by other conditions) may suffice; or the Abkhazian conflict's explanation as an odd case may depend on various contingent factors.

Cornell (2002a) has also asked himself whether concentration/relative demography—by which he means the demographic majority of a subordinated ethnic group in an area—is not a very important factor for the explanation of ethnic conflicts in the South Caucasus. As this theoretical explanation was supported in only three out of nine cases in his study (Cornell 2002a: 125), he concluded that it is not an important factor for such an explanation. However, Cornell's (2002a) approach has many shortcomings. To begin with, he has included Adjarans as a case. Apparently, he regarded the Adjarans as a separate ethnic group. Adjarans—that is, the Georgians of Adjara, an autonomous

region of Georgia—are simply ethnic Georgians. It is true that in Adjara many Muslim Georgians are living, but they still consider themselves Georgians. The religious make-up of that region was obscure during the Soviet era. Although Adjara has had a large Muslim Georgian population, and Muslim Georgian communities are still living there, the majority of its population is not necessarily Muslim. Many Muslim Georgians emigrated to Turkey after Adjara's inclusion into the Soviet Georgia, while many Christians from other parts of Georgia have immigrated to Adjara, and in addition many Adjaran Muslims are converted to Christianity (Pelkmans 2002). A more important fact leading Cornell (2002a) to reach such a conclusion, however, is the fact that his relative majority does not refer necessarily to a majority in autonomous territories, but may refer also to a majority in an area without an autonomous status, or even without clearly defined borders. Although it might be possible to determine ethnic concentrations in parts of a country, it is impossible to determine whether a certain ethnic group constitutes a majority, without referring to a geographically delimited territory. In addition, a demographic dominance within an autonomous territory differs from that outside such a territory. Demographic dominance of the titular group inside its autonomous territory enhances its real or symbolic autonomous capabilities, while a demographic majority without autonomy does not have such properties, simply because in the latter case ethnic groups lack autonomous self-ruling capabilities.

Titular demographic dominance (D) appears to be the most important condition in explaining the emergence of ethno-territorial conflict: 83.3% of ethno-territorial encounters in which this condition is present are afflicted by conflict, while only 2.4% of those in which this condition is absent are afflicted by such conflicts (Table 7.3).

The condition titular demographic dominance is present in five out of eight conflicts. Only in the Abkhazian conflict is the possession of titular autonomous territory not accompanied by demographic dominance. The other two cases—the Uzbek-Tajik and Uzbek-Kyrgyz conflicts, respectively in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan—lack not only the condition titular demographic dominance (d) but also autonomous setting (a). The Uzbeks in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan do not possess any titular autonomous territory at all. In the North Caucasus only one ethno-territorial encounter marked by titulars' demographic dominance—the Russian–Ossetian ethno-territorial encounter—is not afflicted by ethno-territorial conflict. On the other hand, that condition is present in all ethno-territorial conflicts in the North Caucasus.

In conclusion, this condition is a very important one for explaining ethno-territorial conflict, but it is not a necessary condition.

The lack of titulars' demographic dominance can apparently be compensated for by other conflict-generating or facilitating conditions.

***Contiguity to titular kinfolk's homeland (G)***

Being contiguous to ethnic kinfolks may hypothetically enhance the chances of ethno-territorial conflict between an ethno-politically subordinated ethnic group and their overlords. The reason may lie in the mechanisms of ethnic solidarity, which are often associated with primordialism and ethnic nepotism. Nevertheless, it is most probably not restricted to such mechanisms. The territorial and ethno-political histories in a region often drag ethnic kinfolks into their kinfolk's conflict. Indeed, this type of contiguity itself may interact with ethno-territorial disputes and manifest itself as irredentism. Often, the ethnic kinfolks, who are usually dominant in a neighboring state or a part thereof, may demand incorporation of their ethnic kinfolk's territory into their own territory, or their often subordinated ethnic kinfolk may demand unification with them. It is uncertain that ethnic enthusiasts mobilizing for a conflict count on their kinfolk's support beforehand, but it is not surprising if they do so.

Usually the external third parties interfering or showing interest in a conflict are states which are culturally and ethnically related to a party of conflict in another country. Huntington (1993: 35-39; 1997: 272-291) speaks of "kin-country syndrome" in this regard.

According to Horowitz (1991), it is possible to bring the external actor to the negotiation table if that state's interest is on a basis other than ethnic affinity. However, when the external state's interference or interest is based on ethnic affinity, it is more difficult, because the situation is usually very emotionally charged for the ethnic groups involved:

First, when the help of the assisting state is based on some political interest other than ethnic affinity, there is room for state-to-state negotiation to induce a change in policy.... Second, when the help of the assisting state is based on ethnic affinity...domestic opinion in the assisting state will be moved only by concessions on the outstanding ethnic issues. Such concessions, however, are subject to the constraints of domestic opinion in the state affected by the ethnic violence. Or, to put the point differently, this is a matter of foreign policy that is coterminous with domestic ethnic politics. (Horowitz 1991: 473-474)

Using the examples of India (and Indian Tamil Nadu) and Sri Lankan Tamils and of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland's Catholics, Horowitz (1991: 473) asserts that most kin-countries and their political establishments are apathetic towards the incorporation of a (potentially)

conflict-struck kinfolk.<sup>193</sup> This may be so, but still their neighboring kinfolk's involvement in a conflict has repercussions for the kin-country itself. Therefore, external kinfolks and kin-countries are most likely not indifferent towards their ethnic kinfolk's cause. Indeed, incorporation of a conflict-struck area is one thing and support for ethnic kinfolk is another thing.

Moreover, Horowitz (1991: 473) provides examples of established states and their kinfolks in another state. The reality is, however, that such cases differ significantly from intra-state cases. The post-Soviet states, arguably, are still so politically intertwined with each other that it would not be unfair to regard them as part of the same geopolitical realm. In any case, the ethno-territorial conflicts in this study erupted at a time when the Soviet Union had not yet collapsed or at times when the legacies and memories of the Soviet Union were still very fresh. Therefore, it is rather plausible and easy to grasp that the contiguity of an ethno-politically subordinated ethnic group to its kinfolk's titular territory may enhance the chances of ethno-territorial conflict, even though moderately (as shown in Table 7.3).

In Cornell's (2002a: 118) study only four of nine cases support the proposition that the existence of "ethnic kin" in another country enhances the risk of conflict. Reading his study, it is obvious that by the existence of ethnic kin in another country, he meant, in fact, contiguity of the ethno-politically subordinated ethnic group to its ethnic kinfolk across a state's or union republic's borders—even though he has not expressed it precisely. According to Cornell's (2002a) study, this condition does not seem to greatly enhance the risk of conflict. Nevertheless, as he puts it: "However, it is significant that all three cases of conflict do correlate positively with the proposition. Hence, while ethnic kin may theoretically, judging from these results, be a necessary factor, it is obviously not a sufficient one" (Cornell 2002a: 118).

Despite the fact that Cornell's (2002a) study deals only with a limited number of cases, and only with the South Caucasus, its results are still largely consistent with those of the current study. In all cases of ethno-territorial conflict in the South Caucasus, the ethno-politically subordinated ethnic group is contiguous to its kinfolk's autonomous territory across the border, either a union republic or to a lower-ranked autonomous territory (G). This condition is, nevertheless, not present in all ethno-territorial conflicts in other regions and is, therefore, not a necessary condition.

In most ethno-territorial conflicts in which this condition is present (G), autonomous setting (A) is also present. Only the Uzbek-

---

<sup>193</sup> This was his contention, even though he might not have used exactly the same words.

Kyrgyz conflict in Kyrgyzstan and that between the Tajiks and Uzbeks in Tajikistan were conflicts in which Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan lived contiguously to their ethnic kinfolk in Uzbekistan (G), without possessing titular autonomies in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan (a).

Overall, only a modest proportion of ethno-territorial encounters marked by this condition are afflicted by ethno-territorial conflict. This is true in Central Asia as well as in the North and the South Caucasus.

### ***Transborder Dominance (B)***

According to Kaufman (1999: 31): “Demographic threats may also motivate ethnic fears, most insidiously in cases involving an ‘ethnic affinity problem’ in which the minority in a country...is the majority in the broader region”. The chances of fears, active involvement of ethnic kinfolks, and hence conflict are greater if the borders are soft, as they were, and are, in the (post-)Soviet space, where much transborder interaction still exists.

The ethno-territorial encounters in which transborder dominance is present (B) are more likely to be afflicted by conflict than those in which this condition is absent (b). In other words, those encounters in which the ethno-politically subordinated group has a kinfolk in a neighboring republic/state—a republic/state in which it is titular and three times as populous as the titulars in the host republic/state are—have a much higher chance of being afflicted by ethno-territorial conflict than those encounters in which such a condition is absent. While 40% of the first type of encounters are struck by ethno-territorial conflict, only 4.8% of the second type are (Table 7.3). Therefore, transborder dominance greatly increases the chances of ethno-territorial conflicts.

Besides the ethno-territorial conflicts in which the conditions titular demographic dominance (D) or autonomous setting (A) are present, there are two other conflicts which are not marked by these factors. These two other ethno-territorial conflicts are those which are marked by transborder dominance (B). There are five encounters in Central Asia in which this condition is present (B) and only two of them are afflicted by conflict. This condition is not present in other regions of this study. Although only 9.1% of all ethno-territorial encounters in Central Asia are afflicted by conflict (Table 7.1), the percentage of conflict in that region is drastically higher (40%) when only encounters are considered in which this condition is present (Table 7.3). Apparently, although it may compensate for the lack of autonomy (a) and titular demographic dominance (d), transborder dominance (B) alone is not a sufficient factor.

Transborder dominance (B) is often present in encounters between other groups, and Russians and Uzbeks. The reason is that



although Uzbeks and Russians in many Central Asian states are formally ethno-politically subordinated, they are titular in the neighboring Uzbekistan or Russia where they have a large demographic presence. The Uzbeks in Uzbekistan and the Russians in Russia are many times more populous than the Kyrgyz in Kyrgyzstan or the Kazakhs in Kazakhstan, for example. Nevertheless, all ethno-territorial conflicts in which this condition is present are located in the southeastern part of Central Asia. Apparently, there are other conditions present in this area, which in combination with transborder dominance can contribute to the emergence of ethno-territorial conflict. Qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) is a useful method to investigate the sufficiency and necessity of conditions in combination, and will be used in the analyses later in this chapter.

### ***The mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration (M)***

Being situated in a mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration appears to be an important condition for the emergence of an ethno-territorial conflict. Although only 7.7% of encounters situated in such an ethno-geographic configuration (M) are afflicted by ethno-territorial conflict, no ethno-territorial conflict has occurred in other types of ethno-geographical configuration (m) (Table 7.3).

It is remarkable that although the larger part of Central Asia, which does not display the mosaic type of ethno-geographical configuration (m), is free of ethno-territorial conflict, its smaller part (the southeastern part), which does display such an ethno-geographic configuration (M), is afflicted by three ethno-territorial conflicts. Obviously this condition enhances the chances of ethno-territorial conflict in Central Asia. The only ethno-territorial conflict in Central Asia in which the conditions autonomous setting (A) and titular demographic dominance (D) were present—the Tajik–Pamiri ethno-territorial conflict—was situated in such a type of ethno-geographical configuration (M). It is also remarkable that the condition transborder dominance (B) has apparently contributed to the emergence of ethno-territorial conflict, only in those encounters which are situated in a mosaic configuration (M)—these are situated in Tajikistan and the Fergana Valley. Other encounters in other parts of Central Asia in which the condition transborder dominance is present—for example, the Russian–Kazakh one in northern Kazakhstan—are not afflicted by such conflicts.

A similar conclusion is very difficult to reach in the Caucasus, where all ethno-territorial encounters are situated in such a type of ethno-geographic configuration (M). Also all encounters in Fereydan are situated in a mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration (M), without being afflicted by conflict. This fact, plus the fact that most ethno-

territorial encounters in Central Asia and the Caucasus are not afflicted by conflict, despite being situated in such an ethno-geographic configuration, means that being situated in a mosaic type of ethno-geographical encounter is a necessary condition, although not a sufficient one, for the emergence of ethno-territorial conflict.

## ***Qualitative Comparative Analysis***

In this section I will present the results of Qualitative Comparative Analyses (QCA). QCA is a comparative method based on Boolean algebra and investigates which combinations of (whether present or absent) conditions—also called causal configurations—explain ethno-territorial conflicts.<sup>194</sup> In contrast to the above-implemented statistical analyses, the QCA does not analyze the effects of each condition separately, but looks at the effects of combinations of conditions on the outcome. In contrast to the statistical methods, it does not produce results with a probabilistic but rather with a deterministic character. It may appear, therefore, that a condition—a variable or a factor, in more technical terms—with a low frequency of presence in the encounters afflicted by conflict is actually an essential part of the explanation of ethno-territorial conflict, while another condition with a higher frequency of presence is not so.

In QCA the different conditions in the equations are traditionally written next to each other without asterisks (\*) or any other multiplication signs, and the results of an analysis are presented by different equations connected by plus signs (+). In this chapter I do not use the plus sign, but I will mention in parentheses the ethno-territorial conflicts which are explained by these equations. The traditional QCA notation system of capital letters for the presence, and lower-case letters for the absence, of a condition are maintained. In brackets are mentioned the (other) common or popular names of the ethno-territorial conflicts. The equations are numbered consecutively in the text. The closest terms in daily human language for “\*” and “+” are, respectively, “and” and “or”: in order to explain the outcome, this condition *and* that condition *and* another condition must be present ; *or*, this condition must be absent *and* that condition *and* the other condition must be present; *or*, etc. Appendix 2 explains how QCA works, using a simple example. By a satisfactory result is meant that a causal configuration should not produce

---

<sup>194</sup> The combination of absent and present conditions that explain an outcome may also be called “configurations”. Actually, I prefer “configuration” above “causal configuration” for certain philosophical and methodological reasons; but I will use “causal configuration”, or simply “combination”, in order to avoid confusion with the unrelated concept of “ethno-geographic configuration”.

contradictory outcomes. In this study, we speak of satisfactory results when a causal configuration does not explain conflict and coexistence (no-conflict) at the same time. In other words, a conflict formula is satisfactory when it explains conflict only.

The different ethno-territorial encounters in the Caucasus, Central Asia, and Fereydan will be compared with each other in order to explore which causal configurations—i.e. combinations of absent and present conditions—have led to ethno-territorial conflict. The units of analysis are the 129 ethno-territorial encounters (Appendix 5). Below, the qualitative comparative analyses are performed iteratively and in steps. These analyses attempt to arrive at conflict formulas, which are as parsimonious and brief as possible and which can explain as many ethno-territorial conflicts as possible. Each ethno-territorial encounter is represented by a number, which corresponds to those in the dataset (Appendix 5). The column under “n” gives the number of cases—both conflicts and not-conflicts—explained by the combination of absence and presence of those certain conditions. Because of the lack of space (and in order to avoid repetition), only a few “truth tables” are presented in this chapter. In the first step all selected conditions are included into the analysis.

### ***Step 1: Inclusion of all conditions***

The analysis with the inclusion of all selected conditions (S, R, L, T, A, D, G, B and M) explains the outcome of 127 out of 129 ethno-territorial encounters (98.5%). It explains seven out of eight (87.5%) of the ethno-territorial conflicts by four equations.<sup>195</sup> It shows that combinations of our selected conditions are able to explain a large share of conflict and coexistence. Nevertheless, this analysis is unable to explain all cases of conflict and coexistence satisfactorily: one causal configuration (S \* r \* L \* t \* A \* D \* G \* b \* M) produces a contradiction. This causal configuration illustrates the situation in two ethno-territorial encounters: Ossetian-Russian in the Russian Federation and Ossetian-Georgian in Georgia. While the latter is marked by ethno-territorial conflict, the former is not. It is obvious that both ethno-territorial encounters are similar in all aspects except the polity they are located in. It is understandable that the location of the ethno-territorial encounters within different countries (states) or union republics matters. The addition of an extra condition to the analysis, “location in the Russian Federation”, or

---

<sup>195</sup> These equations are as follows: C= R \* L \* T \* A \* D \* G \* b \* M; C= S \* R \* L \* A \* D \* g \* b \* M;

C= S \* r \* L \* t \* A \* d \* G \* b \* M; C= S \* r \* L \* t \* a \* d \* G \* B \* M

simply in Russia (F), can solve the problem. Below is discussed why this is a sensible addition.

Among the (post-)Soviet republics, Russia is the most exceptional one. The discussion of the Soviet nationalities policy and its ethno-territorial manifestations made it clear that peoples with lower-ranked titular status used to seek protection and mediation from Moscow. Moscow, in this view, was a balancer and protector against the union republics. According to Gachechiladze (1995: 33), the lower-ranked territorial autonomous units (ASSRs and AOs) were laid by the Soviet Center as delayed-action mines. His view is consistent with the competitive and divisive nature of the Soviet nationalities policy and its ethno-territorial manifestations (see e.g. Bremmer 1997). Nevertheless, Moscow was and is the Soviet Center as well as the Russian capital. Therefore, Moscow's impact on the lower-ranked autonomous units inside and outside the Russian Federation was not uniform. This was certainly the case before the Russian Federation established its own Communist Party and union republican institutions (see e.g. Dunlop 1997: 34; Shaw 1999: 54). This situation suggested that the Soviet Union was, in fact, the Russian Federation plus a periphery to which a number of cultural and administrative concessions were made. For example, it is remarkable that the Soviet national anthem and those of many union republics (SSRs) had paid notable attention to Russians and Russia.

After *perestroika* and the demise of the federal Soviet government, the balance of power shifted in favor of the Russian Federation. Ultimately, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation inherited most of its assets and territory but also all of its foreign treaties and obligations. Already before its collapse, the Soviet Union was often equated with Russia or Greater Russia, and the Russian people associated themselves with the whole Soviet Union probably as much as they did with Russia. The Russian hegemony did not vanish totally in the wake of the Soviet Union's break-up. "After the break-up of the Soviet Union, several variants of *restorationism* emerged among Russians—all of them virtually indistinguishable from imperialism" (Zevelev 2001: 271). There are indications that the Soviet Center and hence also the Russian Federation played a role in the ethno-territorial conflicts outside its borders. For example, the Russian invasion of Georgia (August 2008) had indeed a longer history. The inclusion of a new condition such as foreign support is difficult in this QCA, first of all because the support prior to the outbreak of the ethno-territorial conflicts was mostly covert and hence uncertain. In addition, in all of the 129 ethno-territorial encounters it must be checked whether or not one of the ethno-territorial groups received support from outside, which is a very difficult task mainly because of the ambiguity in the definition of foreign

support. One type of support is not another. Therefore, the aforementioned condition (F) is preferred above this and is included in the analysis.

Another reason for this inclusion is that the Russian Federation is a very large and, in most aspects, strong country. Russia has far more “infrastructural power” (Mann 1984) than any other (post-)Soviet republic. In addition to the fact that it is more difficult for another country to interfere in Russian internal affairs, it is also more difficult for the ethno-territorial groups there to rebel against Russia. In other words, the threshold of conflict eruption is higher in the Russian Federation than in the other countries in this study. In fact, the presence of this condition (F) has a mitigating effect on the eruption of ethno-territorial conflicts.

A question arises whether or not it is sensible to add a condition which distinguishes between the ethno-territorial encounters located in Iran and those located in the (post-)Soviet space. The question seems legitimate because the ethno-political systems in different Soviet republics and the Soviet successor states were and still are very different from the Iranian ethno-political system. The main difference between Iran and the (post-)Soviet ethno-political system is the fact that Iran lacks any ethno-territorial autonomies. The selected conditions, however, cover the differences between the ethno-political systems in the (post-)Soviet Union and Iran. The lack of ethno-territorial conflicts in Iran can already be explained satisfactorily by these conditions. Therefore, there is no need for the addition of an extra condition.

### ***Step 2: The addition of F***

In the second step, all conditions plus the condition “location in the Russian Federation (F)” are taken into the analysis. Now, no contradictions remain any more. Nevertheless, the equations are too long and each explains only one or at most two ethno-territorial conflicts. These equations, in fact, give the characteristics of each conflict and are consistent with the descriptions of conflicts discussed in Chapter 6. The truth table (Table 7.4), the most inclusive one in our analysis, is presented fully. Because of lack of space, however, the full names of the ethno-territorial encounters (cases) are not given in the truth tables. Each encounter is represented by a number in the truth table which corresponds with those in the dataset (Appendix 5). The explained conflicts are given in the parentheses under the relevant equations of ethno-territorial conflict, and the more popular names of these conflicts are given in the brackets.

Table 7.4. Truth table of all existing combinations

S	R	L	T	A	D	G	B	M	F	C	ENCOUNTERS	N
1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1, 2, 3, 28	4
1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	4, 25	2
0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	5, 18, 32, 33, 98	5
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	6	1
1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	7, 23	2
1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	8, 9, 10, 13, 24	5
1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	11, 95, 101, 105	4
1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	12, 14, 114, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122	8
1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	15	1
0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	16, 19, 20, 29, 30, 102	6
0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	17	1
1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	21	1
1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	22	1
0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	26	1
0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	27, 31, 34	3
1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	35, 36, 37	3
1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	38	1
1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	39	1
1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	40	1
1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	41	1
1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	42	1
1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	43	1
0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	44	1
0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	45	1
0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	46, 72, 76, 77, 80	5
0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	47	1
0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	48	1
0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	49	1
0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	50	1
0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	51, 52, 53, 54	4
0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	55, 56, 57, 58, 60, 61, 62, 63, 70, 75, 78	11
0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	59, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 71, 73, 74, 79	11
1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	81	1
1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	82, 92, 113	3
1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	83, 85, 86, 93, 103, 104, 111	7
1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	84	1
0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	87, 109	2
0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	88	1
0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	89	1
0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	90, 91, 97	3
1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	94, 100	2
1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	96	1
1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	99	1
1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	106	1
0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	107, 108, 110	3
1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	112	1
0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	115, 116, 117, 123, 124, 125, 126, 128, 129	9
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	127	1

The results of the analysis are presented below:

(1) C= S \* r \* L \* t \* A \* G \* b \* M \* f  
(Georgian–Abkhazian in Georgia [Abkhazian Conflict] + Georgian–Ossetian in Georgia [South Ossetian Conflict])

(2) C= S \* R \* L \* T \* A \* D \* G \* b \* M \* f  
(Azerbaijani–Armenian in Azerbaijan [Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict])

(3) C= S \* R \* L \* T \* A \* D \* g \* b \* M \* f  
(Russian–Chechen in Russia [Wars in Chechnya])

(4) C= s \* R \* L \* T \* A \* D \* G \* b \* M \* f  
(Ingush–Ossetian in Russia [Prigorodny Conflict])

(5) C= S \* r \* L \* t \* a \* d \* G \* B \* M \* f  
(Kyrgyz–Uzbek in Kyrgyzstan [Osh Conflict] + Tajik–Uzbek in Tajikistan [Tajikistani Civil War])

(6) C= S \* R \* L \* t \* A \* D \* g \* B \* M \* f  
(Tajik–Pamiri in Tajikistan [Tajikistani Civil War])

As that condition is present (M) in all ethno-territorial conflicts, it appears that the location of the encounter in a mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration (M) is a necessary condition for the explanation of ethno-territorial conflicts.

The following steps attempt to exclude conditions in order to reach parsimonious equations (conflict formulas) that at the same time explain more ethno-territorial conflicts simultaneously. Conditions are excluded from, and included into, the different analyses, somehow iteratively and experimentally, in order to arrive at more parsimonious equations. It is possible that combinations of fewer conditions lead to fewer and shorter conflict formulas without producing “contradictions”. In the following analyses such combinations of conditions are explored.

### ***Step 3: Analysis with the inclusion of A, D, B, M, F, and T***

The occurrence of the condition traumatic peak experience (T) in the analysis renders ethno-political subordination (S), religious difference (R), linguistic difference (L), and contiguity (G) redundant. This occurrence does not need to be accompanied by a positive value (presence) of that condition. Its mere inclusion into the analysis renders the other conditions redundant. By redundant conditions I mean those conditions that can be

excluded from the analysis without contradictions being produced. The results are presented below:

$$(7) C = T * A * D * b * M$$

(Azerbaijani–Armenian in Azerbaijan [Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict] + Russian–Chechen in Russia [Wars in Chechnya] + Ingush–Ossetian in Russia [Prigorodny Conflict])

$$(8) C = t * A * b * M * f$$

(Georgian–Abkhazian in Georgia [Abkhazian Conflict] + Georgian–Ossetian in Georgia [South Ossetian Conflict] + Tajik–Pamiri in Tajikistan [Tajikistani Civil War])

$$(9) C = t * a * d * B * M * f$$

(Kyrgyz–Uzbek in Kyrgyzstan [Osh Conflict] + Tajik–Uzbek in Uzbekistan [Tajikistani Civil War])

Equation 7 means that traumatic peak experience by at least one ethno-territorial group in an encounter (T) which is located in a mosaic type of ethno-geographical configuration (M), and in which both ethno-territorial groups are titulars at the same or different levels of ethno-territorial hierarchy (A) and possess demographic majority in their titular territory (D), leads to conflict (C). This equation also informs us that in such an ethno-territorial encounter, in order to bring about an ethno-territorial conflict, the subordinated ethno-territorial group should not possess transborder dominance. There is no sensible interpretation for this part of the formula. There is also no sensible interpretation for the part of the formulas (Equations 8 and 9) that indicates that in order to get involved in conflict no ethno-territorial groups should have had a traumatic peak experience (t). It may be hypothetically a conflict-generating combination, but the empirical data do not support it, only because such a combination does not appear in any of ethno-territorial encounters in the dataset. Therefore, QCA assumes that the presence of one is accompanied by the absence of the other. In reality, however, no such necessity seems to be plausible.

QCA has certain properties which makes it very sensitive to the existing empirical cases (in a dataset). Certain combinations may hypothetically lead to a certain outcome but may not appear in the formulas because they do not appear in the cases in the dataset. A way to solve this problem is to include the missing combinations with their assumed outcomes—often called the fictive cases—into the analysis. Regarding the availability of theoretical discussions and analytic case descriptions, however, the interpretation (and hence correction) of



outcomes seems a more sensible method and is used in this study. These two above-mentioned methods are, in fact, very similar methods and follow the same logic. In both of them theoretical assumptions are used in order to modify “strange” results. Methodologists propose many (similar) methods to deal with these or similar problems (see. e.g. Delreus & Hesters 2010; Rihoux & Ragin [eds] 2009; Rohwer 2008; Schneider & Wagemann 2003; Stokke 2007; Vanderborcht & Yamasaki 2004).

The last equation (9) relates to the conflicts in the southeastern part of Central Asia, where the prevalent type of ethno-geographic configuration is the mosaic type. That equation informs us that for an ethno-territorial encounter to lead to ethno-territorial conflict, it needs to be located outside the Russian Federation (f) and in a mosaic type of ethno-geographical configuration (M), and that at least one ethno-territorial group should not be titular, which in this context means that the subordinated group should not possess territorial autonomy within the host republic/state (a). But on the other hand, the subordinated ethno-territorial group needs to have transborder dominance (B). In other words, it needs to be contiguous to a territory in which its kinfolk is titular and is three times larger in number than its overlords in the host republic/state. In fact, there is logic to this: contiguity to an ethnic kinfolk that is three times larger in population than the titulars in the host country/republic compensates for the lack of possession of territorial autonomy. Hypothetically, in conflict formulas, transborder dominance (B) may go hand in hand with the titular status of both ethno-territorial groups (A) when the subordinated ethno-territorial group possesses territorial autonomy in its host country/republic. In reality, however, this situation does not appear in any ethno-territorial encounter. In addition, the absence of traumatic peak experiences (t) in the equation seems to be caused by the empirical data—i.e. is contingent upon the real existing cases—and cannot be supported reasonably by theoretical argumentation. Although hypothetically possible, there are no such encounters in the dataset in which such a combination appears. In other words, the result is contingent upon the fact that in this study no “traumatized” ethno-territorial encounters exist in which transborder dominance (B) is present.

The second equation (8) informs us that ethno-territorial encounters located in a mosaic area (M) outside the Russian Federation (f), in which both ethno-territorial groups are titulars (A) without having experienced a traumatic peak experience (t), and in which the subordinated ethno-territorial group is contiguous to a territory in which their kinfolk is titular (G), lead to ethno-territorial conflicts (C). In addition to the above-mentioned contingency of the absence of transborder dominance (b), it is strange that in “non-traumatized” ethno-territorial encounters (t) the titulars must have no demographic majority in

their respective homelands (d), while theoretically this condition contributes to a positive outcome. It is not totally clear why the Armenian–Azeri ethno-territorial encounter in Azerbaijan is very different from the Georgian–Abkhazian and Georgian–Ossetian ethno-territorial encounters in Georgia and the Tajik–Pamiri ethno-territorial encounter in Tajikistan. The case of Abkhazia is the only one in which the subordinated ethno-territorial group possesses no demographic majority in the territory in which it is titular. In addition, it is ambiguous to what extent the case of Armenians is different from that of Abkhazians. Both of these ethnic groups have experienced trauma in the past, but the Abkhazian trauma experience could not be qualified as a traumatic peak experience according to the criteria of this study. A similar case is that of the Yezidi traumatic-peak experience, which, like the Armenian case, also occurred in the Ottoman Empire. Nevertheless, as the only ethno-territorial encounter with Yezidis in the dataset is the one between them and Armenians, this issue can be dealt with, implicitly, by dealing with the Armenian one. The main reason that the Armenians, as opposed to the Abkhazians, are specified as traumatized in this study is because the Armenian Genocide occurred in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, while the Abkhazian deportations proceeded in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. On the other hand, the Ossetians in Georgia (South Ossetia) also possessed titular demographic dominance (D) without being traumatized (t). Therefore, it could be expected that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict could also be explained without Armenians being traumatized (t). The case of Armenian–Azeri ethno-territorial conflict in Azerbaijan requires more investigation, and it will be examined further before the results of analysis with the inclusion of other conditions are reported.

#### ***Step 4: Experimenting with T***

To investigate the aforementioned issue I made a new dataset, in which it is hypothetically assumed that Armenians have not had a traumatic peak experience and in which the condition experiencing a traumatic peak experience (t) is (experimentally) absent in all encounters in which one of the ethno-territorial groups are Armenians. After this experiment, the dataset with the original values will be used again in the subsequent steps. This experiment is, in fact, an effort to solve the aforementioned problem(s) in Step 3. Similar to the Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh, the Ossetians in South Ossetia possessed titular demographic dominance (D) without having undergone a traumatic peak experience (t). Possibly the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict can be explained by the same (parsimonious) formula as the South Ossetian conflict will be. The description of conflicts (Chapter 6) taught us that conflicts in the South Caucasus are similar to

each other. It is, therefore, not easy to understand why in other cases autonomy (A) suffices without being traumatized (t), whereas in the case of the Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh, who possess demographic majority in their autonomous territory (D), they should also be traumatized (T) in order to explain the conflict. Therefore, we changed experimentally the value of traumatic peak experience from present (T) to absent (t), in encounters in which Armenians are one party,<sup>196</sup> to see whether (shorter) explanations could be produced in which traumatic-peak experiences are irrelevant. The results of this (experimental) analysis are as follows:

(10)  $C = t * A * b * M * f$   
 (Azerbaijani–Armenian in Azerbaijan [Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict] + Georgian–Abkhazian in Georgia [Abkhazian Conflict] + Georgian–Ossetian in Georgia [South Ossetian Conflict] + Tajik–Pamiri in Tajikistan [Tajikistani Civil War])

(11)  $C = T * A * D * b * M * F$   
 (Russian–Chechen in Russia [Wars in Chechnya] + Ingush–Ossetian in Russia [Prigorodny Conflict])

(12)  $C = t * a * d * B * M * f$   
 (Kyrgyz–Uzbek in Kyrgyzstan [Osh Conflict] + Tajik–Uzbek in Uzbekistan [Tajikistani Civil War])

In the results of this analysis, the ethno-territorial conflicts inside Russia are listed together (Equation 11). The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is listed together with other ethno-territorial conflicts outside Russia (Equation 10), in which, in contrast to the result of the former analysis (Equation 7), the condition traumatic peak experience is absent (t). Although its absence in this conflict formula is experimental, it nevertheless means that there is no necessity for Armenians to have undergone a traumatic peak experience in order for the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict to erupt. Similar to other ethno-territorial conflicts in the Caucasus and the Pamiri–Tajik ethno-territorial conflict, the possession of territorial autonomy by the subordinated group in the host state/union republic (A) and location in a mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration (M) suffice for the explanation of ethno-territorial conflicts (C) there.

Strictly speaking, according to the formula (Equation 11), the condition transborder dominance should be absent (b), but as discussed

---

<sup>196</sup> To be more accurate, in such an experiment there should be no other group having experienced a traumatic peak experience in encounters with Armenians; but there appear no such cases in the dataset anyway.

earlier this is a matter of factual circumstances and cannot be interpreted by theoretical assumptions or common sense—simply because a similar equation but with capital “B” does not appear in any ethno-territorial encounter.

This experiment—that is, assuming hypothetically and experimentally that Armenians have not undergone a traumatic peak experience—does not influence the results of other analyses (the next two steps) with the inclusion of other conditions, simply because the condition “traumatic peak experience” is redundant in them.

***Step 5: Analysis with the inclusion of A, D, B, M, F, and R***

In addition to the condition traumatic peak experience (T), the inclusion of religious difference also renders the conditions ethno-political subordination (S), linguistic difference (L), and contiguity (G) redundant. The analysis offers satisfactory results when the condition traumatic peak experience (T) is replaced by religious difference (R). The results are presented below:

$$(13) C = R * A * D * b * M$$

(Azerbaijani–Armenian in Azerbaijan [Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict] + Russian–Chechen in Russia [Wars in Chechnya] + Ingush–Ossetian in Russia [Prigorodny Conflict] + Tajik–Pamiri in Tajikistan [Tajikistani Civil War])

$$(14) C = r * A * b * M * f$$

(Georgian–Abkhazian in Georgia [Abkhazian Conflict] + Georgian–Ossetian in Georgia [South Ossetian Conflict])

$$(15) C = r * a * d * B * M * f$$

(Kyrgyz–Uzbek in Kyrgyzstan [Osh Conflict] + Tajik–Uzbek in Uzbekistan [Tajikistani Civil War])

The equations (13–15) resulting from this analysis with the inclusion of religious difference (R) or (r) are very similar to those (Equations 7–12) with the inclusion of traumatic peak experience (T) or (t). In these equations the condition religious difference replaces the condition traumatic peak experience. Taking this into consideration, the interpretation of the results of previous analyses is also valid here. Certain problems of interpretation appear also here.

The condition titular demographic dominance does not appear in Equation 14; it is irrelevant there because while being absent in the Abkhazian conflict, it is present in the South Ossetian conflict. This

equation means that in cases outside the Russian Federation (f), whenever there is no religious difference (r) between the fighting groups, the combination of possession of autonomous territories (A) and location in a mosaic type of ethno-geographical configuration (M) suffices for explaining the ethno-territorial conflicts. Similar to the results of the previous steps, transborder dominance is absent (b) here simply because no other encounter exists which is similar in all other aspects but in which transborder dominance (B) is present. In addition, it is neither theoretically explainable, nor can it be understood by common sense, why titular demographic dominance is irrelevant in the cases in which no religious difference exists between the fighting groups (r) (Equation 14), but it must be present (D) in cases in which religious difference does exist (R) (Equation 13). Similar to the above-mentioned problem, also this problem is contingent upon the real existing cases (in the data-set). These problems are solved in the next steps (see especially Step 9).

There is a similar problem: in this analysis it is notable that the Tajik–Pamiri ethno-territorial encounter in Tajikistan is explained by the first equation (13), in which demographic majority in the autonomous territory is required (D), while in the former analysis it was listed under those in which this condition did not even appear in the equation (10). Similar to the above-mentioned case, also this case is not theoretically apprehensible and leads us to believe in our earlier assumption that the presence of the extra condition traumatic peak experience (T) in the former, and religious difference (R) in this current, analysis may not be necessary for the explanation of ethno-territorial conflicts outside the Russian Federation. This analysis is itself one more reason to investigate this issue further by more analyses.

**Step 6: Analysis with the inclusion of A, D, B, M, F, S, and G**

The inclusion of ethno-political subordination (S) and contiguity (G) together renders traumatic peak experience (T), religious difference (R), and linguistic difference (L) redundant. Linguistic difference (L) is not necessary for any *parsimonious equations* and can be dispensed with. This analysis, however, produces four instead of three conflict formulas (16–19) and has its problems of interpretation. The results are as follows:

(16)  $C = S * A * G * b * M * f$   
 (Azerbaijani–Armenian in Azerbaijan [Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict] + Georgian–Abkhazian in Georgia [Abkhazian Conflict] + Georgian–Ossetian in Georgia [South Ossetian Conflict])

(17)  $C = S * A * D * g * b * M$

(Russian–Chechen in Russia [Wars in Chechnya] + Tajik–Pamiri in Tajikistan [Tajikistani Civil War])

(18) C= s \* A \* D \* G \* b \* M \* F  
(Ingush–Ossetian in Russia [Prigorodny Conflict])

(19) C= S \* a \* d \* G \* B \* M \* f  
(Kyrgyz–Uzbek in Kyrgyzstan [Osh Conflict] + Tajik–Uzbek in Uzbekistan [Tajikistani Civil War])

The inclusion of ethno-political subordination (S) distinguishes between horizontal (Equation 18) and vertical ethno-territorial conflicts (Equations 16, 17, and 19). The only case of horizontal ethno-territorial conflict (the Prigorodny conflict) is located in Russia (F) and is characterized by autonomous setting (A), in which both titulars (the Ingush and Ossetians) possess demographic majority in their respective titular territories (D). This is not surprising, because of all countries covered in this study only in Russia do lower-ranked autonomous territories border each other. Only in Russia can two ethno-territorially subordinated ethno-territorial groups be titular in two bordering lower-ranked autonomous territorial units.

The result of the first equation of this analysis (Equation 16) looks very plausible. It suggests that in the cases in which one ethno-territorial group is contiguous to a titular territory of its kinfolk (G), the possession of demographic majority of population is irrelevant. This condition is not at all part of the equation. This simply means that contiguity renders the (lack of) dominant demographic position irrelevant as a condition. Irrelevancy, however, does not mean absence: in three out of the four cases the ethno-territorial groups do possess demographic majority in their respective titular territories. Only in the case of the Abkhazian conflict do the Abkhazians not possess demographic majority in Abkhazia. In the previous analyses the Tajik–Pamiri ethno-territorial encounter in Tajikistan was listed together with other cases under the conflict formulas in which a dominant demographic position in titular territory was irrelevant (Equations 8, 10), while the results of this analysis suggest that dominant demographic majority (D) is a necessary condition for its explanation. This case also requires further investigation.

Despite what Equation 17 suggests, the requirement for the absence of contiguity to a titular kinfolk in a neighboring union republic/country (g) does not seem to be a very plausible condition in the explanation of the Russian–Chechen conflict (Equation 17). It is rather strange that a “tough” case such as the Chechen–Russian conflict requires the absence of a conflict-facilitating condition in order to be explained. The results of this analysis suggest that the different outcomes of the two

similar cases of the Russian–Chechen and the Russian–Ossetian encounters in the Russian Federation are determined only by the fact that the Ossetians are contiguous to South Ossetia. It is not particularly plausible or comprehensible to assume that contiguity to their ethnic kinfolk, as an extra asset, has prevented North Ossetians from rebellion against Russia or that Russia is deterred by the North Ossetian contiguity to South Ossetia. It does indeed appear strange. The only sensible interpretation would be that a calculating “Eurasianist” Russia would not attack North Ossetians because it needs to have their southern kinfolk as its allies. Nevertheless, as the discussions showed, these were not the host countries/union republics that initiated attacks on subordinated ethno-territorial groups out of nowhere; first there were demands for separation and rebellion, to which the host countries/union republics reacted. In this particular case, however, the North Ossetians did not even rebel against Russia. Nevertheless, it is not too far-fetched to believe that North Ossetians have calculated that they had better not rebel against Russia, which (allegedly) was an ally of their southern kinfolk. The discussion of the ethno-territorial conflicts (Chapter 6), however, suggested that Ossetians, the only non-Slavic Orthodox Christian people in a sea of Sunni Muslims in the North Caucasus, had always been privileged by Russians and hence had not much reason to be aggrieved and yearn for secession from Russia. It should also be taken into account that rebellion against Russia is a much more difficult task than rebellion against Georgia or Azerbaijan.

Apparently, the harsh ordeal through which many North Caucasian Muslims have gone has conditioned their ethno-political behavior. The analyses including religious difference (Step 5) and traumatic peak experience (Steps 3–4) produce much more sensible results than this one with contiguity (Step 6). This is one more reason to believe that the Chechen traumatic deportation in 1944, in which large numbers of Chechens died (T), in combination with other factors such as having a dominant demographic position in their titular territory (D) and being located in a mosaic type of ethno-territorial configuration (M), has been essential in bringing about the Chechen conflict and rebellion against Russia (C).

### ***Step 7: Splitting contiguity***

It seems that the dynamics of ethno-territorial conflicts in the Russian Federation (F) follow another logic than those outside the Russian Federation (f). Putting the ethno-territorial encounters inside and outside the Russian Federation into the same analysis creates confusions in the results and makes their interpretation rather difficult. Therefore, it seems

to be a good idea to perform separate analyses for the ethno-territorial encounters located inside and outside Russia.

Before doing that another oddity needs to be addressed. The type of contiguity which occurs most often in ethno-territorial conflicts, and is sometimes difficult to interpret, seems to be a “lower-ranked contiguity”—that is, contiguity to an autonomous territory inside a union republic/state. Such lower-ranked territorial units were called ASSRs and AOs in the Soviet period. There are many cases of contiguity to a kinfolk’s titular union republic/state—that is, “higher-ranked contiguity”—which remain peaceful. A higher-ranked contiguity is only present in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. In that case the Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh, and Azerbaijan in general, are contiguous to Armenia (and the Armenian SSR). In the Abkhazian, Ossetian, and Prigorodny conflicts a “lower-ranked contiguity” is present. In the former conflict, the Abkhazians are contiguous to their Abaza and Circassian kinfolks in Karacheyvo-Cherkessia (and Kabardino-Balkaria and Adygheya).<sup>197</sup> In the latter conflict, the Ossetians in South Ossetia and North Ossetia were contiguous to their kinfolk on either side of the Georgian–Russian border. South Ossetia was an autonomous province (AO) in Georgia at the onset of the conflict. All other mentioned territories are now autonomous republics of the Russian Federation and were formerly either an internal autonomous republic (ASSR),<sup>198</sup> (North Ossetia and Kabardino-Balkaria) or an autonomous province (AO) (Karacheyvo-Cherkessia and Adygheya).

According to the results of the above analysis (Step 6), part of the explanation of the Prigorodny conflict lies in the fact that Ossetians in Russia are contiguous to South Ossetia in Georgia. It is doubtful that South Ossetians have played a major role in bringing about the Prigorodny conflict. Of course they may have supported their northern kinfolk, but it is unlikely that they played any direct role in the eruption of that conflict. In the description of that conflict it was already mentioned that the North Ossetian leadership has stated that it needed Prigorodny District, as it offers space for the housing of the South Ossetian refugees. It is not certain, however, that the North Ossetian leadership would give in to the Ingush demands, even if there were no South Ossetian refugees.

Contiguity to an ethnic kinfolk in war may have either a conflict-instigating or a conflict-hampering effect, but we should bear in mind that

---

<sup>197</sup> Abkhazia has borders only with Karachayev-Cherkessia. Karachayev-Cherkessia has borders with Kabardino-Balkaria and is proximate to Adygheya. Abkhazia itself is also proximate to Adygheya and Kabardino-Balkaria. Therefore, it can be said that Abkhazia is contiguous not only to Karachayev-Cherkessia but to the whole Circassian area in the North Caucasus.

<sup>198</sup> These internal autonomous republics were called “Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic” (ASSR), which is a confusing name when one realizes that the union republics with higher level of autonomy were simply called “Soviet Socialist Republic” (SSR).



the condition contiguity (G) is not the same as contiguity to a conflict-afflicted territory; it simply accounts only for territorial contiguity to an ethnic kinfolk's titular homeland, with or without being afflicted by conflict.

The formula (Equation 18) suggests that the emergence of conflict in Prigorodny depends on the North Ossetian contiguity to their southern kinfolk, even when there was no conflict in South Ossetia.

In order to investigate this oddity further, I split the condition “contiguity” (G) into two: “higher-ranked contiguity” (Q) means that the subordinated ethno-territorial group is contiguous to a state or union republic, in which its kinfolk is titular; and “lower-ranked contiguity” (K) means that the subordinated ethno-territorial group is contiguous to a lower-ranked autonomous territory in which its kinfolk is titular. The replacement of the condition “G” by “Q” does not produce satisfactory results. There occurs a contradiction. The causal configuration “S \* A \* D \* q \* b \* M \* F” relates to the Russian–Chechen and Russian–Ossetian ethno-territorial encounters in Russia. The former one is marked by ethno-territorial conflict and the latter is not. As expected, however, the replacement of the condition contiguity “G” by lower-ranked contiguity “K” produces satisfactory results:

(20)  $C = S * A * D * k * b * M$   
 (Azerbaijani–Armenian in Azerbaijan [Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict] + Russian–Chechen in Russia [Wars in Chechnya] + Tajik–Pamiri in Tajikistan [Tajikistani Civil War])

(21)  $C = S * A * K * b * M * f$   
 (Georgian–Abkhazian in Georgia [Abkhazian Conflict] + Georgian–Ossetian in Georgia [South Ossetian Conflict])

(22)  $C = s * A * D * K * b * M * F$   
 (Ingush–Ossetian in Russia [Prigorodny Conflict])

(23)  $C = S * a * d * k * B * M * f$   
 (Kyrgyz–Uzbek in Kyrgyzstan [Osh Conflict] + Tajik–Uzbek in Uzbekistan [Tajikistani Civil War])

The formulas of conflicts (Equations 20–23) are similar to those produced by the former analysis. It is remarkable, however, that similar to the result (Equation 10) of the experimental analysis (Step 4), here also, the Tajik–Pamiri ethno-territorial conflict is grouped together with the Nagorno-

Karabakh conflict (Equation 20).<sup>199</sup> On the other hand, interpretations of equations with titular demographic dominance and transborder dominance remain problematic also in this analysis.

All in all, and referring to all arguments in this step and previous ones, there is ample reason to take the ethno-territorial encounters inside and outside Russia into separate analyses. These separate analyses will make it clear whether or not our earlier assumptions were correct. However, one thing should be taken into account: the condition mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration (M) is constantly present in the North Caucasus. Despite being a necessary condition in the explanation of all ethno-territorial conflicts in this study, this condition (M) can be dispensed with because its exclusion from the analysis of the encounters in the Russian North Caucasus does not produce contradictions. Nevertheless, in spite of being redundant in the parsimonious equations, this condition should be taken seriously. Its inclusion only adds to the plausibility and robustness of the results if one looks further than the North Caucasus. Its omission from the analysis would have produced unsatisfactory results if encounters from other Russian regions were also taken into analysis. The fact that nowhere else in the Russian Federation have ethno-territorial conflicts erupted but in the North Caucasus suggests that the mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration (M), which distinguishes the North Caucasus from other regions of the Russian Federation, is a necessary condition in explaining ethno-territorial conflicts in Russia.

### ***Step 8: Analysis of the encounters in the Russian Federation***

Separate qualitative comparative analyses of the 46 ethno-territorial encounters in Russia produce satisfactory results consistent with our expectations (Equations 24–27). These analyses follow the same logic as those of the previous analyses, in which encounters inside and outside Russia were not taken separately. Transborder dominance (b) is lacking in the Russian Federation. Therefore, its omission from the analysis does not create any problems, while resulting in more parsimonious equations. Similar to those previous analyses, the inclusion of traumatic peak experience (T) renders the conditions ethno-political subordination (S), religious difference (R), linguistic difference (L), and all conditions relating to contiguity (whether G, Q, or K) redundant. It also renders the autonomous setting (A) redundant. Nevertheless, it does not lead to any conceptual or interpretative problems, as titular demographic dominance

---

<sup>199</sup> Also, this fact suggests that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict may be explained even when Armenians were not traumatized.

(D) also includes that condition (A). Similarly, the inclusion of religious difference (R) renders ethno-political subordination (S), traumatic peak experience (T), linguistic difference (L), autonomous setting (A), and all conditions relating to contiguity (whether G, Q, or K) redundant. Of the two conditions resulting from the differentiation of type of contiguity (i.e. K and Q), the lower-ranked contiguity (K) is the one that gives satisfactory results. Its inclusion in the analysis, in combination with ethno-political subordination (S), renders traumatic peak experience (T), religious difference (R), and linguistic difference (L) redundant. The truth tables pertaining to these analyses are very clear and clarifying and are, therefore, presented (Tables 7.5, 7.6, and 7.7).

The result of the analysis of ethno-territorial encounters in the Russian Federation with the inclusion of traumatic peak experience (T) is as follows:

$$(24) C = T * D * M$$

(Russian–Chechen in Russia [Wars in Chechnya] + Ingush–Ossetian in Russia [Prigorodny Conflict])

*Table 7.5. Truth table in the Russian Federation with T, D, and M*

<b>T</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>ENCOUNTERS</b>	<b>N</b>
0	0	1	0	35, 36, 37, 41, 43, 44, 46, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80	33
1	1	1	1	38, 49	2
1	0	1	0	39, 42, 45, 47, 48, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54	10
0	1	1	0	40	1

The result of this analysis is very parsimonious and “powerful”. The two ethno-territorial conflicts in the Russian Federation are explained by just one parsimonious formula (Equation 24). These ethno-territorial conflicts (C) are explained by the fact that both ethno-territorial groups in the conflict constitute the majority of population in their respective titular territory, be it Russia or an autonomous republic (D). In addition, at least one of the ethno-territorial groups in the encounter—the Chechens and the Ingush in these cases—has had a traumatic peak experience (T). Furthermore, the ethno-territorial encounters are located in an ethno-geographical configuration of the mosaic type (M).

The inclusion of religious difference (R) results in a similar conflict formula (Equation 25). It only replaces traumatic peak experience (T) with religious difference (R):

(25)  $C = R * D * M$

(Russian–Chechen in Russia [Wars in Chechnya] + Ingush–Ossetian in Russia [Prigorodny Conflict])

*Table 7.6. Truth table in the Russian Federation with R, D, and M*

R	D	M	C	ENCOUNTERS	N
1	0	1	0	35, 36, 37, 39, 41, 42, 43, 46, 48, 72, 76, 77, 80	13
1	1	1	1	38, 49	2
0	1	1	0	40	1
0	0	1	0	44, 45, 47, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 73, 74, 75, 78, 79	30

Equation 25 means that these ethno-territorial conflicts (C) are explained by the fact that both ethno-territorial groups in the conflict constitute the majority of population in their respective titular territories (D). In addition, the ethno-territorial groups in the encounters—the Chechens and Russians in the first and the Ingush and Ossetians in the second case—adhere to two different religions (R). Moreover, the ethno-territorial encounters are situated in an ethno-geographical configuration of the mosaic type (M).

Religious difference (R) and traumatic peak experience (T) overlap to a large extent in the North Caucasus and the conflict formulas containing them can be interpreted more or less in the same way. The traumatized people in the North Caucasus were Muslims. Among the North Caucasian Muslims only the Dagestanis and Circassians were not subjected to the Stalinist collective ethnic deportations (t), but they do not constitute a majority of population in their titular homelands (d). Even though they have a history of violent encounters with the Russian Empire they were not subjected to the harsh and deadly deportations of the 1940s (t). Among the North Caucasian peoples the Orthodox Christian Ossetians have enjoyed the best treatment from Russia and the Soviet Union. Therefore, the best interpretation of this situation would be as follows: the traumatized Muslim peoples in the Caucasus, who constitute a majority in their titular autonomous territory, (are likely to) come into ethno-territorial conflict against Russia or their other non-Muslim neighbors who constitute a majority of the population in their titular autonomous territory. The single example of the latter type of “neighbor” in the North Caucasus is the Orthodox Christian Ossetians.

The inclusion of lower-ranked contiguity (K) in combination with ethno-political subordination (S) results in almost similar conflict formulas to those (Equations 20–23) of one of the earlier analyses (Step 6), in which

the ethno-territorial encounters inside and outside the Russian Federation were not taken separately into the analysis:

(26)  $C = S * D * k * M$   
 (Chechen in Russia [Wars in Chechnya])

(27)  $C = s * D * K * M$   
 (Ingush–Ossetian in Russia [Prigorodny Conflict])

These formulas (Equations 26–27) are less “powerful” because each can explain only one conflict and, in addition, are less parsimonious in comparison with the formulas produced by the other two analyses above. Moreover, the interpretation problems, which have already been discussed in the earlier analysis, remain.

*Table 7.7. Truth table in the Russian Federation with S, D, K and M*

S	D	K	M	C	ENCOUNTERS	N
1	0	0	1	0	35, 36, 37, 39	4
1	1	0	1	1	38	1
1	1	1	1	0	40	1
1	0	1	1	0	41, 42, 43	3
0	0	1	1	0	44, 45, 46, 47, 48	5
0	1	1	1	1	49	1
0	0	0	1	0	50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80	31

**Step 9: Analysis of the cases outside the Russian Federation**

The separate qualitative comparative analysis of the 83 ethno-territorial encounters outside the Russian Federation produces very parsimonious and “powerful” results (Equations 28–29). Moreover, many of the interpretation problems disappear, notably that of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which is yet another indication that the Step 4 experiment was sensible. Aside from autonomous setting (A), transborder dominance (B), and the mosaic type of ethno-geographical configuration (M), all other conditions are redundant in this analysis and can be dispensed with. The corresponding truth table is presented below (Table 7.8). The results of this analysis are as follows:

(28)  $C = A * b * M$   
 (Azerbaijani–Armenian in Azerbaijan [Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict] + Georgian–Abkhazian in Georgia [Abkhazia Conflict] + Georgian–Ossetian in Georgia [South Ossetian Conflict] + Tajik–Pamiri in Tajikistan [Tajikistani Civil War])

(29)  $C = A * B * M$

(Kyrgyz-Uzbek in Kyrgyzstan [Osh Conflict] + Tajik-Uzbek in Uzbekistan [Tajikistani Civil War])

Table 7.8. Truth table outside the Russian Federation with A, B, M, and C

A	B	M	C	ENCOUNTERS	N
0	0	1	0	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 95, 98, 101, 102, 105, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129	52
1	0	1	1	6, 21, 22, 99	4
0	1	0	0	81, 96, 112	3
0	0	0	0	82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 97, 103, 104, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 113	12
0	1	1	1	94, 100	2
1	0	0	0	106	1

There are no horizontal ethno-territorial encounters outside the Russian Federation in which two neighboring ethno-politically subordinated groups possess lower-ranked territorial autonomies. Therefore, all encounters in which the condition autonomous setting (A) appears are vertical ethno-territorial encounters between a group that is titular at union-republican or state-wide level and an ethno-politically subordinated group that is titular in a lower-ranked autonomous territory inside that host state/union republic.

Even though it is hypothetically possible and theoretically a conflict-generating formula, the combination “A \* B \* M” does not appear in the dataset of ethno-territorial encounters in this study—simply because there is no encounter in this study in which both conditions “A” and “B” are present at the same time. This situation may result in conflict formulas parts of which may look “strange”. As discussed before (Step 3), such problems can be solved by sound interpretations or by the inclusion of fictive but theoretically correct cases into the reduction process of the analysis. The logic of both methods are very similar.

The results of this analysis can be interpreted as follows: all these ethno-territorial conflicts (C) are produced by ethno-territorial encounters located in a mosaic type of ethno-geographical configuration (M). They are in an autonomous setting (A) if there is no transborder dominance (b) (Equation 28). On the other hand, if there is such a dominance (B)—that is, the subordinated ethno-territorial group’s kinfolk in a neighboring country/union republic is titular and is three times more populous than the titular overlords in the host country/union republic—the conflict can still be explained without the subordinated ethno-territorial group having a

lower-ranked autonomous homeland within the host country/union republic (a) (Equation 29).

Using the other aforementioned method, we list first all combinations of these three conditions. In addition to the combinations in Table 7.8— $c = A * b * m$ ,  $c = a * b * m$ ,  $c = a * B * m$ ,  $C = A * b * M$ ,  $C = a * B * M$ ,  $c = a * b * M$ —two “fictive” combinations exist: “ $A * B * M$ ” and “ $A * B * m$ ”. Based on the theoretical assumptions and consistent with the results of statistical analysis, autonomous setting (A) and transborder dominance (B) are both important conditions which contribute to conflict. Moreover, although most encounters in such a type of ethno-geographical configuration do not lead to conflict, all conflicts are located in an area which can be typified as the mosaic type of ethno-geographical configuration (M). Therefore, it can be theoretically expected and assumed that the combination “ $A * B * M$ ” may lead to conflict (Equation 30). At first glance it is uncertain whether the combination “ $A * B * m$ ” does, or does not, produce conflict. On the one hand, in this combination two important conflict-generating conditions “A” and “B” are present, while only “m” is absent. Therefore, it could be suggested that the absence of “m” in combination with the presence of “A” and “B” might lead to conflict. On the other hand, the empirical data in Table 7.8 show that the combinations “ $a * b * M$ ”, “ $a * b * m$ ”, and especially “ $A * b * m$ ” and “ $a * B * m$ ” do not lead to conflict, which suggests that “ $A * B * m$ ” may not lead to conflict. One has to realize that the presence of either “B” or “A” in combination with the absence of “m” has not produced any conflicts in so many encounters, all of which show, in reality, a combination of at least five other conditions with different values—that is, the combination of absence and presence of at least five other conditions. All this suggests that “ $A * B * m$ ” may not produce conflict (Equation 31):

$$(30) C = A * B * M$$

$$(31) c = A * B * m$$

The addition of the combinations “ $A * B * M$ ” and “ $A * B * m$ ” respectively as a “conflict-generating” combination (Equation 30) and a “peaceful-remaining” combination, together with the existing combinations (Table 7.8), into the analysis—which is here, in fact, a simple Boolean reduction process—results in two parsimonious equations (32–33), which are easy to interpret and can explain the conflicts explained earlier respectively by Equations 28 and 29. The addition of only “ $A * B * M$ ”, without “ $A * B * m$ ”, produces the same results (Equations 32–33), which is fine because the assumption “ $c = A * B * m$ ” (Equation 31) was not really certain:

(32)  $C = A * M$

(Azerbaijani–Armenian in Azerbaijan [Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict] + Georgian–Abkhazian in Georgia [Abkhazia Conflict] + Georgian–Ossetian in Georgia [South Ossetian Conflict] + Tajik–Pamiri in Tajikistan [Tajikistani Civil War])

(33)  $C = B * M$

(Kyrgyz–Uzbek in Kyrgyzstan [Osh Conflict] + Tajik–Uzbek in Uzbekistan [Tajikistani Civil War])

These equations mean that ethno-territorial conflicts outside the Russian Federation are explained by a mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration (M) in combination with either autonomy (A) *or* transborder dominance:  $(A + B) * M$ .

Apparently, transborder dominance compensates for the lack of autonomy. In contrast to the former equations (28–29), these improved conflict formulas (Equations 32–33) do not imply that the presence of one condition must be accompanied by the absence of the other. According to these formulas (Equations 32–33), a fictive encounter in which both transborder dominance (B) and autonomy (A) are present simultaneously, in addition to being located in a mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration (M), would be afflicted by conflict (C). Moreover, neither combination results in any contradiction: “ $A * M$ ” and “ $B * M$ ”, outside the Russian Federation, always lead to conflict and never to co-existence.

### ***Step 10: Comparing explanations***

After I have addressed a number of issues below, Table 7.9 will compare the explaining power of different combinations. A few plausibly interpretable explaining combinations are presented in this table. Each of these combinations can explain one or more ethno-territorial conflicts. An ethno-territorial conflict can be explained by more than one combination at the same time, and some combinations are implicitly present in the others. The condition location in (F) and outside the Russian Federation (f) is not included in these combinations, but the location of each encounter is mentioned in the table.

It appears that the combination of the mosaic type of configuration and autonomous setting ( $A * M$ ), and the combination of the mosaic type of configuration and titular demographic dominance ( $D * M$ ) are the most important explaining combinations, whether with or without any other accompanying conditions. Nevertheless, these combinations overlap to a great extent. The combination of the mosaic type of



configuration and autonomous setting (A \* M) is present in all cases in which the second combination (D \* M) is present, but not vice versa.

Titular demographic dominance (D) appears to be a necessary condition in the only vertical case of ethno-territorial conflict in Russia (Chechnya) but does not appear to be so outside Russia. However, it is often present even there. Titular demographic dominance (D) is present in three of the four ethno-territorial conflicts explained by the combination of the mosaic type of configuration with autonomous setting (A \* M). The Abkhazian conflict is the only ethno-territorial conflict outside Russia in which a lower-ranked titular group does not constitute the majority of population in its titular territory (d). Therefore, it can be concluded that the combination of the mosaic type of configuration and titular demographic dominance (D \* M), instead of the other one (A \* M), is a necessary combination for explaining ethno-territorial conflict, the Abkhazian conflict being an exception.

The combinations of either autonomous setting (S \* A \* G \* M) or titular demographic dominance (S \* D \* G \* M), and ethno-political subordination, contiguity, and the mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration do not explain any more, but explain fewer, ethno-territorial conflicts than the previous two (A \* M and D \* M) do. The addition of the combination of ethno-political subordination and contiguity (S \* G) to those combinations (A \* M and D \* M) does not result in any improvements. In other words, the conflicts explained by the latter combinations (S \* A \* G \* M and S \* D \* G \* M) are subsets of those explained by the previous shorter combinations (A \* M and D \* M), while the conflicts explained by the combination of titular demographic dominance with the mosaic type of ethno-geographic dominance (D \* M) are themselves a subset of those explained by the combination of autonomous setting and the mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration (A \* M). The Prigorodny conflict, the only horizontal ethno-territorial conflict, can be explained by the combination of titular demographic dominance, contiguity, and the mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration accompanied by a negative value (absence) of ethno-political subordination (s \* D \* G \* M); but the interpretation of this combination is somewhat difficult.<sup>200</sup> This combination is also a subset of the combination of titular demographic dominance and the mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration (D \* M), but in the Russian Federation this combination (D \* M) appears not to be sufficient for the explanation of ethno-territorial conflicts and has to be combined with either traumatic peak experience (T) or religious difference (R).

---

<sup>200</sup> Similarly, a combination (S \* D \* k \* M) exists which may explain the Chechen conflict, but its interpretation is very difficult and not at all plausible. "K" is itself a subset of "G".

The combination of the mosaic type of configuration and transborder dominance (B \* M) is also an important one. Although it explains no more than 25% of ethno-territorial conflicts, the cases explained by it cannot be explained by any other combination.

All in all, location in a mosaic type of ethno-geographical configuration (M), autonomous setting (A), and titular demographic dominance (D) are the most important explaining conditions, because they are the most frequently present ones in the explaining conditions (conflict formulas). Religious difference (R) and traumatic peak experience (T) are important in Russia because there the combination of titular demographic dominance and the mosaic type of ethno-geographic dominance (D \* M) can explain conflict only in combination with either of these conditions. Transborder dominance (B) can explain conflict only in combination with a mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration (M). This combination (B \* M) explains only 25% (two of the eight) ethno-territorial conflicts. The condition transborder dominance (B), nevertheless, is an important one because it is part of the only combination (B \* M) which is able to explain the two ethno-territorial conflicts in Central Asia.

*Table 7.9. A number of explaining combinations and their coverage*

<b>EXPLAINING COMBINATION</b>	<b>EXPLAINED C</b>	<b>% C EXPLAINED</b>
T * D * M	Azerbaijani–Armenian in Azerbaijan [Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict] + Russian–Chechen in Russia [Wars in Chechnya] + Ingush–Ossetian in Russia [Prigorodny Conflict]	37.5%
R * D * M	Azerbaijani–Armenian in Azerbaijan [Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict] + Russian–Chechen in Russia [Wars in Chechnya] + Ingush–Ossetian in Russia [Prigorodny Conflict] + Tajik–Pamiri in Tajikistan [Tajikistani Civil War]	50%
A * M	Georgian–Abkhazian in Georgia [Abkhazian Conflict] + Georgian–Ossetian in Georgia + Azerbaijani–Armenian in Azerbaijan [Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict] + Tajik–Pamiri in Tajikistan [Tajikistani Civil War]	50%
D * M	Georgian–Ossetian in Georgia + Azerbaijani–Armenian in Azerbaijan [Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict] + Tajik–Pamiri in Tajikistan [Tajikistani Civil War]	37.5%
B * M	Kyrgyz–Uzbek in Kyrgyzstan [Osh Conflict] + Tajik–Uzbek in Uzbekistan [Tajikistani Civil War]	25%
S * A * G * M	Georgian–Abkhazian in Georgia [Abkhazian Conflict] + Georgian–Ossetian in Georgia + Azerbaijani–Armenian in Azerbaijan [Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict]	37.5%
S * D * G * M	Georgian–Ossetian in Georgia + Azerbaijani–Armenian in Azerbaijan [Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict]	25%
s * D * G * M	Ingush–Ossetian in Russia [Prigorodny Conflict]	12.5%

## ***Conclusion***

While Central Eurasia is generally known to be a conflict-prone region, only a small proportion (6.2%) of all ethno-territorial encounters in the current study are afflicted by conflict. Despite the Caucasus being known as a shatterbelt, the proportion of ethno-territorial encounters afflicted by conflict is smaller in the Caucasus (6.3%) than it is in Central Asia (9.1%). Despite its ethno-religious diversity and resemblance to the Caucasus, Fereydan, the Iranian “little Caucasus”, has remained free of ethno-territorial conflict. Apparently, ethnic diversity alone cannot cause ethno-territorial conflicts; only those ethno-territorial encounters lead to conflict which fulfill (a combination of) certain conditions.

All conditions appear to enhance the chances of emergence of ethno-territorial conflict. Nevertheless, those conditions are not equally important in this respect. The demographic dominance of ethno-territorial groups inside their titular territorial autonomy (D) appears to enhance radically the chances of an ethno-territorial encounter becoming marked by conflict. Transborder dominance (B) also enhances these chances to a rather large extent.

Whereas the statistical analysis of variables produces a neat arrangement of conditions that are more and less associated with ethno-territorial conflict (Table 7.2), the application of the QCA method evokes the image of a workshop in operation where semi-finished products and waste are difficult to distinguish. The reason is QCA’s great ambition of determinism and the (initially) large number of conditions in the analysis. When the number of positive cases (showing conflict) is relatively small and the set of conditions large, as in the current study, one may easily end with a separate formula for each conflict. This result (approximately Step 1 in the analysis above) is obviously closer to the ideal of descriptive studies hailing the uniqueness of social phenomena than to the goal of generalization. In order to reach more general conclusions (parsimonious equations), I have manipulated the set of conditions and in one case experimentally changed the value attributed to a condition (T). This may convey the impression of manipulating data in order to prove a preconceived idea; however, there was no hypothesis (neither from the author nor in the literature) that could have been written in a specific Boolean equation; and, moreover, different subsequent analyses (steps) confirmed the results of these manipulations in one way or another. This part of the research, therefore, seems more heuristic than the preceding univariate analysis, which at least (dis)proved assumptions from the literature, such as the role of religion.

There are, nevertheless, strong reasons to apply QCA: first, because it is a more accountable version of the comparative method that some authors apply off the cuff in descriptive analyses of a handful of cases that seem to illustrate a theoretical issue; second, because it just as meticulously scrutinizes the host of cases in which the theoretically interesting phenomenon (conflict) does not occur (121 of the 129 cases of ethno-territorial encounter in this study); and third, because the combination of conditions seems to reveal the essential role of a condition that remains invisible in statistical analyses. The superiority of the method, however, seems to be counteracted by the complexity of the outcomes. One may ask if manipulation in order to get more parsimonious results is a methodologically sound strategy. Actually, manipulation is acknowledged in QCA methodology on account of some peculiarities that are intrinsic to the method, such as the silent role of non-occurring cases (=combinations). Another argument is that uncertainties of measurement—such as the assignment of a dichotomous value—have a more disastrous effect in QCA than in statistical analyses, where they just merge into the noise of a probability coefficient. In any case, the recurrence of certain conditions such as “M” (the mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration) is telling.

A more relevant question is whether the power of the result is not undermined by such measures as splitting up the population into separate “worlds” (inside and outside the Russian Federation). While producing more parsimonious equations, it diminishes the generalizing power of the equation. On the other hand, splitting up, or introducing an extra condition, is wholly in the spirit of QCA. It eliminates the complex conditions implied in the political-historical context of a region and brings to the fore politico-territorial factors that control the behavior of ethno-territorial groups.

All in all, the most significant result is that being located in a mosaic type of ethnic configuration is a necessary condition in explaining ethno-territorial conflict. Mosaicness, in combinations with autonomous setting (A \* M) or transborder dominance (B \* M), explains ethno-territorial conflict outside the Russian Federation. Inside Russia, however, more conditions are required. In Russia the combination of location in a mosaic area and titular demographic dominance explains ethno-territorial conflict, either in combination with traumatic peak experience (T \* D \* M) or with religious difference (R \* D \* M).



## Chapter Eight

# 8

## It Was a Winter Morning: Conclusions

What are the reasons behind the ethno-territorial conflicts in Central Asia and the Caucasus? Why do Fereydan and parts of Central Asia and the Caucasus remain peaceful, while other parts of the two latter regions are afflicted by ethno-territorial conflicts? As I wrote in the first chapter of this book: “I have always wondered why there are enduring ethno-territorial conflicts in some multi-ethnic parts of Central Eurasia and not in other parts. What are the conditions which make conflict in one area more likely than in others?”

I have heard many (partial) explanations from different people, inside and outside the regions, and in and outside the field. Once a Georgian told me that the reasons for the conflicts in the Caucasus are people’s emotional attachment to their “language”, “religion”, and “land”. Another one told me that it is all about competition between different ethnic groups. Other people think that the main reason lies in the traumatic histories of the past. Yet other people think that all these were brought about by the awakening of ethno-nationalism after *glasnost* and *perestroika*, and because all people love freedom and hence independence, etc. All these are simple, often emotional, explanations which seem to be quite plausible. Nevertheless, they offer only partial explanations for certain conflicts, while they fail to explain other conflicts.

After having conducted this study and applied systematic methods such as qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) and statistical analyses, in addition to case descriptions, it is time to answer these questions. It is hoped that this study is successful in offering better understanding and explanations of these conflicts, as well as in improving the state of theoretical explanation of ethno-territorial conflicts in general. In the following pages, the results of my research will be presented and discussed, compared with similar studies, and relevant policy and research recommendations will be proposed.

## ***Research Results***

Ethnically and religiously heterogeneous regions, such as the regions covered by this study—Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Fereydan—are often said to be conflict-prone. My research concludes otherwise: only a small proportion of all ethno-territorial encounters in this study are afflicted by conflict. Apparently, conflicts erupt only under certain circumstances and when certain conditions are met.

The aim of this study has been to explain why in some parts of these regions ethno-territorial conflicts have occurred in recent decades, while other parts have had a peaceful recent history. Starting from a political geographic point of view, special attention was given to the impact of territorial factors in combination with other social and political factors. The conditions taken into the analysis were as follows: ethno-political subordination, religious difference, linguistic difference, traumatic peak experience, autonomous setting, titular demographic dominance, contiguity to titular kinfolk, transborder dominance, and the mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration.

The main question of this study was as follows: *Which (combinations of) conditions can explain the occurrence of ethno-territorial conflict in (post-)Soviet Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Fereydan (Iran), from the late 1980s onwards?*

That question also included the following sub-question: *To what extent is the ethno-geographic configuration an explanation for the occurrence of ethno-territorial conflict in (post-)Soviet Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Fereydan (in Iran), from the late 1980s onwards?*

In order to answer the research question(s), I constructed a dataset of 129 ethno-territorial encounters and filled it in on the basis of fieldwork, literature, and governmental and non-governmental (statistical) data. Needless to say, there were many problems, and many arbitrary decisions were taken. In addition to thorough descriptions of ethno-territorial conflicts, systematic qualitative comparative (QCA) and statistical analyses were performed using this dataset.

All selected conditions appeared to enhance the chances of ethno-territorial conflict. Encounters that fulfil these conditions have higher chances of being afflicted by ethno-territorial conflict than encounters that do not fulfil these conditions. A demographic dominance of ethno-territorial groups in their autonomous titular territories appeared to enhance the chances of ethno-territorial conflict drastically. A transborder dominance also enhances these chances to a rather large extent. Transborder dominance is a situation in which an ethno-politically subordinated group is contiguous to its kinfolk's titular territory. In addition, in this situation the kinfolk is at least three times more populous

than the subordinated group's overlords. Concrete examples are the Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

Being located in a mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration appears to be a necessary condition for the emergence of ethno-territorial conflict: it is present in all combinations of conditions which explain ethno-territorial conflict. Although only a modest proportion of all ethno-territorial encounters situated in a mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration were afflicted by ethno-territorial conflict, all ethno-territorial conflicts in this study—in the Caucasus or the southeastern part of Central Asia—were situated in areas which can be typified as a mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration.

The mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration refers to an area which is ethnically very fragmented and in which relative homogeneous pockets of ethnic concentration exist. Because of the properties of this configuration, the mobilization of a people for an ethnic cause—and hence for conflict—is easier; the enemy can be better localized and targeted; and, above all, a strong and often exclusive association exists between the ethno-territorial groups and their habitats—that is, their living areas or ethnic homelands.

The most important combination of conditions for the explanation of ethno-territorial conflict is the combination of possession of territorial autonomy and location in a mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration. A combination of location in a mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration and transborder dominance can also explain the occurrence of ethno-territorial conflict.

As Russia is the strongest of all the (post-)Soviet republics, the occurrence of ethno-territorial conflict has a higher threshold there and requires more causal conditions. In the Russian Federation, in combination with being located in a mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration, both ethno-territorial groups need to have demographic dominance in their respective titular autonomous homelands and adhere to different religions. The condition religious difference can, nevertheless, be replaced by the traumatic peak experience of one of the encountering groups. In other words, either religious difference or traumatic peak experience is sufficient in combination with titular demographic dominance and location in a mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration.

It is important to note that these conditions can bring about these outcomes only in a certain context. The Soviet ethno-political system was itself an important reason why these conflicts erupted in the Soviet Union. The hierarchical ethno-territorial federalism and the ethnic competition which was engineered in that system (see e.g. Bremmer 1997; Martin 2001a; Martin 2001b) facilitated the centrifugal forces when the Soviet



Union was coming to an end and was, in fact, a state in disarray (Van der Wusten & Knippenberg 2001).

Although *glasnost* and *perestroika* were meant to revive the Soviet empire, they had a reverse effect. The Soviet economy deteriorated afterwards and the openness and ethno-nationalism became widespread. The August coup d'état (1991) destroyed the last hopes of keeping together the old empire. The Soviet Union collapsed, but its problems did not finish. The newly independent Soviet successor states inherited the old empire's problems.

The situation in Iran, at that time, was in sharp contrast to the chaotic situation in the (post-)Soviet republics. The Iran–Iraq war ended in 1988, and with that the Iranian economy received a boost. Although Iran still suffered under many economic sanctions, the end of that war made more budget available for recovery and post-war development projects, and hence the economic and social situation in the country also improved in many ways. Although the post-war economic situation was not as bright as expected, it still increased the life expectancy of young men and increased their prospects in life. Fereydan, as a mainly rural region, benefitted indirectly from the end of the war.<sup>201</sup> Even though the end of the war was not without its problems, it still brought more social stability to Iran.

Important differences between the Soviet and Iranian ethno-political systems were their modes of subordination as well as their territorial or non-territorial management of ethnic and religious diversity. In the Soviet Union the non-titulars were subordinated to the titulars in the corresponding union republics. As the system was hierarchical, many subordinated groups possessed territorial autonomy themselves within a union republic belonging to their overlords. The Iranian system was not characterized by ethno-territorial hierarchy. All non-Shi'ite Muslims were politically subordinated to the Shi'ite Muslims. Although there exists cultural autonomy for the recognized (Islamic and non-Islamic) religious minorities, these are not strictly territorially based. Indeed, a main difference between the Iranian and the Soviet ethno-political systems is the lack of territorial autonomies in Iran. The fact that Fereydan, the Iranian little Caucasus, has remained free of ethno-territorial conflicts is a good indication that ethno-religious diversity alone does not cause ethno-territorial conflict: it can cause such conflict only in interaction with, and in a context of, certain ethno-political systems.

---

<sup>201</sup> In Iran there are relatively underdeveloped regions such as Baluchistan and Kurdistan, and relatively developed ones such as Tehran and Eastern Azerbaijan. Fereydan, located in Ostan-e Esfahan, one of the more developed *ostans* of Iran, is nevertheless mainly a rural region and more or less comparable to the Iranian average in most aspects.

Ethno-political subordination, however, appears not to be a very important condition for the emergence of ethno-territorial conflict. Although most ethno-territorial conflicts in this study are separatist (vertical) wars, ethno-political sub-ordination does not appear to be a very important condition in explaining ethno-territorial conflict, as most minorities did not rebel against their hosting union republics or states. A more important condition than being ethno-politically subordinated is possessing territorial autonomy.

The possession of territorial autonomy and titular status of an ethnic group, whether within a union republic/state or in a lower-ranked autonomous territory, enhances its opportunities for ethnic mobilization and hence ethno-territorial conflict. In most (six out of eight) ethno-territorial conflicts, whether horizontal or vertical, ethno-territorial groups were titulars in certain territories and possessed territorial autonomy at different levels. In the only horizontal ethno-territorial conflict, the Ingush and Ossetians, although both being ethno-politically subordinated to their titular overlords, the Russians, were titulars in their own respective titular autonomous territory. It is also notable that the Ossetians, who unlike the newly established Ingush autonomous apparatus, possessed a better-functioning autonomous apparatus, were better able to mobilize armed groups. In the vertical conflicts also, the Abkhazians and Ossetians in Georgia, the Pamiris in Tajikistan, the Armenians in Azerbaijan, and the Chechens in Russia, all possessed territorial autonomy.

The possession of territorial autonomy, apparently, prompts states to react more resolutely against ethnic strife and separatist claims in and by the autonomous units than against similar strivings elsewhere in their territory. For example, while the Armenian separatist ethnic strife in the Republic of Azerbaijan led to a full-scale separatist war in Nagorno-Karabakh, ethnic strife by the ethnic Talysh and Lezgins in that republic did not lead to such warfare. Similarly, the Armenian ethnic strife in, and *de facto* control of, the southern Georgian region of Javakheti did not encounter resolute Georgian military reaction, while similar strivings by the Abkhazians and South Ossetians did encounter highly emotional and resolute reactions from Georgia and Georgians. One reason may be that the autonomous apparatuses in these regions may have a wider outreach thanks to their official and legal statuses. The host states may also calculate that the next step for the autonomous territories is effective separation, while in other cases of ethnic strife, other options, such as offering territorial autonomy, may still be negotiable.

Titular demographic dominance appears to be a very important explaining condition. The demographic majority of titulars enhances their ability to implement ethnic policies and hence also their opportunity to mobilize their constituency for an ethnic cause such as ethno-territorial

conflict. Such a demographic dominance also makes the (exclusive) association of a territory with the titular ethnic group stronger. Those encounters in which the encountering groups constitute a demographic majority in their respective titular autonomous territories have a dramatically higher chance of being afflicted by ethno-territorial conflicts than do other encounters.

Ethnic kinship also appears to be relevant in explaining ethno-territorial conflict. Ethnic kinship has a subjective dimension and can be based on different criteria—for example, language, religion, race, or even tribal pedigree—in different parts of the world. In contrast to many parts of the world (for example, the Balkans and Lebanon) where ethnic identities are mainly based on religion, in the Soviet Union they are mainly based on languages. This is also true to a great extent in Iran. Therefore, in this study, a similarity in the languages spoken by ethnic groups usually also means an ethnic kinship. It appears that ethnic groups who speak intimately similar languages do not come into ethno-territorial conflict with each other.

Confessing the same religion, however, has not prevented ethno-territorial groups from fighting an ethno-territorial conflict with one another. Examples are the Abkhazians and Ossetians, who have been involved in ethno-territorial conflicts with their fellow Orthodox Christian Georgians. A minority of Muslims exists in all these predominantly Orthodox Christians ethnic groups. Similarly, the Sunni Uzbeks have engaged in conflicts with their fellow Muslim Tajik and Kyrgyz neighbors. On the other hand, most encounters between religiously different groups have not led to ethno-territorial conflicts. Therefore, no support is found for Huntington's (1993; 1997) thesis of the "Clash of Civilizations". Religious difference appears in only half of the ethno-territorial conflicts in this study. Only in the Russian Federation did it appear to be an explaining condition in combination with being situated in a mosaic area and possessing titular demographic dominance. Even there it could be replaced by the condition traumatic peak experience, as those conflicts in which the two involved parties adhered to different religions were also those cases in which one group had been traumatized.

The relation between having a different religion and being traumatized is a solid one in this study. Traumatic peak experience in the Russian Federation appeared to be an explaining condition in combination with being situated in a mosaic area and possessing titular demographic dominance. In the Russian Federation, however, the same combination of conditions could explain the emergence of ethno-territorial conflict, when traumatic experience was replaced by the condition religious difference. This is not very surprising because only Muslims have experienced such major traumas in the North Caucasus. The memories and even physical

results of the genocidal deportations in the 1940s are still very vivid in the North Caucasian collective memory. It is notable that most Chechen leaders involved in the Chechen conflict were born or raised in exile. And the North Ossetian-Ingush conflict is about Prigorodny, an Ingush district which was transferred to North Ossetia after the Ingush were deported, and which was never returned to them after they were formally rehabilitated. Another ethno-territorial conflict marked by religious difference, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, is also marked by traumatic peak experience. Although Armenians having experienced a major trauma was not a necessary condition for explaining this case, it most probably played a role in the emergence and course of the conflict, and the trauma was echoed in the Armenian discourses at the time.

## ***Discussion***

Although ethnicity can at times be politicized and regarded as an instrument in order to achieve political goals, its cultural foundations are undeniable. Since an ethno-territorial conflict is a conflict between two ethnic groups, it seems very plausible that cultural factors play a role. Huntington (1993; 1997) maintains that conflicts occur along civilizational fault lines. As civilizations, in his view, are mainly founded on religions, these fault lines are places where adherents to different religions encounter. The Caucasus and the Balkans are good examples of areas where such clashes may occur, according to Huntington's theory of the "Clash of Civilizations" (1993; 1997). Other authors (e.g. Harff & Gurr 2004: 31-32; O'Sullivan 2001: 94-95) have also pointed to the role of religion in ethnic wars. It was beyond the scope of this study to investigate whether religion, as an ideology, can in one way or the other be the main reason behind the eruption of a war. The Wahhabi/Salafi insurgencies in the North Caucasus, however, confirm such ideas. These insurgencies should not be regarded as ethno-territorial conflicts, however, because these wars do not follow the logics of an ethno-territorial conflict; Wahhabism/Salafism is not an indigenous sect of Islam in the region and does not enjoy much support among the local population; the Wahhabi/Salafi militant groups are usually multi-ethnic, consisting of many local and foreign ethnic groups (particularly Arabs and Pakistanis); and, finally, the local population are usually the main victims of Wahhabi/Salafi actions.

On the other hand, not much support is found for the theory that religious difference causes ethno-territorial conflicts. The findings of my study are consistent with those of Cornell (1998a), who asserts that the existing ethno-territorial conflicts in the Caucasus are not religious-based wars. In addition, my findings do not accord with Huntington's (1997;

1993) theory, as most encounters between religiously different ethnic groups remain peaceful and as half of the conflicts studied were fought between ethnic groups with the same religious background.

The idea that the Balkans is a scene of the “Clash of Civilizations” stems from the fact that in the Balkans, ethnic boundaries are mainly shaped around religion, their populations’ language being the same. In the former Soviet Union, however, language is the main denominator of ethnicity. Indeed, this study showed that ethnic kinfolks, measured on the basis of intimacy between their languages, do not come into conflict with each other. This finding is consistent with the ideas of primordialism and ethnic nepotism.

Religious difference appears to explain ethno-territorial conflict only in the North Caucasus, and only in combination with a mosaic configuration and demographic dominance of the titulars in their autonomous territory. Moreover, in this explanation, religious difference can be replaced by the condition of having undergone a traumatic peak experience, as only the Muslims in the North Caucasus were subjected to the Stalin-era genocidal deportations. This finding, however, does not support Kaufman’s (2001) thesis of modern hatreds, which maintains that the events in the recent past are among the main reasons for the emergence of ethnic conflicts. Kaufman’s understanding of trauma and events in the recent past is much broader than in my study. Not all cases of past conflict have led to new conflicts. For example, the Armenian–Georgian war in 1918 in southern Georgia and northern Armenia has not led to new conflict.

Ethno-political systems play an important role and condition the emergence of conflicts. The most important conditions for explaining ethno-territorial conflict in this study were those derived from the ethno-political systems, particularly those with a territorial character. The Iranian ethno-political system is very different from the (post-)Soviet one. One most important difference between them is that the Soviet ethno-political system was based on an ethnic national view of nationality, and ethnicity was politicized therein. Its hierarchical ethnic federalism was the main factor which contributed to the politicization of ethnicity and ethnic competition (see e.g. Bremmer 1997; Martin 2001a; Martin 2001b). The findings of my study contradict the claims of those who regard ethnic federalism as a guarantor of stability in a multi-ethnic state. For example, Ronald Hill (2003), who regards ethnic diversity as a problem (Hill 2003: 201-223), maintains that the Soviet Union undertook positive attempts to solve this problem, but was nevertheless unsuccessful (Hill 2003: 223). My study has shown otherwise: ethnic diversity does not necessarily lead to ethnic conflict. The Soviet ethno-political system itself caused ethno-territorial conflict by establishing a hierarchical *matrioshka*-like system of

nested, ethnically based territorial autonomies. Although ethnic federalism may accommodate ethnic demands and prevent ethnic conflicts in the short term, this kind of federalism may lead to a dissolution of the state in the long run (Van der Wusten & Knippenberg 2001: 288-289). The ethno-political system of the Soviet Union, with its hierarchical ethno-territorial manifestation, created ethnic competition and latent ethnic conflict. The demise of the state in the late 1980s and the early 1990s triggered and catalyzed the conflict-generating mechanisms in the system and caused many formerly latent conflicts to erupt. Violent ethno-territorial conflicts did not emerge where the ethno-political system did not provide conditions for them and no opportunity structures existed.

The possession of territorial autonomy by ethnic groups, especially in a hierarchical fashion, was a main conflict-generating condition in the Soviet Union's ethno-political system. This conclusion is consistent with that of Cornell (2002a), who concluded that territorial autonomy is a very important condition in explaining ethno-political (in fact, ethno-territorial) conflict in the Caucasus. In his study the proposition that "the existence of territorial autonomy significantly increases the risk of conflict" (Cornell 2002a: 123) was supported by eight out of nine cases.

My study, nevertheless, has significant differences from that of Cornell (2002a). Cornell's study stops short of both thorough statistical and qualitative comparative analyses and deals only with a limited number of cases, and only in the South Caucasus. In addition, his conception of demographic factor(s) is very different from mine. His findings do not support the importance of demographic factors. The factor "relative demography" in Cornell's (2002a) study does not include political autonomy. On the other hand, the factor which was included in my study and proved to be very important was "titular demographic majority"—that is, "demographic majority of a titular group within its own territorial autonomy". Moreover, although Cornell (2002a) identifies areas of ethnic concentration, it is not clear according to what criteria they should be delimited. Demographic majority is not really measurable without knowing its delimited territorial realm. One needs to know the borders of a territory in order to measure the demographic weight of an ethnic group within that territory.

The results of my study are consistent with Toft's (2003) and Coakley's (2003a : 2003b) ideas about the mobilizational effects of an intersection of territorial autonomy and ethnic demography. According to Coakley (2003b: 313-314), "political autonomy that is congruent with the geographic spread of an ethnic community tends to reinforce ethnic commitment, other things being equal". According to Toft (2003), ethnic separatism is more likely in territories which contain the highest

concentration of an ethnic group, and especially where the majority of their population consists of that ethnic group. Although Toft (2003) has not formulated it explicitly in this way, all her examined cases included those in which minorities possessed territorial autonomy. All in all, there is ample evidence that ethnically based territorial autonomies increase the chances of ethno-territorial conflict.

Another demographic factor also appeared to be important in my study. This study has concluded that the lack of territorial autonomy can be compensated by transborder dominance. In all conflicts in which ethno-territorial groups possessed autonomy, these groups were demographically dominant in their respective titular autonomous territory, except in Abkhazia, where the titular ethnic Abkhazians did not constitute the majority (nor even the plurality) of the population there. Therefore, one may conclude that the possession of autonomous territory or transborder dominance, in combination with location in a mosaic ethno-geographic configuration, suffices for the explanation of conflicts outside the Russian Federation; or it can be concluded that in a mosaic ethno-geographic configuration, possession of autonomy should necessarily be accompanied by titular demographic dominance—the Abkhazian conflict being an odd case. The oddity in the Abkhazian conflict might be explained by the severe political instability in Georgia when that conflict erupted.

The evidence from my study accords with Van der Wusten's and Knippenberg's (2001) observation that ethnic politics prevail in a time when the state is in disarray. The ethno-territorial conflicts all emerged after *glasnost* and *perestroika*, when the Soviet Union was in demise and when its successor states' authorities still had problems with political legitimacy. In cases where chaos and the lack of political legitimacy were extraordinary, regionalism and sub-ethnic competition prevailed and interacted with ethnic competition. The examples are the Tajikistani Civil War in which different factions of Tajiks (with their strongholds in different parts of the country), along with the Uzbek and Pamiris minorities, fought with and against each other, and the second Uzbek-Kyrgyz conflict in southern Kyrgyzstan, which followed the expulsion of President Bakiyev, who enjoyed much support among his fellow southern Kyrgyz. This situation is somewhat similar to that of the fragile states in Africa, in which different factions fight each other for the capture of the state and its resources (Dietz & Foecken 2001). Given the fact that the allocation of resources in the Soviet planned-economy and in the post-Soviet economies were (and in many cases still are) very much state-centered, it matters a great deal who is in power in a certain republic. It matters especially in the poorer republics such as Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, because the competition for resources, and hence control of

the state, is more important in such contexts. Although Georgia was not a poor republic in the Soviet Union, the civil war between the (supporters of) Gamsakhurdia and his opponents took a heavy toll on that country. Western Georgia, in and around Abkhazia, was particularly chaotic at that time. Apparently, in such a politically unstable situation, the ethnic Abkhazians could wage a rather successful separatist war without constituting the demographic majority in their titular autonomous territory.

Almost all conflicts emerged when the state was in crisis and disarray. Only the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict emerged at a time when the Soviet Union was still not in serious demise and was politically less chaotic. The reason is probably because almost all conditions of conflict were present in that conflict, while other conflicts fulfilled fewer conditions of conflict. Therefore, it can be concluded that it was easier for the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict to emerge when it was still rather difficult for the others to emerge. In other words, *the more severe the situation of political instability is, the easier it is for ethno-territorial conflicts to emerge.*

Political instability provides an opportunity structure for the mobilization of ethnic groups. Nevertheless, such mobilization for ethnic politics and particularly ethnic conflict is dependent on other factors, the most important of them being the possession of territorial autonomy, and also—though it is less important—titular demographic dominance and transborder dominance.

This study proved that being located in a mosaic type of ethno-geographical configuration is important in the explanation of ethno-territorial conflicts. All ethno-territorial conflicts were located in a mosaic area; therefore, it appears to be a necessary condition in the explanation of ethno-territorial conflicts. A fair criticism may be that the fact that all ethno-territorial conflicts in this study were located in a mosaic area does not mean that this factor is a necessary condition everywhere else in the world. Obviously, many ethno-territorial conflicts erupt in the world without being situated in a mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration. Nevertheless, it is fair to say that its properties make the chances of conflict in a mosaic type higher than in other types of ethno-geographic configuration. In addition to the earlier-mentioned ethno-territorial conflicts in Ethiopia (Chapter 2), the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia are good examples. The conflicts in Bosnia, Croatia, Macedonia, and Serbia including Kosovo in the early and late 1990s occurred in a mosaic type of ethno-geographical configuration. Even though we have still not measured it against our criteria of mosaicism, a glance at the ethnic map of the Balkans seems to confirm the mosaic type as the prevalent type of ethno-geographic configuration in a large part of the Balkans.



In addition, there are more reasons to believe that the presence of a mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration is a necessary condition for the emergence of ethno-territorial conflicts in the (post-)Soviet space. Elsewhere in the (post-)Soviet space, where the ethno-geographic configuration is not a mosaic one, the possession of territorial autonomy, whether or not accompanied by a demographic majority, has not led to the eruption of ethno-territorial conflicts. On the other hand, the Transnistrian ethno-territorial conflict is located in an area which can be identified as a mosaic type of ethno-geographical configuration.<sup>202</sup> That ethno-territorial conflict can also be explained in a similar way to the Kyrgyz–Uzbek and Tajik–Uzbek ethno-territorial conflicts, respectively in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The Russian–Kazakh ethno-territorial encounter in Kazakhstan, which is not located in a mosaic configuration but in which the subordinated group (i.e. the Russians) have transborder dominance, has not been afflicted by ethno-territorial conflict. The same situations appears, for example, with regard to the position of Russians in the Baltic republics. There also, in the absence of mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration, the possession of transborder dominance by Russians has not led to ethno-territorial conflict.

Moreover, smaller conflicts and clashes, which could not be typified as ethno-territorial encounters, have also occurred mainly in mosaic areas. Most of these clashes and conflicts—for example, Chechens versus Avars and Laks, Kumyks versus Laks and Avars, Azeris versus Lezgins in Dagestan, Avars and Lezgins against Azeris in Azerbaijan, clashes between many North Caucasian groups and Russians (especially the Russian Cossacks), and not forgetting the Meskhetian pogroms in Uzbekistan—have occurred in areas which are characterized by a mosaic type of ethno-geographical configuration. All facts indicate that the mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration is a factor with conflict-facilitating power.

## ***Recommendations***

Can the results of this study help to resolve and prevent conflicts? Although conflict resolution or prevention have not been the main scope of my study, its results are nevertheless relevant for that purpose. The manipulation of factors can be regarded as a method of conflict resolution.

---

<sup>202</sup> Actually, it depends on which borders should be regarded as hard borders and how ethnic groups are identified there, depending on the questions of whether or not the Moldavians and Romanians, Ruthenians and Ukrainians, or the Orthodox and Catholic Ukrainians should be taken separately and identified as separate ethnic groups, or whether the Orthodox Russians and Ukrainians in Moldova should be placed in a single ethnic category. Nevertheless, that area appears to be a mosaic one by most decisions taken.

In this context, forced migration and ethnic cleansing as well as ethnic assimilation might seem to be tempting options in order to alter a mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration. It is, nevertheless, insane to create suffering and bloodshed in order to prevent them! Moreover, this study has shown that a mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration can never lead to ethno-territorial conflict without being combined with other factors.

More important is preventing or diminishing the politicization of ethnicity. The ethno-political system of the former Soviet Union proved to be very important in that respect. It was the combination of a mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration and the consequences of that ethno-political system—such as autonomous setting, titular demographic dominance, and transborder dominance—that explained the occurrence of ethno-territorial conflict. The choice of the Soviet leaders for a territorial federation on an ethno-national basis was essential in this respect and encouraged ethnic nationalism instead of civic nationalism in the long run. Why is a territory so important in this respect? The social and political relevance and significance of territorial factors and territoriality have been emphasized by many authors (see e.g. Anderson 1988; Ardrey 1967; Coakley 2003a; Coakley 2003b; Cornell 2002a; Dijkink & Knippenberg 2001; Dostál & Knippenberg 1992; Ghai 2000; Gottman 1973; Knight 1982; Knippenberg 1996; Knippenberg & Dostál 1979; Murphy 1989; Rezvani 2010; Roessing 1991; Sack 1986; Storey 2001; Toft 2003). A territory may stimulate ethnic nationalism in three ways. First, a territory may provide recognition by outsiders. As a consequence of the universal acceptance of the ideology of the nation-state, a territory is an asset for any ethnic group trying to preserve its distinctiveness as a group. Second, a territory may serve as a focus of identification for the ethnic group itself, by providing a homeland or “fatherland”. Third, control over territory means opportunities for mobilizing resources, whether they are human or non-human.

Therefore, the legacy of the Soviet nationalities policy can be regarded as the main contributor to the outbreak of the ethno-territorial conflicts—and disturbed inter-ethnic relations in general—in the (post-)Soviet space, because it created hierarchical modes of ethnic and ethno-territorial competition. This means that non-territorial policy options to cope with ethnic or cultural diversity—such as the Iranian ethno-political system or other systems on a personalistic basis—offer a better chance for peaceful coexistence of the ethnic groups involved. Another option is to create territorial competition within an ethnic group, to which the Swiss case can testify.

As far as future research on ethnic conflicts is concerned, this study underlines the importance of the incorporation of territorial factors

for their explanation. The same holds true for the incorporation of the ethno-geographical configuration, but this concept should be developed further, both theoretically and methodologically. As a Persian expression says: *Ma hanuz andar kham-e yek kucheim*—which can be roughly translated as: “We are still at the corner of the first street”.

I began this book with “It was a summer evening...”. I do not remember when I wrote the first sentence of this book, but it was a winter morning when I finished the last one. A long distance has been passed over, and a longer distance remains to be passed. But it is not yet late. There is still time to go. Remember, it was a winter *morning* when I wrote this final chapter, but not a winter *evening*.

# Appendices



# Appendix 1: Measurement of Mosaic Type of Ethno-Geographic Configuration

A mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration is a relatively small area in which different ethnic groups are concentrated in many relatively homogeneous pockets of ethnic concentration. Switzerland is a typical area with such attributes. A mosaic area is ethnically fragmented and, therefore, there are many encounters between these ethnic groups. The total number of encounters between ethnic groups may even be (ideally) larger than the number of ethnic groups.

The best way to determine whether a geographic area is of the mosaic type or not is to develop an index and an instrument which calculates the degree of fragmentation in an area. When fragmentation can be quantified—that is, different values of the extent of fragmentation can be calculated—a critical value can be defined above or below which an area can be designated as a mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration.

As is the case with all social scientific instruments, there is also an arbitrary aspect to the development of this instrument for the measurement and the definition of the critical values of the mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration. Even instruments for measurements of natural phenomena may have an arbitrary aspect, as the definitions of, and choices between, different units of measurement—for example, between Celsius and Fahrenheit—are human-made choices. Natural phenomena follow natural laws, but instruments for their measurement are human-made. All instruments are shaped by the taste and intellect of their designers. Nevertheless, they should all have certain features and characteristics which make them suitable for the task for which they are made. For example, in order to make an instrument which can cut vegetables, it should be a solid and sharp instrument. Metal is the best material for such an instrument, and paper is absolutely unsuitable. The designer designs such an instrument according to his taste, but it fulfills the criteria discussed above. Most likely it looks like a knife and not like a book.

Similarly, an instrument can be made which measures the degree of fragmentation and can determine whether an area is of a mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration or not. Although improvements are desirable, I have made such an instrument. In the following, I will discuss how it is made.

In order to determine whether or not an area is of the mosaic type, we should determine how large the area should be, and how many ethnic spatial pockets and how many encounters between these pockets should be located in this area. Consequently, the formula for such a measurement is based on the value of area divided by the number of ethnic spatial encounters. (One should not confuse ethnic spatial encounters with ethno-territorial encounters. They are slightly different from each other, as will be explained later on.)

Ideally, in an area displaying a mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration, there are many ethnic spatial pockets—that is, relatively homogeneous pockets of ethnic concentrations—and the number of encounters between such pockets are usually larger than their own numbers. In other words, in a mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration, there are usually more encounters than pockets of ethnic concentration. Such a situation is only possible when there are at least four ethnic spatial pockets (see Figure A-1.1). There is only one encounter possible between two ethnic spatial pockets (Circle A), and two (Circle B) or three encounters (Circle C) possible between three ethnic spatial pockets. On the other hand, the number of ethnic spatial encounters is usually larger than the number of ethnic spatial pockets when there are at least four such pockets. In other words, *an additional encounter* is usually present when there are at least four ethnic groups, provided that no ethnic spatial pocket is encircled by another one. Out of the seven imaginary patterns in circles in which four ethnic spatial pockets are present, one (Circle D) results in six ethnic spatial encounters, four result in five encounters (Circles E, F, G, and H), one circle (I) results in four encounters, and one (J) results in three encounters.

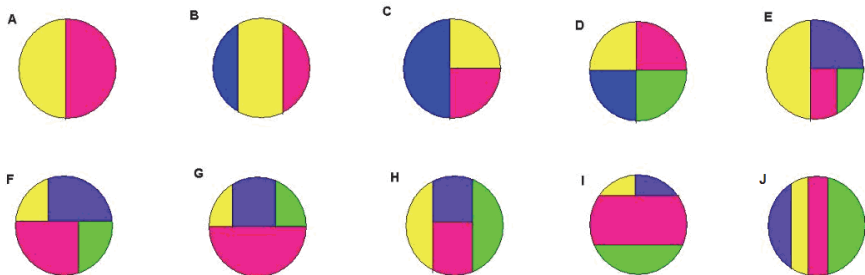


Figure A-1.1. Four ethnic pockets result in additional encounters

These patterns in circles (see Figure A-1.1) show that when there are four ethnic spatial pockets, there is at least one additional encounter in five out of seven cases (more than 71% of the cases). Conversely, this also means that there are at least four ethnic pockets when there are five ethnic

encounters, because three ethnic spatial pockets can never result in five ethnic spatial encounters. It can be argued that five ethnic spatial encounters, whether resulting from four or five ethnic spatial pockets, always result in a certain degree of fragmentation and, therefore, this is a good criterion of mosaicism, provided that the area in which they are located is relatively small.

How large (or more precisely, how small) should an area be in which five ethnic spatial encounters are present? In order to determine this, one should first determine how large an average ethnic spatial pocket should ideally be. Given the fact that mosaicism requires that at least four of them should be present in a small area, these ethnic spatial pockets themselves should not be large.

One can take Switzerland (see Figure A-1.2) as a model and by that recognize as a mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration geographic areas with similar features of ethnic fragmentation. One can also build an instrument by selecting relatively small but ethnically compact areas. Selecting territorial units from the former Soviet Union is a good strategy for this purpose. These are often small territories which are designated as the homelands of a certain ethnic group that is concentrated there.<sup>203</sup> The titular ethnic groups do not necessarily constitute the majority of the population in these territorial autonomous units. However, knowing their relative share in a territory's population, one can calculate how large a homogeneous ethnic spatial pocket would be if that particular ethnic group lived compactly. These territorial units of the former Soviet Union should not be very large. All autonomous ethnic territories, whether SSR, ASSR, AO, or NO, from the former Soviet Union are selected which are smaller than 70,000 km<sup>2</sup> and have less than 4,000,000 inhabitants. Then it is calculated how large the titular groups' share of land would be if the land in that territorial unit was distributed proportionally to their share in the total population (PROPET in Table A-1.1). In this way it can be calculated how large an average homogeneous ethnic spatial pocket would be and, therefore, also the area in which four such pockets would be located. Assuming that the area is circular, the radius of such an area can also be calculated.

The calculations (Table A-1.1)<sup>204</sup> show that an average ethnically homogeneous spatial pocket is 14,427.15 km<sup>2</sup> large. Hence, an area containing four such ethnic spatial pockets will be 57,708.6 km<sup>2</sup> large. It is more practical for the purpose of (manual) measurement if such an area

---

<sup>203</sup> Only the Jewish Autonomous *Oblast'* (Birobujan) in the Russian Far East is not included, because it did not contain the largest concentration of Soviet Jews.

<sup>204</sup> Different sources may present slightly different values. However, these differences do not have significant consequences for our calculations.



is a circle. If we assume it to be circular, such an area should have a radius of 135.5 km. In order to make the calculations and measurements easier, we take 130 km as the radius of this circle. This is justifiable because we have already rounded up many numbers in the calculation of the “vastness” or “smallness” of this area. Moreover, 5.5 km does not produce much difference in the real world. Such a circle will have an area of 53,092.92 km<sup>2</sup>.

Such an area can be qualified as a mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration if at least five ethnic spatial encounters are located in it. An instrument for the measurement of mosaicism can be built by dividing the geometric area by the number of ethnic spatial encounters. (In the following discussion about calculations, an area means a geometric area.) This calculation will result in a large number. In our example, it is 10,618.58. Therefore, in order to work with more “usable” numbers, we divide the result by 1,000. Hence the formula for the measurement of mosaicism will be as follows:

$$\text{m} = \text{area} / (\text{number of ethnic spatial encounters} * 1000)$$

The degree of mosaicism in our example is then  $\text{m} = 10.62$ . This value would have been 11.54 if the area had not been corrected, indicating that the correction of the value of area—by taking a smaller radius—for the sake of practicality does not make a major difference. As  $\text{m} = 10.62$  is the upper limit of mosaicism, this value and any value below it will be considered as a mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration. The formula shows that the value of  $\text{m}$  will be smaller if the number of encounters is larger or the area is smaller.

In Switzerland, with an area of 41,285 km<sup>2</sup> and four ethnic spatial encounters, the degree of mosaicism is  $\text{m} = 41,285 / (4 * 1000) = 10.32$ . This value is close to, but clearly below, the upper limit of  $\text{m} = 10.62$ . Therefore, the instrument determines that Switzerland is a mosaic area. This is yet another reason that this instrument is a good one for the measurement of mosaicism.

Any ethnic spatial encounter located in Switzerland is located in a mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration, as the measurement of  $\text{m}$  for most encounters will most likely result in even smaller values than 10.32 (see the method of measurement discussed below). Although this value falls within the limits of mosaicism, Switzerland contains only four ethnic spatial encounters. However, there are more ethnic spatial encounters between the ethnic spatial pockets in Switzerland and those outside, when foreign countries’ territories—for example, Val D’Aosta in Italy—are also taken into the measurement and calculation of mosaicism. Before doing this, however, we have to answer the question whether

Switzerland's international borders are *hard* or *soft borders*. It is not permissible and appropriate to measure beyond them if they are hard borders, but it is permissible if they are soft. When assumed to be soft borders, the larger area of measurement may still be a mosaic area, because there are more ethnic spatial encounters in that slightly larger area.

It is always necessary to define beyond which borders stops the measurement of mosaicism. In the measurement of mosaicism, one has to distinguish between hard and soft borders. *Hard borders* are those borders across which there is little transborder interaction. The Soviet external borders are an example of such hard borders. Hard borders in the post-Soviet context are the borders between the Soviet successor states and states which were not part of the former Soviet Union. *Soft borders* are those borders across which there is much transborder interaction. These are the Soviet internal borders and borders between the Soviet successor states—usually members of the CIS, an heir to the Soviet Union—even many years after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Visa regime, marriages, and migrations between these republics bind them together for many years, if not decades.

To determine whether the area around an encounter is of the mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration or not, one has to draw a circle with a radius of 130 km around that encounter. As such an encounter is rarely a point and as there are usually one or more lines of contact, there are more points possible around which a circle can be drawn. Therefore, there may be different measurements with different values. However, an encounter can be regarded as being located in a mosaic area if at least one such measurement determines that it is located in a mosaic area.

In the measurement of mosaicism, one has to distinguish between an *ethno-territorial encounter* and an *ethnic spatial encounter*. An ethnic spatial encounter is slightly different from an ethno-territorial encounter. By ethno-territorial encounter is meant a spatial encounter between two rooted ethnic groups within one former union republic or country (state). (In the text of the body of this book, an encounter simply means an ethno-territorial encounter.) Technically, all ethno-territorial encounters are ethnic spatial encounters, but the latter may reach across soft borders. To give an example: if one wants to determine whether the Tajik–Kyrgyz ethno-territorial encounter in Tajikistan is located in a mosaic area or not, one has to draw a circle around a point on the line of their encounter in Tajikistan and then count how many ethnic spatial encounters are present in that area across the soft borders—for example, in Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan—thereby counting each encounter between the same ethnic groups as one ethnic spatial encounter, even when they are located in two

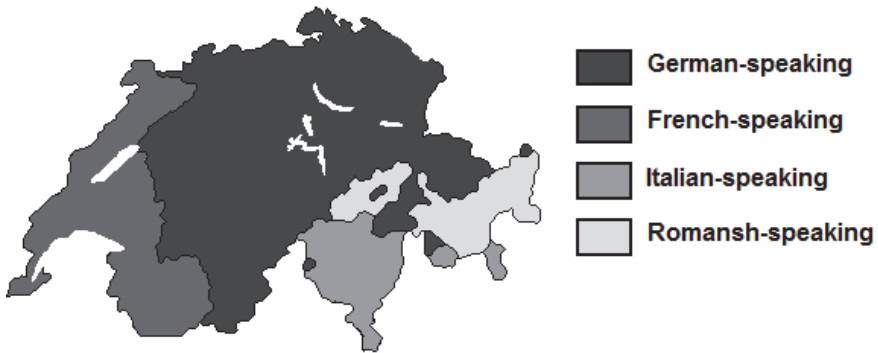
republics. In other words, no attention is paid to the soft borders in the measurement of mosaicism. This is understandable because the effects of mosaicism are presumably present in an area regardless of any soft borders. It is also not important of how many spatial pockets the living area (habitat) of an ethnic group consists. The encounter between two ethnic groups will be counted once, regardless of the multitude of their lines of contact.

It is possible that a full circle cannot be drawn around an ethno-territorial encounter. This is the situation when part of the imaginary circle may be located across the off-limit areas. In addition to the hard borders, the Caspian Sea and Black Sea are also considered off-limits, and the area of circles overlapping with them will not be taken into the calculation of mosaicism. What should we do in these cases? In practice in the study in this book, no difficulties were met because even in such cases it is clearly measurable whether such an area is of the mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration or not, even if a full circle cannot be drawn. However, the best way to deal with this problem is to calculate the area of the incomplete circle, count the number of ethnic spatial encounters in this area, and using the above-mentioned formula see whether it is equal to or below  $\bar{m} = 10.62$ .

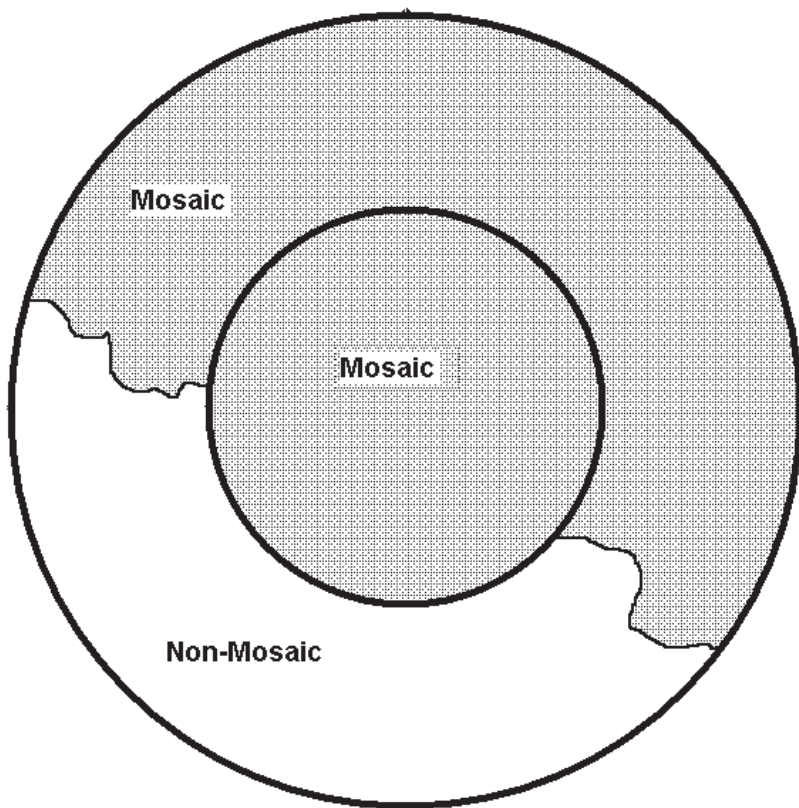
A problem may be that the area of an incomplete circle may be too small and hence even a small number of ethnic spatial encounters may produce a value below the upper limit of mosaicism ( $\bar{m} \leq 10.62$ ). Although correct according to the formula, it does not seem to be justifiable to regard such an area as a mosaic one. In order to solve such problems and in order to get more solid results in general, the measurement process should be repeated over a wider area (even if we were able to draw a full circle). The calculation should proceed at a *short distance* and at a *long distance*. Hence, a circle with a radius of 260 km will be drawn. Using the formula, this area should contain at least 20 ethnic-spatial encounters when it is a full circle. Although the area of this circle covers a geographic area four times larger than the smaller circle, the distance from the (point of) encounter is only twice as long. In reality, many ethnic spatial pockets lie beyond the limits of the first circle, and perhaps more than half of the encounters may repeat themselves in the larger area. A mosaic area can border another mosaic area and hence be located in a larger mosaic area in only one direction but may border a non-mosaic area in its other directions (see Figure A-1.3). In Figure A-1.3 the smaller circle—itsself displaying a mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration—is located in an area which is largely of mosaic type, because it displays mosaicism only in its upper side. In practice, it is reasonable to regard a mosaic area as mosaic even when the outer larger circular area around it is only partially of a mosaic type of ethno-

geographic configuration. It is, therefore, justifiable in such cases as in Figure A-1.3 to regard the ethno-territorial encounter at the center of circles as located in a mosaic type of ethno-geographic encounter. Therefore, we set the criterion of the number of ethnic spatial encounters lower, to 10. In a circle with a radius of 260 km, there should be at least 10 ethnic spatial encounters in order to call it a mosaic area; and in cases where it is not a full circle, it has to have a degree of mosaicism  $\bar{m} = 21,2371.66 / (10 * 1000) = 21.24$  or below (that is,  $\bar{m} \leq 21.24$ ). A precondition is that that the encounter is already located in a mosaic area measured at short distance ( $\bar{m} \leq 10.62$ ).

To recapitulate the main points: an ethno-territorial encounter is located in an area which can be typified as a mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration when—using the formula  $\bar{m} = \text{area} / (\text{number of encounters} * 1000)$ —the value of  $\bar{m}$  is equal to or lower than 10.62 in a circular or partially circular area with a radius of 130 km, in addition to having a value of  $\bar{m}$  equal to or lower than 21.24 in a circular or partially circular area of 260 km.



*Figure A-1.2. Ethnic distribution in Switzerland*



*Figure A-1.3. Mosaicism in a small and larger circular area*

Table A-1.1. Administrative units and PROPETs

ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT	TITULAR ETHNIC GROUP	% IN POPULATION	TITULARS IN THE	AREA KM <sup>2</sup>	PROPET KM <sup>2</sup>
Abkhazia	Abkhaz	18		8,432	1,518
Adygheya	Adygheya (Circassians)	22		7,600	1,672
Aga Buryatia	Buryats	55		19,000	10,450
Armenia	Armenians	93		29,740	27,658
Checheno-Igushetia	Chechens	58		19,300	11,194
Checheno-Igushetia	Ingush	13		19,300	2,509
Chuvashia	Chuvash	68		18,300	12,444
Dagestan <sup>205</sup>	Avars	28		50,300	14,084
Estonia	Estonians	62		43,432	26,928
Gorno-Badakhshan	Pamiris	61		64,200	39,162
Jewish (Birobijan)	Jews	4		36,300	1,452
Kabardino-Balkaria	Kabardin (Circassians)	48		12,500	6,000
Kabardino-Balkaria	Balkars	9		12,500	1,125
Karachayevo-Cherkessia	Karachay	31		14,100	4,371
Karachayevo-Cherkessia	Cherkess (Circassians)	10		14,100	1,410
Khakassia	Khakas	63		61,900	38,997
Komi-Permyak	Komi-Permyak	60		32,770	19,662
Latvia	Latvians	52		64,589	33,586
Lithuania	Lithuanians	80		65,200	52,160
Mari El	Mari	43		23,200	9,976
Mordovia	Mordovins	33		26,200	8,646
Nagorno-Karabakh	Armenians	77		4,400	3,388
North Ossetia	Ossetians	53		8,000	4,240
South Ossetia	Ossetians	66		3,900	2,574
Tatarstan	Tatars	49		68,000	33,320
Udmurtia	Udmurtians	31		42,100	13,051
Ust Orda Buryatia	Buryat	36		22,100	7,956
<b>Total PROPET</b>					389,533
<b>Average area PROPET</b>					389,533/27 = 14,427.15
<b>4x larger PROPET</b>					57,708.6
<b>Mosaicness (5 encounters)</b>					11.54
<b>Radius when the area is assumed to be circular</b>					r = 135.5 km

<sup>205</sup> There is no titular group in Dagestan; therefore, we chose the Avars, the largest Dagestani native ethnic group.



## Appendix 2: How Does Qualitative Comparative Analysis Work? An Example

Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) follows its own notation system, which requires a little clarification. Explanations are formulated in the form of equations. On the one side of the equation sign are the independent variables—the causal or explaining conditions—and on the other side is the dependent variable—the outcome or explained condition. The explaining conditions and outcome are traditionally represented by letters. Upper-case letters represent the presence of a condition or the desired outcome, and lower-case letters represent the absence of a condition or the desired outcome. A present and an absent outcome are also often called, respectively, a positive and a negative outcome. The different conditions in the equations are connected by asterisk signs (\*). Traditionally, the conditions were written next to each other without asterisks or any other multiplication sign. The combination of absent and present conditions that explain an outcome are also called “configurations” or “causal configurations”. Although I prefer “configuration” above “causal configuration”—for certain reasons which go beyond the scope of this book—I will use “causal configuration” or simply “combination” in order to avoid confusion with the unrelated concept of “ethno-geographic configuration”. The results of an analysis are traditionally represented by different equations connected by plus signs (+). The equations are numbered consecutively in the text. The closest terms in daily human language for “\*” and “+” are, respectively, “and” and “or”: in order to explain the outcome, this condition *and* that condition *and* another condition should be present; *or*, this condition *and* that condition should be present *and* the other condition should be absent; *or*, etc.

In order to make clear how QCA works, consider this simple example: We are interested in knowing under which conditions one gets a wet head in the rain. Getting a wet head in the rain (W) is the outcome which we want to explain. The conditions are as follows: being covered by a hat or other kind of headdress (H), holding an umbrella above your head (U), being covered by a building or similar construction (B), sitting inside a covered vehicle (V), and, above all, rain falling at the moment (P). Logically, the equations, or more precisely, the formula for getting wet would be:



$$W = h * u * v * b * P$$

In simple words, this means that one gets a wet head if it is raining *and* one's head is not covered by a hat or other headdress, *and* one is not covered by an umbrella, *and* one is not covered by a building or construction, *and* one is not sitting inside a covered vehicle.

In the practice of QCA, however, we explore the causal configurations and find explanations by comparing the real existing cases. To make it clear, I introduce here a few fictive persons as our cases or units of analysis. Ali, Giorgi, Fatima, Khachik, John, Vladimir, and Tamara are all working in different cities in the branches of a certain company. They were going at 8:00 AM from home to their office, each under different conditions. These conditions are represented in the small dataset (data matrix) (Table A-2.1). When a condition is present, it gets a "1" and when absent it gets a "0". The same applies to the outcome.

*Table A-2.1. Fictive data matrix of persons getting or not getting a wet head in the rain*

Cases	H	U	B	V	P	W
Ali	0	0	0	0	1	1
Giorgi	0	0	0	1	0	0
Fatima	1	0	0	1	1	0
Khachik	0	1	0	0	1	0
John	0	0	0	0	1	1
Vladimir	1	0	0	1	1	0
Tamara	0	0	0	0	0	0

A truth table follows the same system, but it brings together cases in which a similar combination of absent and present conditions leads to similar outcomes (Table A-2.2). In the truth table these are Ali and John, who got a wet head under similar conditions, and Fatima and Vladimir, who did not get a wet head under similar conditions.

*Table A-2.2. Truth Table: Conditions under which a person gets a wet head*

Cases	H	U	B	V	P	W
Ali, John	0	0	0	0	1	1
Giorgi	0	0	0	1	0	0
Fatima, Vladimir	1	0	0	1	1	0
Khachik	0	1	0	0	1	0
Tamara	0	0	0	0	0	0

The formulas resulting from a QCA are exclusive. By this it is meant that no cases can have both a positive and a negative outcome and that the same causal configuration cannot lead to both a positive and a negative outcome; otherwise there is a *contradiction*. A contradiction means that a causal configuration leads in one or more cases to a positive outcome and in the others to a negative outcome. The result of the analysis is as follows:

$$W = h * u * b * v * P \quad (\text{Ali} + \text{John})$$

Because of the aforementioned feature of the QCA—that is, the mutual exclusiveness of explanations of the cases with a positive and those with a negative outcome—in this study and most other studies working with a rather large number of cases, only the formulas of a positive outcome are presented. Nevertheless, to make it clear, I show this mechanism by performing another analysis exploring the formulas of the negative outcomes:

$$w = h * u * b * p + \quad H * u * b * V * P + \quad h * U * b * v * P$$

To be precise, the following equations serve as formulas, which explain why the persons in parentheses did not get a wet head:

$$w = h * u * b * p \quad (\text{Giorgi} + \text{Tamara})$$

$$w = H * u * b * V * P \quad (\text{Fatima} + \text{Vladimir})$$

$$w = h * U * b * v * P \quad (\text{Khachik})$$

The latter two equations are the leftover rows of the truth tables. In the first equation the condition “sitting inside a covered vehicle” does not appear. Giorgi and Tamara did not get wet under the rain (*w*) because they had no hats or other headdresses (*h*), no umbrellas (*h*), and were not inside a building or similar construction (*b*)—and after all, rain is not falling. The fact that Giorgi was inside a covered vehicle (*V*) and Tamara was not (*v*) apparently does not matter, and that condition does not appear in the equation. This is called minimization. By minimization, QCA tries to reach shorter formulas. In reality, however, no one gets wet in the rain if no rain falls (*p*); but as the number of persons is small, QCA does not produce such a result. Such a short formula ( $w = p$ ) will be produced when there is a large number of units of analysis.



# Appendix 3: Ethno-Cultural Issues and Correction of the Numbers of Ethnic Population in the Republic of Azerbaijan

Many accounts suggest that the numbers of some ethnic populations in the (Soviet) Republic of Azerbaijan were (and are) underestimated in the official censuses, even in the last Soviet Census of 1989, which is seen as the most accurate Soviet census after the Second World War. In addition, the usage of the toponym Azerbaijan for that territory and the ethnonym Azerbaijani or Azeri for its titular people is problematic. Below, an attempt is made to provide reasonable estimates of populations in 1989 of the under-represented ethnic groups and to bring clarity to these issues by using different (historical, statistical, etc.) sources.

The adjective Azeri or Azerbaijani has been traditionally used for anything related to the region of Azerbaijan (Azarbaijan) in the northwestern part of contemporary Iran. Such an adjective has not been used traditionally in relation to the region to the north of Araxes, despite the fact that the Shi'ite Muslim Turkic-speaking population there were culturally very similar to the Azerbaijani population to the south of Araxes. They both speak almost the same language. In Iran the Azeri language still resembles the more archaic and literary Azeri, uses the Perso-Arabic alphabet and has an extensive Persian vocabulary. This language, called classicist Azeri (Swietochowski 1995: 28) or classical Azerbaijani (Swietochowski 1985: 26) by Tadeusz Swietochowski (1995: 28), came under pressure from the Russian conquest onwards:

The hold of Persian as the chief literary language in [the current Republic of] Azerbaijan would be broken, followed by the rejection of classicist Azeri, a heavily Persianized idiom that had long been in use along with Persian, though in a secondary position. De-Iranization found a measure of support from Russian officials anxious to neutralize the Azeris' identification with Iran. (Swietochowski 1995: 28)

This policy's consequence is very tangible to this date and makes the Azeri spoken in the Caucasus somewhat different from that spoken by a larger number of Azeris in Iran. The de-Iranization process proceeded after the collapse of the Russian Empire and the advent of Soviet rule. Unlike their Christian Armenian and Georgian neighbors, the Turkic-speaking, largely Shi'ite Muslim population of Transcaucasia were

subjected to a harsh de-culturalization policy in order to break and diffuse their ties with Iran.<sup>206</sup> Paradoxically, however, the choice of the name Azerbaijan relates this republic to Iran even more.<sup>207</sup> The choice of the name for the republic and its titular ethnic groups, however, had political reasons.

The region to the north of the river Araxes was not called Azerbaijan prior to 1918, unlike the region in northwestern Iran that has been called so since long ago. According to Bartold (in Reza 1993: 162-163), the region should have been called Arran, and only for political reasons was renamed to Azerbaijan, in order to attach the region to the Iranian region of Azerbaijan and legitimate its future incorporation into the Soviet Union. Reza (1993; 2011)<sup>208</sup> quotes and cites many sources in which only the contemporary Iranian region of Azerbaijan is called Azerbaijan, while (a vast part of) the territory of the contemporary Republic of Azerbaijan is called by names such as Arran, Aran, Alban, Aghvan, Aghvank, Rani, and Albania.<sup>209</sup> Reza (1993; 2011) also provides many Soviet sources which confirm the fact that the region was renamed to Azerbaijan under the influence of the pan-Turkists, who had an expansionist agenda and desired annexation of the Iranian region of Azerbaijan into their dominion. After the Bolsheviks re-conquered the former imperial Russian territory, they preserved the same name of Azerbaijan for the same expansionist reasons. This region was called Azerbaijan during the reign of the Musavat party in the region under the influence of the occupying Ottoman forces, followed by the British forces. The name was again preserved after the Bolsheviks took over political power in Transcaucasia. The occupying Ottoman and British powers and the Soviets and the local pan-Turkists all hoped that they could have political influence in the region of Azerbaijan in the northwestern part of the neighboring Iran via the newly renamed Transcaucasian Azerbaijan.

---

<sup>206</sup> Remarkably, in a recent atlas published in Baku, entitled *Azərbaycan Tarixi Atlası* (2007) [Historical Atlas of Azerbaijan], the name Iran is even not mentioned for the political entities which had covered the territories of the modern-day Republic of Azerbaijan and Iran, and it uses instead the name of dynasties. Although the name Iran is used in the text of that atlas, it is absent in the maps, except those which depict the Islamic Republic of Iran (*Azərbaycan Tarixi Atlas* 2007: 50-55). Strangely, it labels the Pahlavi-era Iran as “Pars” (p. 49), a Persian/Azerbaijani equivalent for Persia, but this is the period during which the Iranian authorities officially requested foreign governments to use Iran instead of Persia for the name of the country.

<sup>207</sup> In accordance with the Russian/Soviet policy elsewhere in the conquered Islamic lands, the policy in Azerbaijan aimed at the most tangible ties to their past. Not only was the Perso-Arabic alphabet changed to first the Latin and then the Cyrillic alphabet, but also the family names were changed to a Russianized version, ending in *-ov* and *-ev* instead of the Persian *zadeh* [son of], while in contrast the traditional family names of predominantly Christian Georgians and Armenians were retained.

<sup>208</sup> Reza’s (1993) famous book, *Azerbaijan va Arran (Albania-ye Qafqaz)*, was recently translated into Russian (Reza 2011) and published in Russia. The Russian version also contains contributions by V. A. Zakharov.

<sup>209</sup> Udi language, belonging to the Lezgian branch, is thought to be a descendant of the extinct Caucasian Albanian language.

This choice was also in agreement with the Cold War discourse, because by calling this republic Azerbaijan, in fact a “North” Azerbaijan was created and hence the region called Azerbaijan in Iran could be called “South” Azerbaijan. In this way “North” Azerbaijan could be associated with communist North Korea and North Vietnam, and “South” Azerbaijan could be associated with capitalist South Korea and South Vietnam (Hunter 1997: 437). Knowing that Iran in those days was a Western ally, the analogy of North versus South represented the battle between communism and capitalism, and between the good East and the bad West. The Soviets hoped that capitalism and the West would be defeated and the southern parts would reunite with their communist northern counterparts.

This wishful thinking was about to be realized during the course of the Second World War’s Soviet occupation of northern Iran, but was unsuccessful when their marionette local government headed by Paishevari was toppled in 1946. Azerbaijan was not the only Soviet naming trick. For example they created “another” Moldavia inside Ukraine during the interbellum (Cowther 1997: 317). The reason was probably similar: to incorporate Moldavia, which was part of Romania at that time. The experiments and manipulations in the official name and autonomous status of the region of (Finnish-) Karelian (A)SSR in northwestern Russia also seem to have been based upon similar political motives.

Old maps show the names of the two regions, to the north and to the south of the river Araxes, as different. The area to the south is called Azerbaijan, while the area to the north is called Arran, Shirvan, and other local names (e.g. Talysh, Nakhichevan, etc.). These maps are representations of the past situation and are based on many old(er) maps, descriptions, and documents (which are also abundant in Reza’s [1993; 2011] work). Many new maps representing the historical situations also make this distinction; for example, the map in Gronke’s (2006, the first map) *Geschichte Irans: von der Islamisierung bis zur Gegenwart* [History of Iran: From Islamization until Now] names the region to the south of Araxes as Azerbaijan and those to its north as Arran and Shirvan (Schirwan).<sup>210</sup>

The (ethno-)nationalists in the Republic of Azerbaijan usually take offence at these discussions and regard them as an affront to their identity. They usually blame Iranians for having imperialistic intentions. These claims are groundless because, first, it is not only Iranians who

---

<sup>210</sup> Remarkably, a map representing the Ottoman conquests in Iran and elsewhere, to be found at the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations, in Ankara, does almost the same thing. Although the map was remade and Latinized in the modern Turkish Republic, it names the region to the south of Araxes as Azerbaijan and to its north as Karabagh. I saw the map and took a picture of it when I visited the museum in August 2010.

discuss this situation. Second, Iranians and non-Iranians rely mainly on non-Iranian, even Soviet, or medieval Islamic sources. For example, *The Encyclopædia Britannica* published in 1911 also held this view. Third, even Turkey, which is regarded as an ally of the Republic of Azerbaijan since its independence, allegedly “without imperialistic intentions” [sic!], has produced similar maps. In addition, referring to a people to the north of Iran as Azeris, who share linguistic, religious and cultural similarities with the Azeris and the rest of Iranians and whose living areas have been constituent parts of Iran, is not after all very detrimental to the interests of an allegedly imperialistic Iran. On the contrary, calling the Republic of Azerbaijan as Azerbaijan and its titular ethnic group as Azeris or Azerbaijanis, could be very well in favor of such an Iran. Dr. Nosratollah Jahanshahlou Afshar, an ex-member of the pro-Soviet Pischevari government in the Iranian Azerbaijan (1946), writes in his memoirs (Jahanshahlou Afshar 2007)<sup>211</sup> about Mr. Qasemzadeh, his teacher of the French language and the foreign minister of the Musavat party in the first independent Republic of Azerbaijan (1918–1920). According to Qasemzadeh, they chose the name Azerbaijan instead of Arran in order to get support from Iran, hoping to reunite with Iran, but to no avail.

The modern-day Iranian government calls this region simply the Republic of Azerbaijan. The discussions contesting its name are mainly a scholarly affair. The reason for these discussions is simply for the reason of clarity and nothing more. It is, nevertheless, understandable that ethnic discussions are politicized in the post-Soviet space and may invoke strong reactions and uneasy feelings.

According to Tsutsiev (2006: 67), in his *Atlas ethnopoliticheskoy Istorii Kavkaza* [Atlas of ethno-political history of the Caucasus], the ethnic category Azerbaijani is a relatively modern designation. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the “Transcaucasian Tatars” were renamed as Azerbaijani Turks and finally as Azerbaijanis. In a Russian source (Bronevskiy: 2004 [19<sup>th</sup> century]) originally written in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Semen Mikhailovich Bronevskiy, one of the groups living in the South Caucasus and Dagestan are designated as Persians. In those descriptions often two other population groups exist: the Tatars and the Shirvanians. The distinction between them is not always quite clear. It is, nevertheless, very probable that the ethnonym Persian in that source refers to a (a large part of the) the Shi’ite Turkic-speaking population. Indeed, Persian in many sources, even contemporary ones, does not always necessarily refer to ethnic Persian-speakers similar to those in Iran (the ethnic Fars people). It is true that the ethnic Tats of the Caucasus are linguistically close to the

---

<sup>211</sup> A summary entitled “Dr. Jahanshahlou: Azarbaijan, Arran and the Azarbaijani Language” is available online at: <http://www.kavehfarrokhi.com/articles/pan-turanism/dr-jahanshahlou-azarbaijan-arran-and-the-azarbaijani-language/> (Accessed 19 November 2010).

Persian-speakers of Iran, and one of their subdivisions was called *Pars* (Tsutsiev 2006: 15, Map 3), who lived in the Absheron peninsula near Baku. The designation *Pars* in modern-day Iran means Persian. Nevertheless, from Bronevskiy's description in that Russian source (Bronevskiy: 2004 [19<sup>th</sup> century]) it is obvious that by Persian it refers to the Turkic-speaking population which are today called Azeris or Azerbaijani. First, the more the source describes the northern areas of the modern-day Republic of Azerbaijan, the less Persians as a population group are prominent. In fact, they do not appear in many northern areas. Indeed, the northern part of the modern-day Republic of Azerbaijan's territory is mainly inhabited by Sunni people, who usually do not speak a Turkic language. Second, it explicitly states that all people in Dagestan are Sunni Muslims, except Persians, who are Shi'ites (Bronevskiy 2004 [19<sup>th</sup> century]: 223). As the modern-day Azeris are the main Shi'ite population in Dagestan, it is obvious that the source has referred to them—or to be more precise, their ancestors—by the designation Persian. After all, when Bronevskiy (2004 [19<sup>th</sup> century]: 37) mentions languages in the Caucasus, Tatar appears, while neither Persian nor Azeri, Azerbaijani, Azerbaijani Turkic, etc. appear. Tatar is the designation that Russians gave to most Turkic-speaking Muslims—for example, to those in the South Caucasus (Tsutsiev 2006: 67)—and does not necessarily refer to the peoples who are still registered as Tatars, such as the Crimean and Volga Tatars. There is every reason, therefore, to believe that by the Tatar language is meant the modern-day Azeri or Azerbaijani language, and by Persian is meant the (urban) Turkic-speaking Shi'ite population. Nowhere in that source (Bronevskiy 2004 [19<sup>th</sup> century]: 37) is there any reference to a people or a tribe in the Southern Caucasus who were called Azeris.

For reasons of consistency (with the contemporary sources of information), however, the Republic of Azerbaijan's titular population and anything related to them or the Republic of Azerbaijan are called Azerbaijani (or Azeri) in this book. Below are discussed a few other ethnic groups in this republic, whose numbers are believed to be underestimated in the official censuses. An attempt is made to reach more solid and reliable estimates of their numbers.

### *On the number of Talysh*

The Talysh were reintroduced in 1989 as a census category after having been totally removed from the census since 1970. According to the last Soviet census (1989), their number was no more than 21,602 souls. Their number was no less than 77,000 in the first Soviet census (1926). Such a decreasing trend, despite their high fertility rate, can only be explained by attempts at assimilation and by underestimation of their numbers in the official accounts. Although higher than 1989, the numbers of Talysh in



the official post-independence censuses of the Republic of Azerbaijan (1999) are still given as very low: 76,800 in 1999 and 112,000 in 2009.

The under-representation of the number of Talysh people may be because of deliberate governmental manipulation, as well as self-denial in order to escape the stigma of being disloyal to Azerbaijan. Because of the prevalence of pan-Turkist discourse in the Azerbaijan republic, the non-Turkic groups are distrusted, or they feel uneasy in any case. There exist today latent separatist tendencies among the Talysh and Lezgins, which makes them a target of observance and ethnic politics by the Republic of Azerbaijan's authorities (see e.g. Cornell 2001: 268-272 and 356; Cornell 2011: 75 and 260-261). Because of the fact that the Republic of Azerbaijan has historically been an Iranian territory and because of the contemporary Iranian influence there, the Talysh who inhabit the region bordering Iran and speak an Iranian language are reportedly mistrusted and suppressed.

According to Yunusov (2006: 489), at least 200,000–250,000 Talysh live in the Republic of Azerbaijan. Although he does not explicitly mention the year or period to which these numbers are attributed, it is implicitly clear that he bases his estimates on the ethnographic research which was done by (his) Institute for Peace and Democracy during the period 1994–1998 (Yunusov 2006: 486). It is unlikely that the number of this population has increased dramatically since 1989; therefore, it seems that the number of Talysh clearly was under-represented in the last Soviet census (1989). Even though significantly higher by the official accounts, the estimates by Yunusov (and his institute) are still very low compared with other estimates.

According to the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO: 2006), some 800,000 Talysh live in the Republic of Azerbaijan, of whom 500,000 live in the Talysh areas in southeastern districts of the Republic of Azerbaijan such as Astara, Massali (Masally), Lenkoran (Lankaran), Lerik, and Yardimli (Yardymly). *Ethnologue* (2009, 16<sup>th</sup> edition)<sup>212</sup> estimates the number of Talysh in the Republic of Azerbaijan in 1996 at 800,000. According to Hunter (1997: 438), “[i]n Azerbaijan today...it has been estimated there are up to one million Talysh”. In her discussion paper published by the OSCE, Hema Kotecha (2006: 33) states:

According to the Talysh Cultural Centre in Lenkoran, 60% of Masalli is Talysh, only two villages in Lenkoran are Turkic, Astara is entirely Talysh and in Lerik only two villages are “Turkic”. There are also several Talysh-speaking settlements in Baku and on the Absheron peninsula as in the 19<sup>th</sup>

---

<sup>212</sup> See *Ethnologue* report for Azerbaijan. Available online: [http://www.ethnologue.org/show\\_country.asp?name=AZ](http://www.ethnologue.org/show_country.asp?name=AZ) (Accessed 23 December 2011).

century they migrated for employment in the oil industry and fisheries (according to the Lenkoran Talysh Cultural Centre one third of Sumgait is also Talysh).

Despite his lower estimates of the total Talysh population, Yunusov (2006: 489) seems to be more generous than the Talysh nationalists who state that only 60% of Massali region is Talysh (Kotecha 2006: 33). According to Yunusov, 48% of all Talysh live in that district. Based on his estimates and considering the fact that the population of Massali district in 1990 was 146,400, these numbers are respectively 87,840 (according to the Lenkoran Talysh Cultural Center) and 110,000–120,000 (according to Yunusov). In order to calculate the number of Talysh, I maintain the 60% estimates for the Massali district, which appear to be lower than Yunusov's (2006: 489) estimates; but I count only 90% of them as Talysh in the districts Astara, Lerik, and Lenkoran, where—according to the Talysh Cultural Center in Lenkoran—(almost) the entire population is Talysh. It is likely that in the towns of Astara and Lenkoran, the centers of the homonymous districts, groups other than Talysh also live. I also count 90% of the population in the southeastern district of Yardimli as Talysh. As that area is situated to the southwest of Massali District and to the east of Lerik District, it is very likely that it has a rather large Talysh population. Despite the fact that the percentage of Talysh in this district is disputed, counting such a large proportion (90%) as Talysh will not have a major impact on the estimate of total number of Talysh, as this district has a relatively small population. The number of Talysh outside these districts are excluded from this calculation. The number of Talysh population (1989) is calculated by using the information about the total population of these districts available from the State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan's website (Azstat.org).<sup>213</sup>

$$(69,700 * 0.9) + (53,800 * 0.9) + (163,600 * 0.9) + (40,000 * 0.9) + (143,300 * 0.6) = 62,730 + 48,420 + 36,000 + 147,240 + 85,980 = 380,370.$$

These estimates may still be lower than the real numbers, because a (rather large) number of Talysh live outside the traditional Talysh area—for example, in Sumgait and Baku. A fair estimate seems to be 500,000 persons when the number of Talysh elsewhere in the Republic of Azerbaijan is added to this number. These numbers of Talysh in 1989, calculated in such a way, are still larger than the numbers of Talysh in the 1999 and 2009 official censuses.

---

<sup>213</sup> State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Demographic indicators: Constant population size by economic and administrative regions of the Azerbaijan Republic. Available online: <http://www.azstat.org/statinfo/demographic/en/011.shtml#s11> (Accessed 30 September 2011).

### *On the numbers of Lezgins*

According to the 1989 Soviet census, 175,1395 Lezgins lived in the Republic of Azerbaijan. The Lezgin ethno-nationalist movements of Sadval (in the Republic of Azerbaijan) and Samur (in Russia) estimate the number of Lezgins in the Republic of Azerbaijan to be between 600,000 and 800,000, but the realistic numbers, even though larger than the official accounts, are most probably lower than the Lezgin ethno-nationalist accounts (Yunusov 2006: 486). According to Cornell (2001: 269):

Whereas officially the number of Lezgins registered as such in Azerbaijan is around 180,000, the Lezgins claim that the number of Lezgins...[in] Azerbaijan is much higher than this figure, some accounts showing over 700,000 Lezgins in Azerbaijan. These figures are denied by the Azerbaijani government, but in private many Azeris acknowledge the fact that the Lezgin—and for that matter the Talysh or the Kurdish—population of Azerbaijan is far higher than the official figures.

Relying on the ethnographic research which was done by Institute for Peace and Democracy during 1994–1998, Yunusov (2006: 486) counts the number of Lezgins between 250,000 and 260,000.

According to a report for the UNHCR, about 75% of the total population in Qusar and Khachmaz districts and 15% of the total population in Greater Baku are made up of Lezgins (Mateeva 2003, referred to in Kotecha 2006: 38). It is very likely that these percentages were the same in 1989. Using the statistics provided by the State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan's website (Azstat.org),<sup>214</sup> these percentages can be calculated to absolute numbers: 75% of Qusar (total population 68,400) and Khachmaz (total population 117,900) make up 139,725 persons; and 15% of Greater Baku (total population 1,807,800) makes up 271,170 persons. Consequently, there should be as many as 410,895 Lezgins in the Republic of Azerbaijan. According to this report, there must be more Lezgins in Greater Baku than in the Lezgin homeland in the northern part of the republic, which seems a little unlikely. On the other hand, the report does not make any statements about the numbers of Lezgins in other districts (*rayons*), which in many descriptions and maps are designated as (partially) inhabited by Lezgins. Amongst others, these districts are Shaki, Oghuz (formerly called Vartashen), Qabala (Gabala), and Quba (Guba). An additional problem may be that this report or the Lezgin nationalists' accounts may count the Lezgins' kinfolks such as Taskahurs and Rutuls, as Lezgins, while these ethnic groups were counted separately in the census.

---

<sup>214</sup> State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Demographic indicators: Constant population size by economic and administrative regions of the Azerbaijan Republic. Available online: <http://www.azstat.org/statinfo/demographic/en/011.shtml#s11> (Accessed 30 September 2011).

The numbers provided by ethno-nationalists (600,000–800,000) are too high, while the numbers provided by Yunusov (250,000–260,000) may be low. However, Yunusov's (2006: 486) numbers are still larger than the Lezgins' numbers in the independent Republic of Azerbaijan's censuses: 178,000 in 1999 and 180,300 in 2009. Nevertheless, in the absence of other reliable numbers, it is appropriate to take Yunusov's numbers (2006: 486) as good estimates.

Yunusov (2006) speaks about (a) people(s) called Shahdagh. Shahdagh people is an umbrella name which refers to the related small groups (Budukh, Kryz, and Khinalygh) that live at the foot of Mount Shahdagh in the Republic of Azerbaijan and are related to the Lezgins. They were neglected in censuses before the independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan and counted either as Azeris or as Lezgins. The Republic of Azerbaijan's census reports that there were 4,400 Kryz and 2,200 Khinalyghs living there in 2009. While Budukh and Kryz languages are closer to the standard Lezgin, the Kinalygh (or Khinanlugh) language is more distant from it. According to Yunusov (2006: 488), their number is around 10,000. It is a fact that these groups are assimilating rapidly, but it is unclear how large their number was in 1989. Their numbers are probably already included in the estimates of Lezgin people that count their numbers higher than the official figures. In fact, the Shahdagh people can be regarded as subgroups of the Lezgin people in the Republic of Azerbaijan. Because of the fact that in this current study the Soviet ethnic categories are maintained in cases in which groups are smaller in number than 20,000, these Shahdagh groups are not counted separately from the Lezgins.

#### *On the number of Tats*

Muslim Tats were yet another underestimated ethnic group in the last Soviet census (1989). Muslim Tats should not be confused with the Tat-speaking Jewish population of the Republic of Azerbaijan who were included in the last Soviet Census (1989) as Mountain Jews. According to Arif Yunusov (2006: 488), Muslim Tats live in 33 out of 40 villages on the Absheron (Apsheron) peninsula—the peninsula on which Baku is also located. According to him (Yunusov 2006: 488), the Tats constitute the majority of the rural population in Apsheron peninsula around Baku and also live in three villages in the Ismail (Ismaili) district, as well as in Khyzy, Davachi (which is called now Shabran), Guba, and other districts. Although he does not name these other districts, these could be Siyazan, Khachmaz, and Shemakha, districts which either have a Tat name or are mentioned or depicted as Tat-inhabited areas by maps and descriptions in the *Atlas Etnopoliticheskoi Istorii Kavkaza* (Tsutsiev 2006: 15, Map 3; 38,

Map 12; 69, Map 23; 102, Map 37), *Ethnologue* (2009, 16<sup>th</sup> edition),<sup>215</sup> and *The Red Book of the Peoples of the Russian Empire (Red Book 1991: The Tats)*,<sup>216</sup> and in any case are proximate to the districts (*rayons*) which Yunusov (2006: 488) mentions.

One reason for under-representation of the number of Tat population in the Republic of Azerbaijan may be due to the undirected process of assimilation, and another may be deliberate underestimation and policies of assimilation by the authorities. As their language is very close to Standard Persian and as the Republic of Azerbaijan as a former territory of Iran may feel uneasy about a very close association with Iran, reducing the Iranic-speaking element may be perceived as a good strategy, especially since the pan-Turkist discourse has been much enhanced in recent decades in the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Although Yunusov (2006) does not estimate the number of Muslim Tats, it is still possible to provide a conservative and somewhat underestimated estimate of their numbers, which is reasoned further below.

As Yunusov (2006: 488) states that the Tats are undergoing a process of assimilation, the total number of Tats in urban areas—even the urban centers of traditional Tat areas—are excluded from the calculation, because the inter-ethnic interactions and hence assimilation are greater in urban centers than in the relatively isolated and remote villages of the less densely populated northeastern parts of the Republic of Azerbaijan. To calculate the Muslim Tat numbers, I use the following strategy: I assume that the size of population of individual villages does not vary much in these districts. According to the State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan's website ([Azstat.org](http://Azstat.org)),<sup>217</sup> there were 108 rural settlements in Ismailli district in 2009. The number of these settlement may not have been much different in 1989 or 1990. Considering the fact that three villages in Ismailli district were Tat villages, it means that they constitute about 3% of the rural population in that district. A total of 33 out of 40 villages in Absheron Peninsula means that about 82.5% of the rural population in that districts were Tats—assuming that villages have approximately the same size of population. For other districts, I take a more conservative approach and count only 50% of the rural population as Tats, despite the fact that these are also mentioned as Tat areas on the

---

<sup>215</sup> See *Ethnologue* report for Azerbaijan. Available online: [http://www.ethnologue.org/show\\_country.asp?name=AZ](http://www.ethnologue.org/show_country.asp?name=AZ) (Accessed 23 December 2011).

<sup>216</sup> *Red Book* (1991). The Tats. Available online: <http://www.eki.ee/books/redbook/tats.shtml> (Accessed 7 April 2011).

<sup>217</sup> State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Demographic indicators: Territories, number, density of population and territorial units by economic and administrative regions of Azerbaijan Republic. Available online: <http://www.azstat.org/statinfo/demographic/en/010.shtml#s9> (Accessed 1 October 2011)

maps in Tsutsiev's (2006: 15, Map 3; 67, Map 23) *Atlas Etnopoliticheskoi Istorii Kavkaza* [Atlas of the Ethno-political History of the Caucasus] and *Ethnologue* (2009, 16<sup>th</sup> edition). Of the other districts not explicitly mentioned, only Siyazan is considered because unlike Ismaili district it is encircled by, and is located in, the same economic administrative region as the other districts mentioned explicitly by Yunusov (2006: 488). The other districts, such as Khachmaz, which are not mentioned by Arif Yunusov are excluded from this calculation. I use the statistics available from the State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan's website (Azstat.org),<sup>218</sup> which distinguish between the rural and urban population. Although these numbers are attributed to 1990, they cannot be much different from those of 1989. The calculation proceeds as follows:  $(49,000 * 0.03) + (20,900 * 0.83) + (4,300 * 0.5) + (20,300 * 0.5) + (92,600 * 0.5) + (9,500 * 0.5) = 1,470 + 17,347 + 2,150 + 10,150 + 46,300 + 4,750 = 82,167$ .

This number is still a clear underestimation because it does not count the number of Tats in the urban areas in and outside traditional Tat areas, and it even uses a very low estimate of rural population in the traditional Tat areas. There are reasons to justify a conservative approach with respect to the estimation of the number of Tats. In general, an increase in the number of rural population is more likely, but in this case the rural areas are located close to urban centers such as Baku and Sumgait, and, therefore, a decline is more probable. Considering also the decreasing number of Tats in the Republic of Azerbaijan, it is plausible to assume that their numbers in 1989 were slightly higher than these numbers calculated on the basis of statistics from 1990. The decreasing numbers thanks to assimilation may be an undeniable fact; nevertheless, there is also a reverse trend possible, however weak that might be. According to the censuses of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the number of Tats was 10,900 in 1999 and 25,200 in 2009, which means that the number of Tats more than doubled in ten years. This fact may indicate that ethnic awareness is awakened among many formerly assimilated Tats; but even this number (25,200) remains very low.

According to the Soviet census of 1926, nearly 70,000 Tats (including the Tat-speaking Mountain Jews) lived in Azerbaijan (*Red Book* 1991: The Tats; *Red Book* 1991: The Mountain Jews).<sup>219</sup> Yunusov (2004: 350) presents data from 1886, according to which the number of Muslim Tats was 119,663 persons, while the number of Azeris in a wider

---

<sup>218</sup> State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Demographic indicators: Population by economic and administrative regions of the Azerbaijan Republic. Available online: <http://www.azstat.org/statinfo/demographic/en/012.shtml#s11> (Accessed 1 October 2011).

<sup>219</sup> *Red Book* (1991). The Mountain Jews. Available online: [http://www.eki.ee/books/redbook/mountain\\_jews.shtml](http://www.eki.ee/books/redbook/mountain_jews.shtml) (Accessed 7 April 2011).

region than the contemporary Republic of Azerbaijan was 849,116. According to other data (from 1913) presented by Yunusov (2004: 351), the total number of population of the territory of the modern-day Republic of Azerbaijan was 2,532,317. Departing from these numbers, it can be concluded that in 1989 the number of Azeris in the Republic of Azerbaijan had increased approximately six times, and the number of total population approximately three times. Even assimilation into other groups does not seem to be a reliable explanation for the rapid decline in the relative and absolute numbers of the Tats and a few other minorities in the Republic of Azerbaijan. The rate of increase of the population among the predominantly rural Tats should have been most likely higher than that of the more urbanized Turkic Azeris. This is true especially in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the Tat settlements were less under pressure from urbanization and attraction from most urban centers. Although Tats were predominantly rural and a large share of Azerbaijanis were urban, still, assuming that the predominantly rural Tat population increased at the same pace as that of the Azeris, or assuming that the increase in the number of Tats was proportional to the increase in the total population, the number of Muslim Tats in the Republic of Azerbaijan should have been between 350,000 and 700,000 in 1989.

These calculations all show that the number of Tats in the Republic of Azerbaijan is underestimated, whatever assumptions are made or whichever methods of calculations are used.

#### *On the number of Kurds*

The 1989 census counted the number of Kurds in the Republic of Azerbaijan at 12,226. According to Yunusov (2006: 489), however, several expert estimates count their numbers between 50,000 and 60,000. To count the number of Kurds in the Republic of Azerbaijan in 1989, the number of Kurds who arrived from Armenia after the Nagorno-Karabakh war should be deducted from the number of Kurds there in recent years. Approximately 18,000 arrived from Armenia after the Nagorno-Karabakh War (Yunusov 2006: 488-489). Therefore, the number of Kurds in the Republic of Azerbaijan in 1989 should have been between 32,000 and 42,000. Another source also gives a similar number and estimates the number of Kurds during the Soviet period at 41,000 (or more, depending on the exact date) (Orujev 2005). Although the Kurdish nationalists give a substantially higher figure, as many as 200,000 (De Waal 2003: 133), the numbers provided by Yunusov may be more reliable. According to Yunusov, a large number of Kurds were already assimilated into Azeris by the late 20<sup>th</sup> century (Yunusov 2006: 488-489). Regarding the fact that the Kurds in the Republic of Azerbaijan were predominantly Shi'ite

Muslims (*Ethnohistorical* 1994: 409;<sup>220</sup> *Red Book* 1991: Kurds),<sup>221</sup> their assimilation into Shi'ite Azeris is very probable. As *The Red Book of the Peoples of The Russian Empire* (*Red Book* 1991: Kurds) puts it: "Kurdish identity is most endangered in Azerbaijan. In recent decades the Azerbaijani authorities have been attempting to assimilate all ethnic minorities. In the absence of religious differences they have succeeded. The Kurdish language is not officially used and during censuses the Kurds have been recorded as Azerbaijanis". A fair and rather reliable estimate of the number of Kurdish population in the Republic of Azerbaijan in 1989 would be 40,000–45,000.

The censuses from 1999 and 2009 report the number of Kurds in the Republic of Azerbaijan as 13,100 and 6,100 respectively. As can be seen, the number of Kurds has been decreasing in the Republic of Azerbaijan, especially when one counts the influx of Kurds from Armenia into Azerbaijan. As most Kurds living in the independent Republic of Azerbaijan come from Armenia and the Armenian-occupied territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan, they may associate with Azerbaijani nationalism and, therefore, may identify themselves as Azeris. However, as the decline in the Kurdish number is sharper in the last census than in the aftermath of the Karabakh conflict, such a reasoning seems weak. The number of Kurds may still be deliberately under-represented, but the Kurds may also have migrated to other countries.

#### *On the number of Georgians*

According to the last Soviet census (1989), there were 14,197 Georgians in Azerbaijan. However, according to Yunusov (2006: 487), most probably this number does not include the Ingilo (or Ingiloy) Muslim Georgians. Apparently, in Azerbaijan most Muslim Ingilo Georgians were registered as Azeris, while Christian Georgians were registered as Georgians. There are estimates which put their number in 1989 as high as 10,000 persons (Yunusov 2006: 487). According to Antoine Constant (2002: 35), in addition to the Orthodox Christian Georgians, there were 15,000 Shi'ite Ingiloys in the northwestern part of the Republic of Azerbaijan (the Qakh area) in (or prior to) 2002. Yunusov (2006: 487) himself counts the number of rural Ingilo Georgians as 12,500 persons in 1999. This number could have been slightly lower in 1989. It is appropriate to take a more conservative attitude and take the 10,000 figure for 1989 and add that to the 14,197 who were officially registered as Georgians. Hence, the number of Georgians in the Republic of Azerbaijan in 1989 can be estimated at slightly above 24,000.

---

<sup>220</sup> The entry on Kurds is written by Ross Marlay.

<sup>221</sup> *Red Book* (1991). Kurds. Available online: <http://www.eki.ee/books/redbook/kurds.shtml> (Accessed 7 April 2011).



According to the more recent censuses, the numbers of Georgians in the Republic of Azerbaijan were 14,900 in 1999 and 9,900 in 2009. Assuming that Yunusov's statement is right that the number of Georgians (14,197) in the last Soviet Census referred only to the Christian Georgians, and assuming that such a strategy is maintained in the censuses after the Republic of Azerbaijan's independence, their slightly higher number in 1999 seems to be reliable. Also the decline in the number of Georgians in the 2009 census may be explained by their probable migration to Georgia—a country which has economically improved after the Rose Revolution. These explanations are plausible only if the Muslim Georgians are not considered in these numbers. It is very probable that Muslim Georgians still get registered as Azeris in the censuses, or because they may actively identify themselves as such hoping to get a better social and economic position by identifying with the titulars.

## Appendix 4: Tajik Population in Uzbekistan

A widespread claim is that the number of Tajiks in Uzbekistan has been underestimated in the official censuses. It is difficult to estimate the number of Tajiks in Uzbekistan. Although the distinction between Uzbeks and Tajiks is mainly based on their distinct languages [sic!], it is nevertheless blurred. There is much controversy over the identification and delimitation of the two culturally very similar ethnic groups of Uzbeks and Tajiks and particularly over the number of the latter in Uzbekistan.

Many people known as Tajiks or Uzbeks are bilingual in the Uzbek and Tajik languages. Many people belong to mixed families and, after all, many people speak a language as their vernacular language while identifying themselves with the “other” ethnic group in daily life. This is most probably the case among many people in Uzbekistan, who, despite using Persian/Tajik in their daily life, are still aware of their Turkic(-speaking) genealogy, which places them more accurately in the Uzbek category.

The ethnonym Uzbek originally referred to a nomadic Turkic people in Central Asia. The designation “Tajik” as opposed to “Turk” seems to have been used in Central Asia as a designation of people of non-Turkic, particularly Iranian, lineage. The (ancestors of) Tajiks and Uzbeks were called Sarts, particularly by their nomadic Turkic neighbours, the Kyrgyz and Kazakhs, before the categories of Uzbek and Tajik were put into official usage and were used as census categories. The Sarts, who were seemingly the largest ethnic group in the contemporary Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, were composed of a mixture of the local Persian-speaking and settled Turkic elements. Although racially a mixture of the early Iranian<sup>222</sup> natives of Central Asia and the later-settled Turkic tribes, the Sarts mainly used Persian as their vernacular and literary language.

Many of my Uzbek and Tajik respondents stated that their grandparents remember the time in which they were called “Sarts”. This fact is confirmed by many of my other Tajik, Uzbek, Kazakh, and Kyrgyz respondents. The Kazakhs and Kyrgyz still refer to Uzbeks and Tajiks as

---

<sup>222</sup> The Iranian-speaking ancestors of the Sarts spoke Sogdian, a Northeast Iranian language. Later, from the 10<sup>th</sup> century onwards, Persian replaced Sogdian and other native Iranian languages of Central Asia. At the present time, only in Yaghnob Valley in Tajikistan is Sogdian language spoken by a small group of speakers. I have wondered whether or not the ethnonym Sart has something to do with the ancient ethnonym of Sogdian.

Sarts. A number of them, particularly the Kyrgyz, mentioned that the Kyrgyz refer only to Uzbeks in this way and that it is a derogatory term.<sup>223</sup> Interestingly enough, some of my Turkic-speaking Uzbek respondents stated that they were in fact not Uzbeks but just Central Asian Turkic people. In addition, many Persian-speaking respondents from Samarkand and Bukhara identified themselves primarily as Samarkandi or Bukharan and not as Tajik. Many of my respondents from Uzbekistan, amongst whom were also scholars, spoke Persian—or stated that one or both of their parents or grandparents spoke it—but identified themselves, nevertheless, as Uzbeks. On the other hand, many Persian-speakers in Uzbekistan still call themselves Tajiks. According to the Uzbekistani scholar Namoz Hotamov (2001: 270-271), a number of Persian-speaking people in Uzbekistan do indeed call themselves Tajiks, but many others identify themselves as Uzbeks.

According to the late Slovak Iranologist Kamil Banak (Leiden University),<sup>224</sup> Persian was still widely spoken in Uzbekistan in the 1970s when he visited the region. During his trip to Uzbekistan, when he asked many local people about their identity, they responded in the local dialect: “Mo mardumi musalmon, zaboni mo Forst”. This phrase in the local Persian dialect of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan can be translated as follows in English: “We are Muslim people, [and] our language is Persian” (personal communications with Dr. Banak in 2000). John Schoeberlein provides a rich description of the situation of identity in Uzbekistan in his dissertation (Schoeberlein-Engel 1994a), titled “Identity in Central Asia: Construction and contention in the conceptions of Özbek, Tâjik, Muslim, Samarqandi and other groups”.

According to Hotamov (2001), an Uzbekistani Tajik from Bukhara, most Uzbekistani Tajiks are forcefully registered as Uzbek. They would not be offered their internal passports if they insisted on being registered as Tajiks. Even Hotamov himself, who openly speaks of his Tajikness, is registered as an Uzbek (Hotamov 2001: 271). Although their relatively large proportion in the Tajikistani population does not suggest this, probably many Uzbeks for the same reason were registered as Tajik. The registrations were not necessarily forceful. People may have opted to be registered as the titular nation because it offered them many privileges.

Hotamov (2001) distinguishes three categories of Tajiks in Uzbekistan, all of whom are registered as Uzbeks. The first category is the category of the Tajiks who speak the Tajik language and are aware of their ethnicity. Although formally registered as Uzbeks, they introduce

---

<sup>223</sup> I was told this by many Kyrgyz scholars and ordinary people during my visit to Kyrgyzstan (summer 2008).

<sup>224</sup> The late Dr. Banak was a professor of Persian language at Leiden University in the Netherlands (Leyden). He was originally from Slovakia.

and identify themselves as Tajiks. The second category is the category of the Tajiks who speak the Tajik language and are somewhat aware of their Tajik identity, but who introduce and identify themselves as Uzbeks. Many Uzbekistani politicians and officials can be found in this category. According to many respondents, President Karimov of Uzbekistan is probably one of them. The third category is the category of those who were originally Tajiks but are linguistically assimilated into the Turkic-speaking Uzbeks and are no longer aware of their Tajik identity.

According to the last Soviet census (1989), there were 933,560 registered Tajiks in Uzbekistan. Starting from this number, the number of Tajik population of Uzbekistan cannot be much larger now. However, according to many of my respondents, particularly Tajiks of Tajikistan, the actual number of Tajiks in Uzbekistan varies between 8 and 12 million. There are even scholars who give high estimates of the number of Tajiks in Uzbekistan. For example, Richard Foltz (1996) estimates the number of Tajiks in Uzbekistan at 20–30% of the total Uzbekistani population. Many Uzbeks of Uzbekistan, however, usually do acknowledge that the number of Tajiks is higher. As one said to me: “They are two millions, not six millions”. According to Hotamov (2001: 246), who relies on some reliable sources,<sup>225</sup> the number of Tajiks in Uzbekistan may be 3–3.5 million persons.

Persian-speakers in Uzbekistan are mainly concentrated in the provinces of Samarkand (Samarqand), Surkhan Darya (Surxondaryo), and Bukhara (Buxoro). Samarkand counts 2,778,00, Surkhan Darya 1,255,500, and Bukhara 1,728,000 souls. A proportion of the population in these provinces are not Persian-speaking. On the other hand, Persian-speakers can also be found elsewhere in Uzbekistan. One must realize that the vernacular language and ethnic identification are not always congruent. In this case, many Persian-speakers identify themselves rather as Uzbeks than Tajiks, while many Persian- or Tajik-speakers identify themselves as Uzbeks. Hotamov’s estimate seems to be a good one if one assumes that at least half (2,875,500) of the total population (5,761,000) of the aforementioned provinces—and hence a plurality thereof—identify themselves as Tajiks.

Despite the fact that the real number of Uzbeks who identify themselves as Uzbeks is lower than the official figures, the number of Uzbeks is still the largest of all Central Asian peoples. Uzbeks in Uzbekistan outnumber other ethnic groups, amongst whom are many of their neighbouring titulars, by many times.

---

<sup>225</sup> Although his article was written in 2001, his data are from the early 1990s. His information is most probably insider information which he obtained from the Uzbekistani statistical services.



**Appendix 5: Dataset of Ethno-Territorial Encounters in the Caucasus, Central Asia, and Fereydan**

Case		Encounter	(sub-) region	S	R	L	T	A	D	Q	K	G	B	M	C	F
1	Armenia	Armenian–Azerbaijani	The South Caucasus	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0
2	Armenia	Armenian–Kurd	The South Caucasus	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
3	Armenia	Armenian–Yezidi	The South Caucasus	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
4	Armenia	Armenian–Greek	The South Caucasus	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
5	Armenia	Azerbaijani–Kurd	The South Caucasus	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0
6	Azerbaijan	Azerbaijani–Armenian	The South Caucasus	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0
7	Azerbaijan	Azerbaijani–Talysh	The South Caucasus	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
8	Azerbaijan	Azerbaijani–Lezgin	The South Caucasus	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
9	Azerbaijan	Azerbaijani–Avar	The South Caucasus	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
10	Azerbaijan	Azerbaijani–Tsakhur	The South Caucasus	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
11	Azerbaijan	Azerbaijani–Tat	The South Caucasus	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
12	Azerbaijan	Azerbaijani–Mountain Jew	The South Caucasus	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
13	Azerbaijan	Azerbaijani–Georgian	The South Caucasus	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0
14	Azerbaijan	Azerbaijani–Udin	The South Caucasus	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
15	Azerbaijan	Azerbaijani–Kurd	The South Caucasus	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
16	Azerbaijan	Armenian–Kurd	The South Caucasus	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0
17	Azerbaijan	Tsakhur–Rutul	The South Caucasus	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
18	Azerbaijan	Avar–Tsakhur	The South Caucasus	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
19	Azerbaijan	Georgian–Tsakhur	The South Caucasus	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0
20	Azerbaijan	Georgian–Avar	The South Caucasus	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0
21	Georgia	Georgian–Abkhazian	The South Caucasus	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0
22	Georgia	Georgian–Ossetian	The South Caucasus	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0

Continues →

→ Continued

Case	Republic/ State	Encounter	(sub-) region	S	R	L	T	A	D	Q	K	G	B	M	C	F
23	Georgia	Georgian–Greek	The South Caucasus	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
24	Georgia	Georgian–Azerbaijani	The South Caucasus	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0
25	Georgia	Georgian–Armenian	The South Caucasus	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0
26	Georgia	Armenian–Azerbaijani	The South Caucasus	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0
27	Georgia	Greek–Armenian	The South Caucasus	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0
28	Georgia	Georgian–Chechen	The South Caucasus	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
29	Georgia	Greek–Azerbaijani	The South Caucasus	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0
30	Georgia	Ossetian–Azerbaijani	The South Caucasus	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0
31	Georgia	Ossetian–Armenian	The South Caucasus	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0
32	Georgia	Ossetian–Greek	The South Caucasus	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
33	Georgia	Abkhazian–Greek	The South Caucasus	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
34	Georgia	Abkhazian–Armenian	The South Caucasus	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0
35	Russia	Russian–Nogay	The North Caucasus	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
36	Russia	Russian–Avar	The North Caucasus	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
37	Russia	Russian–Kumyk	The North Caucasus	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
38	Russia	Russian–Chechen	The North Caucasus	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
39	Russia	Russian–Ingush	The North Caucasus	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
40	Russia	Russian–Ossetian	The North Caucasus	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1
41	Russia	Russian–Circassian	The North Caucasus	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1
42	Russia	Russian–Karachay/Balkara	The North Caucasus	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1
43	Russia	Russian–Abaza	The North Caucasus	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1
44	Russia	Circassian–Abaza	The North Caucasus	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1
45	Russia	Circassian–Karachay/Balkar	The North Caucasus	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1

Continues →



→ Continued

Case	Republic/ State	Encounter	(sub-) region	S	R	L	T	A	D	Q	K	G	B	M	C	F
46	Russia	Circassian–Ossetian	The North Caucasus	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1
47	Russia	Karachay/Balkar–Abaza	The North Caucasus	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1
48	Russia	Karachay/Balkar–Ossetian	The North Caucasus	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1
49	Russia	Ingush–Ossetian	The North Caucasus	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1
50	Russia	Ingush–Chechen	The North Caucasus	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
51	Russia	Chechen–Nogay	The North Caucasus	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
52	Russia	Chechen–Kumyk	The North Caucasus	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
53	Russia	Chechen–Avar	The North Caucasus	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
54	Russia	Chechen–Lak	The North Caucasus	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
55	Russia	Avar–Dargin	The North Caucasus	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
56	Russia	Avar–Lak	The North Caucasus	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
57	Russia	Avar–Tsakhur	The North Caucasus	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
58	Russia	Avar–Kumyk	The North Caucasus	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
59	Russia	Lak–Dargin	The North Caucasus	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
60	Russia	Lak–Tsakhur	The North Caucasus	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
61	Russia	Lak–Agul	The North Caucasus	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
62	Russia	Lak–Kumyk	The North Caucasus	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
63	Russia	Lak–Rutul	The North Caucasus	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
64	Russia	Tsakhur–Rutul	The North Caucasus	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
65	Russia	Rutul–Agul	The North Caucasus	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
66	Russia	Rutul–Lezgin	The North Caucasus	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
67	Russia	Agul–Lezgin	The North Caucasus	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1

Continues →

→ Continued

Case	Republic/ State	Encounter	(sub- region	S	R	L	T	A	D	Q	K	G	B	M	C	F
68	Russia	Agul– Tabasaran	The North Caucasus	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
69	Russia	Agul– Tsakhur	The North Caucasus	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
70	Russia	Agul–Dargin	The North Caucasus	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
71	Russia	Tabasaran– Lezgin	The North Caucasus	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
72	Russia	Tabasaran– Azerbaijani	The North Caucasus	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1
73	Russia	Lezgin–Rutul	The North Caucasus	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
74	Russia	Lezgin–Agul	The North Caucasus	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
75	Russia	Lezgin– Dargin	The North Caucasus	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
76	Russia	Azerbaijani– Dargin	The North Caucasus	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1
77	Russia	Azerbaijani– Kumyk	The North Caucasus	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1
78	Russia	Kumyk– Dargin	The North Caucasus	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
79	Russia	Kumyk– Nogay	The North Caucasus	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
80	Russia	Azerbaijani– Lezgin	The North Caucasus	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1
81	Kazakhstan	Kazakh– Russian	Central Asia	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
82	Kazakhstan	Kazakh– Ukrainian	Central Asia	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
83	Kazakhstan	Kazakh– Uzbek	Central Asia	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
84	Kazakhstan	Kazakh– German	Central Asia	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
85	Kazakhstan	Kazakh– Dungan	Central Asia	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
86	Kazakhstan	Kazakh– Uyghur	Central Asia	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
87	Kazakhstan	Russian– Ukrainian	Central Asia	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
88	Kazakhstan	Ukrainian– German	Central Asia	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
89	Kazakhstan	Russian– German	Central Asia	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Continues →

→ Continued

Case	Republic/ State	Encounter	(sub-) region	S	R	L	T	A	D	Q	K	G	B	M	C	F
90	Kazakhstan	Russian– Uyghur	Central Asia	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
91	Kazakhstan	Russian– Dungan	Central Asia	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
92	Kyrgyzstan	Kyrgyz– Russian	Central Asia	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
93	Kyrgyzstan	Kyrgyz– Dungan	Central Asia	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
94	Kyrgyzstan	Kyrgyz– Uzbek	Central Asia	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0
95	Kyrgyzstan	Kyrgyz–Tajik	Central Asia	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0
96	Kyrgyzstan	Kyrgyz– Kazakh	Central Asia	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
97	Kyrgyzstan	Kazakh– Russian	Central Asia	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
98	Kyrgyzstan	Tajik–Uzbek	Central Asia	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0
99	Tajikistan	Tajik–Pamiri	Central Asia	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
100	Tajikistan	Tajik–Uzbek	Central Asia	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0
101	Tajikistan	Tajik–Kyrgyz	Central Asia	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0
102	Tajikistan	Pamiri– Kyrgyz	Central Asia	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0
103	Uzbekistan	Uzbek–Tajik	Central Asia	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
104	Uzbekistan	Uzbek– Kazakh	Central Asia	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
105	Uzbekistan	Uzbek– Kyrgyz	Central Asia	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0
106	Uzbekistan	Uzbek– Karakalpak	Central Asia	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
107	Uzbekistan	Tajik–Kazakh	Central Asia	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
108	Uzbekistan	Kazakh– Turkmen	Central Asia	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
109	Uzbekistan	Kazakh– Karakalpak	Central Asia	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
110	Uzbekistan	Turkmen– Karakalpak	Central Asia	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
111	Uzbekistan	Uzbek– Turkmen	Central Asia	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0

Continues →

→ Continued

Case	Republic/ State	Encounter	(sub- region	S	R	L	T	A	D	Q	K	G	B	M	C	F
112	Turkmenistan	Turkmen– Uzbek	Central Asia	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
113	Turkmenistan	Turkmen– Kurd	Central Asia	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
114	Iran	Georgian– Armenian	Fereydan	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
115	Iran	Georgian– Turkic- speaker	Fereydan	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
116	Iran	Georgian– Bakhtiari	Fereydan	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
117	Iran	Georgian– Khwansari	Fereydan	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
118	Iran	Armenian– Turkic- speaker	Fereydan	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
119	Iran	Armenian– Persian- speaker	Fereydan	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
120	Iran	Armenian– Bakhtiari	Fereydan	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
121	Iran	Armenian– Khwansari	Fereydan	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
122	Iran	Armenian– Lur	Fereydan	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
123	Iran	Turkic- speaker– Persian- speaker	Fereydan	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
124	Iran	Turkic- speaker–Lur	Fereydan	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
125	Iran	Turkic- speaker– Bakhtiari	Fereydan	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
126	Iran	Turkic- speaker– Khwansari	Fereydan	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
127	Iran	Persian- speaker– Bakhtiari	Fereydan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
128	Iran	Persian- speaker– Khwansari	Fereydan	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
129	Iran	Khwansari– Lur	Fereydan	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0



# References

Aasland, A. (1996). Russians outside Russia: the New Russian Diaspora. In: G. Smith (ed.). *The nationalities question in the Post-Soviet States*, pp. 477–497. London & New York: Longman.

Abazov, R. (2007). *Culture and Customs of the Central Asian Republics*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Abbink, J. (1993). Ethnic Conflict in the “Tribal” Zone: The Dizi and Suri in Southern Ethiopia. *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 4, pp. 675–682.

Afshari, R. (2001). Review of E. Sanasarian (2000). Religious Minorities in Iran. *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 23, No.4. pp. 1121–1131.

Aghai Diba, B. (2008). Who gave the Kurdish City of Firoozeh to Niazov? *Cultural and Civil Society of Khorasani Kurds (CSKK)*, February 2008.  
<http://cskk.org/en/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=18>  
(Accessed 18 December 2008).

Ahanchi, P. (2011). Ethnic Relations in Baku During the First Oil Boom. *Azerbaijan in the World* (a Publication of Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy’s School of International Affairs), Vol. 4, No.4, pp. 6–13.

Ahmadi, H. (2005/1384 Solar Hegira). *Qowmiyyat va Qowmgerai dar Iran: Afsane va Vaqe’iyyat*. [Ethnicity and Ethno-nationalism in Iran: Myth and Reality.] (First published in 1999/ 1378 Solar Hegira). Tehran: Nashr-e Ney.

Akbarzardeh, S. (2001). Political Islam in Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan. *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 20, No. 4, pp. 451–465.

Akiner, S. (1996). Uzbekistan and the Uzbeks. In: G. Smith (ed.). *The Nationalities Question in the Post-Soviet States*, pp. 334–347. London & New York: Longman.

Akipress, Kyrgyzstan News Agency: <http://www.akipress.kg> and <http://www.akipress.org> and <http://www.akipress.com>

Akipress (12 June 2010). Death Toll in Osh and Jalal-Abad Unrest Rises to 77. *Akipress Kyrgyzstan News Agency*. Available online: [http://www.akipress.com/en\\_news.php?id=37620](http://www.akipress.com/en_news.php?id=37620) (Accessed 16 June 2011).

Akipress (14 June 2010a). Last Night Reported Calm in Osh. *Akipress Kyrgyzstan News Agency*. Available online: [http://www.akipress.com/en\\_news.php?id=37702](http://www.akipress.com/en_news.php?id=37702) (Accessed 16 June 2011).

Akipress (14 June 2010b). 203 People Cross Border of Kyrgyzstan from Uzbekistan Last Night. *Akipress Kyrgyzstan News Agency*. Available online: [http://www.akipress.com/en\\_news.php?id=37711](http://www.akipress.com/en_news.php?id=37711) (Accessed 16 June 2011).

Akipress (15 June 2010). National Security Service: Some 300 Automatic Weapons and 1.5 Thousand Bottles with Flame Liquid Were Used in Osh Clashes. *Akipress Kyrgyzstan News Agency*. Available online: [http://www.akipress.com/en\\_news.php?id=37792](http://www.akipress.com/en_news.php?id=37792) (Accessed 16 June 2011).

Akipress (18 June 2010). Death Toll in Osh and Jalal-Abad Unrest Rises to 192. *Akipress Kyrgyzstan News Agency*. Available online: [http://www.akipress.com/en\\_news.php?id=37673](http://www.akipress.com/en_news.php?id=37673) (Accessed 16 June 2011).

Akipress (3 May 2011). Death Toll in June Violence Approaches 470, but Doesn't Exceed 500 – International Commission of Inquiry into June Violence. *Akipress Kyrgyzstan News Agency*. Available online: [http://www.akipress.com/en\\_news.php?id=48991](http://www.akipress.com/en_news.php?id=48991) (Accessed 16 June 2011).

Akipress (3 June 2011). Identities of 27 Victims of June Events Establishes, Total Death Toll Reaches 435. *Akipress Kyrgyzstan News Agency*. Available online: [http://www.akipress.com/en\\_news.php?id=54361](http://www.akipress.com/en_news.php?id=54361) (Accessed 16 June 2011).

Allen, W. E. D. & P. Muratoff (2011). *Caucasian Battlefields: A History of the Wars on the Turco-Caucasian Border, 1828–1921*. (First published in 1953). Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press.

Allison, Ch. (2004). Yazidis: General. *Encyclopædia Iranica*. Available online: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/yazidis-i-general-1> (Accessed 20 December 2011).

Allworth, E. (1967). *Central Asia: A Century of Russian Rule*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Amanollahi, S. (2005). A Note on Ethnicity and Ethnic Groups in Iran. *Iran and the Caucasus*, Vol. 9, No 1, pp. 37–41.

Amir Ahmadian, B. (2004/1383 Solar Hegira). *Taqsimat-e Keshvari* [The Country's Divisions of Provinces]. Tehran: Daftare Pazhuheshha-ye Farhangi.

Anchabadze, Z. (1976). *Ocherki etnicheskoy istorii abkhazskogo naroda* [Essays about the Ethnic History of the Abkhaz People]. Sukhumi: Alashara.

Anderson, B. (1983). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.

Anderson, J. (1988). Nationalist ideology and territory. In: R. J. Johnston , D. B. Knight & E. Kofman (eds). *Nationalism, Self-Determination and Political Geography*, pp. 18–39. London: Cromm Helm.

Arakelova, V. (2001). Healing Practices among the Yezidi Sheikhs of Armenia. *Asian Folklore Studies*, Vol. 60, No. 2, pp. 319–328.

Arakelova, V. (2004). Notes on the Yezidi Religious Syncretism. *Iran and the Caucasus*, Vol. 8, No. 1, pp. 19–28.

Arakelova, V. (2010). Ethno-Religious Communities: To the Problem of Identity Markers. *Iran and the Caucasus*, Vol. 14, No. 1, pp. 1–17.

Ardrey, R. (1967). *The Territorial Imperative: A Personal Inquiry into the Animal Origins of Property and Nations*. London: Collins.

Armenian News Network/Groong (11 October 2006). *Additional Mini-interviews with ROA Government and Yezidi/Kurdish Representatives Conducted at the Opening of a New Cultural Center for National Minorities in Yerevan, Republic of Armenia, on Friday 6 October 2006*. Available online: <http://www.groong.org/orig/ok-20061011.html> (Accessed 11 April 2010).



Arnson, C. J. & I. W. Zartman (eds) (2005). *Rethinking the Economics of War: The Intersection of Need, Creed, and Greed*. Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University.

Asanbekov, A. (1996). Ethnic conflict in the Osh region in summer 1990: Reasons and lessons. In: Rupesinghe, K. & V. A. Tishkov (eds). *Ethnicity and Power in the Contemporary World*. New York, Paris & Tokyo: United Nations University Press. Available online at: <http://archive.unu.edu/unupress/unupbooks/uu12ee/uu12ee0d.htm> (Accessed 22 February 2008).

Asatrian, G. & V. Arakelova (2003). Malak-Tawus: the Peacock Angel of the Yezidis. *Iran and the Caucasus*, Vol. 7, No. 1, pp. 1–36.

Asatrian, G. & V. Arakelova (2004). The Yezidi Pantheon. *Iran and the Caucasus*, Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 231–279.

Asatryan (Astarian), G. & V. Arakelova (2002). *The Ethnic Minorities of Armenia*. (This publication has been made possible due to the support by the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, with the assistance of the OSCE Office in Yerevan). Available online at the website of *Human Rights in Armenia* at: [http://www.hra.am/file/minorities\\_en.pdf](http://www.hra.am/file/minorities_en.pdf) (Accessed 7 April 2011).

Asaturian (Asatrian), G. (2011/1990 Solar Hegira). Baft-e Nezhadi-ye Mardom-e Iran: Gunaguni-ye Qowmi ya Gunaguni-ye Zabani? [The genealogy of Iranian People: Ethnic or Linguistic Diversity?]. *Fasname-ye Farhang-e Mardom* [Iranian Folklore Quarterly], No. 37–38, pp. 10–26.

Asia Times (3 November 2005). *British Arabism and the Bombings in Iran*. By: Mahan Abedin & Kaveh Farrokh. Available online: [http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle\\_East/GK03Ak02.html](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/GK03Ak02.html) (Accessed 28 January 2008).

Atabaki, T. (2003). Disgruntled Guests: Iranian Subaltern on the Margins of the Tsarist Empire. *International Review of Social History (IRSH)*, Vol. 48, No 3, pp. 401–426.

Atabaki, T. (2005). Ethnic Diversity and Territorial Integrity of Iran: Domestic Harmony and Regional Challenges. *Iranian Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 1, pp. 23–44.

Atabaki, T. (ed.) (2007). *The State and the Subaltern: Modernization, Society and the State in Turkey and Iran*. London & New York: I. B. Tauris.

Atabaki, T. (ed.) (2010). *Modernity and Its Agencies. The Young Moments in the History of the South*. New Delhi: Manohar & Sepsis.

Atabaki, T. & J. O’Kane (eds) (1998). *Post-Soviet Central Asia*. London & New York: I. B. Tauris.

Atabaki, T. & M. Van der Linden (2003). Introduction (of the special theme “Twentieth-Century Iran: History from Below”). *International Review of Social History (IRSH)*, Vol. 48. No. 3, pp. 353–359.

Atabaki, A. & J. Versteeg (1994). *Centraal Azië*. Amsterdam: KIT.

Atabaki, T. & E. J. Zürcher (2004). Introduction. In: T. Atabaki & E. J. Zürcher (eds). *Men of Order: Authoritarian Modernisation under Atatürk and Reza Shah*, pp. 1–12. London & New York: I. B. Tauris.

Atkin, M. (1997). Tajikistan: Reform, Reaction and Civil War. In: I. Bremmer & R. Tarras (eds). *New states, New Politics: Building the Post-Soviet Nations*, pp. 602–633. Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press.

*Azərbaycan Tarixi Atlası* [Historical Atlas of Azerbaijan] (2007). Editor in chief: Y. M Mahmudov. Baku: Bakı Kartoqrafiya Fabriki [Baku Cartographic Factory].

Baker, P. H. & J. A. Ausink (1996). State Collapse and Ethnic Violence: Toward a Predictive Model. *Parameters (The US Army’s Senior Professional Journal)*. Vol. 26, No. 1, pp. 19–31. Available online on *Parameter’s* website at: <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/USAWC/Parameters/Articles/96spring/baker.htm> (Accessed 6 June 2010).

Banks, M. (1996). *Ethnicity: Anthropological Constructions*. London & New York: Routledge.

Baratashvili, M. (1998). *Legal State of Meskh Repatriates in Georgia*. Tbilisi: Union of Georgian Repatriates.

Barnes, C. & K. Abdullaev (2001). Introduction: from war to politics. In: C. Barnes & K. Abdullaev (eds). *Politics of compromise: the Tajikistan peace process (Accord No. 10)*, pp. 8–14. London: Conciliation Resources.

Barth, F. (1969). Introduction. In: F. Barth (ed.). *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference*, pp. 9–38. Boston: Little Brown.

Bayat, K. (2005). The Ethnic Question in Iran. *Middle East Report*. No. 237 (Winter, 2005), pp. 42–45.

BBC (16 April 2009). Russia Ends Chechnya Operation. *British Broadcasting Company*, Page last updated at 17:04 GMT, Thursday, 16 April 2009 18:04 UK. Available online: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8001495.stm> (Accessed 20 December 2009).

BBC (18 June 2010). Death Toll in Kyrgyzstan Clashes Could be Much Higher. *British Broadcasting News*. Available online: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10347472> (Accessed 14 June 2011).

BBC (3 July 2010). Otunbayeva Sworn in as Kyrgyz Leader in Historic First. *British Broadcasting News*. Available online: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10497530> (Accessed 14 June 2011).

Beck, L. (1980). Revolutionary Iran and its Tribal Peoples. *MERIP Reports*, No. 87 (Iran's Revolution: The Rural Dimension) (May), pp14–20.

Bederman, D. J. (2001). *International Law in Antiquity*. Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press.

Belozerov, V. (2005). *Etnicheskaia Karta Severnogo Kavkaza* [Ethnic Map of the North Caucasus]. Moscow: O.G.I.

Bennigsen Broxup, M. (1992). Introduction: Russia and The North Caucasus. In: M. Bennigsen Broxup (eds). *The North Caucasus Barrier: The Russian Advance towards the Muslim World*, pp. 1–17. London: C. Hurst & Co.

Bergne, P. (2007). *The Birth of Tajikistan: National Identity and the Origins of the Republic*. London & New York: I. B. Tauris.

Bhagat, R. B. (2001). Census and the Construction of Communalism in India. *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 36, No. 46/47, pp. 4352–4356.

Bhagat, R. B. (2003). Role of Census in Racial and Ethnic Construction: US, British and Indian Censuses. *Economic and Political Weekly*. Vol. 38, No. 8, pp. 686–691.

Björnehed, E. (2004). Narco-Terrorism: The Merger of the War on Drugs and the War on Terror, *Global Crime*, Vol. 6, No. 3&4, pp. 305–324.

Black, J. (1997). *Maps and Politics*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Black, J. (2000). *Maps and History: Constructing Images of the Past* (Paperback). New Haven, CT & London: Yale University Press.

Bohr, A. & S. Crisp (1996). Kyrgyzstan and the Kyrgyz. In: G. Smith (ed.). *The Nationalities Question in the Post-Soviet States*, pp. 385–409. London & New York: Longman.

Borjian, H. (2007). Geography of the Median Dialects of Isfahan. *Encyclopædia Iranica*. Available online: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/isfahan-xx-geography-of-the-median-dialects-of-isfahan> (Accessed 20 December 2011).

Bosworth, C. E. (1982). The Concept of Dhimma in Early Islam. In: Benjamin Braude & B. Lewis (eds). *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society, Vol.1*, pp. 37–51. New York: Holmes & Meier Publishing.

Bournoutian, G. (1998). Armenians in Nineteenth–Century Iran. In: C. Chaqueri (ed.). *The Armenians of Iran: the Paradoxical Role of a Minority in a Dominant Culture*. pp. 54–76. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bremmer, I. (1997). Post-Soviet Nationalities Theory: Past, Present, and Future. In: I. Bremmer & R. Tarras (eds). *New States, New Politics: Building the Post-Soviet Nations*, pp. 3–26. Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press.

Breuilly, J. (1993). *Nationalism and the State*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Brock, P. (1956). The Fall of Circassia: A Study in Private Diplomacy. *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 71, No. 280, pp. 401–427.

Bromley, Yu. V. (ed.) (1988). *Narody mira: Istoriko etnograficheskii spravochnik* [Peoples of the World: Historical and Ethnographic Directory]. Moscow: Sovetskaya Entsiklopedia.

Bronevskiy, S. M. (2004 [19<sup>th</sup> century]). *Noveshiya Izvestia o Kavkze* [The Latest News about the Caucasus]. (Collected material by Bronevskiy about the Caucasus at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century). Saint Petersburg: Saint Petersburg branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences & Saint Petersburg Oriental Studies.

Brubaker, R. (1994). Nationhood and the National Question in the Soviet Union and Post-Soviet Eurasia: An Institutional Account. *Theory and Society*, Vol. 23, No.1, pp. 47–78.

Brubaker, R. & D. Laitin (1998). Ethnic and Nationalist Violence. *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 24, pp. 423–452.

Bugay, N. F. (2006). *Chechenskaia Respublika: Konfrontatsia, Stabilnost', Mir* [The Chechen Republic: Confrontation, Stability, Peace]. Moscow: Russian Academy of Sciences, institute of Russian History.

Bugay, N. F. & A. M. Gonov (2004). *Severnyi Kavkaz: Novye Orientiry Natsional'noi Politiki (90-e Gody XX Veka)* [The North Caucasus: New Guidelines of National Politics (1990s)]. Moscow: Novyi Khronograf.

Butanaev, V. Ia. (1995). The Question of the Khakas Ethnonym. In: M. Balzer (ed.). *Culture Incarnate: Native Anthropology from Russia*, pp. 70–79. Armonk, NY & London: ME. Sharpe.

Chaqueri. C. (1998). Introduction to “The Armenians of Iran”: A Historical Perusal. In: C. Chaqueri (ed.). *The Armenians of Iran: the Paradoxical Role of a Minority in a Dominant Culture*. pp. 1–23. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Chehabi, H. E. (1997). Ardabil Becomes a Province: Center-Periphery Relations in Iran. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 2. (May, 1997), pp. 235–253.

Cheterian, V. (2008). *War and Peace in the Caucasus: Ethnic Conflict and the New Geopolitics*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Cheterian, V. (2009). The August 2008 War in Georgia: From Ethnic Conflict to Border Wars. *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 28, No. 2, pp. 155–170.

Chirikba, V. (2004). Geopolitical Aspects of the Abkhazian Statehood: Some Results and Perspectives. *Iran and the Caucasus*, Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 341–349.

Chirikba, V. (2008). An Abkhaz Perspective: Abkhazia after Kosovo. *Russian Analytical Digest*, No. 40 (8 May 2008) (Russia and the “Frozen Conflicts” of Georgia), pp. 14–16.

Chirikba, V. (2009). *The International Legal Status of the Republic of Abkhazia in the Light of International Law*. (Paper read at the conference “Independence of Abkhazia and Prospects for the Caucasus”. Istanbul, Bilgi University, 30 May 2009.) Available online at Abkhaz World at: [http://www.abkhazworld.com/Pdf/VChirikba\\_Ist2009.pdf](http://www.abkhazworld.com/Pdf/VChirikba_Ist2009.pdf) (Accessed 21 December 2011).

CIA (2009). *The World Factbook: Iran*. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ir.html> (Accessed 10 February 2009).

Closson, S. (2008). Georgia’s Secessionist De Facto States: From Frozen to Boiling. *Russian Analytical Digest*, No. 40 (8 May 2008) (Russia and the “Frozen Conflicts” of Georgia), pp. 2–5.

Coakley, J. (2003a). Introduction: The Challenge. In: J. Coakley (ed.). *The Territorial Management of Ethnic Conflict* (Second Revised and Expanded Edition), pp. 1, 22. London & Portland, OR: Frank Cass Publishers.

Coakley, J. (2003b). Conclusion: Towards a Solution? In: J. Coakley (ed.). *The Territorial Management of Ethnic Conflict* (Second Revised and Expanded Edition), pp. 293–316. London & Portland, OR: Frank Cass Publishers.

Cohen, A. (1974). Introduction: The Lesson of Ethnicity. In: A. Cohen (ed.). *Urban Ethnicity*, pp. ix–xxiv. London: Tavistock Publications.

Colarusso, J. (1992). *A Grammar of the Kabardian Language*. Calgary, Alberta: University of Calgary Press.

Collier, P. & A. Hoeffler (2000). *Greed and Grievance in Civil War*. World Bank, Policy Research Working Paper 2355 (May).

Collier, P. & A. Hoeffler (2004). Greed and grievance in civil war. *Oxford Economic Papers*, Vol. 56. No. 4, pp. 563–595.

Connor, W. (1978). A Nation Is a Nation, is a State, is an Ethnic Group is a.... *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 4, pp. 377–400.

Constant, A. (2002). *L'Azerbaïdjan*. Paris: Les éditions Karthala.

*Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran* (last modified 1992). Available online on the *University of Bern, Faculty of Law* website: [http://www.oefre.unibe.ch/law/icl/ir00000\\_.html](http://www.oefre.unibe.ch/law/icl/ir00000_.html) (Accessed 20 November 2006).

*Constitution of the Soviet Union* (last modified 1977). Available online on the website of *University of Bern, Faculty of Law*, at: [http://www.oefre.unibe.ch/law/icl/r100000\\_.html](http://www.oefre.unibe.ch/law/icl/r100000_.html) (Accessed 20 November 2006).

Cordell, K. & S. Wolff (2010). *Ethnic Conflict: Causes – Consequences – Response*. (First published in 2009). Cambridge, UK & Malden, MA: Polity Press.

Cornell, S. E. (1997). A Chechen State? *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 16, No. 2, pp. 201–213.

Cornell, S. E. (1998a). Religion as a Factor in Caucasian Conflicts. *Civil Wars*, Vol. 1, No. 3, pp. 46–64.

Cornell, S. E. (1998b). Conflicts in the North Caucasus. *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 17, No. 3, pp. 409–441.

Cornell, S. E. (1999). The Devaluation of the Concept of Autonomy: National Minorities in the Former Soviet Union, *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 18, No.2, pp. 185–196.

Cornell, S. E. (2001). *Small Nations and Great Powers: A Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict in the Caucasus*. Richmond Surrey, UK: Curzon Press.

Cornell, S. E. (2002a). *Autonomy and Conflict: Ethnoterritoriality and Separatism in the South Caucasus—Cases in Georgia*. Uppsala: Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University.

Cornell, S. E. (2002b). Autonomy as a Source of Conflict: Caucasian Conflicts in Theoretical Perspective. *World Politics*, Vol. 54, No. 2, pp. 245–276.

Cornell, S. E. (2005a). The Interaction of Narcotics and Conflict. *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 42, No. 6, pp. 751–760.

Cornell, S. E. (2005b). Narcotics, Radicalism and Security in Central Asia: The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 17, No. 4, pp. 619–639.

Cornell, S. E. (2005c). Russia's Gridlock in Chechnya: Normalization or Deterioration. In: *OSCE Yearbook 2004*. Edited by U. Schlichting. Hamburg: Institute for Peace Research & Security Policy at the University of Hamburg, pp. 251–259.

Cornell, S. E. (2009). Finishing the Job: Russia Tightens its Grip on Georgia's Breakaway Regions. *Foreign Policy*, July 2009. Available online: [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/07/02/finishing\\_the\\_job?page=full](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/07/02/finishing_the_job?page=full) (Accessed 15 November 2011).

Cornell, S. E. (2011). *Azerbaijan since Independence*. Armonk, NY & London: M. E. Sharpe.

Cornell, S. E., J. Popjanevski & N. Nilsson (2008). *Russia's War in Georgia: Causes and Implications for Georgia and the World*. Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program. Available online: <http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/silkroadpapers/0808Georgia-PP.pdf> (Accessed 15 November 2011).

Cornell, S. E. & S. F. Starr (eds) (2009). *The Guns of August 2008: Russia's War in Georgia*. Armonk, NY & London: M. E. Sharpe.



Cornell, S. E. & N. Swanström (2006). The Eurasian Drug Trade: A Challenge to Regional Security *Problems of Post-Communism*. Vol. 53, No. 4, pp. 10–28.

Cowther, W. (1997). Moldova: Caught between Nation and Empire. In: I. Bremmer & R. Tarras (eds). *New States, New Politics: Building the Post-Soviet Nations*, pp. 316–349. Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press.

Dandamayev, M. & I. Medvedevskaya (2006). Media. *Encyclopædia Iranica*. Available online: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/media> (Accessed 20 December 2011).

De Waal, Th. (2003). *Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan through Peace and War*. New York & London: New York University Press.

De Waal, Th. (2010). *The Caucasus: An Introduction*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press.

Delreus, T. & D. Hesters (2010). Solving contradictory simplifying assumptions in QCA: presentation of a new best practice. *COMPASSS Working Paper* 2010-58.

*Demoscope.ru*: <http://demoscope.ru>

Diakonov, I. M. (2009/1388 Solar Hegira). *Tarikh-e Mad* [The Median History]. Originally published in 1956 as: *Istoriya Midii ot drevnishikh vremen do kontsa IV veka* [The history of Media from ancient times until the end of the 4th century BC]. Translated by K. Keshavarz Tehran: Elmi va Farhangi.

Diener, A. (2006). Homeland as Social Construct: Territorialization among Kazakhstan's Germans and Koreans. *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 34, No. 2, pp. 201–235.

Dietz, T. & D. Foeken (2001). The Crumbling of the African State System. In: Dijkink, Gertjan & Hans Knippenberg (eds). *The Territorial Factor: Political Geography in a Globalising World*. pp. 177–200. Amsterdam: Vossiuspers UvA, Amsterdam University Press.

Dijkink, G. (1996). *National identity and Geopolitical Visions: Maps of Pride and Pain*. London: Routledge.

Dijkink, G. & H. Knippenberg (2001). The Territorial Factor: An Introduction. In: G. Dijkink & H. Knippenberg (eds). *The Territorial Factor: Political Geography in a Globalising World*, pp. 11–28. Amsterdam: Vossiuspers UvA, Amsterdam University Press.

Dobaev, I. (2009). The Northern Caucasus: Spread of Jihad. *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 55 (2009, No. 1). Available online: <http://www.cac.org/journal/2009-01-eng/06.shtml> (Accessed 18 June 2011).

Dostál, P. & H. Knippenberg (1988). De Kwestie Nagorno-Karabach. *Internationale Spectator*, Vol. 42, No. 10, pp. 602–610.

Dostál, P. & H. Knippenberg (1992). Russification of Soviet Nationalities: The Importance of Territorial Autonomy. *History of European Ideas*, Vol. 15, No. 4–6, pp. 631–638.

Dudwick, N. (1997). Armenia: Paradise Lost? In: I. Bremmer & R. Tarras (eds). *New States, New Politics: Building the Post-Soviet Nations*, pp. 471–504. Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press.

Dunlop, J. (1997). Russia: In Search of an Identity? In: I. Bremmer & R. Tarras (eds). *New States, New Politics: Building the Post-Soviet Nations*, pp. 29–95. Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press.

Edkins, J. (2003). *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*. Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press.

Eldarov, E. (2008). Development of Daghestan's Rural Population Settlement System in the Post-Soviet Period. *The Caucasus & Globalization*, Volume 2, Issue 1 (2008). Available online: [http://www.cac.org/c-g/2008/journal\\_eng/c-g-1/10.shtml](http://www.cac.org/c-g/2008/journal_eng/c-g-1/10.shtml) (Accessed 20 October 2010).

Eldarov, E., E. Holland, S. Aliyev, Z. Abdulagatov, & Z. Atayev, (2007). Resettlement and Migration in Post-Soviet Dagestan. *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, Vol. 48, No. 2, pp. 226–248.

Eller, J. D. (1999). *From Culture to Ethnicity to Conflict: An Anthropological Perspective on International Ethnic Conflict*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

Eller, J. D. & R. M. Coughlan (1993). The Poverty of Primordialism: The Demystification of Ethnic Attachments. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 16. No.2, pp. 181–202.

Ember, M., C. R. Ember & I. Skoggard (eds). *Encyclopedia of Diasporas: Immigrant and Refugee Cultures around the World*. Volume 2, pp. 983–993. New York: Springer (in conjunction with the Human Relations Area Files at Yale University).

Encyclopædia Britannica (2010). Media. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*. Available online: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/372125/Media>. (Accessed 24 October 2010).

*Encyclopædia Iranica*: <http://www.iranicaonline.org>

Eriksen, T. H. (2002). *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives*, Second Edition. (First published in 1993). London & Sterling, VA: Pluto Press.

Eskandar Beyg Monshi (1998/1377 Solar Hegira). *Tarikh-e Alam-Ara-ye Abbasi, (Three Volumes)* [The History of Abbas, the World Adorner] [originally written in the 17th century]. Edited and commented by M. E. Rezvani.. Tehran: Donya-ye Ketab.

*Ethnic Conflicts, Border Disputes, Ideological Clashes, Terrorism*, (website), A project founded by Andrew (Andreas) Andersen in 2002 and developing until now (2011): <http://www.conflicts.rem33.com>

*Ethnohistorical* (1994). *An Ethnohistorical Dictionary of the Russian and Soviet Empires*. Edited by J. S. Olson (editor in Chief), L. B. Pappas & N.C. J. Pappas. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

*Ethnologue* (2009). *Ethnologue, 16<sup>th</sup> edition*, edited by P. M. Lewis: <http://www.ethnologue.org/>

Eurasianet.org (24 January 2006). *Ethnic Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan Voice Complaints over Discrimination, Corruption*. Available online: <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/civilsociety/articles/eav012506.shtml> (Accessed 20 November 2008).

Eurasianet.org (27 February 2010). *Is Manas Being Used to Destabilize Iran?* By: Joshua Kucera. Available online: <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/32773> (Accessed 20 December 2011).

Farrokh, K. (2005a). Pan-Turanianism Takes Aim at Azerbaijan: A Geopolitical Agenda. *Rozaneh Magazine*, November/December 2005. Available online: <http://www.rozanehmagazine.com/NoveDec05/aazariINDEX.HTML> (Accessed 28 January 2008).

Farrokh, K. (2005b). Pan-Arabism's Legacy of Confrontation with Iran. *Rozaneh Magazine*, January/February 2005. Available online: <http://www.rozanehmagazine.com/JanFeb2005/aFarrokhArab.html> (Accessed 28 January 2008).

Farrokh, K. (2009). *Shadows in the Desert: Ancient Persia at War*. Oxford, with a foreword by Nelson Richard Frye. (Paperback version; first published in 2007). Oxford & New York: Osprey Publishing.

Ferghana News (19 March 2007). *Insulting graffiti in Osh, Kyrgyzstan*. Available online on *Ferghana News Information Agency's* website at: <http://enews.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=1880> (Accessed 10 December 2008)

FIDH (2003). *Discrimination against religious minorities in Iran*. Paris; Brussels; The Hague & Geneva: La Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'Homme (International Federation for Human Rights), August 2003.

Foltz, R. (1996). The Tajiks of Uzbekistan. *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 15, No. 2, pp. 213–216.

Fondahl, G. (1997). Siberia: Assimilation and its Discontents. In: I. Bremmer & R. Tarras (eds). *New States, New Politics: Building the Post-Soviet Nations*, pp. 190–232. Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press.

Frank, A. & R. Wixman (1997). The Middle Volga: Exploring the Limits of Sovereignty. In: I. Bremmer & R. Tarras (eds). *New States, New Politics: Building the Post-Soviet Nations*, pp. 140–189. Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press.

Friedman, J. (1992a). The Past in the Future: History and the Politics of Identity, *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 94, No. 4, pp. 837–859.

Friedman, J. (1992b). Myth, History and Political Identity. *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. 7, No. 2, pp. 194–210.

Frye, R. N. (2002). Ethnic Identity in Iran. *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam (JSAL)*. Vol. 26, pp. 78–83.

Frye, R. N. (2006). Peoples of Iran (1): A General Survey. *Encyclopædia Iranica*. Available online: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/iran-v1-peoples-survey> (Accessed 20 December 2011).

Fumagalli, M. (2007). Ethnicity, State Formation and Foreign Policy: Uzbekistan and “Uzbeks Abroad”. *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 26, No. 1, pp. 105–122.

Gachechiladze, R. (1995). *The New Georgia: Space, Society, Politics*. London: UCL Press.

Garagozov, R. (2002). Collective Memory and the Russian “Schematic Narrative Template”. *Journal of Russian and East European Psychology*. Vol.40, No.5, pp. 55–89.

Garagozov (Karakezov), R. (2005a). *Metamorfozy kollektivnoi pamiati v Rossii i na Tsentral'nom Kavkaze* [The Metamorphoses of Collective Memory in Russia and Central Caucasus]. Baku: Nurlan.

Garagozov, R. (2005b). Collective Memory and Memory Politics in the Central Caucasian Countries. *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 36 (2005, No. 6), pp. 51–60. Available online: [http://www.cac.org/online/2005/journal\\_eng/cac-06/06.gareng.shtml](http://www.cac.org/online/2005/journal_eng/cac-06/06.gareng.shtml) (Accessed 11 October 2009).

Garagozov, R. (2006). Collective Memory in Ethnopolitical Conflicts: The Case Of Nagorno-Karabakh. *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 41 (2006, No. 5), pp. 145–155. Available online: [http://www.cac.org/online/2006/journal\\_eng/cac-05/13.kareng.shtml](http://www.cac.org/online/2006/journal_eng/cac-05/13.kareng.shtml) (Accessed 8 October 2009).

Garagozov, R. (2008a). Introduction (to “Collective Memory: Patterns and Manifestations”), *Journal of Russian and East European Psychology*, Vol. 46, No. 1, pp. 13–18.

Garagozov, R. (2008b). Historical Choice and the Characteristics of Collective Experience, *Journal of Russian and East European Psychology*, Vol. 46, No. 1, pp. 19–51.

Garagozov, R. (2008c). Historical Narratives, Cultural Traditions, and Collective Memory in the Central Caucasus, *Journal of Russian and East European Psychology*, Vol. 46, No. 1, pp. 52–98.

Garagozov, R. (2008d). Historical Narratives, Cultural Traditions, and Collective Memory in the Central Caucasus (continued), *Journal of Russian and East European Psychology*, Vol. 46, No. 2, pp. 3–57.

Garagozov, R. (2008e). Characteristics of Collective Memory, Ethnic Conflicts, Historiography, and the “Politics of Memory”: Characteristics of Historical Accounts and “Forms” of Collective Memory, *Journal of Russian and East European Psychology*, Vol. 46, No. 2, pp. 58–95.

Garagozov, R. (2008f). Conclusion (of “Collective Memory: Patterns and Manifestations”), *Journal of Russian and East European Psychology*, Vol. 46, No. 2, pp. 96–98.

Garagozov, R. (2008g). “Forcing Georgia to Accept Peace” or why Politicians Should Take the Specifics of Collective Memory into Account. *The Caucasus & Globalization*, Vol. 2, No. 4. Available online: [http://www.ca-c.org/c-g/2008/journal\\_eng/c-g-4/10.shtml](http://www.ca-c.org/c-g/2008/journal_eng/c-g-4/10.shtml) (Accessed 22 November 2011).

Garagozov, R. (2009). Turkish-Armenian Rapprochement and the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: The Role of Collective Memory and Identity. *Azerbaijan in the World* (a Publication of Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy’s School of International Affairs), Vol. 2, No. 10, pp. 4–7.

Garagozov, R. (2010). Psychological Dimensions of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict. *Azerbaijan in the World* (a Publication of Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy’s School of International Affairs), Vol. 3, No. 10, pp. 1–5.

Garagozov, R. & R. Kadyrova (2011). The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict from the Postmodernist Perspective: Cultural Grounds for Biased Interpretations. *The Caucasus & Globalization*, Vol. 5, No. 1–2. Available online: [http://www.ca-c.org/c-g/2011/journal\\_eng/c-g-1-2/10.shtml](http://www.ca-c.org/c-g/2011/journal_eng/c-g-1-2/10.shtml) (Accessed 22 November 2011).

Garb, P. (2009). The view from Abkhazia of South Ossetia ablaze. *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 28, No. 2, pp. 235–246.

Geertz, C. (1963). The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States. In: C. Geertz (ed.). *Old Societies and New States: The Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa*, pp. 105–157. New York: Free Press.

Geertz, C. (2000). *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. (First published in 1973). New York: Basic Books.

Gegeshidze, A. (2008). A Georgian Perspective: Towards “Unfreezing” the Georgian Conflicts. *Russian Analytical Digest*, No. 40 (8 May 2008) (Russia and the “Frozen Conflicts” of Georgia), pp. 12–14.

Gellner, E. (1983). *Nations and Nationalism*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Gellner, E. (1997). *Nationalism*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

Gellner, E. (1999). Adam’s Navel: “Primordialists” Versus “Modernists”. In: E. Mortimer, & R. Fine. *People, Nation and State: The Meaning of Ethnicity and Nationalism*, pp. 31–35. London & New York: I. B. Tauris.

George, J. (2009). The dangers of reform: state building and national minorities in Georgia. *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 28, No. 2, pp. 135–154.

Georgia’s State Department of Statistics (2003). *Sakartvelos mosakhleobis 2002 ts’elis p’irveli erovnuli saq’oveltao aghts’eris shedebebi, t’omi I* [Results of the 2002 First Nation-Wide Georgian Population Census, Volume 1]. Tbilisi: Sakartvelos St’at’isk’is sakhelmts’ipo dep’art’ament’i.

Ghai, Y. (2000). Ethnicity and Autonomy: A Framework for Analysis. In: Y. Ghai (ed.). *Autonomy and Ethnicity: Negotiating Competing Claims in Multi-ethnic States*, pp. 1–26. Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press.

Ghazarian Senegerdi, B. S. (1991/1370 Solar Hegira). *Farhang-e Khodamuz-e Farsi-Armani* [A Self-learning Persian-Armenian Guide]. Esfahan (?): Chapp-e Esteghlal.

Ghods, M. R. (1991a). Iranian nationalism and Reza Shah. *Middle Eastern Studies*. Volume 27, Issue 1, pp. 35–45.

Ghods, M. R. (1991b). Government and society in Iran 1926–34, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 27. No. 2, pp. 219–230.

Gill, A. & A. Keshavarzian (1999). State Building and Religious Resources: An Institutional Theory of Church–State Relations in Iran and Mexico, *Politics & Society* 27(3): 431–465.

Glazer, N. & D. P. Moynihan (1963). *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press & Harvard University Press.

Glazer, N. & D. P. Moynihan (1975). Introduction. In: N. Glazer & D. P. Moynihan (eds). *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience*, pp. 1–26. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Gleason, G. (1997). Uzbekistan: The Politics of National Independence. In: I. Bremmer & R. Tarras (eds). *New states, New Politics: Building the Post-Soviet Nations*, pp. 571–601. Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press.

Goble, P. (2010). *Window on Eurasia: Moscow Nervous about Circassians Identifying Themselves as Circassians in Upcoming Census*. Available online on the website *Circassian World*, at: <http://www.circassianworld.com/new/headlines/1501-moscow-nervous-circassians-upcoming-census.html> (Accessed 20 December 2011).

Goldberg, J. (2008). After Iraq: A Report from the New Middle East- and a Glimpse of its Possible Future. *Atlantic Monthly*, January/February. Available online: <http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200801/goldberg-mideast> (Accessed 23 March 2008).

Goltz, Th. (1993). Letter from Eurasia: The Hidden Russian Hand. *Foreign Policy*, No. 92 (Autumn 1993), pp. 92–116.

Goltz, Th. (1999). *Azerbaijan Diary: A Rogue Reporter's Adventures in an Oil-Rich, War-Torn, Post-Soviet Republic*. (Paperback). Armonk, NY & London: M. E. Sharpe.

Goltz, Th. (2003). *Chechnya Diary: A War Correspondent's Story of Surviving the War in Chechnya*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Goltz, Th. (2009a). *Georgia Diary: A Chronicle of War and Political Chaos in the Post-Soviet Caucasus, Expanded Edition with a New Epilogue*. Armonk, NY & London: M. E. Sharpe. (This is an expanded version of the 2006 edition).



Goltz, Th. (2009b). The Paradox of Living in Paradise: Georgia's Descent into Chaos. In: S. E. Cornell & S. F. Starr (eds). *The Guns of August 2008: Russia's War in Georgia*, pp. 10–27. Armonk, NY & London: M. E. Sharpe.

Gorbachev, M. S. (1987a). *Perestroika i novoe myshlenie dlya nashei strany i dlya vsego mira*. Moscow: Politizdat.

Gorbachev, M. S. (1987b). *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World*. (An English Translation of (Gorbachev's (1987a) *Perestroika i novoe myshlenie dlya nashei strany i dlya vsego mira*). New York & Harper and Row.

Gordadze, T. (2009). Georgian Russian Relations in the 1990s. In: S. E. Cornell & S. F. Starr (eds). *The Guns of August 2008: Russia's War in Georgia*, pp. 28–48. Armonk, NY & London: M. E. Sharpe.

Gorlizki, Y. (1996). The Jews. In: G. Smith (ed.). *The Nationalities Question in the Post-Soviet States*, pp. 436–461. London & New York: Longman.

Gottmann, J. (1973). *The Significance of Territory*. Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia.

Graney, K. (2010). *Of Khans and Kremlins: Tatarstan and the Future of Ethno-Federalism in Russia*. Lanham, MD; etc.: Lexington Books, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Gregorian, V. (1998). Minorities of Isfahan: The Armenian Community of Isfahan, 1587–1722. In: C. Chaqueri (ed.). *The Armenians of Iran: The Paradoxical Role of a Minority in a Dominant Culture*, pp. 27–53. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Grenoble, L. A. (2010). *Language Policy in the Soviet Union*. Berlin & Dordrecht etc. London: Springer. (This is a reprint of the hardcover version published in 2003 by Kluwer Academic Publishers).

Grigorian, A. & S. J. Kaufman. (2007). Hate Narratives and Ethnic Conflict. *International Security*, Vol. 31, No. 4, pp. 180–191.

Gronke, M. (2003). *Geschichte Irans von der Islamisierung bis zur Gegenwart* [History of Iran since Islamization until the Contemporary Time]. Munich. Verlag C.H. Beck oHG.

Guest, J. S. (1987). *The Yezidis: A Study in Survival*. London: Keegan Paul International.

Guest, J. S. (1993). *Survival among the Kurds: A History of the Yezidis*. London: Keegan Paul International.

Gurr, T. R. (1993). *Minorities at Risk: A Global View of Ethnopolitical Conflict*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace.

Gurr, T. R. (1994). Peoples Against States: Ethnopolitical Conflict and the Changing World System. (1994 Presidential Address). *International Studies Quarterly*. Vol. 38, No. 3, pp. 347–377.

Gurr, T. R. (2000). Ethnic Warfare on the Wane. *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 79, No. 3, pp. 52–64.

Gurr, T. R. (ed.) (2000). *People Versus States: Minorities at Risk in the New Century*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press.

Gurr, T. R., & W. H. Moore (1997). Ethnopolitical Rebellion: A Cross-Sectional Analysis of the 1980s with Risk Assessments for the 1990. *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 41, No. 4, pp. 1079–1103.

Haindrava, I. (2008). Eyes Wide Open. *Russian Analytical Digest*, No. 45 (4 September 2008) (Russia and the Conflict in Georgia), pp. 6–8.

Halbach, U. (2005). *Der Kaukasus in neuem Licht: Die EU und Rußland in ihrer schwierigsten Nachbarschaftsregion* [The Caucasus in a New Light: The EU and Russia in Its Most Difficult Neighborhood Region]. Berlin: Stiftung Sicherheit und Politik, Deutsches Institut für Internationale Politik und Sicherheit (SWP) [German Institute for International and Security Affairs]. Available online: [http://www.swp-berlin.org/common/get\\_document.php?asset\\_id=2576](http://www.swp-berlin.org/common/get_document.php?asset_id=2576). (Accessed 19 January 2010).

Halbach, U. (2007). *Antiterrorismus und Jihad im postsowjetischen Raum* [Anti-terrorism and Jihad in the post-Soviet Space]. Berlin: Stiftung Sicherheit und Politik, Deutsches Institut für Internationale Politik und Sicherheit (SWP) [German Institute for International and Security Affairs]. Available online: [http://www.swp-berlin.org/common/get\\_document.php?asset\\_id=4270](http://www.swp-berlin.org/common/get_document.php?asset_id=4270) (Accessed 19 January 2010).

Hanson, A. (1989). The Making of the Maori: Culture Invention and Its Logic. *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 91, No. 4, pp. 890–902.

Harff, B. and T. R. Gurr (2004). *Ethnic Conflict in World Politics* (Second Edition; First Published in 1994). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Harrison, S. S. (2007). Meddling Aggressively in Iran. *Middle East Online*, 9 October 2007. Available online: <http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/Default.pl?id=22592>. Originally published in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, October 2007, Available online on the website of *Le Monde Diplomatique* at: <http://mondediplo.com/2007/10/02iran>. (Accessed 28 January 2008)

Hart, C. C. (1998 [1932]). Political Attitudes and Affiliations of Persian Armenians: An American Diplomatic Report (1932). In: C. Chaqueri (ed.) *The Armenians of Iran: The Paradoxical Role of a Minority in a Dominant Culture.*, pp. 370–379. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Heathershaw, J. (2011). Post-conflict Tajikistan: The Politics of Peacebuilding and the Emergence of Legitimate Order. (Paperback; Hard Cover published in 2009). London: Routledge.

Henze, P. B. (1983). Fire and Sword in the Caucasus: The 19<sup>th</sup> Century Resistance of the North Caucasian Mountaineers. *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 2, No.1, pp. 5–44.

Henze, P. B. (1996, 2007). Circassian Resistance to Russia. In: M. Bennigsen Broxup (eds). *The North Caucasus Barrier: The Russian Advance towards the Muslim World*, pp. 62–111. London: C. Hurst & Co.

Hewitt, G. (2005). North West Caucasian. *Lingua*, Vol. 115, No. 1–2, pp. 91–145.

Hill, R. (2003b). The Dissolution of the Soviet Union: Federation, Commonwealth, Secession. In: J. Coakley (ed.). *The Territorial Management of Ethnic Conflict* (Second Revised and Expanded Edition), pp. 199–228. London & Portland, OR: Frank Cass Publishers.

Hille, Ch. (2010). *State Building and Conflict Resolution in the Caucasus*. Leiden: Brill.

Hin, J. (2003). *Ethnic and Civic Identity: Incompatible Loyalties?—The Case of Armenians in Post-Soviet Georgia*. Utrecht & Amsterdam: Royal Dutch Geographical Society & University of Amsterdam.

Hirsch, F. (1997). The Soviet Union as a Work-in-Progress: Ethnographers and the Category Nationality in the 1926, 1937, and 1939 Censuses. *Slavic Review*, Vol. 56, No. 2, pp. 251–278.

Hirsch, F. (2005). *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge & the Making of the Soviet Union*. Ithaca, NY & London: Cornell University Press.

Hobsbawm, E. & T. Ranger (eds) (1983). *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press.

Hobsbawm, E. (1983a). Introduction: Inventing Traditions. In: E. Hobsbawm & T. Ranger (eds). *The Invention of Tradition*, pp. 1–14. Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press.

Hobsbawm, E. (1983b). *Mass Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870–1914*. In: E. Hobsbawm & T. Ranger (eds). *The Invention of Tradition*, pp. 263–308. Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press.

Hobsbawm, E. (1990). *Nations and Nationalism since 1870: Programme, Myth, Reality*. Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press.

Hopkirk, P. (1994). *The Great Game: The Struggle for Empire in Central Asia*. New York; Tokyo & London: Kodansha International. (First Published in 1990 as “The Great Game: On Secret Service in High Asia”, by John Murray Publishers.)

Horowitz, D. L. (1985). *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Berkley; Los Angeles & London: UCLA University Press.

Horowitz, D. L. (1991). Making Moderation Pay: The Comparative Politics of Ethnic Conflict Management. In: J. V. Montville (ed.). *Conflict and Peacemaking in Multiethnic Societies*, pp. 451–475 (Paperback). Lexington MA: Lexington Books.

Horsman, S. (1999). Uzbekistan’s Involvement in The Tajik Civil War 1992–97: Domestic Considerations. *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 18, No. 1, pp. 37–48.

Hotamov, N. (2001/1380 Solar Hegira). Dar Bokhara Bokhar Gardidim [We Faded Away in Bukhara] In: M. Shakurzoda (Shukurov) (ed. and translator). *Tajikan, Ariaiha va Falat-e Iran* [Tajiks, Aryans and the Iranian Plateau], pp: 263–275. Tehran: Soroush.

Hovannisian, R. G. (1994). Historical Memory and Foreign Relations: The Armenian Perspective. In: S. F. Starr (ed.). *The Legacy of History in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*. pp. 237–276. Armonk, NY & London: M. E. Sharpe.

Hovannisian, R. G. (1999). Introduction: The Armenian Genocide, Remembrance and Denial. In: R. G. Hovannisian (ed.). *Remembrance and Denial: The Case of the Armenian Genocide*. pp. 13–22. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University.

Hovian, A. (2001/1380 Solar Hegira). *Armanian-e Iran* [The Armenians of Iran]. Tehran: The International Center for Dialogue among Civilizations & Hermes.

Hunter, S. (1997). Azerbaijan: Searching for New Neighbours. In: Bremmer & Tarras (eds). *New States, New Politics: Building the Post Soviet Nations*, pp. 437–470. Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press.

Hunter, S. (2006). Borders, Conflict, and Security in the Caucasus: The Legacy of the Past. *SAIS Review*, Vol. 26 no.1, 111–125.

Huntington, S. (1993). The Clash of Civilizations? *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 3, pp. 22–49.

Huntington, S. (1997). *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. London: Simon & Schuster.

Huskey, E. (1997). Kyrgyzstan: The Politics of Demographic and Economic Frustration. In: I. Bremmer & R. Tarras (eds). *New States, New Politics: Building the Post-Soviet Nations*, pp. 655–680. Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press.

Hutchinson, J. & A. D. Smith (1996). Introduction. In: J. Hutchinson & A. D. Smith (eds). *Ethnicity*, pp. 3–14. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press.

Hyman. A. (1996). Volga Germans. In: G. Smith (ed.). *The Nationalities Question in the Post-Soviet States*, pp. 462–476. London & New York: Longman.

Ilkhamov, A. & L. Zhukova (eds) (2002). *Etnicheskiy atlas Uzbekistana* [Ethnic Atlas of Uzbekistan]. Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation Uzbekistan. Joint Edition of the Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation Uzbekistan and LIA <R. Elinina>.

International Crisis Group (2007). *Georgia's South Ossetia Conflict: Make Haste Slowly*. Crisis Group Europe Report N°183, 7 June 2007.

Isfahanportal.ir (2007a). *Moarrefi-ye Shahrestan-e Fereydan* [An Introduction to Shahrestan-e Fereydan]. Available online on the website *Portal-e Ostan-e Esfahan* at: <http://www.isfahanportal.ir/framework.jsp?SID=2105>. The page is copyrighted in 2007 and seems to be updated no later than that year. (Accessed 9 February 2009)

Isfahanportal.ir (2007b). *Moarrefi-ye Shahrestan-e Fereydunshahr* [An Introduction to Shahrestan-e Fereydunshahr] Available online on the website *Portal-e Ostan-e Esfahan* at: <http://www.isfahanportal.ir/framework.jsp?SID=2100> (The page is copyrighted in 2007 and seems to be updated no later than that year). (Accessed 9 February 2009).

Isfahanportal.ir, *Portal-e Ostan-e Esfahan* [the website of *Ostan-e Esfahan*]: <http://www.isfahanportal.ir> and <http://isfp.ir/framework.jsp?SID=1>

Islamawareness.net (2002). *Khattab, the Man who Died for the Cause of Chechnya*. (The original report is from 4 May 2002) Available online: <http://www.islamawareness.net/Persecution/Chechnya/khattab.html> (Accessed 9 November 2009).

Ismailov, E. & R. Garagozov (2007). Confrontational Collective Memory in the Caucasus: How Can the “Curse of the Past” Be Overcome? *The Caucasus & Globalization*, Vol. 1, No. 4. Available online: [http://www.ca-c.org/c-g/2007/journal\\_eng/c-g-3/10.shtml](http://www.ca-c.org/c-g/2007/journal_eng/c-g-3/10.shtml) (Accessed 22 November 2011)

IWPR (2006, 3 November). Armenia: Yezidi Identity Battle. *Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, CRS Issue 364. Available online:

<http://iwpr.net/report-news/armenia-yezidi-identity-battle> (Accessed 11 April 2010).

Jahani, C. (2005). State Control and Its Impact on Language in Baluchistan. In: A. Rabo & B. Utas (eds). *The Role of the State in West Asia*. pp. 151–164. Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul.

Jahanshahlou Afshar, N. (2007/1386 Solar Hegira). *Ma va Biganegan: Khaterat-e Siasi-ye Doktor Nosratollah-e Jahanshahlou Afshar* [We and the Strangers: The Political Memoirs of Dr. Nosratollah Jahanshahlou Afshar]. Collected and edited by N. Peymaei. Samarqand: Tehran. A summary titled as “*Dr. Jahanshahlou: Azarbaijan, Arran and the Azarbaijani Language*” is available online: <http://www.kavehfarrokh.com/articles/pan-turanism/dr-jahanshahlou-azarbaijan-arran-and-the-azarbaijani-language/> (Accessed 19 November 2010).

Jaimoukha, A. M. (2005). *The Chechens: A Handbook*. London & New York: RoutledgeCurzon.

Jenkins, R. (1997). *Rethinking Ethnicity: Arguments and Explorations*. London, Thousand Oaks, CA & New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Johanson, L. (1998). The History of Turkic. In: L. Johanson & É. Á. Csató (eds). *The Turkic Languages*, pp. 81–125. London: Routledge.

Johanson, L. (2001). *Discoveries on the Turkic Linguistic Map*. Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul.

Jones, S. (1997). Georgia: The Trauma of Statehood. In: I. Bremmer & R. Taras (eds) *New States, New Politics: Building the Post-Soviet Nations*, pp: 505–543. Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press.

Jones, S. (2009). Introduction: Georgia’s domestic front. *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 28, No. 2, pp. 93–98.

Jones, S. (ed.) (2010). *War and Revolution in the Caucasus: Georgia Ablaze*. London: Routledge.

Jonson, L. (2006). *Tajikistan in the New Central Asia: Geopolitics, Great Power Rivalry and Radical Islam*. London & New York: I. B. Tauris.

Junne, G. & W. Verkoren (eds) (2005). *Postconflict Development: Meeting New Challenges*. London & Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Kaiser, R. J. (1994). *The Geography of Nationalism in Russia and the USSR*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Kaldor, M. (1999). The Structure of Conflict. In: Lennart Wohlgemuth, Samantha Gibson, Stephan Klasen, & Emma Rothschild (eds). *Common Security and Civil Society in Africa, Volume 1999*, pp. 118–129. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet.

Kaldor, M. (2001). *New & Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era*. (With a New Afterword). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Kaloev, B. A. & Z. B. Tsalagova (2005). *Kulturnoe Naslednie Narodov Rossii: Osetiny* [Cultural Heritage of Peoples of Russia: Ossetians]. Golos-Press: Moscow.

Kaplan, R. D. (2000a). *Eastward to Tartary: Travels in the Balkans, the Middle East, and the Caucasus*. New York: Random House.

Kaplan, R. D. (2000b). Where Europe Vanishes, *The Atlantic Magazine*, November 2000. Available online: <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2000/11/where-europe-vanishes/6460/> (Accessed 25 July 2011).

Katouzian, H. (2004). State and Society under Reza Shah. In: T. Atabaki & E. J. Zürcher. *Men of Order: Authoritarian Modernisation under Atatürk and Reza Shah*, pp. 13–43. London & New York: I. B. Tauris.

Kaufman, S. J. (2001). *Modern Hatreds: The symbolic Politics of Ethnic War*. Ithaca, NY & London: Cornell University Press.

Kaufman, S. J. (2006). Symbolic Politics or Rational Choice? Testing Theories of Extreme Ethnic Violence. *International Security* .Vol. 30, No. 4, pp. 45–86.

Keddie, N. (1986). Religion, Ethnic Minorities and the State in Iran: An Overview. In: A. Banuazizi & M. Weiner (eds). *The State, Religion and Ethnic Politics: Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan*, pp. 157–166. Syracuse NY: Syracuse University Press.



Kerr, D. (1995). The New Eurasianism: The Rise of Geopolitics in Russia's Foreign Policy. *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 47, No. 6, pp. 977–988.

Kertzer, D. I. & D. Arel (eds) (2002). *Census and identity: the politics of race, ethnicity, and language in national census*. Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press.

Khabarnameh-ye Khwansar (2007/1386 Solar Hegira). *Yahudian dar Khwansar* [Jews in Khwansar], by Mohammad Seddighian, 18 Aban 1386 Solar Hegira. Available online: <http://tomego-khosar.blogfa.com/post-43.aspx>. (Accessed 6 November 2011).

Khalid, A. (1998). *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia*. Berkeley; Los Angeles & London: University of California Press.

Khalid, A. (2007). *Islam after Communism: Religion and Politics in Central Asia*. Berkeley; Los Angeles & London: University of California Press.

Khasiev, S. M. (2004). “O roli i meste religioznogo faktora v glubnykh prichinakh Rossiysko-Chechenskogo konflikta” [The Role and the Place of the Religious Factor among the Main Causes of the Russian-Chechen Conflict.] In: A. Iskandarian (ed.). *Religia i politika na Kavkaze* [Religion and Politics in the Caucasus], pp. 110–120. Yerevan: Kavzkaskiy Institut SMI.

Khazanov, A. M. (2002). *Contemporary Russian Nationalism between East and West*. Available online on Eurozine's website: <http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2002-03-08-khazanov-en.html> and <http://eurozine.com/pdf/2002-03-08-khazanov-en.pdf> (Accessed 20 January 2010)

Kim, G. (2004). Koreans in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Russia. In: M. Ember, C. Ember

King, Ch. (2008a). *The Ghost of Freedom: A History of the Caucasus*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press.

King, Ch. (2008b). The Five-Day War: Managing Moscow After the Georgia Crisis. *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 87, No. 6, pp. 2–11.

Klüter, H. (1993). People of German Descent in CIS States—Areas of Settlement, Territorial Autonomy and Emigration. *GeoJournal*, Vol. 31. No. 4, pp. 419–434.

Knight, D. B. (1982). Identity and Territory: Geographical Perspectives on Nationalism and Regionalism. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 72, No.4, pp. 514–531.

Knippenberg, H. (1991). The Nationalities Question in the Soviet Union. In: H. Van Amersfoort & H. Knippenberg (eds) *States and Nations: The Rebirth of the Nationalities Question in Europe*, pp. 42–58. Nederlandse Geografische Studies. Utrecht & Amsterdam: Royal Dutch Geographic Association (KNAG) & University of Amsterdam (UvA).

Knippenberg, H. (1996). State formation and nation-building in the Netherlands and the Soviet Union: A Historical Comparison. *GeoJournal*, Vol. 40, No. 3, pp. 249–262.

Knippenberg, H. & P. Dostál (1979). The “Russification” of Ethnic Minorities in the USSR. *Soviet Geography*, Vol. 20, No.4, pp. 197–219.

Knippenberg, H. & P. Dostál (1981). De Staatkundige Indeling en het Russificeringsproces in de Sowjet-Unie [Administrative Division and the Process of Russification in the Soviet Union]. In: J. M. M. Van Amersfoort, W. F. Heinemeijer, & H.H. Van der Wusten (eds). *Een Wereld van Staten [A World of States]*, pp. 105–119. Alphen den Rijn, the Netherlands: Samson.

Kolossov, V. (1995). Nationalism versus “World Society”: A View from Russia. In: P. J. Taylor (ed.). *Political Geography of the Twentieth Century: A Global Analysis*, pp. 239–243. Chichester & New York; etc.: John Wiley & Sons.

Komakhia, M. (2005a). Yezidi Kurds in Georgia: Ethnic Self-awareness and Consolidation. *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 32 (2005, No. 2) , [http://www.ca-c.org/online/2005/journal\\_eng/cac-02/16.komeng.shtml](http://www.ca-c.org/online/2005/journal_eng/cac-02/16.komeng.shtml) (Accessed 10 September 2008).

Komakhia, M. (2005b). The Greeks of Georgia: Migration and Socioeconomic Problems. *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 36 (2005, No. 6). Available online: <https://www.ca-c.org/journal/2005-06-eng/17.komprimen.shtml> (Accessed 20 December 2011).

Komakhia, M. (2006). The Assyrians of Georgia: Ethnic Specifics should be preserved. *Central Asia and the Caucasus*. No.39 (2006, No.3). Available online: [http://www.ca-c.org/online/2006/journal\\_eng/cac-03/16.komen.shtml](http://www.ca-c.org/online/2006/journal_eng/cac-03/16.komen.shtml) (Accessed 8 October 2008)

Kotecha, H. (2006). *Islamic and Ethnic Identities in Azerbaijan: Emerging Trends and Tensions*. Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's (OSCE) Office in Baku. Available online: [http://www.osce.org/documents/ob/2006/08/23087\\_en.pdf](http://www.osce.org/documents/ob/2006/08/23087_en.pdf) (Accessed 28 September 2011).

Kozlov, V. I. (1982). *Natsional'nosti SSSR: Etnodemograficheskii obzor (izdanie vtoroe)* [USSR's Nationalities: An Ethno-demographic Review (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)]. Moscow: Finansy i Statistika.

Kreyenbroek, Ph. G. (1995). *Yezidism: Its Background, Observances, and Textual Tradition*. Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press.

Krikorian, O. (2004). *Being Yezidi, on Yezidi identity politics in Armenia*. <http://www.oneworld.am/journalism/articles/yezidi.html> (first published by Transitions Online (2004). (Accessed 6 October 2008)

Kuchakian Fard, H. (1999/1377 Solar Hegira). *Majmue-ye Akharin Qavanin va Moqarrarat dar zemine-ye Showraha-ye Eslami-ye Keshvar* [Collection of the latest Laws and Regulations of the Islamic Councils in the Country]. Tehran: Mobtakeran

Kumakhov, M & K. Vamling (1998). *Dopolnitel'nye Konstruktsii v Kabardinskom Yazyke* [Complementation in Kabardian]. Lund: Department of Linguistics, Lund University.

Lake, D. A. (1995). *Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention*. University of California, Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation (IGCC) Policy Brief, No. 03, March 1995.

Lake, D. A. & D. Rothchild (1996a). Containing Fear: The Origins and Management of Ethnic Conflict. *International Security*, Vol. 21, No. 2, pp. 41–75.

Lake, D. A. & D. Rothchild (1996b). *Ethnic Fears and Global Engagement: The International Spread and Management of Ethnic Conflict*. University of California, Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation (IGCC) Policy Brief, No. 20, January 1996.

Lake, D. A. & D. Rothchild (1998). Spreading Fear: The Genesis of Transnational Ethnic Conflict. In: D. A. Lake, & D. Rothchild (eds). *The International Spread of Ethnic Conflict: Fear, Diffusion, and Escalation*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, pp. 3–32.

Lake, D. A. & D. Rothchild (eds) (1998). *The International Spread of Ethnic Conflict: Fear, Diffusion, and Escalation*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Laruelle, M. (2004). The Two Faces of Contemporary Eurasianism: An Imperial Version of Russian Nationalism. *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 32, No. 1, pp: 115–136.

Lewis, B. (1990). The Roots of Muslim Rage. *The Atlantic Monthly*, September 1990. Available online: <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1990/09/the-roots-of-muslim-rage/4643/> (Accessed 18 February 2011).

Lewis, B. (2002). *What Went Wrong? Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response*. London: Phoenix, Orion Books Ltd.

Library of Congress Federal Research Division (2008). *Country Profile: Iran*, May 2008. Available online: <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Iran.pdf> (Accessed 15 March 2010).

Lieven, A. (1998). *Chechnya: Tombstone of Russian Power*. New Haven, CT & London: Yale University Press.

Lijphart, A. (1977). *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration*. New Haven, CT & London: Yale University Press.

Lipschutz, R. & B. Crawford (1995). “Ethnic” Conflict Isn’t. University of California, Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation (IGCC) Policy Brief, No. 02, March 2005.

Longworth, R. C. (1998). Boomtown Baku. *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, May–June 1998, pp. 34–38.

Madih, A. A. (2007). The Kurds of Khorasan. *Iran and the Caucasus*, Vol. 11, No.1, pp. 11–31.

Malmberg, T. (1980). *Human Territoriality: Survey of Behavioural Territories in Man with Preliminary Analysis and Discussion of Meaning*. The Hague: Mouton.

Mann, M. (1984). The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and Results. *European Journal of Sociology /Archives Européennes de Sociologie*, Vol. 25, No. 2, pp. 185–213.

Mansfield, E. D. & J. Snyder (2005). *Electing to Fight: Why Emerging Democracies Go to War*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

MAR (2006a). *Assessment for Karachay in Russia*. Minorities at Risk, Data. Information current as of December 31, 2006. Available online on the *Minorities at Risk* website: <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/assessment.asp?groupId=36511> (Accessed 26 November 2008).

MAR (2006b). *Assessment for Ingush in Russia*. Minorities at Risk, Data. Information current as of December 31, 2006. Available online on the *Minorities at Risk* website: <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/assessment.asp?groupId=36528> (Accessed 18 April 2011).

MAR (2006c). *Assessment for Chechens in Russia*. Minorities at Risk, Data. Information current as of December 31, 2006. Available online on the *Minorities at Risk* website: <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/assessment.asp?groupId=36504> (Accessed 18 April 2011).

MAR (2006d). *Assessment for Uzbeks in Tajikistan*. Minorities at Risk, Data. Information current as of December 31, 2006. Available online on the *Minorities at Risk's* website: <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/assessment.asp?groupId=70202> (Accessed 18 April 2011).

MAR (2010a). *Chronology for Uzbeks in Tajikistan*. Minorities at Risk, Data. Information current as of July 16, 2010. Available online on the *Minorities at Risk* website: <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/chronology.asp?groupId=70202> (Accessed 18 April 2011).

MAR (2010b). *Chronology for Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan*. Minorities at Risk, Data. Information current as of July 16, 2010. Available online on the

*Minorities at Risk* website:  
<http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/chronology.asp?groupId=70302>  
(Accessed 18 April 2011).

MAR. *Minorities at Risk* Project: <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/>

Markedonov, S. (2008a). A Russian Perspective: Forging Peace in the Caucasus. *Russian Analytical Digest*, No. 40 (8 May 2008) (Russia and the “Frozen Conflicts” of Georgia), pp. 5–9.

Markedonov, S. (2008b). Caucasus Conflict Breaks Old Rules of the Game. *Russian Analytical Digest*, No. 45 (4 September 2008) (Russia and the Conflict in Georgia), pp. 2–5.

Martin, T. (1999). Interpreting the New Archival Signals: Nationalities Policy and the Nature of the Soviet Bureaucracy. *Cahiers du Monde russe* [Journal of the Russian World], Vol. 40, No.1–2, pp. 113–124.

Martin, T. (2001a). *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939*. Ithaca, NY & London: Cornell University Press.

Martin, T. (2001b). An Affirmative Action Empire: The Soviet Union as the Highest Form of Imperialism. In: Suny, R.G. & T, Martin (eds). *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, pp. 67–90. Oxford & New York : Oxford University Press.

Masov, R. (1996). *The History of a National Catastrophe*. Translated by Iraj Bashiri. Department of Slavic and Central Asian Languages and Literatures. University of Minnesota. (Original published in 1991). Available online: <http://www.angelfire.com/rnb/bashiri/Masov/frame.html> (Accessed 18 June 2010).

Mateeua, A. (2006). *Central Asia: A Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding*. London: International Alert.

McGarry, J. (2005). Canadian Lesson for Iraq. In: B. O’Leary, J. McGarry & K. Salih (eds). *The Future of Kurdistan and Iraq*. Philadelphia, PA. University of Pennsylvania Press, pp. 92–115.

McGarry, J. (2007). Asymmetrical Autonomy and Conflict Regulation: A response to Adeney, Conversi, Hechter and Rezvani. *Ethnopolitics*. Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 133–136.

Megoran, N. (2004). The critical geopolitics of the Uzbekistan–Kyrgyzstan Ferghana Valley boundary dispute, 1999–2000. *Political Geography*, Vol. 23, No. 6, pp. 731–764.

Megoran, N. (2005). The critical geopolitics of danger in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, Vol. 23, No. 4, pp. 555–580.

Melander, E. (2001). The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict Revisited: Was the War Inevitable?, *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 48–75.

Miller, D. E. (1999). The Role of Historical Memory in Interpreting Events in the Republic of Armenia. In: R. G. Hovannisian (ed.). *Remembrance and Denial: The Case of the Armenian Genocide*. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University, pp. 187–200.

Minahan, J. (2004). *The Former Soviet Union's Diverse Peoples: A Reference Sourcebook*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC–CLIO.

Minasian, L. (1998/1377 Solar Hegira). *Farhang-e Amiane-ye Aramane-ye Fereydan/ Giughakan Barr u Ban (Peria Gavar)* [The Fereydani Armenian Culture and Traditions/ Rural Folklore (Fereydan Region)]. Esfahan: Vank Cathedral.

Minorities Right Group International (2008a). *Tajikistan Overview: Pamiris*. Updated January 2008. Available online: <http://www.minorityrights.org/2384/tajikistan/pamiris.html> (Accessed 18 April 2011).

Minorities Right Group International (2008b). *Tajikistan Overview: Uzbeks*. Updated January 2008. Available online: <http://www.minorityrights.org/2383/tajikistan/uzbeks.html> (Accessed 18 April 2011).

Mitchell, L. (2009). Compromising Democracy: State Building in Saakashvili's Georgia. *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 28, No. 2, pp. 171–183.

Monogarova, L. F. (1972). *Preobrazovaniya v bytu i kulture pripamirskikh narodnostey* [Transformations in the Pamiri People's Life and Culture]. Moscow: Nauka.

Montalvo, J. G. & M. Reynal-Querol (2005). Ethnic Polarization, Potential Conflict, and Civil Wars. *The American Economic Review*, Vol. 95. No. 3, pp. 796–816.

Morozova, N. (2009). Geopolitics, Eurasianism and Russian Foreign Policy under Putin. *Geopolitics*, Vol. 14, No. 4, pp. 667–686.

Motyl, A. J. (ed.) (1992). *The Post-Soviet Nations: Perspectives on the Demise of the USSR*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Muliani, S. (2000/1379 Solar Hegira). *Jaygah-e Gorjiha dar Tarikh va Farhang va Tamaddon-e Iran* [Georgians' Position in the Iranian History and Civilization]. Esfahan: Yekta.

Murphy, A. B. (1989). Territorial Policies in Multiethnic States. *Geographical Review*, Vol. 79, No.4, pp. 410–421.

*Naseleniye soyuznykh respublik* [The Union Republics' Population] (1977). Edited by T. V. Ryabushkin (editor in chief). Moscow: Statistika.

Nichols, J. (1997). *The Ingush (with notes on the Chechen): Background information*. University of California: Berkley. Available online on the website of *University of California, Berkeley Linguistics Department* at: [http://linguistics.berkeley.edu/~ingush/ingush\\_people.html](http://linguistics.berkeley.edu/~ingush/ingush_people.html) (Accessed 26 November 2008).

Nyheim, D. (2009). *Preventing Violence, War and State Collapse: The Future of Conflict Early Warning and Response*. Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

O'Ballance, E. (1997). *Wars in the Caucasus, 1990–1995*. New York University Press: New York.

O'Loughlin, J. & C. A. Raleigh (2008). Spatial Analysis of Civil War Violence. In: Cox, K. R. & M. Low & J. Robinson (eds). *Handbook of Political Geography*, pp. 493–508. London & Thousand Oaks, CA; etc.: Sage.

O'Sullivan, P. M. (2001). *The Geography of War in the Post Cold War World*. Lewiston, NY & Lampeter, UK; etc.: The Edwin Mellen Press.



Olcott, M. B. (1997). Kazakhstan: Pushing for Eurasia. In: I. Bremmer & R. Taras (eds). *New States, New Politics: Building the Post-Soviet Nations*. pp: 547–571. Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press.

Oldberg, I. (1995). *Rysslands Krig mot Tjetjenien* [Russia's War against Chechnya]. Stockholm: Världspolitikens Dagsfråger, Nr. 4.

Ormrod, J. (1997). The North Caucasus: Confederation in Conflict. In: I. Bremmer & R. Taras (eds). *New States, New Politics: Building the Post-Soviet Nations*, pp: 96–140. Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press.

Orujev, R. (2005). Azerbaijan: Kurds Targeted Again. *Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, Caucasus Service, CRS No. 174, 21 Feb 2005. Available online: <http://iwpr.net/report-news/azerbaijan-kurds-targeted-again> (Accessed 28 September 2011).

Parekh, Bh. (1999). Defining National Identity in a Multicultural Society. In: E. Mortimer, & R. Fine. *People, Nation and State: The Meaning of Ethnicity and Nationalism*, pp. 66–44. London & New York: I. B. Tauris.

Pasdermajian, H. (1998/1377 Solar Hegira). *Tarikh-e Armanestan* [History of Armenia]. Translated by M. Ghazi. Tehran: Zarrin. Originally Published in 1949 as *Histoire de L'Arménie; depuis les origines jusqu'au traité de Lusane* [History of Armenia from the beginning until the Treaty of Lausanne].

Pavlenko, A. (2008). Multilingualism in Post-Soviet Countries: Language Revival, Language Removal, and Sociolinguistic Theory. *The International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, Vol. 11, No. 3–4, pp. 275–314.

Pelkmans, M. (2002). Religion, Nation and State in Georgia: Christian Expansion in Muslim Ajaria. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Vol. 22, No. 2, pp. 249–273.

Pelkmans, M. (2005). *Baptized Georgian: Religious Conversion to Christianity in Autonomous Ajaria*. Working paper, No. 71. Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle/Saale, Germany.

Pelkmans, M. (2006). *Defending the border: identity, religion, and modernity in the Republic of Georgia*. Ithaca, NY & London: Cornell University Press.

*Petermanns Geographische Mitteilungen* (1896). Dr. A. Petermanns *Mitteilungen aus Justus Perthes' geographischer Anstalt*. Gotha: Justus Perthes.

Pokshishevsky, V. (1974). *Geography of the Soviet Union*. Translated from the Russian Original “*Geografiya Sovetskogo Soyuza: Priroda, Naselenie, Khozyaisto*” by D. Fidlon. Moscow: Progress.

Politkovskaya, A. (2003). *A Small Corner of Hell: Dispatches from Chechnya*. (With an Introduction by Georgi M. Derluguian. Translated by A. Burry & T. Tulchinsky, Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press. Originally Published in 2001 as *Vtoraya Chechenskaya* [The Second Chechen (War)], by Zakharov Publishers.

Posen, B. R. (1993a). The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict. *Survival*, Vol. 35, No. 1, pp. 27–47.

Posen, B. R. (1993b). The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict. In M. E. Brown (ed.), *Ethnic Conflict and International Security*, pp. 103–124. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Potier, T. (2001). *Conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia and South Ossetia: A Legal Appraisal*. The Hague & Cambridge, MA: Kluwer Law International.

Rabo, A. & B. Utas (ed.) (2005). *The Role of the State in West Asia*. Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul.

Ragin, C. (1987). *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies*. Berkeley & Los Angeles & London: University of California Press.

Rahimi, M. M. (2000/1379 Solar Hegira.). *Gorjiha-ye Iran: Fereydunshahr* [The Georgians of Iran: Fereydunshahr]. Yekta. Esfahan.

*Red Book* (1991). *The Red Book of the Peoples of the Russian Empire*. (Date of translation is not mentioned but the Foreword is written in 1991) by Margus Kolga, Igor Tõnurist, Lembit Vaba & Jüri Viikberg Translated into English by S. Ainsaar, H. Greenbaum, K. Kaer, L. Liivak, K. Mits, E. Sivonen, T. Tobber, V. Verrev. Available online: <http://www.eki.ee/books/redbook> (Accessed 5 December 2008).

Renner, K. (1918). *Das Selbstbestimmungsrecht der Nationen- In besonderer anwendung auf Österreich. Erster Teil: Nation und Staat* [The National Right of Self-determination- Especially Applied to Austria. First Part: Nation and State]. *Vienna: Franz Deuticke*.

Reuters (23 February 2010). Iran arrests Sunni rebel leader Rigi. By: Parisa Hafezi & (editing by) Allison Williams. Available online on *Reuters* website at: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2010/02/23/idUSHAF321911> (Accessed 17 June 2011).

Reuters (17 June 2010). U.N. says 400,000 Kyrgyz refugees. By: Dimiti Solovyov. Available online on *Reuters* website at: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2010/06/17/us-kyrgyzstan-violence-idUSTRE65A02B20100617> (Accessed 17 June 2011).

Reza, E. (1993/1372 Solar Hegira). *Azerbaijan va Arran (Albania ye Qafqaz)*. Tehran: Bonyad-e mowqafat-e Afshar.

Reza, E. (2011). *Azarbaidzhan i Arran (Aturpatakan I Kavkazskaya Albaniya)*. Translated from the Persian original, *Azerbaijan va Arran (Albania ye Qafqaz)*, by G. Asatrian [also contains contributions by V. A. Zakharov]. Moscow: Kvadriga.

Rezvani, B. (2005). Central Eurasia in Amsterdam: Three Conference Reports. *Central Eurasian Studies Review*, Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 60–62.

Rezvani, B. (2006). Irak: geen eeuwenoud sektarisch, maar modern etnisch conflict [Iraq: No Centuries-Old Sectarian, but a Modern Ethnic Conflict]. *Geografie*, Vol. 15, No. 6, pp: 46–48.

Rezvani, B. (2007). Almaniha-ye Asia-ye Mianeh [Germans of Central Asia]. *Farhang va Ensan* [Culture and Human Being, Iranian academic journal of Anthropology and Ethnology], (No. 5) Vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 164–168.

Rezvani, B. (2008a). The Islamization and Ethnogenesis of the Fereydani Georgians. *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 36, No. 4, pp. 593–623.

Rezvani, B. (2008b). Aghvam-e Sharghi-ye Asia-ye Mianeh [East Asian Ethnic Groups in Central Asia], *Farhang va Ensan* [Culture and Human Being], (No. 7) Vol. 4, No. 2, pp. 164–169.

Rezvani, B. (2008c). Steppe Magazine: A Central Asian Panorama. *Anthropology of the Middle East*, Vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 100–102. (Review)

Rezvani, B. (2009a). The Fereydani Georgian Representation of Identity and Narration of History: a Case of Emic Coherence. *Anthropology of the Middle East*, Vol. 4, No. 2, pp. 52–74.

Rezvani, B. (2009b). Iranian Georgians: Prerequisites for a Research. *Iran and the Caucasus*, Vol. 13, No. 1, pp. 197–203.

Rezvani, B. (2010). The Ossetian–Ingush Confrontation: Explaining a Horizontal Conflict. *Iran and the Caucasus*, Vol. 14, No. 2, pp. 419–429.

Rezvani, B. (2011). (Reviewing and Discussing John Heathershaw’s [2011]) Post–Conflict Tajikistan: The politics of peace building and the emergence of legitimate order. *Ethnopolitics*, Vol. 11, No 2, pp. 470–472.

Ria Novosti (23 January 2007). Supreme Court Backs Decision to Close Chechnya Human Rights NGO. Available online on *Ria Novosti*’s website at: <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20070123/59577944.html> (Accessed 20 December 2009).

Ria Novosti (18 June 2010). Death Toll in Kyrgyz Clashes May Near 2,000 – President. Available online on the *Ria Novosti* website: <http://en.rian.ru/exsoviet/20100618/159471284.html> (Accessed 14 June 2011).

Ria Novosti (3 July 2010). Otunbayeva Blames Dark Forces for Kyrgyz Violence. Available online on the *Ria Novosti* website: <http://en.rian.ru/exsoviet/20100703/159674966.html> (Accessed 14 June 2011).

Rihoux, B. & C. Ragin (eds) (2009). *Configurational Comparative Methods: Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) and Related Techniques*. Thousand Oaks, CA; etc.: Sage.

Roessingh, M. (1991). The Interaction of States and Ethnic Groups: Emergence, Persistence or Disappearance of Primordial Manifestations. In: H. Van Amersfoort & H. Knippenberg (eds). *States and Nations: The Rebirth of the Nationalities Question in Europe*, pp. 172–187. Nederlandse Geografische Studies. Utrecht & Amsterdam: Royal Dutch Geographic Association (KNAG) & University of Amsterdam (UvA).

Roessingh, M. (1996). *Ethnonationalism and Political Systems in Europe: A State of Tension*. Amsterdam University Press: Amsterdam.

Roessingh, M. (2001). Ethno-nationalism and Political Systems in Europe. In: Dijkink, Gertjan & Hans Knippenberg (eds). *The Territorial Factor: Political Geography in a Globalising World*. pp. 293–316. Amsterdam: Vossiuspers UvA, Amsterdam University Press.

Rohwer, G. (2008). *Qualitative Comparative Analysis: A Discussion of Interpretations*. Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Fakultät für Sozialwissenschaft [Faculty of Social Sciences], Available online: <http://www.stat.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/papers/dqca.pdf> (Accessed 29 July 2011).

Roy, O. (2001). Inter-regional Dynamics of War. In: C. Barnes & K. Abdullaev (eds). *Politics of Compromise: The Tajikistan Peace Process (Accord No. 10)*, p. 23. London: Conciliation Resources.

Roy, O. (2007). *Le Croissant et le Chaos* [Crescent and Chaos]. Paris: Tapage Hachette Littératures.

RREC (2005). *Comprehending the Present (Annual Report 2005)*. Russian Regional Environmental Center (RREC).

*Russian Analytical Digest*/Chirikba, S. (2008b). Interview with Dr. Viacheslav Chirikba, Adviser on Foreign Policy to the President of Abkhazia. *Russian Analytical Digest*, No. 45 (4 September 2008) (Russia and the Conflict in Georgia), pp. 8–11.

*Russian Analytical Digest*/Gegeshidze, A. (2008b). Interview with Archil Gegeshidze, Senior Fellow at the Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies (GFSIS) in Tbilisi. *Russian Analytical Digest*, No. 45 (4 September 2008) (Russia and the Conflict in Georgia), pp. 11–14.

Sack, R. D. (1983). Human Territoriality: A Theory. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 73, No. 1, pp. 55–74.

Sack, R. D. (1986). *Human Territoriality: Its Theory and history*. Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press.

Saffron, I (1998). The Mountain Jews of Guba. *Azerbaijan International*, Vol. 6, No. 2, pp. 46–47. Available online:

[http://azer.com/aiweb/categories/magazine/62\\_folder/62\\_articles/62\\_mountainjews.html](http://azer.com/aiweb/categories/magazine/62_folder/62_articles/62_mountainjews.html) (Accessed 21 January 2010).

Sakaharov, A. N., N. F. Bugay, L. P. Kolodinkova, B. B. Mamraev & L. A. Sidorova (eds) (2006). *Rossia i Kazakhstan: Problemy Istorii (XX-Nachalo XXI Veka)* [Russia and Kazakhstan: Problem of History (20<sup>th</sup>-Early 21<sup>st</sup> Century)]. Moscow: Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Russian History.

Salomons, D. (2005). Security: An Absolute Prerequisite. In: G. Junne & W. Verkoren (eds). *Postconflict Development: Meeting New Challenges*, pp. 19–42. London & Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Sambanis, N. (2001). Do Ethnic and Nonethnic Civil Wars Have the Same Causes?: A Theoretical and Empirical Inquiry (Part 1). *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 45, No. 3, pp. 259–282.

Samii, A. W. (2000). The Nation and Its Minorities: Ethnicity, Unity and State Policy in Iran. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, Vol. 20, No.1–2, pp. 128–137.

Sanikidze, G. (2008). An Historical Survey of Georgian–Iranian Relations in the Nineteenth Century. *Journal of Persianate Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 148–173.

Sansarian, E. (2000). *Religious Minorities in Iran*. Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press.

Saul, J. S. (1979). The Dialectic of Class and Tribe, *Race and Class*, Vol. 20, No. 4, pp. 347–372.

Schermerhorn, R. A. (1978). *Comparative Ethnic Relations: A Framework for Theory and Research*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Schneider, C. Q. & C. Wagemann (2003). *Improving inference with a “two-step” approach: theory and limited diversity in fs/QCA*. EUI Working Paper SPS No. 2003/7, European University Institute, Badia Fiesolana, San Domenico (FI), Italy.

Schoeberlein-Engel (Schoeberlein) J. (1994a). *Identity in Central Asia: Construction and Contention in Conceptions of Ozbek, Tajik, Samarqandi and other Groups*. (Ph. D. Diss., Harvard University).

Schoeberlein-Engel (Schoeberlein) J. (1994b). Conflict in Tajikistan and Central Asia: The Myth of Ethnic Animosity. *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review*, Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 1–55.

Sepiani, M. (1979/1358 Solar Hegira). *Iranian-e Gorji* [Georgian Iranians]. Esfahan: Arash.

Sergeyev, V. M. (2001). Organized Crime and Social Instability in Russia: The Alternative State, Deviant Bureaucracy, and Social Black Holes. In: V. E. Bonnel & G. W. Bresslauer (eds). *Russia in the New Century: Stability or Disorder?*, pp. 158–171. Boulder, CO & Cambridge: Westview Press.

Shaheen, S. (1956). *The Communist Theory of National Self-Determination: It's Historical Evolution up to the October Revolution*. The Hague: Van Hoeve.

Shaw, Ch. (2011). Friendship under Lock and Key: The Soviet Central Asian Border, 1918–34, *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 30, No. 3–4, pp. 331–348.

Shaw, D. J. B. (1999). *Russia in the Modern World: A New Geography*. Oxford; etc.: Blackwell.

Shekofteh, A. (2008). *The Kurds in Khorasan, North-east of Iran*. Available online on the *Cultural & Civil Society of Khorasani Kurds (CSKK)* website: <http://cskk.org/en/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=19> ) (Accessed 10 December 2008).

Shils, E. (1957). Personal, Primordial, Sacred, and Civil Ties. *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 130–145.

Shiokawa, N. (1999). The History of Soviet Language Policy Reconsidered. *Slavic Studies* (a publication of the Slavic Research Center at Hokkaido University), Vol. 46, pp. 155–190.

Shlapentokh, D. (1997). Eurasianism: Past and Present. *Communist and Post Communist Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 2, pp. 129–151.

Shlapentokh, D. (2007a). Dugin, Eurasianism, and Central Asia. *Communist and Post Communist Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 2, pp. 143–156.

Shlapentokh, D. (2007b). Jihadization of the Chechen Islamic Resistance and Global Implications. *Central Asia–Caucasus Analyst*. Available online: <http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/4696> (Accessed 9 November 2011).

Shlapentokh, D. (2010). The Rise of the Russian Khalifat: The View from the Jihadist Side. *Iran and the Caucasus*, Vol. 14, No. 2, pp. 117–142.

Shlapentokh, D. (2011). Jihadism in the Post-Soviet Era: The Case of Interaction of Theoretical and Practical Aspects of the Revolutionary Struggle. *Iran and the Caucasus*, Vol. 15, No. 1–2, pp. 275–298.

Sinelina, Yu. (2006). *Izmenenie religioznosti naseleniia Rossii (pravoslanye i musulmane): suevernoe povedenie rossiyan* [Transformation of Religiosity among Russian Population (Orthodox Christians and Muslims): Superstitious Behavior among Russian Citizens]. Moscow: Nauka.

Skakov, A. (2011). *South Ossetia: Aftermath and Outlook*. Carnegie Moscow Center & Black Sea Peacebuilding Network, Russian Expert Group, Report No. 2011/1.

Slezkine, Y. (1994). The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism. *Slavic Review*, Vol. 53, No. 2, pp. 414–452.

Smith, A. D. (1981). *The Ethnic Revival in the Modern World*. Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press.

Smith, A. D. (1986). *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*. Oxford; etc.: Blackwell.

Smith, A. D. (1999). The Nation: Real or Imagined? In: E. Mortimer & R. Fine. *People, Nation and State: The Meaning of Ethnicity and Nationalism*, pp. 29–36. London & New York: I. B. Tauris.

Smith, A. D. (2003). *Chosen Peoples: Sacred Sources of National Identity*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press.

Smith, B. (1997). *The Cognitive Geometry of War*. Available online on the *Department of Philosophy and Center for Cognitive Science, SUNY Buffalo* website: <http://ontology.buffalo.edu/smith//articles/bosnia.html> (Accessed 1 October 2005). Printed version in: P. Koller & K. Puhl (eds).



Current Issues in Political Philosophy, pp. 394–403. Vienna: Hölder-Pichler Tempsky.

Smith, G. (ed.) (1996). *The Nationalities Question in the Post-Soviet States*. London & New York: Longman.

Smith, G. (1999). The Masks of Proteus: Russia, Geopolitical Shift and the New Eurasianism. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, New Series, Vol. 24, No. 4, pp. 481–494.

Soldatova, G. U. (1995). The Former Checheno-Ingushetia: Interethnic Relations and Ethnic Conflicts. In: M. Balzer (ed.). *Culture Incarnate: Native Anthropology from Russia*, pp. 83–101. Armonk, NY & London: M. E. Sharpe.

Soudavar Farmanfarmaian, F. (2009). Georgia and Iran: Three Millennia of Cultural Relations. *Journal of Persianate Studies*, Vol. 2, No.1, pp. 1–43.

Stalin, J. V. (1913). *Marxism and the National Question*. Available online:

<http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1913/03.htm#s5>  
(Accessed 8 September 2003) First published in *Prosveshcheniye*, No. 3–5, March–May 1913; Transcribed by Carl Kavanagh.

Stalin J. V. (1953). *Over de politieke taken van de Universiteit voor de volken van het Oosten; Redevoering in een vergadering van de studenten der Communistische Universiteit van de Werkers van het Oosten op 18 mei 1925* [The Political Tasks of the University of the Peoples of the East: Speech Delivered at a Meeting of Students of the Communist University of the Toilers of the East on 18 May]. Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Pegasus.

*State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan:*  
<http://www.azstat.org>

*Statistical Center of Iran:* <http://www.amar.org.ir> and  
<http://amar.sci.org.ir>

Stavenhagen, R. (1996). *Ethnic Conflicts and the Nation State*. London: Macmillan.

Stokke, O. S. (2007). Qualitative Comparative Analysis, Shaming, and International Regime Effectiveness. *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 60, No 5, pp. 501–511.

Storey, D. (2001). *Territory: The Claiming of Space*. Harlow; London; etc.: Pearson, Prentice Hall.

Strayer, R. (1998). *Why did the Soviet Union Collapse? Understanding Historical Change*. Armonk, NY & London: M. E. Sharpe.

Suleymanov, M. (2008). The Role of History in the Creation of National Identities in Central Asia: Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan Case Studies. *Peace and Conflict Review*, Vol. 1, Issue 1; pp. 1–33, Available online on the *University for Peace* website: <http://www.review.ucepeace.org/index.cfm?opcion=0&ejemplar=12&entrada=70> (Accessed 14 June 2011).

Suny, R. G. (1993). *Looking toward Ararat: Armenia in Modern History*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Suny, R. G. (1994). *The Making of the Georgian Nation*. (First published in 1988) Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Suny, R. G. (1998). *The Soviet Experiment: Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press.

Suny, R. G. (ed.) (2003). *The Structure of Soviet History: Essays and Documents*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press.

Suny, R. G. (2009). Preface: Georgia on Everybody's Mind: The Aftermath of War. *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 28, No. 2, pp. 91–92.

Suny, R. G. & T, Martin (eds) (2001). *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press.

Svanberg, I. (1996). Kazakhstan and the Kazakhs. In: G. Smith (ed.). *The Nationalities Question in the Post-Soviet States*, pp. 318–333. London & New York: Longman.

Svensson, I. (2007). Fighting with Faith: Religion and Conflict Resolution in Civil Wars. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 51, No. 6, pp. 930–949.

Swietochowski, T. (1985). *Russian Azerbaijan, 1905–1920: The Shaping of a National Identity in a Muslim Community*. Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press.

Swietochowski, T. (1995). *Russia and Azerbaijan: A Borderland in Transition*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Swirszcz, J. (2009). The Role of Islam in Chechen National Identity. *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 37, No. 1, pp. 59–88.

Szakonyi, D. (2007). Ethnic Mobilization in Post-Soviet Georgia: The Case of the Yezidi-Kurds. *Journal of Ethnic Minorities in Europe*, Vol. 6, No. 2, pp. 1–19.

Szporluk, R. (ed.) (1994). *National Identity and Ethnicity in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*. Armonk, NY & London: M. E. Sharpe.

*Tabriz News*: <http://tabriznews.ir> and <http://www.tabriznews.com>

Takmil Hodayun, N. (2001/ 1380 Solar Hegira). *Marz-ha-ye Iran dar Dowre-ye Moaser* [Contemporary Borders of Iran]. Daftare Pazhuheshha-ye Farhangi: Tehran

Tehran Times (24 June 2010). Majlis extends term of councils, votes for new province. Available online on the *Tehran Times* website: [http://www.tehrantimes.com/index\\_View.asp?code=221928](http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=221928) (Accessed 22 Augustus 2010).

Ten Dam, C. (2010). How to Feud and Rebel: 1. Violence-values among the Chechens and Albanians. *Iran and the Caucasus*, Vol. 14, No. 2, pp. 331–365.

Ten Dam, C. (2011). How to Feud and Rebel: 2. Histories, Cultures and Grievances of the Chechens and Albanians. *Iran and the Caucasus*, Vol. 15, No. 1–2, pp. 235–273.

The Guardian (23 February 2010). Iran Captures Sunni Insurgent Leader Abdolmalek Rigi. By: Ian Black. Available online: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/feb/23/iran-abdolmalek-rigi-arrest> (Accessed 16 June 2011)

The Guardian (18 June 2010). Kyrgyzstan Death Toll Could Be 2,000, Warns Leader. By: Luke Harding. Available online: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/jun/18/kyrgyzstan-death-toll-2000-leader> (Accessed 14 June 2011).

The Independent (19 June 2010). Kyrgyz Leader Says 2,000 May Have Died in Clashes. By: Shaun Walker. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/kyrgyz-leader-says-2000-may-have-died-in-clashes-2004795.html> (Accessed 14 June 2011).

The Jerusalem Post (29 November 2010). Dagan Urged Support for Iranian Minorities to Oust Regime. By: Yaakov Katz. Available online: <http://www.jpost.com/International/Article.aspx?id=197135> (Accessed 30 November 2010).

The Society for the Russian-Chechen Friendship. *Human Rights Violations in Chechnya*. Available online: <http://web.archive.org/web/20070821110222/www.hrvc.net/main.htm> (The report has no date, but obviously it is from before 2007) (Accessed 20 December 2009).

The Washington Times (18 June 2010). Kyrgyz Leader Says 2,000 Dead in Clashes. By: Peter Leonard, (with contributions by) Yuras Karmanau, Eliane Engeler & Masha Stromova (Associated Press). Available online: <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2010/jun/18/kyrgyz-leader-says-2000-dead-clashes/> (Accessed 14 June 2011).

Tishkov, V. (1989). Glasnost and the Nationalities within the Soviet Union. *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 11, No. 4, pp. 191–207.

Tishkov, V. (1991). The Soviet Empire before and after Perestroika. *Theory and Society*, Vol. 20, No. 5, pp. 603–629.

Tishkov, V. (1995). Don't Kill Me, I'm a Kyrgyz!: An Anthropological Analysis of Violence in the Osh Ethnic Conflict. *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 32, No. 2, pp. 133–149.

Tishkov, V. (1997). *The Mind Aflame: Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict in and after the Soviet Union*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications; and Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD).

Tishkov, V. (1999). Ethnic Conflicts in the Former USSR: The Use and Misuse of Typologies and Data. *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 36, No. 5, pp. 571–591.

Toft, M. D. (2003). *The Geography of Ethnic Violence: Identity, Interests, and the Indivisibility of Territory*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Tohidi, N. (2006). *Iran: Regionalism, Ethnicity and Democracy*. Available online on the *Open Democracy* website: [http://www.opendemocracy.net/democracy-irandemocracy/regionalism\\_3695.jsp](http://www.opendemocracy.net/democracy-irandemocracy/regionalism_3695.jsp) (Accessed 4 November 2011).

*Treaty of Golestan*. (English) (Also other spellings are possible) Available online on the *The Circle of Ancient Iranian Studies* (CAIS) website: <http://www.cais-soas.com/CAIS/Iran/golestan.htm> (Accessed 12 May 2011).

*Treaty of Golestan*. (Russian) (Also other spellings are possible) Available online on the *Khronos* website: <http://www.hrono.ru/dokum/ruper1813.html> (Accessed 12 May 2011).

*Treaty of Torkamanchay*. (English) (Also other spellings are possible) Available online on the *The Circle of Ancient Iranian Studies* (CAIS) website: <http://www.cais-soas.com/CAIS/Iran/torkmanchai.htm> (Accessed 12 May 2011).

*Treaty of Torkamanchay*. (Russian) (Also other spellings are possible) Available online on the *Moscow State University M.V. Lomonosov, Faculty of History* website: <http://www.hist.msu.ru/ER/Etext/FOREIGN/turkman.htm> (Accessed 12 May 2011).

Trenin, D. (2002). *The End of Eurasia: Russia on the Border between Geopolitics and Globalization*. Washington, DC: The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace & Brookings Institution Press.

Tsutsiev, A. (2006). *Atlas Ethnopoliticheskoi Istorii Kavkaza (1774–2004)* [Atlas of Ethno-Political History of the Caucasus (1774–2004)]. Moscow: Evropa.

Tsygankov, A. P. (2003). Mastering Space in Eurasia: Russia's Geopolitical Thinking after the Soviet Break-Up. *Communist and Post Communist Studies*, Vol. 36, No.1, pp. 101–127.

Tsygankov, A. P. (2005). Vladimir Putin's Vision of Russia as a Normal Great Power. *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 21, No. 2, pp. 132–158.

Tsygankov, A. P. (2007). Finding a Civilisational Idea: “West”, “Eurasia”, and “Euro-East” in Russia's Foreign Policy. *Geopolitics*, Vol. 12, No 3, pp. 375–399.

Umarov, E. (2002). Uzbekskiy Yazik [The Uzbek Language]. In: Ilkhamov, A. & Zhukova L. (eds). *Etnicheskiy atlas Uzbekistana* [Ethnic Atlas of Uzbekistan], pp. 304–311. Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation Uzbekiistan. Joint Edition of the Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation Uzbekistan and LIA <R. Elinina>.

UN (2004). *Tajikistan: Rising from the Ashes of Civil War*. Available online on the United Nations' (UN) website: <http://www.un.org/events/tenstories/06/story.asp?storyID=600> (Accessed 20 September 2011).

United States of America Department of State International Boundary (1964). *Iran - Turkey Boundary*. International Boundary Study No. 28, February 3, 1964.

University of California TV. (2005). *Conversations with History: Chechnya, with Thomas Goltz*, 24 January 2005. Available online on the University of California Television website: <http://www.uctv.tv/search-details.aspx?showID=8999>, (Accessed 20 September 2007).

University of Texas Perry-Castañeda Library's Map Collection: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/>.

Unpo.org (2006). *Background and Present Situation of the Talysh*. Available online on the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization's (UNPO) website: <http://www.unpo.org/article/3910> (Accessed 28 September 2011).

Van den Berg, H. (2005). The East Caucasian Language Family. *Lingua*, Vol. 115, No. 1-2, pp. 147–190.

Van den Berghe, P. L. (1978a). Bridging the Paradigms. Biology and the Social Sciences. *Society*, Vol. 15, No. 6, pp. 42–49.

Van den Berghe, P. L. (1978b). Race and Ethnicity: A Sociobiological Perspective. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 4, pp. 401–411.

Van den Berghe, P. L. (1979). *Human Family Systems: An Evolutionary View*. New York: Elsevier.

Van den Berghe, P. L. (1986). Ethnicity and the Sociobiology Debate. In: J. Rex and D. Mason (eds). *Theories of Race and Ethnic Relations*, pp. 246–263. Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press.

Van den Berghe, P. L. (1987). *The Ethnic Phenomenon*. (First Published in 1981). Westport, CT.: Praeger, Greenwood Publishing Group.

Van den Berghe, P. L. (1995). Does Race Matter? *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol. 1, No. 3, pp. 357–368.

Van der Pijl, K. (1992). *Wereldorde en Machtspolitiek: Visies op de Internationale Betrekking van Dante tot Fukuyama* [World Order and Power Politics: Ideas about the International Relation since Dante until Fukuyama]. Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis.

Van der Wusten, H. & H. Knippenberg, (2001). The Ethnic Dimension in 20<sup>th</sup> Century European Politics: A Recursive Model. In: Dijkink, Gertjan & Hans Knippenberg (eds). *The Territorial Factor: Political Geography in a Globalising World*. pp. 273–291. Amsterdam: Vossiuspers UvA, Amsterdam University Press.

Vanderborght, Y. & Yamasaki, S. (2004). Des cas logiques ... contradictoires? Un piege de l'AQQC dejoue a travers l'etude de la faisabilite politique de l'Allocation Universelle. *Revue Internationale de Politique Comparee*, Vol.11, No 1. pp. 51–66.

Vanhanen, T. (1999a). Domestic Ethnic Conflict and Ethnic Nepotism: A Comparative Analysis. *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 36. No. 1, pp. 55–73.

Vanhanen, T. (1999b). *Ethnic Conflicts Explained by Ethnic Nepotism*. Stamford, CT: JAI Press.

Vatchagaev, M. (2005a). Evolution of the Chechen Jamaat. *North Caucasus Analysis*, Vol. 6, No. 14. Available online on *The Jamestown Foundation's* website: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no\\_cache=1&tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=30223](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=30223) (Accessed 9 November 2009).

Vatchagaev, M. (2005b). The Role of Sufism in the Chechen Resistance. *North Caucasus Analysis*, Vol. 6, No. 16. Available online on *The Jamestown Foundation's* website: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no\\_cache=1&tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=30330](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=30330) (Accessed 9 November 2009).

Vichos, I & S. Karampampas (2011). *The Security Situation in North Caucasus and the Energy Factor*. Available online on the *EKEM, European Energy Policy Observatory* website: [http://www.ekemeuroenergy.org/en/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=197:the-security-situation-in-north-caucasus-and-the-energy-factor&catid=35:analyses&Itemid=57](http://www.ekemeuroenergy.org/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=197:the-security-situation-in-north-caucasus-and-the-energy-factor&catid=35:analyses&Itemid=57) (Accessed 25 July 2011).

Villari, L. (1906). *Fire and Sword in the Caucasus*. London: T. F. Unwin. Available online on the *ArmenianHouse.org* website: <http://armenianhouse.org/villari/caucasus/fire-and-sword.html> (Accessed 23 October 2009).

VOA (16 August 2010). Intimidation of Uzbek Minority Continues in Kyrgyzstan. By: James Brooke. Available online on the *Voice of America News* website: <http://www.voanews.com/english/news/Intimidation-of-Uzbek-Minority-Continues-in-Kyrgyzstan-100805129.html> (Accessed 14 June 2011).

Walker, E. (1996). *The Dog That Didn't Bark: Tatarstan and Asymmetrical Federalism in Russia*. Available online on the *Kazan State University* website: [http://www.kcn.ru/tat\\_en/politics/dfa/f\\_media/tatar.htm](http://www.kcn.ru/tat_en/politics/dfa/f_media/tatar.htm) (Accessed 21 January 2010).

Walker, E. (2001). Dagestan and the Stability of Instability in the North Caucasus. In V. E. Bonnel & G. W. Bresslauer (eds). *Russia in the New Century: Stability or Disorder?*, pp. 326–357. Boulder, CO & Cambridge: Westview Press.

Ware, R. B. (1998). Conflict in the Caucasus: Historical Context and Prospects for Peace. *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 17, No. 2, pp. 337–352.



Ware, R. B. & E. Kisriev (2001). Ethnic Parity and Democratic Pluralism in Dagestan: A Consociational Approach. *Europe and Asia Studies*, Vol. 53, No. 1, pp. 105–131.

Ware, R. B. & E. Kisriev (2009). *Dagestan: Russian Hegemony and Islamic Resistance in the North Caucasus*. Armonk, NY & London: M.E. Sharpe.

Waters, M. C. (1990). *Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities in America*. Berkley, CA; Los Angeles & London: University of California Press.

Waters, M. C. (2002). The Social Construction of Race and Ethnicity: Some Examples from Demography. In: N. A. Denton & S. Tolnay (eds). *American Diversity: A Demographic Challenge for the Twenty First Century*, pp. 25–50. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Wimmer, A. (2003). Democracy and Ethno-religious Conflict in Iraq. *Survival*, Vol. 45, No. 4, pp. 111–134.

Wixman, R. (1984). *The Peoples of the USSR: An Ethnographic Handbook*. Armonk, NY & London: M. E. Sharpe.

Wolff, S. (2003). *Disputed Territories: The Transnational Dynamics of Ethnic Conflict Settlement*. New York & Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Wolff, S. (2006). *Ethnic Conflict: A Global Perspective*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press.

Wong, F. (2000). *Pirooz in China: Defeated Persian Army takes Refuge*. Available online: <http://www.chinapage.com/minority/iran.html> (Accessed 22 December 2008).

WRITENET (1995). *Dagestan*. Available online on the UNHCR.org website, *Refworld*: <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3ae6a6bd4.html> (Accessed 12 February 2009).

WRITENET (2008). *The Human Rights Situation of the Yezidi Minority in the Transcaucasus (Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan)*. A WRITENET Report Commissioned by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Status Determination and Protection Information Section (DIPS).

Yamakov, A. N. (1991). Ethnic Conflict in the Transcaucasus: The Case of Nagorno-Karabakh. *Theory and Society*, Vol. 20, No. 5, pp. 631–660.

Yevsyukova, M. (1995). *The Conflict between Russia and Chechnya*. Conflict Information Consortium (the former Conflict Research Consortium) at the University of Colorado, Boulder, CO. Working Paper no. 95-5(1). Available online at: [http://www.colorado.edu/conflict/full\\_text\\_search/AllCRCDocs/95-5.htm](http://www.colorado.edu/conflict/full_text_search/AllCRCDocs/95-5.htm) (Accessed 16 January 2011).

Yunusov, A. (2001). *Etnicheskiy sostav Azerbajdžana (po perepisi 1999 goda)* [Ethnic composition of Azerbaijan (Census 1999)]. Originally published on the website of the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Available online at: <http://demoscope.ru/weekly/2004/0183/analit05.php> (Accessed 6 April 2011).

Yunusov, A. (2004). *Islam in Azerbaijan*. Translated by Zh. Mammadova & M. Gassanly. Baku: Zaman & Institut Mira i Demokratii [Institute of Peace and Security] & Friedrich Ebert Foundation.

Yunusov, A. (2006). Ethnic Profile of Post-Soviet Azerbaijan. In: *European Yearbook of Minorities Issues Vol. 4, 2004–2005*, edited by the European Centre for Minority Issues and The European Academy Bozen/Bolzano. Leiden: Brill.

Yunusov, A. (2007a). *Azerbajdžan v Nachale XXI Veka: Konflikty i Potentsialnye Ugrozy*. [Azerbaijan at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Conflicts and Potential Threats.]. Baku: Adilogu & Institut Mira i Demokratii [Institute of Peace and Security].

Yunusov, A. (2007b). *Azerbajdžan in the Early of XX Century: Conflicts and Potential Threats*. Translated by A. Mamedov. Baku: Adilogu & Institut Mira i Demokratii [Institute of Peace and Security].

Zargarian, R. A. (1999). Principles for Conflict Resolution in Nagorno Karabakh. *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 6, No.3, pp. 129–133.

Zevelev, I. (2001). The Redefinition of the Russian Nation. International Security, and Stability. In: V. E. Bonnel & G. W. Bresslauer (eds). *Russia in the New Century: Stability or Disorder?*, pp. 265–289. Boulder, CO & Cambridge: Westview Press.

Zevelev, I. (2009). Russia's Future: Nation or Civilization?- Collapse of the Soviet Union and the "Russian Question". *Russia in Global Affairs*, Vol. 7, No. 4, pp. 73–87.

Zhuravel', V. (2005). *Terrorizm, Ekstremizm, Separatizm* [Terrorism, Extremism, Separatism]. MakBlansh: Moscow.

Zürcher, C. (2007). *The Post-Soviet Wars: Rebellion, Ethnic Conflict and Nationhood in the Caucasus*. New York & London: New York University Press.

## Samenvatting

### **Enoterritoriaal conflict en co-existentie in de Kaukasus, Centraal Azië en Fereydan**

Dit boek gaat over de etnoterritoriale conflicten en vreedzame co-existentie tussen etnische groepen in (post-)Sovjet Centraal Azië, de Kaukasus en Fereydan (Iran). Deze drie regio's zijn onderdelen van Centraal Eurazië, een macroregio gelegen in het midden van het Euraziatische continent.

Deze regio's zijn etnisch, linguïstisch en religieus zeer divers. Er worden talen gesproken die behoren tot de Indo-Europese (waaronder de Slavische, Iraanse, Armeense, en Germaanse), Turkse, Chinese, Kartveelse (Zuid-Kaukasische), Nakh-Daghestaanse (Noordoost-Kaukasische), en Noordwest-Kaukasische taalfamilies. De grootste religies in deze regio's zijn de soennitische en sjiëtische islam, en het orthodox christendom. Daarnaast komen ook Westerse stromingen van het christendom, het jodendom en het jezidisme voor.

#### *Probleemstelling en hypothesen*

Aanleiding tot deze studie was de vraag waarom in sommige delen van Centraal Eurazië etnoterritoriale conflicten uitbreken, terwijl in andere delen vreedzaam naast elkaar geleefd wordt. Welke omstandigheden (factoren) kunnen deze verschillen verklaren? Vanuit een politiek geografisch gezichtspunt beoogt deze studie te onderzoeken welke factoren een belangrijke rol spelen in het uitbreken van etnoterritoriale conflicten in de voornoemde delen van Centraal Eurazië. Behalve aan factoren die ontleend zijn aan gangbare sociaalwetenschappelijke theorieën, wordt in het bijzonder aandacht besteed aan de aard van de etnogeografische configuratie en andere territoriale factoren.

Onder een etnoterritoriaal conflict wordt verstaan een gewelddadig conflict met minstens 100 doden tussen twee etnoterritoriale groepen (een horizontaal conflict) of tussen een etnoterritoriale groep en de staat waartoe de groep behoort, indien die wordt geassocieerd met en gedomineerd door een andere etnoterritoriale groep (een verticaal conflict). Een etnoterritoriaal conflict heeft een territoriale dimensie: de strijdende partijen vechten over (de status van) een gebied.

De centrale onderzoeksvraag luidt: "Welke (combinaties van) factoren kunnen het uitbreken van etnoterritoriaal conflict in (post-)Sovjet Centraal Azië, de Kaukasus en Fereydan (Iran) verklaren vanaf het eind der jaren tachtig van de vorige eeuw?"; met als deelvraag: "In welke

mate draagt de aard van de etnogeografische configuratie bij tot het verklaren van deze etnoterritoriale conflicten?”.

Alvorens de theorieën te bespreken die specifiek ingaan op de verklaring van etnoterritoriale conflicten is in hoofdstuk 2 allereerst gepoogd een aantal begrippen die in dit onderzoek centraal staan te verduidelijken. Het gaat om de begrippen: etniciteit, natie, nationalisme, staat, territorialiteit en conflict in onderliggende samenhang. Bij etniciteit wordt gekozen voor een combinatie van een instrumentele en een primordiale benadering. Een natie wordt omschreven als een ‘verbeelde gemeenschap’ waarvan de leden op subjectieve gronden menen bij elkaar te horen en die een gemeenschappelijke staat bezitten of menen daar recht op te hebben. Een staat is dan de politiek-territoriale uitdrukking van de natie. Territorialiteit wordt gezien als een organisatiestrategie waarbij mensen en goederen beheerst en beïnvloed worden door het afgrenzen van gebied. Dat territorium kan vervolgens ook symbolische waarde krijgen voor de natie als ‘thuisland’ of vaderland.

De volgende stap was het op theoretisch niveau selecteren van verklarende factoren of condities. Deze factoren vormen evenzovele hypothesen, die het uitbreken van etnoterritoriale conflicten zouden kunnen verklaren. Een centrale hypothese is dat een etnogeografische configuratie van het mozaïek type (in combinatie met andere factoren) een belangrijke factor is ter verklaring van het ontstaan van etnoterritoriale conflicten. Gebieden met een mozaïek configuratie worden gekenmerkt door relatief veel ruimtelijk geconcentreerd levende, (vrijwel) homogene, aan elkaar grenzende etnische groepen. In zulke gebieden zijn er veel potentiële contacten tussen de verschillende etnische groepen. De geografische concentratie vergemakkelijkt politieke mobilisering, versterkt de band van de etnische groepen met ‘hun’ grondgebied, en vergemakkelijkt de lokalisering van de potentiële vijand.

Een tweede centrale hypothese is dat de aard van het politieke systeem en het gevoerde beleid jegens etnische diversiteit van invloed is op het uitbreken van etnoterritoriale conflicten. In hoofdstuk 3 is daarom extra aandacht besteed aan de wijze waarop de overheden in de voormalige Sovjet Unie en Iran zijn omgegaan met de etnische diversiteit op hun respectievelijke territoria en welke politieke systemen daaruit zijn voortgekomen. De verschillen tussen beide staten blijken groot te zijn en bovendien door te werken in de voormalige Unierepublieken, die na het uiteenvallen van de Sovjet Unie onafhankelijk werden. In de Sovjet Unie werd gekozen voor een territoriale oplossing van het ‘nationaliteitsvraagstuk’: een hiërarchisch territoriaal systeem, waarbij de meeste etnische groepen ‘thuislanden’ van verschillende niveaus van politieke autonomie kregen toegewezen, uiteraard onder supervisie van de centraal geleide communistische partij. Hoe hoger een etnische groep in

de hiërarchie stond des te meer autonomie die genoot. Er waren vier niveaus van autonomie. De belangrijkste etnische groepen kregen een Unierepubliek (SSR) toegewezen. Een tweede trap in de hiërarchie vormden de Autonome Republieken (ASSR), altijd onderdeel van een Unierepubliek. De derde trap vormden de Autonome provincies (AO) en de vierde de Nationale districten (NO). De laatste groep autonome gebieden kwam uitsluitend in de Russische Federatie en buiten de hier bestudeerde regio's voor en speelt in dit onderzoek verder geen rol. Daaronder bevinden zich dan nog de volkeren, die geen eigen 'thuisland' toegewezen kregen en helemaal onderaan de etnische groepen die als zodanig niet erkend werden. Dit systeem heeft etniciteit in het politieke systeem geïnstitutionaliseerd en er bovendien voor gezorgd dat er sprake was van onderschikking en bovenschikking van de verschillende etnische groepen ten opzichte van elkaar. Bovendien kan daarbij verondersteld worden dat de getalsverhoudingen tussen de verschillende volkeren binnen de autonome gebieden een rol spelen. Datzelfde geldt voor het al dan niet grenzen aan een autonoom gebied waar het eigen volk titulair is.

In tegenstelling tot de voormalige Sovjet-Unie, is etniciteit in Iran niet gepolitiseerd. De Iraanse onderverdeling in administratieve gebieden is niet op etniciteit gebaseerd. Hoewel er etnisch vrijwel homogene administratieve eenheden in Iran zijn, geniet geen enkele etnische groep wettelijke voorrechten in geen enkel administratief gebied. Daardoor is etniciteit voornamelijk een culturele categorie en heeft deze weinig politieke lading. Wel heeft Iran een officiële staatsgodsdienst, de Sjiietische Islam. De Iraanse grondwet beschouwt Sjiieten als de titulaire bevolkingsgroep, voor wie de belangrijkste politieke posities zijn gereserveerd. Formeel genieten de etnische groepen dezelfde rechten en privileges, zolang ze dezelfde religie hebben.

Sociaalwetenschappelijke theorieën suggereren verder dat culturele verschillen kunnen bijdragen tot conflict, zoals de bekende these van Huntington over de 'botsende beschavingen', die vooral in godsdienst van elkaar verschillen. Gezien het feit dat religie, behalve een pijler van etnische identiteit te zijn, ook over fundamentele normen en waarden van menselijke groepen gaat, ligt het voor de hand te veronderstellen dat religieuze verschillen tot conflict zouden kunnen bijdragen. Ook taal is een centraal element in de cultuur en vaak de belangrijkste pijler van etnische identiteit. Op taal gebaseerde etnische verwantschap zal dan ook zeker de kans op conflicten tussen etnische groepen verkleinen.

Naast culturele en politieke worden vaak economische factoren genoemd als verklaring voor het ontstaan van conflicten. Frustratie door economische achterstelling, maar ook hebzucht (denk bijvoorbeeld aan het gevecht om natuurlijke hulpbronnen) kunnen de aanleiding vormen waardoor etnische groepen met elkaar in conflict komen. De

verwevenheid van het politieke en economische systeem in de (post) Sovjet Unie maakt het evenwel lastig politieke en economische factoren van elkaar te scheiden.

In de literatuur worden ook traumatische piekervaringen genoemd, die zouden bijdragen tot conflict. In het kader van dit onderzoek kan daarbij gedacht worden aan zaken als de Armeense genocide of de deportaties onder Stalin. Volkeren die getraumatiseerd zijn houden vaak de herinneringen aan dergelijke gebeurtenissen in stand en kunnen alsnog naar genoegdoening of erkenning zoeken en zo vatbaar zijn voor conflict mobilisering.

Op basis van de bespreking van de theorieën over etnische conflicten alsmede de analyse van de etnopolitieke systemen van de voormalige Sovjet en Iran, plus de toevoeging van de soort etnogeografische configuratie vond zo een selectie plaats van factoren of condities die hypothetisch van belang geacht konden worden voor de verklaring van het ontstaan of achterwege blijven van etnoterritoriale conflicten in de regio's van deze studie. Het gaat dan om de volgende factoren:

- etnogeografische configuratie
  - mozaïek configuratie
- kenmerken van het etnopolitieke systeem
  - het bezitten van territoriale autonomie
  - etnopolitieke ondergeschiktheid
  - demografische dominantie van de titulaire groep binnen een autonoom gebied
  - grensoverschrijdende dominantie: de situatie waarin een etnopolitiek ondergeschikte groep in een unierepubliek/staat grenst aan zijn etnisch verwante groep in een naburige unierepubliek/staat, waar deze de titulaire bevolkingsgroep is, en minstens drie keer groter is dan de titulaire groep in de eerste unierepubliek/staat.
- culturele factoren
  - verschil in religie
  - verschil in taal
  - contigüiteit met de unierepubliek of het autonome gebied van een etnisch verwant volk
- economische grieven.
- historische traumatische piekervaringen.

### *Methodologie*

Om de probleemstelling te kunnen beantwoorden is de volgende methodologie gehanteerd. Vanuit het gezichtspunt dat het er niet alleen om gaat te verklaren waarom bepaalde aan elkaar grenzende

etnoterritoriale groepen met elkaar in conflict gekomen zijn, maar ook waarom andere vreedzaam naast elkaar leven, is een data verzameling geconstrueerd van alle combinaties van twee aan elkaar grenzende etnoterritoriale groepen (aangeduid als *ethno-territorial encounters*). Deze combinaties vormen de eenheden van analyse. Daartoe is eerst in hoofdstuk 5 vastgesteld welke etnoterritoriale groepen voorkomen in de onderzoeksregio's. In totaal zijn 129 combinaties van twee aangrenzende etnoterritoriale groepen vastgesteld, inclusief de combinaties die eerder als vertikaal zijn aangeduid. Van deze combinaties is vervolgens vastgesteld of er sprake was van conflict. Bovendien zijn deze combinaties gekarakteriseerd via operationalisaties van de geselecteerde verklarende factoren. Daarbij is afgezien van het operationaliseren van economische factoren als gevolg van het ontbreken van (betrouwbare) gegevens op het niveau van de onderzoekseenheden, als ook door de verwevenheid van politiek en economie in de regio's die deel uitmaakten van de voormalige Sovjet Unie. De benodigde gegevens zijn verkregen via (gouvernementele en niet-gouvernementele) statistische bronnen, literatuur en veldwerk. Met deze data verzameling zijn statistische analyses verricht alsmede een systematische kwalitatieve vergelijkende analyse (QCA).

Naast deze analyses zijn bovendien in hoofdstuk 6 alle combinaties van etnoterritoriale groepen die met elkaar in conflict waren aan een systematische beschrijving onderworpen ten einde het inzicht in de achterliggende mechanismen te vergroten.

### *Resultaten*

Ondanks het feit dat de Kaukasus en Centraal Azië bekend staan als conflictrijke regio's, bleek toch een beperkt aantal combinaties van twee aangrenzende etnoterritoriale groepen tot conflict te hebben geleid. In de Kaukasus ging het om vijf van de 80 combinaties: het Armeens-Azerbeidjaanse conflict over Nagorno-Karabach, het Georgisch-Abchazische conflict over Abchazië, het Georgisch-Ossetische conflict over Zuid-Ossetië, de Ingoesjetisch-Ossetische conflict in Rusland over Prigorodny en het Russisch-Tsjetsjeense conflict over Tsjetsjenië. In Centraal Azië ging het om drie van de 33 combinaties: de burgeroorlog in Tadzjikistan waarin ook conflicten voorkwamen tussen Pamiris en Tadzjiekken en tussen Oezbeken en Tadzjiekken, en het conflict tussen Oezbeken en Kirgiezen in het zuiden van Krigizië rondom de stad Osj. In het Iraanse Fereydan leidden de 16 etnoterritoriale combinaties niet tot conflict.

Uit de statistische analyse bleek verder dat alle geselecteerde condities (factoren) de kans op etnoterritoriaal conflict vergroten. Combinaties van



etnoterritoriale groepen die voldoen aan deze condities hebben een grotere kans op conflict dan de combinaties die daaraan niet voldoen. Maar de samenhangen zijn lang niet altijd overtuigend. Vooral de aanwezigheid van titulaire groepen die demografisch dominant zijn in hun autonoom gebied bleek de kans op conflict drastisch te vergroten. Ook een grensoverschrijdende dominantie vergroot deze kans behoorlijk. Concrete voorbeelden van dat laatste zijn de Oezbeken in Kirgizië en Tadzjikistan, die weliswaar in Kirgizië en Tadzjikistan ondergeschikt zijn aan respectievelijk de Kirgiezen en de Tadzjiekken, maar grenzen aan hun Oezbeekse burens in Oezbekistan, die de Kirgiezen en de Tadzjiekken in respectievelijk Kirgizië en Tadzjikistan aanzienlijk in aantal overtreffen.

Ook etnopolitieke ondergeschiktheid blijkt de kans op conflict te vergroten. Dat neemt echter niet weg dat verreweg de meeste combinaties van een titulaire en een ondergeschikte etnoterritoriale groep vreedzaam van aard zijn. Bovendien komt ook conflict voor, waarbij beide groepen van hetzelfde etnopolitieke niveau zijn, getuige het Noord-Ossetisch–Ingoejetisch conflict over Prigorodny.

Etnische verwantschap op basis van taalverwantschap blijkt van groot belang te zijn. Volkeren die zeer verwante talen spreken komen niet in conflict met elkaar. Daarnaast blijkt uit de geschiedenis van de hier beschreven conflicten dat etnisch verwanten elkaar ondersteunen tijdens een conflict.

Tegen de verwachtingen in en in strijd met Huntingtons these over de ‘botsende beschavingen’, speelt verschil in religie nauwelijks een rol. De kans op conflict tussen groepen die verschillen in godsdienst is slechts weinig groter dan die tussen groepen met dezelfde godsdienst.

Het beide hebben van territoriale autonomie (van hetzelfde of verschillend niveau) blijkt wel een belangrijke factor te zijn. Het vergroot de kans op conflict aanzienlijk.

Hoewel we niet in staat waren dat bevredigend te onderzoeken, lijken economische factoren geen belangrijke rol te spelen in het tot stand komen van etnoterritoriale conflicten in deze regio's. Dat geldt zowel voor verschillen in welvaart als voor relatieve economische deprivatie.

De aanwezigheid van trauma's uit het verleden levert wel een grotere kans op conflict op, maar de verschillen tussen combinaties van etnoterritoriale groepen met en zonder trauma zijn niet groot.

Alle conflicten blijken zich voor te doen in gebieden die gekenmerkt worden door een etnogeografische configuratie van het mozaïek type. Toch komt slechts een beperkt aantal van de binnen een mozaïek configuratie gelegen combinaties van etnoterritoriale groepen met elkaar in conflict. In die zin is een mozaïek configuratie wel een noodzakelijke, maar zeker geen voldoende voorwaarde voor conflict.

Dat doet de vraag rijzen welke combinaties van factoren vooral van belang zijn om het uitbreken van conflicten te verklaren. Om die vraag te beantwoorden bleek het van belang een tweetal onderscheidingen te maken: in de eerste plaats tussen Iran en de gebieden van de voormalige Sovjet Unie en in de tweede plaats binnen de voormalige Sovjet Unie tussen de gebieden binnen en buiten Rusland.

Het is duidelijk dat het etnopolitieke systeem van de voormalige Sovjet Unie –in tegenstelling tot dat van Iran– een belangrijke bijdrage heeft geleverd aan het institutionaliseren van etniciteit in het dagelijks leven en daarmee aan het in stand houden en soms zelfs creëren van etnoterritoriale groepen. Dat bleek bij het uiteenvallen van de Sovjet Unie, maar droeg ook bij aan de conflicten nadien. Binnen de voormalige Sovjet Unie is het van belang een onderscheid te maken tussen Rusland en de zelfstandig geworden voormalige Unierepublieken in de Kaukasus en Centraal Azië. Rusland is een veel sterkere staat en heeft veel meer wat Michael Mann *infrastructural power* noemt. Daarom liggen de drempels voor conflict aldaar hoger.

Buiten Rusland blijkt de combinatie van een mozaïek configuratie en het hebben van territoriale autonomie de meeste conflicten te kunnen verklaren. De conflicten over Nagorno-Karabach, Zuid-Ossetië, Abchazië en Gorno-Badachsjan (tussen Pamiris en Tadzjiekken in Tadzjikistan) voldoen aan deze voorwaarden. In drie van deze vier conflicten gaat territoriale autonomie bovendien gepaard met een demografisch overwicht van de corresponderende titulaire groepen. Alleen in Abchazië is dat niet het geval; daar overtreffen de Georgiërs de Abchazen in aantal. In de resterende twee conflicten in Centraal Azië is vooral de combinatie van een mozaïek configuratie en grensoverschrijdende dominantie van doorslaggevende betekenis. De demografisch dominante aanwezigheid van de Oezbeken in buurland Oezbekistan heeft zeker bijgedragen aan het conflict van de Oezbeken met de Kirgizezen in Kirgizië en met de Tadzjiekken in Tadzjikistan.

Binnen Rusland moet aan meer voorwaarden voldaan worden om tot conflict te komen. Naast een mozaïek configuratie en demografische dominantie in de corresponderende titulaire gebieden (wat uiteraard het bezitten van autonome gebieden inhoudt), moet minstens een van de beide etnoterritoriale groepen een traumatische piekervaring hebben opgedaan in het verleden of moeten deze groepen duidelijk in godsdienst van elkaar verschillen. De reden van deze ‘overlap’ tussen trauma en godsdienst is dat in de Noord-Kaukasus alleen de islamitische volkeren zijn getraumatiseerd door de deportaties onder het bewind van Stalin. Zowel het conflict over Tsjetsjenië met de Russen als over Prigorodny tussen Osseten en Ingoesjen voldoen aan deze voorwaarden.

Het is tenslotte van belang op te merken dat deze conflictgenererende combinaties van condities pas hun werking kregen in een context van politieke instabiliteit als gevolg van het falen van het economische en politieke systeem van de Sovjet Unie. Paradoxaal genoeg waren het juist de hervormings- en democratiseringsprogramma's (*Perestrojka* en *Glasnost*) onder leiding van Michail Gorbatsjov die de aanzet tot deze instabiliteit gaven en uiteindelijk tot het uiteenvallen van de Sovjet Unie leidden. Nadat de Unierepublieken hun onafhankelijkheid hadden bevochten, kregen vervolgens ook de autonomie gebieden op een lager niveau de smaak te pakken met de hier behandelde conflicten als gevolg.

Ongeveer in dezelfde periode herstelde Iran van de oorlog met het Irak van Saddam Hussain en zijn bondgenoten, welke een zware tol had geëist. Hoewel Fereydan niet in de frontlinie van de oorlog lag, profiteerde ook deze regio van het eind van de oorlog.

Het geheel overziend, heeft deze studie vooral laten zien hoe belangrijk territoriale factoren zijn in de verklaring van het uitbreken van etnische conflicten. Zeggenschap over een eigen territorium is op verschillende manieren van belang. De zeggenschap over een eigen territorium brengt erkenning door buitenstaanders met zich mee. Deze zeggenschap door een etnische groep is vaak een startpunt van het separatisme. Daarnaast, fungeert een eigen territorium als een essentieel identificatiepunt voor de etnische groep zelf door de groep een 'thuisland' of 'vaderland' te verschaffen. Tenslotte, verschaft een eigen territorium middelen tot het mobiliseren van menselijke zowel als niet-menselijke hulpbronnen.





Few authors have such an intimate knowledge of the background of conflicts in Central Asia. Rezvani looks at the region from a fresh perspective. He arrives at highly relevant recommendations how the politicization of ethnicity can be avoided and how ethnic nationalism in the long run can be turned into civic nationalism.

*Gerd Junne: Emeritus Professor of International Relations, University of Amsterdam.*

It is rare to find such a thorough study about identity/culture and territory/geography in the troubled regions of Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Iran, and it is even more rare to find a comparative analysis. This book is encyclopedic and thought-provoking at the same time.

*Ton Dietz: Director of African Studies Centre, Leiden University, and Guest Professor of Human Geography, University of Amsterdam.*

In contrast to much other research on conflict between ethnic groups, Rezvani has not only focused on the conflicts and their origins but also included the set of situations where a conflict could have erupted but failed to occur. This provides a useful correction to stereotypes of “conflict-prone” regions, particularly in the Caucasus and Central Asia.

*Gertjan Dijkink: Associate Professor of Political Geography, University of Amsterdam.*

Babak Rezvani’s well-written and systematic work focuses on ethno-territorial and demographic aspects of conflict, combining theory with case studies and statistical analysis. He not only provides an innovative and interesting contribution to his field of study but also demonstrates a detailed knowledge of the relevant literature. The book is extremely well-sourced and offers a deep and insightful history of the areas and conflicts concerned.

*Georg Frerks: Professor of Conflict Prevention and Conflict Management, Utrecht University, The Netherlands.*

Babak Rezvani is a geographer and political scientist.



VOSSIUSPERS

isbn 978-90-5629-733-6



9 789056 297336