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Diplomová práce

2013   **Tomáš Baranec**

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The War on Terror and the War of Terror: Revealing the post-transformation separatism?

Kremlin, Radical Salafism and Post-Soviet Dagestan on a Road from the Peace to the Violence

Diplomová práce

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Abstrakt

Po roku 1999 sa situácia v do tej doby relatívne stabilnom Dagestane začala prudko zhoršovať. Avšak na rozdiel od prípadov predchádzajúcich separatistických hnutí, ktoré vzplanuli v niektorých častiach Ruskej federácie po rozpade ZSSR, Dagestanskí separatisti sa nezačali zhromažďovať pod nacionalistickými vlajkami, avšak pod vlajkou Islamu. Už čoskoro nastúpil Dagestan vstúpil do obdobia zvýšenej nestability a násilia, ktoré sa vyvinuli v bludnú špirálu krviprelievania. Tento v skutku radikálny odklon Dagestanu od stability k rozsiahlemu násiliu za tak krátke obdobie pred nás kladie potrebu pochopiť aké faktory vznik daného stavu spôsobili. Táto diplomová práca analyzuje vývoj Dagestanu po rozpade ZSSR od stabilných 90-tych rokov až do dnešných dní, ktoré sú charakteristické všadeprítomným násilím. Aplikáciou teoretických poznatkov získaných inými odborníkmi analyzujúcimi obdobné separatistické hnutia v post-socialistickom priestore, za prihliadnutia k špecifikám regiónu Severného Kaukazu sa táto štúdia snaží identifikovať faktory, ktoré stoja na pozadí Dagestanského separatizmu. Pomocou komparácie s Čečenským separatizmom zo začiatku 90-tych rokov práca odhaľuje korene a skutočnú tvár „novej vlny" separatizmu, ktorá zaplavila Dagestan a ďalej sa šíri regiónom Severného Kaukazu.

Abstract

After 1999 the situation in then relatively stable Dagestan started to deteriorate swiftly. However, unlike in the cases of previous separatist movements which sprung up in some parts of the Russian Federation after the demise of the USSS, Dagestani separatists did not officially gather under the flags of nation but under the flags of Islam. Soon, Dagestan entered a period of instability and violence which turned into a vicious circle of bloodshed. In a short period of time, Dagestan radically turned from stability to large scale violence, which makes it necessary for us to understand the factors responsible for the current situation. The following thesis analyses the development of Dagestan after the collapse of the USSR, from the stable period of the 90s till these days, which are characterized by omnipresent violence. Employing the theoretical knowledge collected by other scholars and analyzing similar separatist movements in other parts of the post-socialist world, taking into account the specifics the North Caucasus region, this study attempts to identify the factors (grassroots) which caused the rise of Dagestani insurgence. In comparison with the Chechen separatism of the early 90s, it uncovers the roots and the real face of the "new wave" of insurgency which flooded Dagestan and started to spread into the wider region of North Caucasus, seemingly replacing many small insurgency movements of a single separatist front.

Klíčová slova

Dagestan, Čečensko, separatizmus, faktory, radikálny Salafizmus, „hard power".

Keywords

Dagestan, Chechnya, separatism, factors, radical Salafism, "hard power".

Rozsah práce: 140 normostrán

Prohlášení

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V Praze dne …   Tomáš Baranec

Acknowledgement:

Diplomová práce

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Introduction:

In the early 90s the general wave of unrest, ethnic clashes, wars and destruction hit the large area extending from Yugoslavia, through Caucasus to Kyrgyzstan. In these years, following the Gorbachev's policy of "*perestroika*", the Soviet Union for many decades "Nationalist in form and Socialist in content" shifted instead to "Nationalist in content and bloody in form." This wave of nationalist separatism is generally viewed as to be linked to the process of transition and later transformation[1] from Socialism to a new post-socialist (dis)order.[2] This phenomenon was characteristic by weakening the state structures, extending the ideological vacuum and opening the way for popular nationalism, new elites emerging and a rise of the security dilemma. As Zürcher has noted, the sire of nationalism and ethnic mobilizations "was accompanied and exacerbated by a devaluation of state capacities."[3] However an interesting question soon emerged: "Why are that many regions with potential for full-scale violence have remained calm during this "great transition",[4] while others have not? What were the underlying factors causing these differences?" Many great studies have been written on this topic and although, each of authors has emphasized a different factor or set of factors as the crucial one; ancient hatreds for primordialists, manipulative elites for instrumetalists, "autonomy" for Svante Cornell, "the concept of a homeland" for Monica D. Toft etc., they all together managed to identify a set of various factors appearing with the background of separatism and violence in many different cases and areas.

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[1] In this study transition will be understood a process of slower and to some extent controlled change such as Gorbachev's policy of *perestroika* in contrast to transformation which refers to radical and uncontrolled change such a the collapse of the Soviet Union, author.

[2] Svante Cornell, *Autonomy and Conflict, Ethnoterritoriality and Separatism in the South Caucasus – Cases in Georgia* (Stockholm: Elandrs Gotab, 2002).

[3] Christoph Zürcher, *The Post- Soviet Wars: Rebellion, Ethnic Conflict, and Nationhood in the Caucasus* (New York: NYU Press, 2007), p. 212- 213.

[4] There is questionable if the transition, which began in USSR in the period of *glasnost* and *perestroika* and escalated in the period of Chechen war, Nagorno.Karabakh conflict and Georgean civil war and already ended. What is important for this work on the phenomenon of transition is the fact of weakening the state structures and so from this point of view it is irrelevant, if the transition still continues, as long as central government in Kremlin is stronger and the power is rather centralised with strong state structures, for these reasons I will work rather with narrower term of weakened state structures than the broad term of the transition which contains other different elements, author.

The process (factor) of transition followed usually by the process (factor) of the weakening of the state structures is considered to be one of the crucial factors for ethnic violence or armed separatism to appear. A variation of other factors in the context of transition has than decided if the violence emerged or not. A huge amount of valuable research has been done on all mentioned conflicts of early 90s.

At this point, an interesting phenomenon linked to the region of North Caucasus appears. Here one can find a dozen Autonomous regions (AR), which remained calm during the wave of nationalistic separatism of early 90-ties and turned to violent much later on a different, seemingly non-nationalist basis. The most vivid case of this phenomenon is Dagestan after the beginning of the new millennium. This region, with a very difficult and tense inner dynamism reminded suspiciously calm during 90s, when the Russian state suffered on inner chaos and weakness, with rebelling Chechnya mounting the large scale destructive separatist campaign. However surprisingly, Dagestan has become extremely violent in a period following 1999, which was expected to be a rather stable one, following the suppression of the Chechen separatist Republic of Ichkeria and the inner stabilisation and empowerment of the Russian state.

Here the main question of this study arises, namely what factors and mechanisms are operating on the background of a sharp rise of separatism[5] in Dagestan after 1999? This main question is linked to a set of important sub-questions such as: (A.) what was the role of factor of transition in triggering Chechen separatism was it really the key factor? (B.) If the conflict in Chechnya as well as most other conflicts in the post-socialist space are associated primary with the process (factor) of large-socio-political transition and subsequent transformation,[6] why did Dagestan remain relatively calm and stable in this period, but rapidly began to destabilize following 1999 when Russian Federation started to stabilize and recentralize again after the onset of Vladimir Putin and the increase in global oil prices? (C.) Is conflict in Dagestan just a delayed consequence of transformation, or is it linked to a different chain of factors and has rather a post-transformative character? (D.) Is the conflict in Dagestan a result of external intervention (e.g. radical Islamists, global terrorism), or are its causes rooted

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[5] Although ethnic conflict and separatism may overlap, it is not always the case. In this work I will study the phenomenon of separatism rather than ethnic conflict. By separatism I mean the situation in which one or more "ethnic" minority group(s) trie(s) to secede from the country they are part of, no matter if on ethnic, religious or other basis. However as I will argue in the first chapter, the term ethnic may fit very well for most of cases, on the other hand the case of Dagestan is questionable and will have to be analyzed from this perspective, author.

directly in Dagestan-if so, which factors are these? (E.) What is the role of religion (Islam) in the separatism, why don't insurgents mobilize on nationalist base? Is religion itself a core of problem or is it rather just an ad hoc mean of mobilization?

Although due to Kremlin's officials as well as some some authors such as Zurab Todua[7], the emergence of radical Islamism and terrorism in the North Caucasus should be understood as a part of a worldwide phenomenon caused by the rise of so called global terrorism. The destabilization of Dagestan is than understood as a result of outside cross border intervention destabilizing otherwise stable republic. The measures needed to successfully address these issues should be due to this logic of an international character as well. However my hypotheses, which will be a subject of testing in this analysis, is that the separatism in Dagestan has a post-transformation character, and has paradoxically been caused by inner stabilization of Russian Federation which allowed the center[8] to recentralize political power in Dagestan and to launch military campaign of pre-emptive strikes against Salafi radicals. These two steps connected (under specific Dagestani realities) existing factors of separatism[9] into a vicious chain leading to the rise of armed insurgency. Current conflict in Dagestan is therefore caused by factors having roots in domestic realities, rather than being a consequence of some external factors or forces.

The argument presented in this study has already been touched on by some authors;[10] however it has never been addressed deeply. The only study analysing the issue of Dagestans insurgency in a book format, is Wares and Kisrievs work *Dagestan: Russian Hegemony and Islamic Ressistance in the North Caucasus*.[11] Although Ware and Kisriev have created this unique study, giving us a deep analysis and explanation of political roots of the Islamic resistance in Dagestan after 1999, I believe that the whole picture of this conflict hasn't been painted yet. Therefore on the following pages, I will

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[6]Under the term Transition rather a process of a smooth change will be understood, while the term Transformation will present a much more radical and swift change, author.

[7] For more information see: Zurab Todua, *Ekspansiya islamistov na kavkaze i v centralnoy azii* (Expansion of Islamists on the Caucasus and in Central Asia), (Moscow: Novosti, 2006).

[8] Under the term *center,* the central government of Russian Federation will be understood on the following pages, author.

[9] Because, at this point we can't for sure state that both conflict in Chechnya and conflict in Dagestan were ethnic conflicts, in this work instead of Factors of ethnic conflicts, I will use the term Factors od separatism, author.

[10]This issue has been to some extent touched for example by Moshe Gammer or many authors publishing for the Jamestown Foundation. For more information look at: Moshe Gammer, "From the Challenge of Nationalism to the Challenge of Islamism," The case of Dagestan. In *Ethno- Nationalism, Islam and the State in the Caucasus, Post- Soviet Disorer,* ed. Moshe Gammer et al. (New York: Routledge, 2008).

examine this phenomenon in depth, working with Ware's and Kisirev's findings, yet trying to put them into a wider context; not hoping to finally grasp this complex and ever-changing phenomenon but rather to find another piece of the puzzle.

Understanding the real reasons behind the "New wave of insurgency" in the Northern Caucasus could enrich our theoretical understanding of grassroots of ethnic conflicts and separatism, which until this day examined rather the old nationalistic separatism, linked with the process of transition and weakening of the state structures following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

To examine the roots of Dagestan's Islamic separatism, in the first chapter I will address existing theoretical frameworks for studying the grassroots of conflicts and I will determine which factors should be a part of following analysis and why? The econd and third chapter will focus on Chechnya and Dagestan in 90s. I'll try to analyze the situation prevailing in both regions during this period and to identify the presence or absence of individual factors acting on the background, to set up a scene for the comparison. Identification of factors and mechanisms that led to the outbreak of the Chechen separatism and the definition of factors, the absence of which prevented a similar development in Dagestan will be crucial in this sense. Having a picture of Dagestan in 90-ties and of reasons why it did not erupt into nationalistic violence, in the fourth chapter we will move on to the analysis of development following 1999, and the crucial changes it has brought. However defining the changes won't be enough for the entire problem. The comparison of the factors in Dagestan during both before and after 1999 conducted in this chapter will be vital. By managing it, we should be able to identify the crucial changes leading to the "Islamist upspring" in Dagestan on an academic level. However because the inner dynamism of separatism is not created only by isolated factors, but rather by their vivid and changing interactions, in the conclusion, I'll try to reconstruct this model of mutual interaction among the various factors leading to Dagestan's separatism. Finally, after a brief discussion of findings in the conclusion, I'll try to give an answer to the main questions, evaluate the hypotheses and conclude the study.

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[11] Robert Bruce Ware, Enver Kisriev, *Dagestan: Russian Hegemony and Islamic Resistance in the North Caucasus*. (London, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2010), 251 p.

1. Searching for the Grassroots?

1.1 Shall We Study the Roots of Ethnic Conflicts and Separatism?

Research on ethnic conflicts and separatism encounters on a series of problems in both theoretical and methodological point of view and so it presents a significant challenge for each researcher. The ethnic separatism in Chechnya, the "Islamic" insurgency in Dagestan, the civil war in former Yugoslavia and the ethnic cleansings in Rwanda, they all represent a different phenomenon; therefore it seems unlikely to create one model or theory able to grasp them all. However, the very nature of ethnic conflict and ethnic- based separatism is often questioned. One of the most fundamental critiques of analyses dedicated to the concept of ethnic conflict was presented by Bruce Gilley in his essay *"Against the Concept of Ethnic Conflict"*.[12] His criticism has two levels: empirical and conceptual. Empirical level is based on the fact that only a tiny part of conflicts and separatist movements does have an ethnic background. In fact, most of them stem rather from economic or religious issues and the ethnic aspect comes into play ad hoc. Conceptual problems are related to the concept of ethnic conflict as such. According to Gilley, the phenomenon of "ethnic" suffers from poor conceptualization, given the fact that the concept of ethnic identity is too complex and composed of many other identities. Compared with the class identity it is supposed to be very unstable and variable, making it scientifically very difficult to grasp.[13]

Although Gilley in his criticism correctly identifies several problems that research on ethnic conflicts has to face, his criticism as such is in general aimed rather at the primordialist approach, which has already been superseded in the past few decades. This approach is truly based on the perception that conflicts and separatism are ethnic in their core, being fuelled by ancient historical hatreds among communities, which are labelled to each new generation. The mere fact of ethnic diversity is then understood as the root

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[12] Bruce Gilley, „Against the concept of ethnic conflict", *Third world quarterly* 25, No. 6, (Jan 24, 2004), 1155- 1166.
[13] Ibid., 1157- 1160.

of ethnic conflict. However, most of the modern approaches for studying this phenomenon emphasize that its roots are in fact often of economic or class character or that they are created by elites as a means of manipulating the masses and thus concentrating more power in their hands. One can as well agree with the statement that ethnic identity as opposed to class or religious identity is not the elementary one, but it is complex and consists of the combination of various elementary identities. Although we can agree on this, Gilley tends to downplay one important fact: that conflicts springing from class, religious or economic disputes later usually directly replicate the ethnic boarders of warring groups. Almost an idle illustrative example of a case, when violence obviously has other than ethnic roots, was the pogroms in the city of Osh in Kirgizstan in 1990. Kyrgyz and Uzbek identities were both too young, so the conflict could be hardly rooted in some kind of ancient ethnic hatred. As Valery Tishkov noted, the roots were really of economic character and were the result of competition between Uzbek peasants and Kyrgyz shepherds in the context of worsening economic situation.[14] However, while there are cases of fights between Uzbek shepherds and Kyrgyz peasants, we have no case of a Kyrgyz shepherd killing a Kyrgyz peasant, but we have plenty of cases in which Kyrgyz were simply massacring Uzbeks. The conflict might have had economic roots, but when the violence erupted; it in fact copied ethnic rather than economic lines.

An example of strong ethnic symbolism during the pogroms was the case of Uzbek beekeeper Umurzakov, who had an argument with local Kyrgyz shepherds over his bees sticking their horses. Soon after the eruption of violence, four horsemen from Kyrgyz ranch attacked Umurzakov's house trying to kill him. However, he and his family managed to escape the day before and the only people near the house were three Uzbek teenagers. Due to the testimonies, after the Kyrgyz caught them, they were tied by a rope like a piece of cattle and dragged barefoot to the near hill of *Tosmo* just to be plunged into an abyss.[15] If this violence had been driven only by economic rivalry, it would have been rational to burn the beekeepers house; but why to kill three innocent teenagers? However, the act not only resulted in the death of three Uzbek children who did not present any significant economic threat, but was accompanied by strongly symbolic acts. Tying the Uzbek teenagers in the way Kyrgyz tie cattle before killing

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[14] Valery Tishkov, "Don't Kill Me, I'm a Kyrgyz!: An Anthropological Analysis of Violence in the Osh Ethnic Conflict," *Journal of Peace Research*, 32, No. 2 (1995): 133- 149, http://www.jstor.org, (accessed October 7. 2012), 133.

them was a highly symbolic act, which degraded the members of other ethnic group to the animal level. If the conflict had not had a significantly ethnic character, such acts would not have been necessary and probably would have never occurred. Therefore, although Gilley may be right about usually non ethnic roots of conflicts, it would be a mistake to ignore the strongly ethnic character these conflicts adopt after the eruption of violence. In this context the economic, political or religious roots should rather be understood as non-ethnic factors of ethnic violence. But still, it doesn't mean that there are no non-ethnic conflicts and separatist movements based rather on religious or class identity that later tend to follow these lines after the eruption of violence.

Also, the issue of ethnic conflict as a concept that clearly persists may not necessarily be insolvable. As Maxim Barbashin points out, the concept of ethnic conflict is semantically neutral, in contrary to such labels as anti-terrorist operation or "restoring constitutional order" used by governments on the one hand, and terms like the struggle for self-determination, or the fight against imperialism used by insurgents on the other.[16] Similarly, its vague character that involves other forms of conflict such as economic, religious, etc., gives us the opportunity to explore these conflicts as a functional and complex unit. Thus, although the conflicts are usually driven by many different factors, in most cases they copy the existing ethnic lines, when ethnicity becomes the criterion by which the violence is carried out. It is therefore legitimate to describe them as ethnic conflicts.

There are strong arguments pro and contra using the term "ethnic" when analysing various separatist movements, so we should work carefully with this concept. Therefore, in the following analysis I will not use the term factors of ethnic violence, but rather factors of separatism (FoS), and deciding if they were of ethnic or some other origin could be possible only at the end of the study. In the following chapter I will address the current state of research on the topic of "ethnic conflicts" and separatism, because these approaches work usually with non-ethnic factors and the term ethnic is usually understood in the broad sense, Barbashin has described. So they can be used for analysing both Chechnya and Dagestan as well.

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[15] Ibid., 134.

[16] Maxim U. Barbashin, "Informal Power Structures in Russia and Ethno-Political Conflict in the Northern Caucasus", in *Ethno- Nationalism, Islam and the State the Caucasus, Post-Soviet Disorder*, ed. Moshe Gammer et. al. (New York: Routledge, 2008), 9- 10.

1.2 Theoretical Approaches for Studying Grassroots – Unity in Diversity?

Ethnic conflict (and separatism linked to it) is a phenomenon extremely variable in space as well as in time. In his article *"Patterns of Ethnic Violence"*[17] Donald Horowitz identified two main research levels of ethnic conflicts. The first one is the time level, which aims to uncover what forces are on the background of the global increase in the number of ethnic conflicts and ethnic based separatist movements. The second level – the territorial one – is addressing the question of why some groups are risking launching the bloody and destructive separatist movements while others do not. The following study will focus on the second level, the territorial one, asking why ethnic separatism did occur in Chechnya in the early 90s and not in Dagestan, but it flared there a bit later under a different, non-nationalist banner.

As has been mentioned above, the very concept of ethnicity or ethnos and its conceptualization present a rather complicated issue. This fact is also well reflected in the theoretical discourse on the roots of ethnic violence. The term "ethnic" is term of Greek origin meaning initially the "the kin" in a narrow sense referring to a small group of people linked by family ties. Later in the history the term ethnic started to be used by Greeks as a mean to describe the all Hellenic peoples in the contrast to non-hellenic barbarians.[18]

The term "ethnic group", from which the term "nation" was later allocated, has undergone a considerable development over the centuries and has often reflected the existing socio-political reality. The current discourse about the roots of ethnic violence distinguishes the three main theoretical perspectives on the concept: primordialistic, instrumentalist and constructivist.

Primordialists understand ethnicity as an innate quality and a form of an extended family. This approach has been popular in the USSR and it is still influential in Russia and the South Caucasus these days. Unlike in the primordialist case, according to the constructivist approach the concept of ethnic group is not of natural origin, but it

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[17] Donald R. Horowitz, "Patterns of Ethnic Separatism", Comparative studies in Society and History, 23, No. 2 (1981): 165- 195, http://www.jstor.org (accessed September 5. 2012), 165.
[18] Filip Tesař, *Etnické konflikty* (Ethnic Conflicts), (Prague: Portal, 2007).

is a social construct created by elites and social scientists; a kind of Weberian ideal type, non-existent in the reality.[19] Ethnic groups are not viewed only as an imagined concept but also as quite a new one. As Benedict Anderson argues, national (ethnic) community replaced the religious one when capitalism discovered the possibilities given by the print technology in the 17th century.[20] The instrumentalist approach stems from the constructivist one, but it stresses the role of elites in creating or mobilizing ethnic identity. For thess elites, ethnicity then becomes the means of accumulating power. These elites, e.g. Slobodan Milosevic, were not often originally nationalistic at all, but adopted this policy later and with a clear purpose.[21]

In general, constructivists are correct in saying that modern nations are not extended families, but rather imagined communities. However, on the other hand we can find small nations even in Dagestan and Azerbaijan[22], which can be de facto identified as extended families. But what is even more important from the practical point of view, even huge communities such as nations can in case of a conflict behave the way extended families would. At this point, the people one did not know before become very important as members of the same community or "family" for communal protection from the people who could have been one's neighbors or friends in the past.[23] The role of elites in either suppressing or supporting ethnic identity is well documented in the case of the USSR and especially in Central Asia. Although these three main approaches may look a priori antagonistic, it is not the case. In this work, ethnic group will be understood as a generally imagined community, which may become manipulated by elites, but may in some cases behave as an extended family.

This controversy is also blending in the discourse on the roots or causes which create ethnic violence. Here we can identify many different schools or individual

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[19] S. M. Markedonov, *Etnonacionalnyy I religioznyy factor v obshchectvenno-politicheskoy zhizni Kavkazskogo regiona* (Ethno-national and religious factor in the political life of the Caucasus region) author's manuscript, 8- 12.

[20] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities, Reflecion on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (London, New Yourk: Verso, 2006), 37- 47.

[21] S. M. Markedonov, "Etnonacionalnyy I religioznyy factor b obshchectvenno-politicheskoy zhizni Kavkazskogo regiona, (Ethno-national and religious factor in the political life of the Caucasus region)," 8- 12.

[22] For example, Udi people, a small nation (around 10,000 people worldwide) living isolated mostly in two villages of Nij and Oguz in the modern day Azerbaijan, author.

[23] Author has noticed many cases of this phenomenon during his trip to Nagorno Karabakh. Even the later leaders of Armenian insurgency in Nagorno Karabakh admit that they used to have many close friends of Azeri origin that they are still in touch with. For more information see: Thomas de Waal, *Černá Zahrada:*

approaches of particular authors. From the territorial-comparative point of view, three main schools were most important for developing the research of grassroots or factors of separatism: primordialists, materialists and instrumentalists.

As has been mentioned above, the traditional primordialist approach assumes that ethnic groups have a character of an extended family and are able to behave as one, especially in a period of conflict with another group.[24] Factors in triggering ethnic conflicts are especially older conflicts, kept in the collective memory of the group; in primordialist terminology: the ancient hatreds, passed down from generation to generation. This approach has been widely criticized in the West in the last decades, especially by the above mentioned constructivists.

The materialist approaches tend to search for the roots of ethnic conflicts rather in the material world in the sense of struggle for resources. Monifa Duffy Toft identifies two main materialist approaches in the territorial comparative research, namely the relative deprivation and intrinsic worth. The relative deprivation refers to the situation when after decades of growth, economic or political, stagnation and decline appear, causing the resource competition.[25] As Toft notes this theory linked to the economic or political transition sounds logical but it is hard to test. The intrinsic worth approach refers to the fact that disputed territory has either strategic or intrinsic worth and therefore is worth fighting for. Due to Toft, this approach is right but ignores other dimensions such as emotional or symbolic worth of the territory.[26] A considerable research effort on this topic has been undertaken by Donald Horowitz. In his article "Patterns of Ethnic Separatism"[27] Horowitz compared combination of two types of regions (advanced and backwards) with two types of minorities living in them (advanced and backwards) and their combinations, the influence on the likelihood of violent, ethnic based separatism. As the most likely precondition for this scenario has been identified the case in which the backwards minority inhabits the backwards region followed by advanced groups living in background regions. However was this analysis

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Arménie a Ázerbajdžán v míru a za války (The Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan through Peace and War), (Prague: Academia, 2012), 63- 73.

[24] Monica Duffy Toft, *The Geography of Ethnic Violence: identity, interests and indivisibility of territory* (Princeton: Princeton university press, 2003), 9.

[25] At this point the resource doesn't need to be necessary of economic character. It may be the resources of power and power competition as well, author.

[26] Monica Duffy Toft, „The Geography of Ethnic Violence: identity, interests and indivisibility of territory", 9.

[27] Donald R. Horowitz, "Patterns of Ethnic Separatism", *Comparative studies in Society and History*, 23, No. 2 (1981): 165- 195, http://www.jstor.org (accessed October 28, 2012), 165.

enriching, other factors must be included; for example if the minority group is settled as a compact unit or it is dispersed and so on. To sum up the materialist approach can give us much valuable knowledge, but it is unable to grasp other immaterial phenomena influencing the rise of ethnic violence.

The last important approach is the instrumentalist or elite manipulation one. It works with the theses that passive masses can be stirred to violence by elites manipulating symbols, creating myths of ethnic hatred and generally constructing the ethnic identity, the way they need it to accumulate more power in their hands. But at this point we encounter the same problem as in the case of the intrinsic worth; the approach is logical but taken out of the broader context it is insufficient. Its biggest weakness is the fact that instrumentalism in itself does not reflect and identify the factors that create necessary background preconditions, enabling elites to manipulate masses and run ethnic mobilization. In a practical sense, if elites want to abuse symbols, there must be some pre-existing ethnic symbolism. Similarly, if they want to create myths of ethnic hatred, there must be some historical conflicts still existing in the collective memory of the nation. This kind of elites usually appears in the periods of drastic economic or political transitions. At this point we can see the overlap of all primordialist, materialist and instrumentalist approaches.

In fact, these approaches are not necessarily antitheses of each other's. As we have mentioned above, Donald Horowitz, who is considered to be in many aspects a primordialist, did a valuable research on the materialist approach. In fact, primordialists often argue that modern nations are in fact extended families, but rather that under some circumstances, they can behave that way. These approaches, rather than being theses and anti-theses study different aspects or factors of ethnic conflicts and separatism, which in reality interact with each other. For these reasons, many authors such as Svante Cornell, Monica Duffy Toft or Stuart J. Kaufman[28] started to work with all these approaches at once when analyzing concrete issues. Yet there is no universal model for analyzing factors triggering ethnic violence and separatism; each of these authors considers a different factor to be dominant in the concrete case of his or her study. Monica D. Toft stresses the emotional value of territory which is considered to be a homeland and the character of ethnic minority in the sense of being dominant and

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[28] For more information about Kaufman's research on the issue of ethnic conflicts and separatism see: Stuart J. Kaufman, *Modern Hatreds: The symbolic politics of ethnic war* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2001).

concentrated or rather minor and scattered.[29] On the other hand, Cornell stresses the role of autonomy as the means of not just enlarging the capacity of ethnic minority, but creating and mobilizing possibly radical organized elites.[30] It is most probably impossible to create the universal model for explaining ethnic conflicts, taking into account how different some realities in places like Georgia, Yugoslavia, Dagestan or Rwanda are. However, these territorial analyses gave us some more or less universal factors and tools. As Cornell argues, in every ethnic conflict there must be three components influencing the rise of violent ethnic conflict or separatism; willingness to act, capacity to act and political opportunity to act.[31] Due to Cornell, factors are then of two types; background factors determining the will and capacity to act, such as discrimination, cultural differences, former conflicts and their mythification, or group cohesion etc.; and catalysing factors causing the shift from ethnic tension to ethnic violence, such as political transformation, loss of autonomy, external intervention etc.[32] In my work on factors of ethnic conflict in Kosovo and Voivodina,[33] I have tested the possibility of applying Cornell's set of factors on different region, having noticed that however the region of former Yugoslavia has its specifics and this set of factors is not universal, most of the factors identified by Cornell in Georgia have been present here as well. It means that we can work with this framework which is not based only on Cornell's work but works of other authors such as Toft, Kaufman and others, in different regions of the world by addressing its specifics and identifying particular factors present in this region before approaching to the analysis itself.

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[29] Toft, "The Geography of Ethnic Violence: identity, interests and indivisibility of territory", 26.

[30] Cornell, "Autonomy and Conflict, Ethnoterritoriality and Separatism in the South Caucasus – Cases in Georgia" , 225- 237

[31] Ibid., 2001, 25

[32] Ibid., 2001, 25-27.

[33] Tomáš Baranec, "Kovská autonómia a faktory etnického napätia: Etnický stret ako nevyhnutný?" (Kosovo's Autonomy and the Factors of Ethnic Tension: The ethnic clash as inevitable?), *Acta Universitatis Carolinae Studia Territorialia* XII, No. 1. (2012): 55-85. http://stuter.fsv.cuni.cz/index.php/stuter/article/view/517/468, (accessed October 26 2012).

1.3 Background Factors in Chechnya and Dagestan

1.3.1 Will to Act:

In this section I will present factors that support the will of ethnic group to launch violent ethnic conflict or separatism. I will encounter the factors already identified by other researchers, but for conducting an accurate analysis, one needs to present also the factors specific for the regions of Chechnya and Dagestan. Strong presence of factors which increase the will of ethnic group to undertake an action does not necessary mean that the conflict will appear. Rather than just measuring the presence or absence of some factors it is crucial to put them into a context with the capacity of ethnic group to launch the conflict, and most importantly to analyse the interaction between factors of will and catalysing factors.

Cultural and religious differences

The first factor I want to address is the Factor of cultural and religious differences mentioned by Gurr in the *Minorities at risk* project[34]. The concept of cultural differences as defined by Gurr is quite wide and includes six cultural traits: ethnicity/nationality, language, religion, social customs, historical origin and urban-rural residence.[35] At this point Cornell rightly points out that the sole reality of cultural differences may not in itself be a factor which increases the ethnic tension and more; it may be a reality of a strong cultural affinity, which may the smaller ethnic group lead to a separatist campaign in fear of fast assimilation.[36] The most important seem to be the three traits of religion, language and customs.

Religious differences between orthodox Russians and mostly Muslim dwellers of northern Caucasus played its role in local conflicts in the past. Although traditional Sufi Islam of the Northern Caucasus is quite syncretic and tolerant in general, it used to play the crucial role of uniting force among many different north-Caucasian nations in their struggle against Russia. In addition, new Salafi Islamic movement, which started

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[34] Ted Gurr, *Minorities at Risk, a Global view of Ethno-political conflict*, (Washington DC: USIP Press: 1993)
[35] Ibid. 126
[36] Svante Corenell, "Autonomy and Conflict, Ethnoterritoriality and Separatism in the South Caucasus – Cases in Georgia", 29- 30.

to appear in the Northern Caucasus, is by many authors such as Todua considered to be the main destabilizing factor in the region in the last 20 years.[37] The role of the factor of religious differences should not be a priori overestimated, historically the struggle of north-Caucasian peoples against the Russian empire had different than religious roots. But neither should it be overlooked, especially after the rise of the Salafi and Wahhabi movements in Dagestan.

In case of language differences, once again, just the sole fact that two distinct groups use two mutually unintelligible languages does not mean the conflict will be more likely to occur. Two aspects are important. The knowledge of others (usually the dominant's group) language may under some circumstances serve as the gate to other's culture, reducing the cultural differences between two groups.[38] Another aspect is how the actual usage of dominant's group language among the group indicates the level of integration into the state and identification with it.

Different habits and traditions may create some tension on micro-level among various groups living for example in the same house. It is not important if the differences in habits and customs are really high, if they are considered to be high or if a "cultural barrier" exists. By a cultural barrier I mean situation in which one or both group live not just culturally isolated from each other, but have also minimal knowledge about the other culture. In recent years such a barrier formed between Russians and people of Caucasian origin. Due to surveys only 5 % of young Russians said they would be interested in habits and culture of their Caucasian neighbours, comparing to 20 % of respondents who said they would be interested in culture of neighbours from Africa, even when intolerance to Africans is traditionally widespread in Russia.[39]

Analysing the significant role the Factor of cultural and religious differences plays in chain of interactions among various Factors of Separatism (FoS) will be an important part of this work.

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[37] Zurab Todua, „*Ekspansiya islamistov na kavkaze i v centralnoy azii* (Expansion of Islamists on the Caucasus and in Central Asia)", 6-32.

[38] This is quite obvious in the case of Georgian-Russian relations on the level of an ordinary citizen. Even young Georgians are still under a strong cultural influence of Russia, knowing the language often much better than English, watching Russian movies and reading Russian books. And as a result, despite the war, Georgians still admire the Russian culture and Russians themselves, considering the existing conflict rather a political issue, author.

[39] Denis Dafflon, *Youth in Russia- The Portrait of a generation in transition*, A Research Report by the Swiss Academy of Development, (SAD, Bern, 2009), Source: http://www.stiftung-drja.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Dokumente/Russland/sad-youth-in-russia.pdf , (accessed October 9. 2012), 29

Civic vs. ethnic identity:

The difference between civic and ethnic conception of the nation presents another factor. Civic conception of the nation presents the "West European" model based on the territorial identity we can find in France, Great Britain or the USA. However, it has been applied to Turkey after the fall of the Ottoman Empire as well. For being a Turk, one does not have to have a family bloodline to Turkic nomads from the mythological "Turan", he or she can be a Turk in the civic sense just by adopting the Turkish language, culture and identity. This model is in general quite successful in assimilating ethnic minorities, which was the case of Kartvelian Lazs or many Adyghe nations in Turkey. However, none of this has helped to assimilate Kurds, which still, to some extent, present an obstacle to creating universal Turkic civic identity in the modern day Turkey. Ethnic conception of the nation presents the "East European" model based rather on bloodline in a sense similar to the primordialist idea of the extended family. Ethnic model is considered to be much more exclusive and prone to create ethnic violence or separatism. This has been the case of the early Georgian republic under the rule of president Gamsachurdia and his callings for "Georgia for Georgians" which excluded all other ethnic minorities in the country and degraded them to the status of unwelcomed temporal guests, which ultimately led to bloody conflicts with Abkhazia and South Ossetia and to the "cold conflict" with an Armenian minority in the region of Javakheti. However, in our cases we have two levels of these conceptions; the Russian, which aims with bigger or smaller success to be the civic one, and the local one in Dagestan in Chechnya having strongly ethnic and exclusive character.

Therefore, in this work Factor of Civic vs. Ethnic identity will be analysed on both levels, federal and local.

Political autonomy:

The most important factor able to highly enlarge the capacity of ethnic group, give it leadership and will to fight addressed by Svante Cornell was the presence and following loose of the political autonomy.[40] Cornell managed to give a convincing argument about how important may the role of the autonomy be for ethnic separatism to occur. It may have a character of both the background factor, by creating elites and rising capacity of ethnic group to act through autonomous organs, and of the catalysing factor, when abolished by the center. The cases of Chechnya and Dagestan are interesting because of the fact that the deprivation of autonomy has never been the focus of the day and yet, the level of separatist violence in both cases was and still is significant. However, we have to address and analyse the role played by elites and institutions created by the autonomous status in both Chechen and Dagestan's conflicts. Therefore, in this work, the factor of autonomy will be analysed as a background factor only.

Mythification of past conflicts:

The presence of past conflicts is an important factor able to increase the level of ethnic tension or level of motivation for violent separatism. However, in this case, the phenomenon of mythification is important. We may find bloody historical conflicts, which were forgotten and play no role anymore (although they can be revived by radical elites under some circumstances) and then we can find some minor conflicts which, however, still remain vivid in the collective memory and are highly mythicized, playing an important role in increasing the level of ethnic tension and separatism.[41] For these reasons I will not analyse the real level of historical conflicts with the Russian state, but rather its constructivist perception among Chechens and dwellers of Dagestan.

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[40]Svante Cornell, „Autonomy and Conflict, Ethnoteritorriality and Separatism in the South Caucasus – Cases in Georgia", 225-237.

[41]The role of mythification is very obvious in Nagorno Karabakh, where one can often hear about Azeries having been plotting for decades under the Soviet rule "the final solution" for Armenians together with Turks. Azeries in general are referred to as Turks, the same Turks which carried out the massacres of Armenian population living under the Ottoman rule in the early 20th century, ignoring the fact that Azeries, although of Turkic origin, did not participate on these events. This concrete myth played a significant role in launching mass panic and fast ethnic mobilization among the local Armenians in the beginning of the crisis, author.

Economic factors:

Taking into account the materialist approach as well, we should encounter the economic factors and analyse their role in the rising separatism of Chechnya in the 90s and Dagestan after 1999. I will follow the role of collapsing economy on the political radicalization of Chechens and the impact of a very weak economy of Dagestan on rising insurgency in this region. Therefore, I will focus on the issue of relative depression rather than intrinsic worth of territory. This factor has to be understood in a connection with weak social conditions of local dwellers and we should address its possible link to the issue of anomie in Chechnya and Dagestan.

Anomie:

As Cornell noted the political discrimination is hard to measure and so it can be very hardly used as a factor in research, no matter how big its role in supporting separatist tendencies.[42] But what we can measure or at least define is the level of the anomie, which can have an impact on an emergency of violent society, indirectly preparing the soil for ethnic conflict or separatist insurgency. Due to the research of Denis Dafflon from Swiss academy for development,[43] anomie, which is caused by transition and loss of values or by bad socioeconomic reality giving young people just small or no perspectives for better future, can cause the rise of violent society in which the use of force for achieving goals becomes the social norm; due to this research there is a direct link between the anomie and the violent and self-destructive behaviour.[44] For these reasons I include the anomie as one of the factors possibly influencing the rise of violent separatism and its role will be analysed more deeply.

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[42] Svante Cornell, „Autonomy and Conflict, Ethnoterritoriality and Separatism in the South Caucasus – Cases in Georgia", 31-33

[43] Denis Dafflon, *Youth in Russia- The Portrait of a generation in transition*, A Research Report by the Swiss Academy of Development, (SAD, Bern, 2009), Source: http://www.stiftung-drja.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Dokumente/Russland/sad-youth-in-russia.pdf , (accessed October 9. 2012), 9- 15.

[44] Ibid., 38-44.

1.3.2 Capacity to Act:

These are factors which do not directly create the will or desire for secession from the center, but once this will exists, they determine the possibilities for carrying out the armed separatist campaign.

Rough terrain:

Rough terrain is considered to be a very important precondition for a long term separatist insurgency. As Valery Tishkov points out, flatland is idle for short term surprising ethnic cleansings and pogroms (as we have seen in Osh), but rather inadequate for a long term separatist campaign.[45] Mountainous or forested regions are then an important factor which raises the ability of separatists for long term guerrilla insurgency; however, it is not an indispensable precondition for separatism.

Access to weapons:

An access to weapons presents rather a complicated issue; it can be the background factor raising the capacity and also confidence of separatists before the actual separatist campaign, but the appearance of huge amounts of weapons can act also as the catalysing factor.[46] Therefore, the role of the access to large amount of weapons in supporting violent separatism should be analysed in this work.

Ethnic geography:

Ethnic geography presents the third important factor influencing the capacity of separatists to act. As argued by Toft, the best starting position for separatism have those ethnic minorities which present a compactly settled majority in their regions. However, there are exceptions such as Abkhazians which presented a minority in Abkhazia but managed to finish the separatist campaign due to the intervention of outside power

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[45] Valery Tishkov," Don't Kill Me, I'm a Kyrgyz! An Anthropological of Violence in the Osh Ethnic Conflict", 136-137.

[46] This was the case of Kosovo; the separatist movement had a political character and radical separatists from UKC, they were marginal until 1997, when the arsenals of Albania were robbed and huge amounts of weapons emerged in Kosovo. The access to weapons was not the factor raising the capacity, but rather the factor shifting the separatism from a political level to a violent one, author.

(Russia).[47] Another exception is Armenians settled in the Georgian region of Javakheti, representing the majority in this area. Despite the high level of tension with the central government during Gamsakhurdias presidency, they have never launched a violent separatist movement. Cornell explains that the reason for this was the absence of support from ethnic kin in Armenia and the absence of autonomous status and thus inability to mobilize elites and institutions.[48] However, ethnic geography presents an important factor and it will be interesting to analyse its role in such different regions such as Chechnya and Dagestan. It is worth mentioning that ethnic geography as well can act as the factor increasing the will of ethnic group to launch violence, when it has a dynamic changing character. In Kosovo, it was the reality of fast demographic changes over a few years which lead to minoritization of Serbians and a fast increase of the Albanian ethnic dominance, which was the main trigger for the rise of anti-Albanian sentiment in the Serbian society.[49]

Ethnic kin:

Ethnic kin refers to the existence of ethnically close people close abroad or in the other part of the same country. This factor is linked to the higher possibility of official intervention; however, not necessarily. In the case of the Kosovo separatist movement of the 90s, insurgents got no support from the Albanian government, but it was the looting of Albanian weapon stores which would be hardly feasible without any help from "Albanian Albanians", which enabled the start of a large scale armed resistance. So this factor may support the rise of the capacity of an ethnic group to launch a separatist movement.

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[47]Monica Duffy Toft, „The Geography of Ethnic Violence: identity, interests and indivisibility of territory", 88- 107.
[48]Svante Cornell, „Autonomy and Conflict, Ethnoterritoriality and Separatism in the South Caucasus – Cases in Georgia", 196- 209.
[49] Tomáš Baranec, "Kosovská autonómia a faktory etnického napätia: Etnický stret ako nevyhnutný?" (Kosovo's Autonomy and the Factors of Ethnic Tension: The ethnic clash as inevitable?), 81- 83.

Regional constellation of power:

Regional constellation of power refers to the possibility of an intervention by an outside force. It may be often linked to the presence of ethnic kin abroad as in the case of Armenian support for the Nagorno Karabakh separatist movement, but not necessarily as we have seen in the case of the Russian intervention to Abkhazia.[50]

However, following the unsuccessful coup from the summer of 1991 and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the newly established Russian Federation found itself on the brick of economic collapse with chaos rising all over the country. Even under these conditions the Russian state presented a significant power on the international stage, with no other state openly discussing its territorial integrity. The only help from abroad separates could count on were the already mentioned groups of religious fundamentalist from abroad.

The year 1991 was a moment which gave many nations of the former socialist block the opportunity to re-establish their statehood. It was not just the case of Georgians, Armenians or Ukrainians, but also of Croats or Slovenes. All of these new states were soon to be accepted by international community. However, as Sakwa argues, only the nations which already existed as constituent republics and had some historical heritage of an independent statehood could expect the recognition of independence by wider international community. This was the case of neither Chechnya, nor Dagestan, and international community considered these issues to be the internal problem of Russia.[51]

For these reasons, factor of regional constellation of power will not be the subject of analysis in the following chapters.

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[50] In Abkhazian war, the intervention has been conducted by Cossack regiments and more importantly by volunteers from other mountainous republics of North Caucasus. This intervention was based mostly on shared mountainous identity, character of which will be described later in this paper, author.

[51] Richad Sakawa, „Introduction: Why Chechnya? " in *Chechnya from Past to Future*, ed. Richard Sakawa et. al., (London: Anthem Press, 2005).

1.4 Catalysing Factors:

The concept of catalysing factors presents rather a difficult matter. It is caused by the fact that even background factors may sometimes play the role of catalysing factors. As in the above mentioned case of Kosovo, where a large scale armed resistance started at the moment when Kosovo Albanians obtained huge amount of weapons from Albania. At this point the conflict was already triggered, and low scale violence already existed, just the capacity was not sufficient to launch the armed campaign, and so the factor of capacity behaved as a catalysing factor.

Therefore, under the term catalysing factor we will understand either the factor bringing a rapid change such as intervention or emergence of radical elites causing the transition from tension to violence directly, or factors creating the chain of interactions moving the conflict to another stage indirectly in more phases. For example, the armed intervention of the centre in Chechnya was a catalysing factor which led directly to violence. On the other hand, the factor of elite competition in Moscow led at first to the emergence of radical elites on the head of Chechnya and later to the decision to use the force to supress the Chechen separatists instead of capitalizing existing capacities of soft power. This catalysing factor did not directly lead to violence; however, it activated and interlinked the existing but inactive FoS, thus moving the conflict into another stage closer to violence, paving the way for the intervention.

Period of transformation:

I have already briefly mentioned the role of the political (and in our case economical as well) period of transformation/transition in triggering the ethnic conflict. Among scholars interested in the topic of ethnic conflicts and separatism there is a general agreement on the crucial role of political transformation/transition on the rise of ethnic violence and separatism. As Cornell mentioned, the same factors which led to the rise of the ethnic tension led to the regime change as in the Soviet Union.[52] This argument may be discussed, as it raises the question when the regime transition has begun; was it when Gorbachev launched the policies of glasnost and perestroika, or was it after the failed putsch of 1991? It was the policy of glasnost which launched the riots

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[52] Svante Cornell, "Autonomy and Conflict, Ethnoterritoriality and Separatism in the South Caucasus – Cases in Georgia", 21- 61.

in Nagorno-Karabakh and it was these riots which then triggered the domino of events leading to the fall of the Soviet Union and the actual political transformation. For the purposes of this work, the concept of political transformation/transition will be understood as the actual transition of the whole system following the putsch of 1991and the period of decentralization of power in Russia, characteristic also by elite struggles for power in Moscow. I will therefore work with this narrow interpretation of the term focusing on transformation rather than transition. In wider context, the question still remains; whether the period of transition has already finished in Russia or whether it still continues.

The problem remains that the factor of transformation is still rather broad and it consists of more sub-factors or ways it can influence the rise of separatism; namely it can cause an economic collapse, weaken the state structures, create anomie or increase the power struggle in the state. Therefore, this factor must be examined more deeply and conceptualized. In the course of examination of Chechen and Dagestan case I will try to identify which of the above mentioned aspects of transformation played a more significant role (if they played any) in the rise of armed separatist movements. It is necessary to add that such factors as economic depression, anomie or increased elite rivalry may appear also without the factor of period of huge transformation. Therefore, the factor of transformation will be understood as a factor standing at the beginning of an imaginary chain of interlinked factors, which may cause appearance of economic depression, elite rivalry and weakened state structures. These, however, will be analysed as separate factors. Economic depression and anomie were already described above in the section on factors of will. Factors of weak state structures and increased power struggle among elites are more likely to act as catalysing factors and they will be described on the following pages.

Weak state structures:

The factor of weak state structures is once again a very broad term and it may be understood in more than one way by many different authors, therefore it has to be explained in the context of the following study. In this study the factor of weak state structures will be understood as a situation of a multi-ethnic state (the centre) or a separatist minority region, when the centralized power weakens. It may be the case of a power vacuum "following dissolution of multi-ethnic state held together by authoritarianism, coercion and failed ideology".[53] These are the circumstances of weakening the state structures of the centre; however, armed separatism may be provoked also by weakening of state structures of a separatist region. It can clear the way to power for radical elites or let local elites adopt more confrontational policy toward the centre, in attempt to increase the national unity or their popularity.

In this study I will analyse two cases: Chechnya as a transition based separatism and Dagestan as hypothetically a post-transition one. This comparative difference is one of the key issues of this study. Therefore, the analysis of the role of a weak state on the rise or decline of separatism will be one of the crucial.

Radical elites:

At this point we mostly refer to the instrumentalist approach and the role of elites in creating ethnic conflict and launching separatism. In this study, both the CoS in Chechnya and Dagestan have (and had in the Soviet period) a status of autonomy. It means both regions have clear boarders, official institutions and official political elites.[54] However, as it was mixed in the case of Chechen separatism in the early 90s, which was led by both official and un-official elites, in the case of Dagestan the official elites remained always calm and avoided launching any kind of separatist movement. Even nowadays the insurgency is motivated by un-official and mostly religious elites. A deeper analysis and comparison of both cases could cast some light on this issue.

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[53] Ibid., 45- 46.

[54] In launching ethnic conflict or separatism there are two types of elites, which can play the role; the political one, as has been the case of Yugoslavia, and unofficial, mostly cultural elites and often former dissidents, as has been the case of Gamsakhurdia's Georgia, author.

Intervention of external actor

The term intervention is usually understood as an open military or political intervention of a national state. As Monica D. Toft argued, this factor may be the crucial one and it has been the crucial one in the case of Abkhazia, where Abkhazians as the minority in their own autonomous unit lacked the capacity to launch a successful separatist movement without another actor.[55] In our case, Russia has not been a target of any official intervention and it probably will not be in the near future. However, many of radical Salafi insurgents and leaders such as the Black Khattab came into Russia from the abroad, so to some extent we may possibly face an unofficial non-nation state abroad intervention, the extend of which has to be analyzed.

Intervention of the central government:

Unlike the foreign intervention, the Intervention of central government means rapid and huge use of repression against the troubled region on the state's territory. Such act may easily mobilize even moderate dwellers of the troubled region and move the conflict from its non-violent stage to a violent one. Therefore, the secessionist war is not supposed to be necessary launched by the separatists themselves, it may easily be started by the central government lacking other tools how to solve the problem.

Local catalysing factors:

While analysing different separatist conflicts, we can identify some factors appearing which appear often and in many cases, yet each conflict is specific and there is no universal pattern for their analysis. In the background of each separatist conflict we can usually identify some specific factor or set of factors, playing often the key role in the chain of interactions leading from tension to an armed resistance. In the case of Dagestan, this role is played by factors of inter-ethnic and clan rivalry, repressive policy of the centre and by a very specific local factor of blood feud.

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[55] Monica Duffy Toft, „The Geography of Ethnic Violence: identity, interests and indivisibility of territory", 106.

Recentralization:

Recentralization is a catalysing factor similar to Cornell's factor deprivation of autonomy; however it does not mean actual abolishment of autonomous status of some political unit, just its curtailing. By adding this factor I try to reflect steps undertook by the central government under President Vladimir Putin such as abolishing the direct elections of governors and presidents in the regions of the Russian Federation, and many other. Unlike in the case of deprivation of autonomous status, recentralization is less swift and shocking; however its possible influence on rising of insurgency in Dagestan should not be overlooked.

Repressive policy of central government:

This catalysing factor may sound similar to the above discussed discrimination; however, this concept is more narrow and specific. It does not refer to general discrimination but to the violent discrimination linked to the policy of preventive *"zachistkas"*, which started to be applied on Dagestan after the Wahhabi invasion from Chechnya or the "Dagestan war" of 1999. The term *zachistka* refers to the cleansing raids often carried out by the infamous battalion *Vostok* in Chechnya. These operations may take on a very brutal character, as did the operation in the village of Borozdinovskoy. The said operation was aimed at controlling the adherence of passport regime. However, after the departure of the Vostok battalion, several houses stayed burned down, dozens of local dwellers were beaten and humiliated, eleven people kidnapped with two of them found dead later.[56] Another aspect is large scale kidnapping of local dwellers by official security forces with the pretext that there is an anti-wahhabi action going on, in order to obtain a ransom from the relatives. These repressive actions started to be applied on Dagestan in 1999, at the same time or a bit before the republic started to boil inside.

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[56]Alkhanov priznal, chto zachistku v Borozdinovskoy provel "Vostok", (Alkhanov admitted that special operation in Borozdinovskaya was carried out by "Vostok, *Lenta.ru*, http://lenta.ru/news/2005/08/13/borozdinovskaya/, (accessed October 11. 2012)

Inter-ethnic and clan rivalry:

The term inter-ethnic rivalry refers to a rivalry or conflict between/among distinct groups living in one region. This was, for example, the conflict over political influence and new settlements in the plains between Avars and Kumyks in Dagestan in the early 90s. Unlike inter-ethnic rivalry, clan rivalry refers to a conflict among various segments of one ethnic group, such as rivalry among various Chechen teyps. This factor may play various roles under various circumstances, either as a factor increasing, or as a factor decreasing the likelihood of separatism. Inter-ethnic rivalry may be cleverly used by the center as a tool of "divide and rule", thus preventing the ethnic mobilisation of local groups against the center. By doing so, it may create the need for an alternative mobilizing tool such as religion, which has transnational nature. Clan rivalry may play the same role as inter-ethnic rivalry. On the other hand, it may increase the need of ruling elites for achieving national unity, and by doing so to accumulate and centralize the power. This may lead these elites to promote the idea of an external threat, leading to radicalization of some segments of society. All these patterns will be analysed in the following chapters.

Elite Rivalry:

The factor of elite rivalry, although similar to clan rivalry, refers to the situation, when elites struggle for power either in the ethnic region or in the state itself. Unlike clan rivalry, elite rivalry is not based on a relation to a region or an extended family and it may have a different outcome. Therefore, in this work I will differentiate between these two factors.

The blood feud:

The blood feud itself does not seem to play the role of the factor of ethnic conflict or separatism, but in the case of Dagestan it appears to be a very important component in a chain of interactions leading to the current insurgency. Factors leading to separatism should not be understood as an isolated phenomenon either supporting or blocking the rise of separatism, but rather as interacting parts of a greater mechanism. There may be some factors present, which in other cases support the rise of separatism,

but in a concrete case they are not a part of this mechanism and they can be considered inactive and later may be awakened by the emergence of another catalysing factor. This is the role blood feud appears to play in the Dagestani insurgency, the validity of this assumption will be tested later in the analysis of Dagestan after 1999. For these reasons I have decided to incorporate these factors among the catalysing factors. The role of blood feud will be analysed later in the analytical part devoted to the issue of Dagestan after 1999.

Conclusion:

In the discussion above, I have addressed two important issues: Firstly, the character of the concept of "ethnic" conflict and its role and application in this study and secondly, the factors of ethnic conflict and separatism, and their role in this study. The proper conceptualization of the term "ethnic" has been a necessary precondition for carrying out a meaningful research on the separatism in Chechnya and mostly in Dagestan. As a result, I have come to the conclusion that the term ethnic can be used for many conflicts and separatist movements, when understood in its broad non-primordialist character which takes into account the often non-ethnic roots of ethnic conflicts and separatist movements. I have also agreed on the fact that not every conflict turns out to be ethnic after the violence starts and we should not use this term a priori before analysing the character of the conflict. For these reasons I have decided to apply the same methods which are used for analysing ethnic (in broad sense) conflicts, but to talk rather about factors of separatism without connecting it with the adjective "ethnic". As the factors I have decided to apply were mostly the factors identified by other authors in different regions, being mostly inspired by the structure used by Cornell, but realizing the non-existence of a universal pattern for analysing separatist conflicts I am taking into account the specific conditions prevailing in the region of Northern-Caucasus and adding some new factors into the scheme. In this chapter we have created an essential background for the empirical analyses which will be carried out in the following chapters.

2. Transformation in Chechnya: Triumph of nationalism or Absence of Soft Power

2.1 Chechens- the portrait of a "nation"

To understand the factors, which have led the Chechen nation not just to mount an ordinary separatist movement, but also to march nearly unanimously to the brink self-destruction; one has to outline at least briefly an image of these people, their ancient origin, severe but just customs and violent history. Chechens as every other nation are made up from many different individuals; nevertheless as an ethnic group they are very specific even in such a specific region, as Caucasus.

2.1.1. Origin:

From the scientific point of view it is always hard to talk about the age of a nation,[57] however historically Chechens have lived on the foothills and in the hills of Caucasus in the historical regions of Aukhovski, Ichkerinski, Argunski, Nazranovski and Chechenski rayons[58] for thousands of years, with some linguistic research estimating its presence in the region to be around 8 000 years.[59] There may be doubts about such estimates but fact remains, that Chechens have inhabited this region for thousands of years and became considerably adapted to its harsh environment. Linguistically Chechen language (Noxčiyn mott) is a member of the Vainakh language family, which includes also the Ingush language and they altogether with the Bats language spoken in Georgia by not more than a few thousands of people and some already extinct languages; present the Nakh group related probably to the North-Eastern Caucasian languages of Dagestan.

As it is clear from the Chechen term for Chechen language (Noxčiyn mott) they don't refer to themselves by using the term Chechen. Originally for each north-

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[57] Just remember the constructivist polemics, author.
[58] Umalat Laudaev, *Chechenskoe plemya- Sbornik svedeniy o kavkazskikh gortsakh* (Chechen peoples-Collection of information about the Caucasian highlanders), (Tifilis: 1872),
http://oldcancer.narod.ru/caucasus/Laudaev.htm , (accessed: October 12. 2012)
[59] Bernice Wuethrich, Peering into the Past with Words, *Science* 288, No. 5469 (May 2000), p. 1158.

Caucasian nation, people of mountainous Ichkeria[60] and surrounding flatlands used to be known under different names. Kumyks called them "Michikish"; Tavlins used the term "Burtel", Kabardins "Shashan" and Russians adopting the Kabardin term use Chechen. However Chechens itself call themselves "Nakhchoy", which according to Umalat Laudaev, the Chechen historian of nineteenth century means "People who are eating the cheese", being originally probably a mocking name used by highland Chechens for the lowland ones, later adopted by the whole nation.[61] Due to one of many legends, this name is derived from the village named Nakhsh, where there used to be a huge copper kettle on which the names of all pure original Chechen clans (teips) used to be engraved.[62] Also there used to exist an ancient term *Durdzuk* derived from the mythical name of the first Chechen, who according to the legend escaped from Syria as son of a noble and found refuge in the mountains of Ichkeria.[63]

2.1.2. Chechen society and tradition of statehood:

Talking about the Chechen society, one has to stress its specific character. In the case of Chechnya we are not analysing the modern nation state, but rather a conglomerate of smaller political units, with shared ethnic identity, yet often rival to each other. The elementary political unit of Chechen society is clan; so called *Teyp*,[64] today there are around 150 teyps of various size and influence in Chechnya.[65] Teyp presents "the community of blood" based not on a territorial principle but it has rather character of an extended family. As the "community of blood" it provides not just staunch protection and economic benefits for its members, but also protects their lives and honour through the institution of a blood feud. On the political level, Chechens don't unite in parties representing some ideology or business, but they rather advocate needs of concrete teyps. This reality presents a huge obstacle for cohesive state building

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[60] Umalat Laudaev, "Chechenskoe plemya- Sbornik svedeniy o kavkazskikh gortsakh, (Chechen peoples-Collection of information about the Caucasian highlanders)",
http://oldcancer.narod.ru/caucasus/Laudaev.htm , (accessed: October 12. 2012)
[61] Ibid.,
[62] George Anchabadze, *The Vainakhs* (Tbilisi: Caucasian House, 2009),
http://www.circassianworld.com/pdf/The_Vainakhs_George_Anchabadze.pdf, (accessed: December 26, 2013), 17
[63] Ibid., 2009, 19.
[64] Teyps are divided into branches (Gar), consisting from the smallest elements of society; patriarchal families (Nekye), for more information about chcechen society see: Emil Souleimanov, *An Endless War: The Russian- Chechen conflict in Perspective* (Peter Lang: Oxford, 2007).
[65] Ibid., 22.

process, as one could witness in the period of independent Chechen republic Ichkeria under Maschadonov's presidency, when the country became effectively paralyzed by inter-teyp rivalry, resulting in a civil war.

This reality has both physical and historical roots. The mountainous geography of Chechnya has effectively prevented the formation of any centralized political unit with only exception of a short living kingdom of Simsir (or alternatively Dzurdzuk). This kingdom however, was rather an ad hoc reaction on Mongol invasions, revealing another characteristic of Chechen society. Mountaineers of Ichkeria seem to have a strong sense of unity in the periods of external threat, which is immediately replaced by often bloody inter-teyp conflicts once the threat vanishes. The ideal of Chechen society could be described as small military democracies, rather than centralized hierarchical state, which would place one Chechen above another by birth. Centralized power used to be to some extent substituted by the council of elders (Vokkhstags or Aksakkls) from each teyp so called *Mechk- Khel*, making decisions based on the mountainous customary law called *Adat*.[66] This ideal of military democracies respecting common law was in fact far from reality in which large teyps often ruthlessly oppressed the smaller ones referring simply to the natural right of the stronger.

2.1.3 Chechen society and its norms:

Chechen culture consists of a complex set of ideals and social norms of behaviour, analysis of which would require a much deeper research, excessing the possibilities of this study. However, I'll try to point out at least a few crucial aspects shaping the Chechen society.

The above mentioned historical absence of centralized horizontal power structures had one crucial implication namely, the equality of all Chechens by birth. There was no nobility in Chechen society and the standing of a man was determined only by his bravery, ruthlessness and deeds, thus resulting into a primitive meritocracy. Unlike Adyghe nations and dwellers of Dagestan, who had at least some historical experiences with centralized states, for Chechens it has been and still is much harder to accept the reality of living as often second class "citizens" in the centralized state. The ideal of Chechen is so called *Uzden-* a free man who is *Borz senna-* free as a wolf. This could be one of the reasons why the center of insurgency moved from Dagestan to

Chechnya during the Shamil's uprising, creating and feeding the myth of two hundred years- long resistance to the Russian expansion, often ignoring periods of peaceful existence.

On individual level, the absence of a centralized state creating the equality by birth in combination with rather scarce resources mountainous Chechnya can offer, created the ideal of a strong individual despising by theft, living up to its promises, yet not execrating to take whatever he wants by force, referring to the law of stronger; so called *jiggit*. Military abilities were on the top of Chechen ranking of values, which is reflected linguistically as well; the main way how to show respect to other man was by saying "*Im diki konakhi vu*" (He is a good soldier).[67] This culture of blood and violence naturally stemming from local geographical and historical reality could be possibly fatal for the whole society in which *adat* wasn't respected by all clans, not being for blood feud.

The institute of blood feud was (and still is) applied not just to a crime of murder, but to the crime of affront as well, and the subject of feud wasn't just an individual who committed the crime, but whole his clan, meaning that an "act of justice" could be carried out by any adult male member of the clan, giving under the circumstances the right for payback to his relatives. This kind of unregulated and bloody inter-clan war could then last for many generations.[68] The possible scale of violence linked to blood feud has forced the elders to look for alternative ways to resolve conflicts, either by offering material compensation or by banishing the culprit out of their clan making him an *abrek-* outlaw. The possible scale of violence caused by this model of blood feud had often paradoxically worked as a prevention of even small inter-clan crimes.

The character of traditional Chechen society may look very specific, yet it presented an adaptable response to the reality of life in Chechen highlands, influencing Chechnya till modern times.

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[66] Ibid., 23.

[67] Umalat Laudaev, "Chechenskoe plemya- Sbornik svedeniy o kavkazskikh gortsakh (Chechen peoples- Collection of information about the Caucasian highlanders)". http://oldcancer.narod.ru/caucasus/Laudaev.htm , (accessed: October 15. 2012)

[68] Vladimir O. Bobrovnikov, *Musulmane severnogo Kavkaza- Obychay, pravo, nasilie*, (Moslems in the North Caucasus- tradition, law and violence), (Moscow: Vostochnaya literatura, 2002), 55- 61.

2.2 Will to act- Shadows of a Near Past?

2.2.1. Cultural and religious differences:

Along with Dagestan and Ingushetia, Chechnya belongs to the more traditionalist eastern part of Northern Caucasus.[69] This reality mirrors in all aspects of life, including religion, relation to mother tongue as well as customs of forefathers.

The traditional faith of the region, the Sufi Church, has strongly syncretic character including many older pagan rites, presenting the mystical branch of Islam, often described as national Islam, which is by many of Salafists considered to be heretic in its essence. Sufism as an emotional and spiritual way to god has not developed any political philosophy and the way back to the Ummah is supposed to lead only through the personal spiritual struggle of each Muslim rather than through political organization of the whole Muslim society. Another aspect of Sufism is its inspiration by other religions and general tolerance toward them, as well as adherence of Jesus.[70]

Although the calls for the holy war (*Ghazvad*) against Russian forces were common during the Chechen war, the direct link between Islam and separatism in Chechnya should not be overestimated. In the course of first Chechen war, positions of radical Salafists started to rise especially after gaining sympathy of such leaders as Shamil Basaev or Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev; and although the conflict among Sufis and radical Salafists significantly shaped the inner situation of Chechnya during and after the war the positions of religious radicals were weak before the actual escalation of violence. As such, radical Salafism cannot be considered to be a dominant factor leading to Chechen separatism. While listening to Dudaev's speeches, one can easily realize that nationalism has been the primary fuel of separatism with Islam serving rather as secondary element of national identity and ethnic mobilization.

It is well known, that Dzokhar Dudaev being the first Chechen president and leader of separatists wasn't personally fond of religion, having at some occasions even problems to praying in a correct manner during official religious ceremonies. Also in the first constitution of Chechen republic Ichkeria, there were no signs of religious influence and at least on a paper it resembled a common constitution of western type state rather than Islamic one. In its first Article it refers to the right of Chechen people

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[69] North- Western part consisting from republics of Kabardino- Balkaria, Karachevo- Cherkessia and Adyghea is considered to be much more liberal in religious sense, author.
[70] Karen Armstrong, *Islam*, (Banská Bystrica: Slovart, 2008), 107.

(as a nation not a religious group) for self-determination and in the fourth chapter it clearly states the separation of church and the state.[71] This is in direct opposition to views of radical Salafists demanding non-national the first Chechen president and leader of separatists state based on Sharia law.

Religious aspect of Factor of cultural and religious differences has definitely been present in a sense of different religious tradition between the center of state and the peripheral separatist region. Yet at this point it doesn't seem to play a significant in the actual rise of will to secede from the center, but rather of an ad hoc mobilizing force.

Regarding the relation of Chechens towards the Russian language, the comparison of Chechnya with Tatarstan made by Valentin Mikhailov[72] may be helpful. Mikhailov compared the relation of Chechens and Tatars toward Russian language in three different aspects: (a.) The percentage of people who considered Russian to be their mother tongue, (b.) the percentage of people able to speak Russian fluently and finally (c.) the percentage of people speaking Russian at home with their families. On the issue of mother language, rather similar results have been found. Reflecting the situation of early 90s, 99.9 % of Chechens considered Chechen language to be their mother tongue, while 96, 6% of Tatars considered Tatar language to be their mother tongue and 77, 2% of Tatars and 73, 4% of Chechens stated that they speak Russian fluently. However results turned out to be significantly different in the third aspect, indirectly reflecting the extent of Russian cultural influence in the respective societies. Just 48, 3% of Tatars used Tatar language at home, while most of the rest preferred Russian. Yet 94% of Chechens used Chechen language at home and only 6% preferred Russian. Deeper research also uncovered that Chechens unlike Tatars were very reluctant to let their children attend Russian schools, and this reluctance even grew over the years. On the contrary the popularity of Russian among Tatars had tendency toward increase. In fact for Chechens, the Russian language and culture linked to it were much more alien than it was in the case of Tatars.[73]

Regarding differences in habits between Chechens and Russians there are many different aspects, such as the views on relations between genders, or the different views on personal honours and insults, which can be meant one way by a Russian and

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[71] The Constitution of Chechen Republic Ichkeria, http://www.waynakh.com/eng/chechnya/constitution/, (accessed December 28. 2012).
[72] Valentin Mikhailov, „Chechnya and Tatarstan: Differences in Search of an Explanation" in *Chechnya from Past to Future* ed. Richard Sakawa et al. (London: Anthem Press, 2005), 53.
[73] Ibid. 53.

understood in a very different way by a Chechen. Similar conflicts having often fatal consequences happened often among Russians and mountainous Chechens during the Soviet period. These differences are less radical between Chechens and Cossacks, who adopted many cultural traits from mountaineers; however in this case the difficult love and hate relation prevails.

As a result, we can argue that the factor of cultural and religiousdifferences creating a cultural barrier between minority region and the center was present in the case of Chechnya; not just in its religious aspect but also in relatively weak bonds between Chechens and the Russian culture expressed in both their reluctance towards the Russian language and the often incompatible customs of Chechens and Slavs. However the real role of this factor in triggering separatism will be analyzed deeper.

The factor of cultural and religious differences between minority and the dominant ethnic group is highly present in the case of Chechnya.

2.2.2 Civic vs. National Conception of State

Although considered to be second class citizens in Russian empire and later suffering forced deportation in 1942, the Soviet empire had officially adopted the civic conception, making some of the smaller nationalities even subjects of a strong positive discrimination especially during the periods of NEP and korenizatsya.[74] However this wasn't the case regarding Chechens, since top Soviet leaders never trusted them enough to let them reach any higher positions in Chechen-Ingush ASSR itself. For example Dzokhar Dudaev became the first native Chechen that managed to reach higher officer rank (General) in the Red Army, although achieving enrolment into lieutenant academy only thanks to a fraud, after declaring his nationality to be Ossetian.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union the situation altered dramatically both on a federal level and within Chechnya itself. Yeltsin's "Take as much autonomy as you can swallow" became the Zeitgeist all over the Russian Federation. For the country facing more than one separatist threat adopting national conception was no option. Instead the Civic Conception of a state followed by the radical decentralization has been adopted. This claim can be supported also further through comparison to neighbouring Georgia of that time under the presidency of Zviad Gamsakhurdia. Here as a reaction to

newly established but still vulnerable statehood, national conception of the state has been adopted. This policy wasn't characterised simply by slogans such as "Georgia to Georgians", but also by proclamations of Ossetians and other minorities to be temporal guests on the territory of Georgia, what in the end significantly nurtured a process of inner disintegration of the Georgian state. Russian Federation couldn't afford similar excesses, and officials in Moscow did realise that.

National conception of the Russian Federation as a contributing factor working in the background Chechen separatism of early 90-ties can be therefore denied. On the other hand, national conception of the state, characteristic by rising chauvinism of leading state officials was adopted by Chechen government under Dudaev's presidency. This however has been a result of elite change in Chechnya which will be explained and analysed later.

Factor of National conception was not present on the federal level; however it occurred in Chechnya once radicals gained the power in Grozny.

2.2.3 Role of Political Autonomy

Svante Cornell in his research, dealing with the roots of separatism in Georgia, has identified political autonomy as a key factor influencing the emergence of radical separatism. He has pointed out that it has been political elites created by autonomous institutions (in collaboration with other factors), who has launched separatist movements in Abkhazia and South Ossetia soon after the period of transformation and destabilization emerged.[75]

While analysing the case of Chechnya a different picture appears. Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, the first leader of Chechen separatist movement and the man who "discovered" Dzokhar Dudaev, has never been part of any autonomous institution. As a literary scholar, childrens writer and poet, he rather belonged to the cultural elite, members of which can often be much more radical than political elites; however their existence is not linked to the political autonomy.

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[74]Yet this was just a temporal situation in early stages of the Soviet Union, later politics of slow Reification were adopted, author.

[75] Svante Cornell, „Autonomy and Conflict, Ethnoterritoriality and Separatism in the South Caucasus – Cases in Georgia," 225- 237.

As Todua argued, if Dzokhar Dudaev, the general of the Red army, hadn't had accepted the role of a mascot of Chechen separatist movement led originally by Yandarbiyev, at this time he would probably be an honoured citizen of Russian Federation, a retired general living with his Russian wife, giving lectures about his career and experiences at Russian schools on the victory day.[76] This man also hasn't been a product of Chechen autonomy.

On the other hand Doku Zavgaev, Soviet Communist Party official and later the first Secretary of Chechen- Ingush autonomous republic has become one of the loudest opponents of the Chechen separatist movement in period of his tenure. Unlike as in the case of South Ossetia where parliament launched the war of escalations and laws already in 1989,[77] in Chechnya separatists had to establish their own institutions to challenge the older autonomous structures. In fact, Chechnya was the only case where the radical change of elites took place after 1991, letting inexperienced nationalists without any understandings of policy and diplomacy to seize all the power. This crucial issue will be explained and analysed later in this study.

Unlike in Cornell's study on Georgia, in the case of Chechnya, political autonomy cannot be identified as one of crucial factors leading to the Chechen separatism. On the opposite local autonomous institutions became rather centres of opposition against the idea of separatism.

2.2.4. Mythification of past conflicts

At this point we are approaching to the primordialist concept of ancient hatreds; however one has to distinguish between conflicts of the past, draping pages of history textbooks and conflicts of the past, causing mass panic among two communities living for decades peacefully with each other, springing up, soon after first signs of emerging instability or system transformation.

Chechnya as "the mountainous fortress" or "the Achilles heel of Russian expansion" into the Caucasus plays a significant role in the collective identity of

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[76] Zurab Todua, "Ekspansiya islamistov na kavkaze i v centralnoy azii (Expansion of Islamists on the Caucasus and in Central Asia)", 33- 71.

[77] Svante Cornell, „Autonomy and Conflict, Ethnoterritoriality and Separatism in the South Caucasus – Cases in Georgia", 195.

Chechen nation. It was initially during the great Caucasian war of the 19th century, when previously warring teyps started to unite. Heroic struggle against the northern Empire can be understood as a nation-building myth, effectively ignoring both the terrible consequences of the war and the later periods of unprecedented development.

However, the insurgency of Imam Shamil didn't began in Chechnya but rather in Avar areas of Dagestan, another region famous by giving birth to brave jiggits earning their fame by causing havoc in the ranks of the Russian army. Not mentioning the fact that the once mighty Adyghe nation came on the brick of extinction following decades-long confrontation with the Russian empire. Giving just one example; the Ubykh tribe/nation (of Adyghe origin) which inhabited the Black sea shore near today's city of Sochi for thousands of years, has been completely annihilated in the course of this conflict.[78] Still, it has been only the case of Chechnya, where the conflicts of the past became mythicized by the new-born nationalist movement and the Russian state has been promoted into a role of the historical nemesis.

Although sharing many historical experiences with Dagestanis and Adyghes, the Chechen story contains another painful chapter much more vivid than the Caucasian wars which have already been shrouded by the history: and namely the deportation of the whole nation to deserts and steppes of Kazakhstan in late 1944.

When analysing the interviews conducted by Chechens on their collective memory, E. Sokirianska managed to divide these memories and stories into three groups: (1.) Memories of multicultural existence linked to everyday peaceful routine and the bonds created among Chechens and members of other nationalities in the course of the Soviet period, strong especially in lowland and urban areas; where the multicultural experience has traditionally been strongest. (2.) Another group of memories is linked to the process of modernization and the rise of living standards of Chechen people under the Soviet empire, successes of Chechen soldiers in the ranks of Russian army and the periods of liberalization creating the memories of shared success. On the one hand, this research reveals the important fact, namely that in the collective memory of Chechens there are many experiences enabling peaceful coexistence with Russian state, but on the other hand, it reveals how deeply embedded are the memories

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[78] Remnants of Ubykh people were forced to move into Ottoman Empire, where the out rooted nation and its languages died out slowly.

of grievance.[79] Although the memory of the Caucasian wars still exists on its own it plays rather the role of the source of national pride rather than hatred toward Russians or more specifically the fear of the Russian state; (3.) The memory of deportation is a different story. In this context one has to realize that people who experienced the deportation and exile itself, are still alive and can spread this story from the first hand with a strong emotional charge. Many Chechen children used often listen to stories about the suffering and humiliation Chechens had to experience in exile from their parents and grandparents having in all likelihood huge impact on many of them. Moreover the generation of nationalist leaders of early 90-ties, people such as Dudaev or Yandarbiyev, has witnessed the agony of an out-rooted mountainous nation putted into the cattle wagons without food and water, with survivors left to die slowly in the middle of Kazakh wilderness. For these people the suffering under the Soviet (Russian) state hasn't been just a hazy memory of the distant past, but a vivid reality of their lives and lives of their parents.

This kind of experience is very similar to the situation in Yugoslavia, where Serbs who suffered in hands of Ustasha and Croats who suffered in hands of Chetniks, still lived "under the one roof in early 90-ties. The only difference was that unlike in Yugoslavia where these excesses affected only limited proportion of the population, in the case of Chechnya, if affects the whole nation.

At this point Ware argues, that the role of historical grievances should not be overestimated and believes that other factors such as clan rivalry were crucial for the separatist movement.[80] As I have mentioned in the first chapter, the memory of historical grievances on its own is usually not enough to support the rise of successful separatist movement, yet under some circumstances it can play important role in it. These circumstances will be analyzed later in the text.

In this moment we can argue that the factor of "not always that past" conflicts and their mythification has been significantly present in Chechnya, yet its real role in the conflict has to be analyzed deeper on the pages dealing with the catalyzing factors and actual shift from tension to violence.

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[79] Ekaterina Sokirianskaia, „Chechen Political Nationalism Prior to, and During, Ten Years of War" in *Ethno- Nationalism, and the State in the Caucasus, Post- Soviet Disorder,* ed. Moshe Gammer et al. (Routledge: New York, 2008), 104- 111.
[80] Robert Bruce Ware, "A Multitude of Evils: Mythology and Political failure in Chechnya" in *Chechnya from Past to Future*, ed. Richard Sakawa et al, (Anthem Press: London, 2005), 88- 90.

2.2.5 Economic factors

As mentioned in the chapter on methodology, the economic factor may have various faces. In the sense of Horowitz's typology, Chechens as the disadvantaged ethnic group living in the disadvantaged territory belong to the most hazardous groups in the sense of willingness to launch the bloody separatism.

Through the whole Soviet era, the socioeconomic indicators were close to the bottom in Chechnya, what in context of very high birth rates resulted into crowds of young and unemployed men. If we add the factor of relative economic depression appearing on the stage as the Soviet state started to crumble we can see how an explosive mixture has been mixed.[81]

And indeed, as Richard Sakawa points, after the Chechen crisis started to escalate, most observers used to blame the poor socioeconomic conditions as the main source of radical separatism. Just latter studies have revealed that there have been many other minority regions all over the Soviet Union with similar socioeconomic performances, which however stayed calm.[82]

This remark correlates with other studies, arguing that bad socioeconomic performance is an important factor able to raise the will of nation to launch armed separatism, yet other factors have to act.

We can argue that economic factor of both relative depression and disadvantaged group in disadvantaged region was strongly present in the case of Chechnya.

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[81] Anatol Lievan, *Chechnya: Tombstone of the Russian Power* (Yale University Press: New Haven, 1998), 57

[82] Richard Sakawa, "Introduction: Why Chechnya?" ed. Richard Sakawa et. al., (London: Anthem Press, 2005) 1-2

2.2.6 Anomie

The situation described above in which young, often educated but jobless people lose any hope for improving their living prospects in face of socioeconomic stagnation or collapse, leads frequently to the emergence of anomie. Studies conducted on this issue in recent years are showing that young people from North Caucasus are one of the most anomic all over the Russian federation.[83] However anomie is a complex phenomenon not linked just to the lack of opportunities for self-realization, but also with loss of social norms and the weakening of traditional authorities. Anomie in Chechnya fully developed after the two Chechen wars, when the traditional society of adat and the sufi religion collapsed.

However, its foundations were built by highly discriminatory labor policy of the Soviet state toward Chechens. The industrial sector in Chechnya was rapidly growing from the 60s, yet Chechens were not allowed to work in it. As Tishkov points, in late 80s, the two largest petrochemical companies Grozneft and Orgsynthez, employed around 50 000 workers and engineers, only a few hundred of whom were Chechen or Ingush. Too many educated youngsters had to flee to other regions to Russia to find at least some kind of work, which was often criminal, yet knowing there were plenty of free work positions in their own republic. It was these often already criminalized (anomic) young people who later became the core of the radical separatist movement.

Under these circumstances anomie may be understood as the factor influencing the will of some areas of Chechen society to support (any kind of) radicalism, however it does not seem to be widespread in most segments of society and therefore it should not be overemphasized.

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[83] Denis Dafflon, *Youth in Russia- the Portrait of a Generation in Transition, A research report by the Swiss Academy for Development* (Biel, 2009). 5

2.3 Capacity to Act: Mountains of Weapons?

2.3.1 Rough terrain:

Not only is Chechnya situated in the foothills of the North Caucasus and its people perfected the art of waging guerrillas in mountains over centuries; the special relation between Chechens and the mountains mirrors even into linguistics. The Chechen language contains five different words describing different types and levels of mountains. So called *Bash-lam* refers to mountains covered by snow, *lam* is a mountain or level where snow melts in the summer and reveals bald meadows. High mountains covered by forest, Russian "black mountains", are called *Ars* by Chechens in a contrast to *Rag; low* wooden hills concluding the typology by the term *Shu* describing massifs around the Terek river on the boarder of planes historically settled by various nomadic peoples often hostile to mountaineers.[84]

The first president of Chechnya, Dzokhar Dudaev, wanted to abandon the guerrilla tactic and fight "army against army" out of ideological reasons, showing that the first Chechen war was not about revolt, but it was a conventional war between two independent states.[85] Although Chechen fighters in combination with (on some occasions even criminal) incompetency of Russian top command celebrated some significant victories, the fate of first Russian campaign in Chechnya has been sealed in the mountains of Ichkeria. It is obvious that the character of the Chechen environment and the way this environment shaped the character of Chechen people throughout the history has been a factor significantly rising the capacity of separatist to fight the Kremlin.

The factor of Rough terrain is strongly present in the case of Chechnya.

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[84] Umalat Laudaev,"Chechenskoe plemya- Sbornik svedeniy o kavkazskikh gortsakh (Chechen peoples- Collection of information about the Caucasian highlanders)".

[85] Yagil Genkin," I can fight, army against army, The 1994- 1996 Russo-Chechen war, strategies and misconceptions," in *Ethno- Nationalism, Islam and the State the Caucasus, Post-Soviet Disorder*, ed. Moshe Gammer et. al. (New York: Routledge, 2008), 148- 154

2.3.2 Access to Weapons:

Even assuming that we will ignore the domestic arsenal many Chechen families possessed due to the military traditions of mountainous teyps, the fact remains that in the early 90s, weapons in Chechnya were being sold in the center of Grozny on ordinary markets among fruits and vegetables for friendly prices.[86]

In May 1992 the newly appointed defense minister of the Russian Federation Pavel Grachev, signed a decree, due to which half of all weapons and weapon systems located at that time in the territory of Chechnya should be surrendered into the hands of separatists. In reaction, local lieutenants from military bases, many of which were already under the siege of Chechen insurgents at that time, were often forced to bypass the order by damaging weapons and vehicles, supposed to be handed over. Nevertheless, a large number of weapons fell into the hands of separatists: tanks 40, Infantry fighting vehicles 34, mortars 145, Anti- Aircrafts 15, Cars 500, 40 000 guns and finally 60 000 tons of ammunition. Moreover, Dudaevs regime inherited 51 Airplanes, both for training and fighting purposes, two short- range artillery rocket systems *Luna*, 10 highly modern surface to air missile systems *Strela*, 590 pieces of anti-tank weapons, 200 000 pieces of hand grenades, 24 000 shells for the D- 30 howitzers and finally 13 millions of bullets.[87] Moreover in Chechnya itself the low-cost sub-machinegun Borz (wulf) has been produced.

Putting these numbers in comparison with the size of the Chechen population already armed before, one starts to understand how Dudaev could plan to wage a conventional war against Russian federation.

To create an image of how Chechen separatists were armed by using their "home inventory" it is good to note, that the first incidents of sieges lied lay on Russian military bases have been reported on January, three months before Grachev's pen touched the document letting the restless republic be flooded with weapons freely accessible to anyone, willing to purchase one.[88]

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[86] Sebastian Smith, *Allah's Mountains, the Battle for Chechnya*, (London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks),129-130.

[87] Zurab Todua, Zurab Todua, "Ekspansiya islamistov na kavkaze i v centralnoy azii (Expansion of Islamists on the Caucasus and in Central Asia)," 41.

[88] Ibid. 33- 71.

The above listed documentation supports the claim that the Factor of access to weapon was strongly present in case of Chechen separatism, as a factor highly increasing the capacity of separatists to act.

2.3.3 Ethnic geography

Despite the deportation of 1944, which decimated the Chechen nation wiping it off for several years, from the ethnic map of North Caucasus, the high natural birth rate enabled Chechens to maintain their ethnic dominance in the republic with the Russian minority living scattered in urban areas of the northern plain shrinking from 49% in 1959 to 24% in 1989 (on the territory which later became Chechnya). Four out of five Russians in Chechnya lived in Grozny by that time. According to 1989 census in the eleven districts of Chechen- Ingush ASSR, which later became part of the Chechen republic, 65% of population was Chechens. In six of these eleven districts Chechens constituted around 94% of population.[89] Based on these characteristics, the Chechen nation fits into the theoretical group of so called concentrated majorities being most capable of leading an effective armed resistance against the central government. These theoretical assumptions were later confirmed by columns of powerless Russian refugees unable to carry out any kind of resistance, desperately trying to escape the territory of Chechnya.

On the other hand, the factor of ethnic geography didn't have a dynamic character for Chechens. By their numbers in republic increasing from decade to decade, Chechens didn't have to fear that they would be overwhelmed in their own homeland, what which could possibly have increased (if it would happen) could increase their will to fight.

The factor of Ethnic geography have been present in the case of Chechnya in its static form as factor increasing the capacity of ethnic group to launch successful secessionism, yet it was not present in its dynamic form a the factor increasing the will of Chechens to launch the separatism.

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[89] Valentin Mikhailov, "Chechnya and Tatarstan: Differences in Search of an Explanation, in *Chechnya from Past to Future*, ed. Richard Sakawa et al, (Anthem Press: London, 2005), 50.

2.3.4 Ethnic and Religious Kinship

The factor of an ethnic kin as analytical tool is rather a problematic one in the case of the North Caucasus. Ethnic identity is just one among many, moreover often not even the most significant one. In the narrow sense, the only ethnic kin of Chechens in Chechnya, are so called Chechens Akkins living in the neighboring republic of Dagestan and Kists living in Pankisi Gorge in Georgia. However Akkins being in their own conflict with the much stronger Laks and Avars already in the over the so called "Little Ichkeria" settled by Avars and Lezgins after the deportation, were showing little sympathy to the Chechen separatism. Kists, living in the Pankisi Gorge , numbering only a few thousand people, could help Chechen separatists by smuggling weapons through Georgia and providing them with a shelter, however their will and possibilities to support Chechen secessionism were rather limited as well.

Another ethnic group with shared Vainakh identity and origin are the Ingush who for decades shared with Chechens the same Chechen- Ingush ASSR. Yet they showed their unwillingness to support Chechen separatists by declaring their own Ingush autonomous republic as a part of the Russian Federation. Like the Akkins, they as well had territorial conflict with a non-russian ethnic group (Ossetians) over the Prigorodni district, escalating later in 1993 into a low scale war, in which they looked for support from Moscow rather than alienating it. Moreover till these days Ingushetia has its own territorial disputes with Chechnya.[90]

As we can see, the factor of ethnic kin hasn't been strong in the case of Chechnya, yet we should not overlook the factor of religious kinship, and shared mountainous identity as an alternative mobilizing force to the nationalism. As in the case of Abkhazia[91] has been shown, by time to time the mountainous nations can mobilize in support of each other on the basis of shared religious and Caucasian identity. And furthermore, many radical Islamists, veterans of the Afghan war such as

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[90] There is a long-lasting dispute between Chechens and Ingush over the Sunzha district. This district is homeland of the Vainakh Orstkhoy tribe, which was decimated after Imam Shamil's defeat. Orstkhoy are considered to be Chechns by Grozny, however they consider themselves to be distinct Vainakh nation. In the dispute over Sunzha district they demand it to be renamed on Orstkoy district and they promote re-reation of Chechen-Ingush republic so they would not live in divided territory. For more information on the Orstkhoy issue see: Voctor A. Shinerleman, "The Orstkhoy revival, Identity and border dispute in the Northern Caucasus", in *Ethno- Nationalism, Islam and the State the Caucasus, Post-Soviet Disorder*, ed. Moshe Gammer et. al. (New York: Routledge, 2008), 139- 147.

[91] In a course of the Georgian- Abkhaz war (1992- 1993), the militarist organization composed from North Caucasus volunteers, called The Confederation of Mountainous People of Caucasus helped significantly Abkhaz separatists in their fights against Georgian forces, author.

the Black Khattab, often with no ethnic kin to the Caucasian peoples, came to fight on the side of Chechen rebels. However the case of mountaineers fighting against Georgian forces in Abkhazia was specific, because this operation got official blessing from the Kremlin. Although there was no North-Caucasian republic in the early 90s willing to anger Moscow by supporting Chechen calls for independence. Regarding Jihadists, as mentioned earlier they entered the scene later in the period of armed conflict and their help was rather limited and unexpected by Chechen separatists. Therefore, the factor of religious kinship cannot be identified as factor significantly increasing the capacity of Chechen separatists to act.

The overall influence of Factor of Ethnic and religious kinship on the capacity of Chechen separatists to wage the war was rather limited. In no case can we talk about such a possibility of strong ethnic support.

2.4 Catalyzing Factors: War is Less inevitable than it seems?

For a deeper understanding of motives, which led some Chechens to idea of independence at any cost, while others were prepared to continue to live their lives as citizens of newly established Russian Federation, it is important to at least briefly sketch a picture of life in soviet Chechnya after the Chechen return from exile..

Being an ordinary Chechen in the Soviet Union during the late Brezhnev's period, one would probably be living in an underdeveloped and less urban part of the union, working in kolkhoz or as a migrant labour, since the more qualified jobs were reserved for Slavs.[92] The republic one lives in would be the autonomous unit of the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic, having its own autonomous structures such as the soviet, yet governed by the First secretary of Slavic origin, reflecting the continuing mistrust of the Kremlin for the loyalty of his nation to the Soviet state. One would have either the first-hand experience with the deportation or would at least witness its destructive consequences. If living in a flatland one could have a lot of daily experiences of peaceful interactions with Russians, Armenians and other minorities. Yet if living in mountains both his experiences with Russians and Russian culture and language would probably been quiet limited. Regardless of the fact that the situation in

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[92] Valery Tishkov, *Chechnya: Life in a War-Torn Society* (Erwing: University of California Press, 2004), 41.

the republic was far from being ideal, he would be also living in a rather unusually peaceful period of stable and continuous development, having access to free medical care and education, belonging to a lucky generation of Chechens, with the highest living standards ever.[93]

Life in Chechnya after the repatriation of Chechens in 1956- 1957 with lower living standards and discriminatory policy of the center was far from ideal, but it can be still described as a rather peaceful and calm era, not just compared to the harsh reality of these days, but seemingly harsh reality of any other period in the history of the Northern Caucasus. Why than did this "imperfect stability" disappear, just to be replaced by a bloody and destructive war, in which there were to be no winners?

2.4.1 From Transformation to Radical Elites

A lot has been written about Gorbachev's policy of *glasnost* and *perestroika* and the influence it had on the rise of ethnic conflicts and separatism in the Caucasus. It is true that the first separatist movement in Soviet Union rose over Nagorno Karabakh as a direct reaction to perestroika. Local dwellers seized the first opportunity to state their will to secede the Nagorno Karabakh autonomous region from Azerbaijan SSR (already in 1987). Official local elites followed them soon after, regardless of their internationalist, communist origin.

Gorbachev's policy, which was a reaction on a rising crisis of the whole socialist system of the USSR, influenced the issue of emerging nationalism and separatism on two levels. Firstly it gave an opportunity to express nationalist emotions and requirements, which were for decades suppressed by the totalitarian regime. Secondly it undermined the economic and political power of the Soviet state, giving new nationalist leaders possibility to challenge the old elites and the old order on both autonomous and federal levels. Therefore Gorbachev, although unwittingly launched the process of slow transition, leading in its first stages to the rise of economic depression.

In this period Chechens seemed to have many reasons to demand independence, taking into an account how many factors of will were present in their case. Chechens were the disadvantaged ethnic group, not trusted enough to achieve any higher social

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[93] During the 70s and 80s Chechnya was the republic with a stable growth in both economic and cultural spheres, showing no symptoms of interethnic tensions. Unlike some others, Chechnya wasn't considered to be a possibly unstable region. For more information see: Valery Tishkov, *Chechnya: Life in a War-Torn Society* (Erwing: University of California Press, 2004), 37- 38.

status in the Soviet hierarchy, neither as a nation nor as individuals.[94] They were living in a backward region with the situation worsening each year that has elapsed particulary since the beginning of perestroika, having the fresh memory of the crimes that the Soviet regime has conducted on them. And at the same time these people had the rich history of anti-Russian insurgency, high forested mountains and plenty of weapons in basements. At this point, taking into an account the scope of Russian-Chechen conflict of the past, deportations and their mythification plus the high capacity of Chechens to act, one would expect that Chechens would be among the first to grasp the opportunity to start secessionist movement.

However, surprisingly,, Chechens were surprisingly calm long after the first bloodshed in Nagorno Karabakh which was instigated prior to the First Congress of the Chechen Nation in 1991, and at this time nationalist support in Chechnya had only average support, comparing to most of other ethnic regions of the Soviet Union at that time.

It is clear that even after existing factors of will, large capacities to act in the context of early transition, politics of glasnost and a worsening economic situation the appropriate conditions were not present to warrant such a massive separatist movement, one could witness in Nagorno-Karabakh by that time. This means that the First Chechen war was not simply the result of suppressed nationalism.

The whole issue seems to be much more complex and the armed conflict, anything, but inevitable. In fact, it has rather been just one of many possible outcomes. As shown above in the text, Chechens had both reasons and capacities to launch the large-scale separatist movement, yet one could find many other regions with similar preconditions all over the Soviet Union such as Dagestan, which stayed stable at that time. The specific set of catalyzing factors had to appear on the stage at concrete moments to set this mixture of suspicion, fear and discontent into a blaze.

By the Russian economy approaching the edge of an abyss and the separatist trends in the Baltic region and Transcaucasia escalating, Gorbachev's position started to be severely undermined in late 80s. Not only had he started to be challenged by Boris Yeltsin from one side for lack of genuine political will to perform real reforms, but also the conservative opposition started to press Gorbachev from the other side. It wasn't just Gorbachev who found himself in the middle of a power struggle, but also the local

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[94] Think of the case of Dzokhar Dudaev, who had to lie about his nationality just to be accepted into the lieutenant's academy, author.

nomenclatures in Autonomous regions such as Chechnya. The moment of break came during the unsuccessful coup d'état attempt in August 1991, when transition turned into transformation. This factor led to the first major elite struggle in Kremlin, between conservative far left forces and Boris Yeltsin.

Chechen nomenclature just newly created in the course of perestroika, hadn't at this time been well established, and in the situation in which it had to face increasing assertiveness of nationalistic opposition, the liberalizing changes ongoing in Kremlin appeared to be a threat rather than an opportunity. Under these circumstances Doku Zavgayev, by that time the First secretary of Chechnya decided to back the coup while leaders of nationalists headed by Dzhokhar Dudaev loudly expressed their support to Boris Yeltsin, who seemed to be resisting the movement toward the "communist contra-revolution".

After a failure of the coup in Moscow, the position of moderate Chechen nomenclature opposing the separatist trends became severely undermined, under the conditions of shaken state structures and lack of Yeltsin's support.[95] Already on 6 September, Dudaevs paramilitary National Guard stormed the Supreme Soviet and grasped the power in Chechnya.[96] Nowhere else has been the elite change as radical as in Chechen case following the events of August 1991. Not just were the new political elites under Dzhokhar Dudaev highly nationalistic, representing mostly just the highland teyps, moreover they lacked any political experience, and were highly unprepared for new political and diplomatic tasks, linked to the negotiation over the new status of Chechnya.

At this point we can see how political transformation and the elite struggle for power, which severely weakened the state structures of both Russia and Chechnya led directly to the elite change in Chechnya establishing the radicals as the official and leading force in the republic. Under these circumstances the catalyzing factor of radical elites appeared as the direct consequence of the catalyzing factor of political and economic transformation and weak state structures. However Dudaev's position seemed still far from ideal and the support of radical nationalism among Chechens was limited. At this point (after a total change of leading elites), Chechnya became a specific case among other ethnic-autonomies, yet the war between Moscow and Grozny still didn't seem to be the most obvious outcome.

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[95] Paradoxically Yeltsin backed Dudaev against Zavgaev at this period, author.
[96] Sebastian Smith, "Allah's Mountains, the Battle for Chechnya," 126.

2.4.2 Clan Rivalry and the Need for the External Threat

As mentioned above, even after grasping power, the support of separatists reminded limited and concentrated mostly among highland teyps and anomic youth; therefore Dudaev's supporters had to face a set of serious challenges. The creation of centralized and effective state under the conditions of high decentralization caused by the clan rivalry in the course of Chechen history was possible only under one of two two conditions: either as a part of a larger and usually restrictive political unit or during the period of real or imagined external threat, when Chechens effectively united under Islamic and nationalistic banners. In many other autonomous republics where nationalism was reaching its peak in early 90s, the old nomenclature with close ties to Kremlin, having already political experience, managed the natural rise of nationalism among autonomous peoples, even if they were heading these movements as in the case of Tatarstan. Chechnya however, was a different case. Here the rising anti-Dudaev opposition supported the first possibility, that of Chechnya that Chechnya could be part of the new Russian Federation, but with real and wide autonomy and subsidies from Moscow as in the case of Tatarstan or neighboring Ingushetia. Dudaev on the other hand was calling for a Chechnya without ties to Russia. But for independent Chechnya to keep its unity, it would need either highly centralized tools of restriction and government with monopoly on violence (unlikely in Chechen case), or the external enemy, to keep all the rivaling clans in one camp. Aggressive policy against Russia wasn't under these circumstances just the means to independence. For Dudaev it was the Alfa and Omega of how to avoid internal fragmentation and keep centralized power in his hands.

Early in 1991 Dudaev had the support of the population although the idea of separatism wasn't that popular especially among the dwellers of the lowland. However soon the inter- clan conflicts started to rise sharply under Dudaev's presidency, many Chechens did not understand why some of their fellow-citizens and their clans could participate on the share of power and what seemed even more important, the share of scare resources.[97] The centralized power in Dudaevs hands appeared to decentralize among various clans in a short time. Under these circumstances there was a need to foster the picture of outer enemy (Russia), as a tool of recentralizing the power. Soon Dudaev became famous for his aggressive and undiplomatic statements on Russia and

Yeltsin especially. This in combination with Yeltsin's personality resulted in the fact that both leaders never met and never managed to diplomatically discuss the situation. Therefore, to some extent it was the fragmented character of Chechen society and rising rivalry among clans which forced Dudaev to increase the nationalistic and separatist sentiment among population and complicated the search for a diplomatic solution. The impact of this policy is well illustrated by the comparison in numbers of Russians moving into Chechnya and Russians leaving it. In 1990 for each 10 Russians moving into Chechnya, there were 26 leaving it. Three years later the ratio was 10 to 250.[98] These numbers illustrate the character and impacts of nationalistic policies adopted by Dudaev after 1991.

Although the above described factors of economic collapse and rising anomie among many young Chechens led to the rise of membership base of radical nationalists, the strong moderate anti-separatist opposition started to rise among Chechens in some regions as well. In fact, the idea of Chechens as people driven by primordial instincts, united in their struggle for independence at any cost isn't just orientalist in essence, but it would be also far from the reality.

It's difficult to argue which movement enjoyed the majority support among Chechens at the given period, whether separatists or moderates. But Dudaev clearly feared the power of opposition and although his policy of radicalizing the nationalist resentment was far from fully successful, it contributed significantly to the further polarization of Chechen society. A series of anti-separatist demonstrations took place in Grozny in 1993. Soon after, the proposal on a referendum on secession from Russia was submitted by the opposition. Dudaev aware of its limited support, blocked the referendum, and dissolved the parliament after its attempt for presidential impeachment.[99] By 1994 the situation deteriorated even more and by a pro-Moscow opposition controlling part of the country. Chechnya found itself on the brick of civil war.

It is important to stress that even then, the idea of independence at all costs didn't have the overwhelming majority among Chechens. And Dudaev's radical rhetoric and rising authoritarianism led to the disgust among them. Taking into account the factor of strong clan rivalries, serious inter-chechen conflict started to appear.

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[97] Emil Souleimanov, "An Endless War: The Russian- Chechen Conflict in Perspective," 127-132.
[98] Valentin Mikhailov, „Chechnya and Tatarstan: Differences in Search of an Explanation" in *Chechnya from Past to Future* ed. Richard Sakawa et al. (London: Anthem Press, 2005), 57- 60.

2.4.3 Armed Intervention of the Center in the Context of Past Memories: Fatal Lack of the Soft Power?

How is it possible that, Dudaev's regime survived under above described circumstances and Chechens were not just able but willing to carry on a suicidal resistance to Russian forces, when the idea of separatism hadn't yet achieved full local support? Furthermore, why didn't Yeltsin and his group make use of the anti-Dudaev opposition in a soft way using a popular ex-spokesmen of the Supreme Soviet Ruslan Khasbulatov to "win the hearts" of Chechens rather than supporting the rise of civil war among them, effectively discrediting the opposition by using force? Since there are always two sides in the separatist struggle, for answering these questions one has to take a brief look at events taking place in the Kremlin at that time.

Among authors and scholars, the opinions on why the tension escalated into a full scale conflict in Chechnya vary. Robert Bruce Ware argues that Yeltsin was forced to act and intervene. He stresses the fact that inter-Chechen conflict evolved into a civil war between 1993 and 1994. Chechnya as a factually collapsed state started to threaten the stability of whole southern Russia. The spread of criminality from Chechnya started to be unbearable according to Ware.[100] Sebastian Smith on the other hand stresses the role of the changes in the Kremlin and the shaky position of President Yeltsin in late 1993. The President's popularity started to drop significantly and the nationalist-populist opposition led by Vladimir Zhirinovsky won the 1993 State duma's elections. People became fed up with the liberals, and the influence of conservatives and "Hawks", dedicated to the idea of neo-imperialism, started to rise in the circle of Yeltsin's co-workers. These circumstances resulted into the idea, that short victorious war is something Yeltsin needed to save his declining popularity in order to maintain the power in his hands.[101]

Neither of these two factors should be overlooked since they both played a role in deciding for harsh action in the rebelling republic, yet the question remains; why didn't Kremlin manage to eliminate Chechen separatists rather by using soft power? The situation, when the pro-kremlin opposition effectively controlled northern parts of

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[99] Sebastian Smith, „Allah's Mountains, the Battle for Chechnya", 133

[100] Robert Bruce Ware, A multitude of Evils, Mythology and Political Failure in Chechnya, in *Chechnya from Past to Future* ed. Richard Sakawa et al. (London: Anthem Press, 2005), 80-87.

[101] Sebastian Smith, "Allah's Mountains, the Battle for Chechnya", 113-118.

the country (Nadterechni region) and the support of separatists faltered, created some manoeuvrable space to undermine Dudaev's position without (directly) using the force against Chechens.

The weakest point of the Chechen opposition was an absence of a charismatic leadership on par with Dudaev. Opposition already controlling parts of Chechnya even formed the so called "Interim council", yet it was led by such figures as Umar Avturkhanov, personally lacking in support, viewed among many to be a spy of Kremlin. Next to him was Beslan Gantemirov a rich man and former Mayor of Grozny and last but not the least was the unpopular and infamous Ruslan Labazanov, former "debt collector" and convict.[102] Yet there was a man who could possibly give the opposition so needed leadership and broader respect among Chechens was Ruslan Khasbulatov.

Khasbulatov was born 1942 in Chechnya and was what could be understood as a civilian counterpart of Dzokhar Dudaev. In fact, as a spokesman of the Russian parliament, he became the second strongest figure in Russia just after the president Yeltsin. If Dudaev was the most successful Chechen in Russian military, Khasbulatov was without no doubt the most successful Chechen in the civil field. At first, a supporter of Dudaev in his struggle with Zavgaev, he later became a vocal critic of his rule, willing to end it.

At this point, the factor of power struggle in Kremlin appears once again. In 1993 the conflict between Yeltsin as acting Russian president and the parliament headed by his former co-worker Khasbulatov and Vice President Alexander Rutskoi deteriorated into a physical struggle. After opening the fire from tanks on the parliament on 4 October, Yeltsin resolved the conflict by using crude force. As a result, the competences of the president were strengthened significantly and Khasbulatov with Rutskoi were arrested and politically eliminated. This wasn't just a final blow for Yeltsin's remaining liberal co-workers and an hour of triumph for more conservative forces with a security background; it was also the moment when the Chechen opposition lost the only figure that could possibly solve the crisis without bloodshed. After being amnestied by a new parliament Khasbulatov returned to Chechnya on the peak of the crisis to be welcomed as a hero by ordinary Chechens, a model of a successful yet rebelling Chechen, seeming to be more capable to run the country than Dudaev did at

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[102] Ibid. 135

the time.[103] But Yeltsin decided (also because of personal animosity to Khasbulatov) to give his support to a less credible and capable anti-Dudaev's figures such as Ruslan Labazanov.

Under these circumstances, the pro-Russian opposition was able to control the northern plains of Chechnya, but neither side was able to maintain decisive influence to oust the other group. The de-facto civil war in Chechnya started in late September 1994 after a deadly clash near Tolstoy Yurt, one of towns supporting the opposition. After this clash some 20 to 30 young men died. In Chechnya, where one murder can lead to decades of bloodshed, this caused a shock. It was the point in which Chechen civil war started, destabilizing the republic even more and leading to destabilization of surrounding regions, where civilians started to be kidnapped and trains robbed in the "Western like" style. Now the situation wasn't rapidly worsening just in Chechnya itself, but also in the Russian regions of Stavropol and Krasnodar. Yeltsin had to act promptly. Lacking the sufficient capacity to use the soft power after denying Khasbulatov, Yeltsin under the pressure of dropping popularity and revival of the communist party, made a last attempt to solve the crisis without direct violent intervention of the central government. Kremlin decided to secretly support the opposition by man and ammunition and to orchestrate a "Chechen coup".

The coup attempt was launched on 26 November 1994, when the units of regular Russian army joined the opposition forces on their march to Grozny. In a result the secret Russian army managed to enter Grozny just to be ambushed and annihilated by Dudaev's forces soon after. These captured often confused and scared Russian soldiers were officially paraded through the streets of Grozny few days later. This was the fatal blow for anti-Dudaev opposition. As I've already mentioned, most Chechens wished more powers to Chechnya, but many wished it to stay a part of the Russian Federation and therefore supported pro-Russian opposition. Before the unsuccessful and Kremlin backed coup attempt, fighting Dudaev seemed to be the right thing to do for many of them. But by letting Russian tanks to enter Chechnya and fighting the Chechen government, both the opposition and the Kremlin severely underestimated how the memory of the not that distant past has formed the Chechen psyche. Russian soldiers on the streets of Grozny launched the mobilization of Chechens, and discredited the

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[103] Ibid. 136

opposition. Under the rising pressure Yeltsin didn't realize this fact and agreed on the thesis of a short victorious war which would restore his diminishing popularity.

On 9 December the Russian army crossed the border of Chechnya. The paradox remains that Dudaev had never been stronger as on that particular day. At the point when the Russian army was marching into Chechnya the factor of past conflict and mythification kept in the Chechen collective memory started to play its role. Even Chechens willing just few weeks ago to overthrow Dudaev's regime by force stood now in one line with separatists willing to fight Russian troops since 1991. Remembering the cruelties of Caucasian wars and more crucially those of deportations, Chechens had reached a stage of panic; not knowing what could possibly happen if Russian army seizeed their villages, no matter whether being from traditionally separatist mountainous *auls*, or the northern pro-Russian ones. The primordial argument, that Chechen war was caused by past-conflicts and myths or the ancient hatred, won't stand under the evidence showing how limited was Dudaev's support, yet it was this specific factor which played the crucial role leading to the self-destructive resistance of Chechens, at the point when the Factor of armed intervention of the central government began.

Conclusion:

The Chechen crisis wasn't simply a result of some kind of ancient hatred and the factor of past conflicts which appeared on the surface as soon as the process of transition started in Soviet Union, bringing the policy of *glasnost* and *perestroika*. Nationalism appeared in this period in Chechnya, but so did it in many other regions around the Soviet Union, where no serious conflicts sprung up. The economic collapse and anomie created masses of unemployed people, but once again this happened all over the Union. Both these factors, linked to the process (factor) of transformation contributed to the rise of nationalism and extremism, but they copied the developments all over the country and therefore cannot sufficiently explain the difference of the Chechen case.

There was however one specific result of the transformation in Chechnya. The weakening of state structures both in Russia and Chechnya and the elite rivalry in Kremlin resulted into an unprecedented change of elites in Grozny. These elites weren't just radical, but also politically inexperienced. This situation in combination with the

fatal inability of the Kremlin to use soft power and facilitate the strong anti-Dudaev opposition back in Chechnya led to a decision to use the intervention of central government viewed as the only tool capable to solve the situation. And this is the point when the factor of past conflicts and their mythification started to significantly influence the course of events leading to war, making even the masses of moderate Chechens take arms against Russians instead of supporting them.

Another important conclusion is that Factor of cultural and religious differences, however strongly present, wasn't part of the chain of factors leading to armed separatism, it rather played just the ad hoc role only as an ad hoc mobilising tool.

To sum up, the Chechen conflict was a transition based nationalist separatism, yet instead of being inevitable taking into account the significant presence of both; factors of will and factors of capacity, it has rather been a result of very specific developments or the catalyzing factors appearing on the stage. Firstly this situation has been caused by the factor of the radical elites, which appeared as a result of weakening state structures and especially as a result of elite rivalry in the Kremlin. Secondly the intervention of the central government resulting from Yeltsin's inability to effectively use existing tools of soft power aced as a catalysing factor.

3. Transformation in Dagestan: From Ethnic Conflicts to Stable Instability

3.1 Identities, States and Religions

3.1.1 Land of mountains, Puzzle of identities

One of the crucial characteristics that has shaped development in Dagestan following the collapse of the Soviet Union, has not been simply its extreme ethnic diversity, but rather the general diversity of identities existing in many different layers. Ethnicity itself presents a rather complicated issue in this case. As is also the case in Chechnya, there existed (proto)nations, sharing the same language and customs in Dagestan prior to the Soviet Union, yet they were highly decentralized, with ethnic identity playing a rather less prominent role. To understand why nationalistic (anti-Russian) separatism did not appear in Dagestan in the early 1990s, the character and role of national identity must be understood.

The term Dagestan, being of mixed Turkic-Persian origin is translated as "the land of mountains"; clearly an accurate name, taking into account the geographical characteristics of the region, yet another not less truthful term existed in the past. Arabs used to call this land, which became a tombstone of their Northern expansion, *Jabal al Alsinah*; Mountains of Languages, reflecting its extreme linguistic and ethnic diversity. Officially in this region, having around 2 million inhabitants, 14 ethnic groups are recognized, yet their real number is estimated to be over 30.[104]

A problem also lies, however, in the fact that national awareness arose among Dagestani peoples in the course of the 20th century; its development has been initiated from the top, by Kremlin officials rather than as a result of a natural process. This resulted in a certain artificiality of Dagestan's official nationalities. Not that there were no ethnic groups in Dagestan before, rather that they haven't been nations in western sense and the borders of communities were borders of Djamaats rather than linguistic groups. Existence of above mentioned artificiality linked to the top-down process of forming nations in Dagestan can be illustrated in two cases: Avars and Lezgins.

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[104] The permanent Committee on Geographical names, *Respublika Dagestan*, 2004, http://www.pcgn.org.uk/Dagestan-Land%20of%20Mountains-2004.pdf (accessed: 8.2 2013), 1

Numbering around 751 000, the Avars present the largest ethnic group in Dagestan.[105] Linguistically however they consist rather of around 15 ethnic groups, some of which are very distinct from each other. Even some unrelated or very distinct groups were labeled by the name Avar in the early 1920s, making this nation even bigger and stronger than it already was. On the other hand, from the Lezgins, being already divided by the border between Russia and Azerbaijan, four other linguistically very close groups (Tabasarians, Rutuls, Aguls and Tsakhurs) were picked and given the status of nation in this period. And so as we can see, the national policy of the Soviet Union in Dagestan did not always respect reality and the issue of national identity remains a rather complicated one. Nonetheless a short presentation of main ethnic groups will be vital.

Avars (Maarulal, 29% of population): As mentioned above, they consist of many smaller groups.[106] For centuries, the Avars inhabited the mountainous areas of eastern Dagestan; however after the Second World War they started to settle on the plains, traditionally inhabited by Nogais and Kumyks. As the largest group of Dagestan, they are known for admiring power and ruling positions. Also the famous leader of the Caucasian wars Imam Shamil was of Avar origin, originating from the village of Gimri.

Dargins (Dargan, 16.5%): Second largest group in Dagestan. They consist also of two other, smaller groups (Kubachins and Kaitags) and populate the mountains and foothills of Central Dagestan. Among other Dagestani nations they have a reputation of seeking financial wealth as an indication of success.

Kumyks (Kumuks, 14.2%): Lowlanders living around Derbent and on the Caspian shore. They are of Turkic origin, speaking a language belonging to the Kipchak group.

Lezgins (Lezgiar, 13%): Lezgins live on both sides of the Caucasus Mountains in Russia and Azerbaijan. Among the mountainous nations of Dagestan they are known for placing higher importance on education, rather than just material wealth, or power as is said to be typical for Dargins or Avars. They also became the most secularized group in the course of the Soviet period. Linguistically very close to Lezgins are four other

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[105] S. M. Markedonov, "Etnonacionalnyy I religioznyy faktor v obshchectvenno-politicheskoy zhizni Kavkazskogo regiona, (Ethno-national and religious factor in the political life of the Caucasus region)," 73.

[106] These other groups are namely: Akhavakhs, Anids, Archins, Bagulals, Bezhtins, Botlikhs, Chamalals, Didoi, Ginukhs, Godoberins, Gunibs, Karatins, Khvarshims and Tinidins, Robert Bruce Ware, Enver Kisriev, *Dagestan: Russian Hegemony and Islamic Resistance in the North Caucasus,* 39.

groups, namely: **Tabasarians** (4.3%), **Rutuls** (0.9%), **Aguls** (0.9%) and **Tsakhurs** (0. 3%)

Laks (Lak, 5.4%)**:** Mountain dwellers inhabiting the central part of Dagestan, the most urbanized group. After the deportation of the Chechens in 1944, a large group of Laks was resettled into the Aukhlovski region and later also to lowland areas.

Russians (4.7%): The Russians of Dagestan live in the northern regions; their traditional center is the city of Kizlyar. They are mostly of Cossack origin, yet their numbers have been shrinking significantly in recent years.

Chechens-Akkins (3.4%): As a sub-ethnic group of Chechens, the Akkins traditionally lived around the Khasavyurt and Novolakski regions. As other Chechens, they were deported in 1944. Meanwhile Laks and Avars were settled on their territories and after the return of Akkins, conflict over land appeared among these groups.

Nogais (1.5%): A large ethnic group of Turkic origin, related to Kumyks, which inhabits the northern plains from Karachay-Cherkessia, through Stavropol and Astrakhan oblast to Northern Dagestan. The Nogais living in Dagestan are traditionally called "Black Nogais" to distinguish them from their western brethren "White Nogais".[107] Their language is closely related to Kazakh and they themselves are sometimes referred as western Kazakhs.[108]

Among other small nations living in Dagestan **Tats,** or so-called Mountain Jews, should be mentioned. Similar to Lezgins, they also live on both sides of mountains; their religion is Judaism, yet they speak an Iranian language. Further **14 other small language groups** can be found in Dagestan. They consist from altogether 32,400 persons, with some of these groups surviving in only one small village each.[109]

It is important to realize one crucial fact, namely, that no ethnic group in Dagestan is able to become the dominant one. If the power of one group rose to more than acceptable levels, a coalition of some other groups would appear to maintain the natural power balance. Although ethnic borders are often uncertain, other layers of identity appear in Dagestan: (1) Mountain identity and (2) Dagestani identity.[110]

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[107] S. M. Markedonov, "Etnonacionalnyy I religioznyy factor v obshchectvenno-politicheskoy zhizni Kavkazskogo regiona, (Ethno-national and religious factor in the political life of the Caucasus region)," 72- 76.

[108] Valery Dzutsev, Outflow of Ethnic Russians from Russian-Majority Stavropol Region Troubles Moscow, *North Caucasus Analysis* 13, Issue: 9 (May 4, 2012), (accessed 30.3. 2013).

[109] The permanent Committee on Geographical names, Respublika Dagestan, 2004, http://www.pcgn.org.uk/Dagestan-Land%20of%20Mountains-2004.pdf (accessed February 8.2013), 3.

[110] Beside of religious identity which will be discussed later, author.

In fact all mountainous nations (including to some extent also Slavic Cossacks), from the Black Sea shore in the west to the Caspian Sea in the east, share many social and cultural traits irrespective of their language or religion. One can see it for example in the traditional dress of the Caucasus - Cherkeska - derived from the name Cherkess, but proudly worn also by Avars, Ossetians and even Georgians. On the other hand, in the case of the Caucasian dance called the Lezginka, whose name is derived from Lezgin, all Avars, Abkhazians or Balkars will persuade their western guests, that it is them who dance it best, fastest and in the manliest matter. According to Robert Chenciner this identity also manifests itself in many specific aspects of folklore, such as very distinct hunting masks, found on both sides of great Caucasus Mountains, but not in the plains.[111] Historically these shared traits developed into some level of shared identity, which can manifest itself from time to time.

This was the case of the Caucasian war, when at first an alliance of Dagestan's feudal states and Djamaats, irrespective of their national composition was forged, and soon also close cooperation with the Adyghe nations fighting similar battles in the west appeared.

Shared mountainous identity materialized a second time during the Russian civil war, in the Mountainous Republic of the Northern Caucasus lasting from 1917 until 1920 and consisting of modern day Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, North Ossetia-Alania, Kabardino-Balkaria and parts of the Stavropol Krai. This was a case of a multiethnic political unit, based on the shared mountainous identity rather than an ethnic or religious one.[112]

This shared mountainous identity manifested itself to some extent also in the beginning of the first Chechen war, when some batallions of the Russian army didn't manage to reach Chechnya, being blocked by dwellers of mountainous villages.[113] Another case from this period was the battalions of volunteers from mountainous republics, which fought hand-in-hand with Cossacks in the Abkhazian war against Georgian forces, to support their mountainous brethren.[114] The mountainous identity os not necessarily the strongest regional identity, yet it is more than simply a complex of

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[111] Robert Chenciner. *Daghestan, Tradition and Survival*, (Oxon: Routledge, 1997), 168- 190
[112] It should be noted that even Cossacks were firstly asked to participate by representatives of mountainous nations, author.
[113] Emil Souleimanov. "An Endless War: The Russian-Chechen Conflict in Perspective", 100- 101
[114] Georgians of course are predominantly a mountainous nation as well: they wear Cherkeska and dance Lezginka, yet they are representatives of the South Caucasus, which has its specifics, on the other side Abkhazians being part of the larger Adyghe nation, are considered to part of the North Caucasus, author.

shared songs and dances and can also politically manifest itself, often in contrast to lowland ethnic groups, such as the Kumyks or Nogais.

As Ware and Kisriev argue, there is also a significant level of trans-ethnic Dagestani identity, especially among local elites. According to their research, with the exception of Chechens-Akkins, most Dagestanis identified themselves rather with Dagestan and the Russian Federation, than their ethnic group, religion or Djamaat.[115] Their findings support the claim that although there are more than 30 different and often rival ethnic identities, Dagestanis can, under specific circumstances, carry out united political action. On an elite level, this fact manifested itself in the common struggle of Dagestani officials to get as many representatives from Dagestan to the State duma as possible, no matter of ethnicity.[116] Yet as it will be shown later, this layer of identity may be also overwhelmed by nationalism and serious interethnic conflicts.

To sum up, although the national identities in Dagestan developed in the course of 20th century, many people identify themselves also by the mountainous culture and Dagestan itself, and often one person can have all these identities at once, interacting with each other. Dagestan is not simply just a puzzle of ethnic identities; it presents more puzzle sets of different identities mixed altogether. It implies that Dagestan presents many bases for mass mobilization or mutual support, beside religion and Djamaats, yet none of them seems to be prevailing in the way that nationalism prevails over religious identity or local identity in modern-day Europe. Also it provides not just fair ground for mutual support but also for mutual conflicts between ethnic groups, Djamaats, religious groups, highlanders and lowlanders or all of them at once. How this reality manifested itself in the period of transition will be analyzed later.

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[115] Robert Bruce Ware, Enver Kisiev, Wernej J. Patzelt, Ute Roericht, "Stability in the Caucasus, The Perspective from Dagestan, *Problems of Post-communism* 5, no. 2, (March/April 2003), http://www.siue.edu/~rware/Stability_in_the_Caucasus.pdf, (accessed March 3. 2013).
[116] Bruce Ware, Enver Kisriev, "Dagestan: Russian Hegemony and Islamic Resistance in the North Caucasus*," 49.

3.1.2 Dagestan's Society and Tradition of Statehood

In the case of Chechnya, the absence of historical experience with centralized statehood has led to clan rivalry, causing destabilization and radicalization of Dudaev's regime. As well in the case of Dagestan, it is important to understand its specific experience and tradition of statehood.

Regarding the tradition of statehood in Dagestan, seemingly similar patterns appear as has been seen for Chechnya. Here also, we can identify what Ware and Kisriev described as the vertical hierarchy of mountains, characteristic with higher level of equality among the members of society, parochialism,[117] and kinship. This is said to be in opposition to the vertical hierarchies of lowland civilizations. It is this horizontality of mountainous societies which makes them very difficult to be ruled by lowland civilizations, which usually try to apply their model of vertical power structure on these societies aka centralization.[118] Despite existing similarities, it would be a mistake to overlook differences between Chechen and Dagestan's respective traditions of statehood.

Unlike in Chechnya, where *teyps* (clans based on blood) constitute the primal political units, in Dagestan this role is played by so called Djamaats. In contrast to clans, the Djamaat presents rather a territorial and historical unit, being either one bigger settlement or a historical coalition of smaller settlements. Every Djamaat has its own *adat* and it consists of smaller units called *thumus*; which are tribal ancestral structures headed by elders who represent them on Djamaat level. In a very broad sense, a Djamaat can be understood as a kind of Caucasian polis, but more territorially based than the Chechen teyps. An important feature of the Djamaats is that they consist mostly of people speaking one language, or one could say they are mono-ethnic.[119] However, ethnic groups in Dagestan are extremely decentralized, and Djamaat identity often prevails; therefore the alliance of one Djamaat with a Djamaat of a different ethnic background against a Djamaat of the same origin is nothing exceptional.

In fact, in Dagestan politically more advanced units evolved than in Chechnya, where the "mountainous horizontality" persisted in its most radical form. Already between 5th and 10th century following the collapse of so called Caucasian Albania, a

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[117] Parochialism is antonym of universalism it means being provincial, and narrow-scope, author.
[118] Robert Bruce Ware, Enver Kisriev, "Dagestan: Russian Hegemony and Islamic Resistance in the North Caucasus," 3- 14.
[119] Ibid., 39-88.

variety of bigger political units appeared on the territory of Dagestan, such as Derbent, which became the busy commercial city state on the Caspian shore. Tabarasan, in the west of Derbent, presented another type of state structure in Dagestan, being rather a confederation of tribes ruled by so called Tabasaran shahs. More or less centralized political units could be found also in the Avar inhabited mountainous parts of Dagestan. Here the so-called Serir (or Bat-Dadu) arose in the 6th century, soon incorporating many other non-Avar ethnicities. Yet not just Avars managed to create states in mountains, but Lezgins and Laks also created higher political units over the course of history.[120]

In comparison with Chechnya, Dagestan has more historical experience with statehood and especially with a higher level of social stratification, making it a less extreme case of highland vertical anarchy.

Yet as Ware and Kisriev argue, Djamaats still play the role of elemental and dominant political units, which have to be respected and included in the decision making process. Their main argument is that when these conditions are met, Dagestan can be controlled by an external power and it is the centralization based on the vertical power model which makes Dagestanis revolt against the central government, be it Russian or otherwise. Recentralization of power after the beginning of Putin's presidency is than seen as the main reason of destabilization and insurgency in present day Dagestan.[121]

Their claim is fairly supported and helps us to understand significantly better the roots of present day insurgency in Dagestan, yet it is not the only reason. The sole fact of recentralization cannot explain why young people all around Dagestan took up arms and "flew to the forest".

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[120] V. G. Gadjiev, *Istorya Dagestana*, (1967), http://alpan365.ru/biblioteka/istoriya-online/istoriya-dagestan/, (accessed February 2, 2013).
[121] Robert Bruce Ware, Enver Kisriev, "Dagestan: Russian Hegemony and Islamic Resistance in the North Caucasus,"156- 203.

3.1.3 Sufism

Unlike in the case of the first Chechen war, where Islam played rather purely the role of an ad hoc means of mobilization, in the case of Dagestan's insurgency, Islam is presented as one of the crucial factors of instability by the Russian government. Therefore before commencing the analysis of the situation in Dagestan, its religious realities have to be analyzed, offering at least a basic picture of this issue.

From a religious point of view Dagestan, and especially the city of Derbent, present the cradle of Islam in the North Caucasus. Although it was in Dagestan where the Arabic expansion was halted, Islam had already started to culturally expand into this region in the seventh century, and although it took many more centuries to prevail deeper in the mountains, it embedded deep in Dagestan's culture and society. As early as the 12th century, mystic Sufism had prevailed and merged with older pagan traditions to create a very specific and syncretic "national Islam" in Dagestan. It became characteristic by particular ceremonies, often of pagan origin, of weddings and burials, as well as for cults of famous Seikhs (religious and spiritual teachers). Sufi Islam is organized into orders, yet these orders lack the hierarchical organizational structure of Christian orders and are in fact, extremely decentralized. What under these conditions count are the so-called Tariqas, or brotherhoods. They are based on the relation between the Seikh in the role of spiritual teacher and his disciples (*murids*).

In fact, the religious structure of Dagestan reflects to some extent its political structure. Tariqas, similarly to Djamaats, usually present highly independent mono-ethnic of Sufism in Dagestan. Yet they are usually tied with secular elites from the same Djamaat or of the same ethnic background and often participate in elite and inter-ethnic struggle. Ethnic struggle between various Sufi groups became obvious in 1990, when the head of the official religious body of Dagestan, the so-called Spiritual Board of Muslims of Dagestan (DUMD), became the Kumik named Bagautdin Isaev. This made the Avars, who had already lost their dominant political position in the republic to the furious Dargins (resulting in the "coup" of 1992, when Avar activists stormed the headquarters of the DUMD) ousted Isaev and installed Said Akhmed-Darbishgadjiev. The Dargins willing to appease the Avars decided to support the legitimacy of the new head of the DUMD and later in 1997 even the law on "Freedom of conscience, Freedom of religions and Freedom of Religious Organizations" was adopted, legally prohibiting

alternative spiritual boards in Dagestan, ignoring the fact that adopted law probably contradicts the constitution of the Russian Federation.[122]

Yet the real authority of the DUMD remains limited, unlike in other parts of the Russian Federation; in Dagestan and Chechnya the Shafi School of law has been adopted, instead of the Hanafi. The differences aren't just of a juridicial and theological character however; the teaching of the Shafi School has one important practical implication: unlike in other parts of Russia, where mosques are built by the state or donors and imams are appointed by a higher power, in Dagestan mosques are built by Djamaats, and imams also have to be elected, or at least approved by local communities. The link of tarqikas to some patrimonial or national network and their high decentralization makes Sufism in Dagestan extremely hard to control from above by vertical hierarchy. The situation in which the authority of the DUMD has been accepted mostly only by Avar, Dargin and Nogai tariqas, with Kumik opposition in North and multiethnic opposition in south has led to something that to the external observer could be easily reminiscent of the schism. Yet as Matsumato and Ibragimov noted, this conflict is not that deep especially in relation to southern opposition, and DUMD often succeeds easily to appoint imams into southern Djamaats once they achieve the respect of local residents.[123]

However it is this decentralized character which has helped Sufism in Dagestan to survive decades of Soviet oppression. Even after the annihilation of its elites, religious education and life survived on the Djamaat level. However this characteristic trait of Dagestani sufism is rather double-edged and has resulted to some extent in the degeneration of Sufism in Dagestan. Many of its recent top leaders lack the proper theological education, causing disregard among many youngsters, willing to listen instead to new young cadres, educated in Arabic countries.

The final important characteristic of Sufism in Dagestan is its support of the establishment. After the abolition of Wahhabism in 1999, the DUMD began to actively collaborate in the suppression of "Wahhabis". State leaders did not hide the fact that the role of traditional Islam in the region should be to support the official policy of the Russian Federation and local elites. In 2010 Alexander Khloponin, standing at the head of the North-Caucasian federal district, submitted a proposal on the creation of official

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[122] Kimitaka Matsuzato, Magomed-Rasul Ibragiov, „Islamic politics at the sub-regional level in Dagestan: Tariqua Brotherhoods, Ethnicities, Localism and the spiritual board", *Europe Asia studies* 7, no. 5 (July 2005): 753- 779. www.jstore.org, (accessed October 11, 2013), 761

Islamic learning centers in Dagestan. This was intended to avoid religious education abroad, without official permission from the government.[124] These, and similar, steps create a situation where the traditional Sufi Islam starts to be - in the eyes of some Dagestanis - too closely connected with the very unpopular and corrupt regime.

Basic characteristics of Sufism in Dagestan:

- More oriented toward spiritualism, than material society.
- Highly decentralized.
- Tariqas competing on ethnic and Djamaat base.
- Highly syncretic, respecting ancient pre-islamic traditions of Dagestan.
- Less educated clerics, often with "nomenclature thinking".
- In general pro- establishment.

3.1.4 Salafism and Wahhabism

Both Salafism and Wahhabism belong to the reformist movement in Islam, calling for a return to the example of the forefathers (al Salaf al Salih) and offering a considerable critique of Sufism as "syncretic polytheism."[125] To find the roots of Salafism is, however, a rather difficult task. It existed probably already in medieval times in the form of various reforming movements criticizing syncretism in Islam, yet was not yet called Salafism.

Wahhabism is a puritan movement founded by Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb in the 18th century in Najd, central Arabia, and adopted in 1744 by the Saudi dynasty, later becoming the official religion of Saudi Arabia.[126] Wahhabism may be understood as belonging to the wider Salafi movement.

In fact, to draw a line between Salafism and Wahabism when both terms often overlap is rather a complicated issue. As Quintan Wiktorowicz argues, the term

[123] Ibid., 771.
[124] Valery Dzutsev, „Lost Between Words and Deeds: Dagestan's Government Fails to Influence Rebel Surrender", *North Caucasus Analysis* 12, no. 1 (2011), http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=37320&tx_ttnews%5Bback Pid%5D=514, (accessed February 12, 2013)
[125] Itzachak Weismann, „The Politics of Popular Religion: Sufis, Salafis, and Muslim Brothers in 20th-Century Hamah", *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 37, No. 1, (Feb. 2005): 39- 58, www.jstore.org, (accessed February 12, 2013), 39.
[126] "Wahhābī" Encyclopædia Britannica, Online, (accessed February 12, 2013).

Wahhabi, having negative connotations in the West is often used by local authorities to discredit even moderate Salafists in the eyes of the public. In fact, Salafists outside Saudi Arabia will only rarely call themselves "Wahhabi".[127] Therefore I have decided not to use term "Wahhabi" in this work to describe Islamic radicals and insurgents, but rather the term "radical Salafists", to distinguish them from Salafists who refuse using violence as means of achieving their goals.

It has been to some extent the war in Afghanistan which has triggered the rise of religious activism among Muslims in the Soviet Union. In the course of perestroika, the Islamic Party of Revival has been established in Tajikistan, for example. It was headed by Akhmed Kadji Akhtaev, an Avar from Dagestan who soon returned to his native republic and established the Salafic educational organization Islamia. Yet Akhtaev represented what can be described as moderate Salafism. He even admitted Dagestan to be a part of both Islamic and Orthodox world and refused the use of violence.[128] The fact that many Salafists in Russia adhere to this moderate view, rather than to more radical ones, cannot be overlooked.

Radicals are organized into many different Jamaats,[129] with Ayub Omarov-Astrakhanski as their most prominent figure. They are scattered all over the Russian Federation and are proponents of religious separatism of all Muslim regions of the Russian Federation. Yet they present many different groups rather than an organized united front. They do share, however, the same broad goal of establishing a non-national Islamic state based on the Sharia law in all regions of Russian Federation settled by Muslim populations.

Basic characteristics of Salafism in Dagestan:

-Refuses Sufism and many syncretic religious traditions in Dagestan.
-This branch of Islam is new in Dagestan and contradicts many of its tradition.
-It is often attractive among poor rural or anomic youth, giving more material perspectives than mystic Sufism.
-Consists of both, moderates and radicals.

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[127] Quintan Wiktorowicz, "Anatomy of the Salafi Movement", *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 29, (2006):207- 239, 235.
[128] Bruce Ware, Enver Kisriev, "Dagestan: Russian Hegemony and Islamic Resistance in the North Caucasus", 96-97

3.1.5. Sufis and Salafists, religious relations in Dagestan

Dagestan was not only subjected for decades to atheistic propaganda in the Soviet Union; local Isalm has also always been comparing Middle Eastern traditions. Local Muslims were often hard drinkers and Dagestani women continue to a play traditionally more active role in the society than in Arabic countries. Differences exist especially among more the traditional mountains and the much more secular lowlands, with Derbent becoming the most liberal city in Dagestan, where even short skirts can be seen on the streets; what is something highly unlikely in other parts of the region of north/eastern Caucasus. The situation of Lezgins was particularly specific - a mountainous nation always favoring higher education and therefore becoming the most secularized of all the nations in Dagestan.[130] Under these circumstances the first Salafists talking about Sufism as polytheism, accompanied by wives in burkas appeared rather exotic in the Dagestan of the late 1980s. Yet in the course of the 1990s, with the borders open and many young people starting to study Islam abroad, Salafism found its ground in Dagestan, entering into ever sharper conflict with Sufism.

The research conducted in Dagestan in the mid-1990s revealed that support of Wahhabism[131] remained quite limited, with only just 3% of Dagestanis openly admitting that they were Wahhabists, and further estimates assuming that their real support wasn't more than 10%.[132] According to this research, the position of Salafists was strongest in rural areas among often educated youngsters. Those who opposed Salafism were especially people from cities, women and elderly people. As extremists, Wahhabists were described mostly by Tabasarians, Lezgins, Russians and Azeris. On the other hand, as pious Muslims and non-extremists they were usually described especially by Chechens-Akkins, followed by Avars and Dargins. These results are explained by the fact that rural areas suffered by transition much more than cities did, resulting in the

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[129] Jamaat in this context means organized group of believers, in distinction to Djmaat as political unit of Dagestan, author.

[130] Kimitaka Matsuzato, Magomed-Rasul Ibragiov, „Islamic politics at the sub-regional level in Dagestan: Tariqua Brotherhoods, Ethnicities, Localism and the spiritual board", 759.

[131] In this particular research the term Wahhabi was used, author.

[132] Bruce Ware, Enver Kisriev, Werner J. Patzelt, and Ute Roericht, „Political Islam in Dagestan", *Europe-Asia studies* 55, No. 2, (March 2003): 287- 302, www.jstore.org, (accessed February 10, 2013), 289.

denunciation of modernity, linked to an unsuccessful transition by many mountain-dwellers.[133]

Although in the minority, Salafists became very distinct and launched large scale conflicts with Sufis, such as interfering with traditional weddings and funerals or destroying their sacred sites. Soon whole Djamaats started to be divided by the rising violence between Sufis and Salafists, with the so-called Kadar zone becoming the most radical case. The Kadar zone consisted of the Dargin Djamaat of three villages - Karamakhi, Chabanmakhi and Kadar - where Salafists who had prevailed in late 1990s, adopted the sharia law and declared secession from the Russian Federation. The radicalization of some Sufis followed soon after, with some imams even promising heaven to all who will kill some "Wahhabists". Following these events, Dagestan entered an era of low-scale religious war, which still remains in progress. On the official website of radical Salafists of the Caucasus - Kavkazcenter.com - instead of 'Sufi' the term 'polytheists' is usually used for traditional believers in the Caucasus, who used to be blamed for various crimes against Islam.

As we have seen, the real support of Salafists was quite limited in the late 1990s and these Salafists met a strong resistance from Sufis, which later evolved into a serious religious conflict. The Russian central government soon became aware of this intra-Dagestan violence and became one of its actors. As in the case of nationalism, the religious identity in Dagestan provides enough space for mass mobilization, but also for massive religious conflicts among different Muslim communities.

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[133] Ibid., 299.

3.2 Will to act:

3.2.1. Cultural and religious differences:

Russians and Dagestanis share some elements of identity, especially those embedded in the Soviet period. However cultural and religious differences among dwellers of Dagestan and Russians are rather significant.

Although Dagestan used to be Christian prior to the 7th century, Islam became one of the key sources of identity for locals, especially in the course of the Caucasian war in the 19th century. However, rather a general religious tolerance was characteristic for Dagestan, not just between Sufis and Christians but also Sufis and Shia, who for example share the Friday mosque[134] in the city of Derbent.

Dagestan became the center of intensive religious revival in the course of perestroika and the years that followed. It has been much more massive than in Chechnya (where it was rather just a part of national revival) and after decades of forced atheism, Dagestan became a new and dynamic center of re-Islamization. Between 1985 and 2001 more than 1500 new mosques were built, mostly from local resources.[135] The scope of revival is even more obvious in comparative terms. There are around 5000 pilgrims from Dagestan to Mecca a year; in Bashkortostan, another Muslim republic of the Russian Federation that has twice the population of Dagestan, there are 10 on average.[136]

However it was not just traditional Sufi Islam, but also Salafism which started to gain popularity in Dagestan, turning it into a primal base in the Russian Federation. The role religion plays in the insurgency will be analyzed in the following chapter, but for now it is important to note that Islam is traditionally more embedded in Dagestan than in in other parts of the Caucasus and also its revival was more intense there in the early 1990s. Yet one has to note that the religious revival appeared many years before the situation started to deteriorate in Dagestan from a security point of view.

Another aspect is that unlike the Chechens, the nations of Dagestan have a more intense historical experience with multiculturalism, and have become more open to external influences. This claim is supported also by high amount of mixed marriages

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[134] Friday mosque refers to the Mosque used for communal prayers, i tis the most prominent among mosques in the city. The Shafi tradition even forbids more than one Friday mosque in the city, author.

[135] Vladimir O. Bobrovnikov, "Musulmane severnogo Kavkaza- Obychay, pravo, nasilie, (Moslems in the North Caucasus- tradition, law and violence)," 264.

among members of various groups, around 25% on average.[137] However it would be interesting to see what the ratio is of mixed marriages among dwellers of Dagestan and Russians. Also one has to note that mixed marriages are typical for urban areas, while in mountains even marriages between members of the same ethnic group but different Djamaats remain rather exceptional. Despite the fact that Dagestan is one of the most rural areas in Russia, the role of the Russian language rose significantly in the course of the Soviet period, even among the mountainous nations. This trend continued also in the years after the collapse of the Soviet empire. The following numbers in brackets show the percentage of people speaking Russian among various ethnic groups in 1989 and 2002: Avars (62%, 84%), Dargins (68%, 88%), Kumyks (74%, 90%), Lezgins (68%, 90%), Laks (74%, 94%), Tabasariuans (59%, 87%).[138] However as we can see, the percentage of Russian speaking people among nations of Dagestan was often lower than in Chechnya around 1989 and the linguistic gap persisted between Russia and Dagestan in the early 1990s.

Regarding traditions and habits, the situation in Dagestan mirrors the situation in Chechnya insofar as both regions share to a huge extent many cultural traits which are in fact rather alien to Russians and vice versa. This fact, however, is much stronger in the case of mountainous ethnic groups than the lowland dwellers.

In general we can argue, that also in case of Dagestan, between the peoples and Dagestan and Russians the factor of cultural and religious differences is significant.

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[136] Kimitaka Matsuzato, Magomed-Rasul Ibragiov, "Islamic politics at the sub-regional level in Dagestan: Tariqua Brotherhoods, Ethnicities, Localism and the spiritual board," 757.

[137] B. M. Ataev, M. B. Ataeva, "Vzaimodeystvie i funkcionirovanie russkogo i dagestanskikh yazykov (Interactions and Functions of the Russian and Dagestani Languages)," http://www.work.vegu.ru/vegu/vestnik/DocLib/43-50_%D0%90%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%B5%D0%B2,%20%D0%90%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%B5%D0%B2%D0%B0.pdf , (accessed February 19, 2013), 44.

3.2.2 Civic vs. Ethnic identity

It has been already argued in the second chapter that the federal government of the newly established Russian Federation had no other choice than to adopt the civil model of society, yet on the other hand new radical elites in Chechnya chose the strictly ethnic one. Also in Dagestan new nationalistic elites emerged in the early 1990s, especially among Kumyks and Avars, who advocated the national model rather than a civic one. However the calls for Kumistan or Avaria were calls against other rival ethnic groups in Dagestan rather than in favor of separatism from the Russian Federation. The crisis culminated in October 1991, when major ethnic clashes between Avars and Kumyks threatened to erupt. Soon after, the old nomenclature of communist origin under Dargin Magomedali Magomedov managed to consolidate the power and absorbed part of the radical nationalist leaders. The highly civic model of consociational democracy has been adopted soon thereafter. The cartel comprising the three most influential ethnic groups (Avars, Kumyks and Dargins) was abolished and all ethnic groups became included in the power-share, with Dagestan becoming the only subject of the Russian Federation which adopted a collective head of state.

Already in the early 1990s, a civic model significantly prevailed over the national one in Dagestan, so this factor cannot be considered as a FoS in this case.

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[138] Ibid. 46.

3.2.3 Political autonomy:

Unlike in Chechnya, local nomenclature in Dagestan flourished for decades under Soviet rule and strong local cadres were established. The position of first secretary was usually occupied by an Avar, Kumik or Dargin, with the second secretary being of Slavic origin. So on the eve of the transformation and later collapse of the Soviet empire, there was a strong and stable elite of local origin created by autonomous institutions already present in the republic. Yet similar to the Chechen case, elites created by autonomous institutions did not adopt radical views. These were rather advocated by new elites outside of the nomenclature circle.

Political autonomy as a factor has been presented, yet it did not play any role in the rise of separatist tendencies over Dagestan. The autonomous elites rather blocked the nationalistic and separatist tendencies.

3.2.4 Mythification of past conflicts:

At first glance Dagestan seems to share the same amountof historical conflicts with Russia as Chechnya. It was the Russian imperial expansion, led by the infamous General Ermolov, which forced the divided feudal and tribal units of Dagestan to unite and launch the so-called Caucasian war, which lasted for nearly a half century (1817-1874) and led to the large scale destruction of Dagestan in terms of both population and material. On the other side, the Caucasian war became the nation-building myth for many locals, creating a framework for Dagestan's shared identity and, most importantly, finishing the Islamization of the region. In this period atrocities consecrated by the policy of "we need mountains, yet we don't need mountain-dwellers" became a tool of Russian imperial policy.

However, the history of the Caucasian war does not seem to be purely an issue of mythification which would breed hostility toward Russia. In fact Imam Shamil has been officially recognized by the communist regime as a liberator, and until the present day the memory of the Caucasian war does not play a role of mobilizing factor feeding animosity toward Russians, but it is rather simply a source of national pride among Dagestanis. This was also the case of Chechnya, where the factor of past conflicts had

rather the character of vivid and fresh memories of Stalin's deportations, rather than the Caucasian war.

And at this point the main difference between Chechnya and Dagestan appears. Unlike in Chechnya where the whole nation has been deported by the Soviet regime; in Dagestan only Chechens-Akkins were subjected to these atrocities. In fact among most Dagestanis the "memory of success" under the Soviet regime prevails. The living standards rose in this period, national languages were created and, most importantly, power was, at least officially, in local hands. Among most Dagestanis, the Soviet era is a source of nostalgia, rather than of nightmares as in the case of many Chechens. These claims are supported also by field research and surveys, in which 63.6% of Dagestanis answered that Russia is one of the most important sources of identity for them, with 62.8% of respondents wishing more integration with the Russian state, compared to 14.8% wishing more independence, in the late 1990s.[139]

We can assume that, in contrast to Chechnya, the factor of mythification of past conflicts wasn't present in Dagestan in the early 1990s, which can be attributed to the experience with deportation limited only to Chechens-Akkins.

3.2.5 Economic Factors:

The process of economic transition had an extremely severe impact on the economy of Dagestan. The local economy was destroyed by the shock therapy associated with the transition to a market economy, when heavy industry in the country fell to 15% of its former production.[140] The constant rise of unemployment in particular became one of the most chronic problems that Dagestan had to cope with. In 2010 the unemployment rate reached 20%, thus becoming the fourth highest in the Russian Federation.[141] This situation affects mostly young people, while overall 73% of

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[139] Robert Bruce Ware, Enver Kisriev, Werner J. Patzelt, and Ute Roericht, „Political Islam in Dagestan", 294

[140] Mikhail Roschin, „Dagestan's Economic Crisis: Past, Present and Future", *North Caucasus Analysis* 7, č. 42 (14. 2. 2013)

[141] "Uroven bezrabotitsy v Dagestane sostavlyaet 20, 1% (The unemployment rate in Dagestan reaches 20.1%)" , *RIA Dagestan*, (14. 2. 2013), (accessed February 17, 2013),
http://www.riadagestan.ru/news/2010/04/25/96266/ , (accessed February 17, 2013).

inhabitants live below the poverty line, and another 16% are close to this limit.[142] The structure of the regional economy also remains a considerable problem. While it has been devastated in the course of the transition to a market economy at the national level, in Dagestan the process of privatization was never fully accomplished, and so almost 70 percent of the economy remains in the hands of the government. The Republic also remains almost entirely financially dependent on the support of Moscow, as up to 78.8% of its budget comes from the central government.[143] However not everyone in Dagestan is poor and social scissors are open wide resulting in rising frustration for many Dagestanis. One has to note that the economic and social consequences have been much more severe in rural areas, than in cities.

The economic factors of both relative depression and disadvantaged ethnic groups in disadvantaged regions was and still is strongly presented in the case of Dagestan.

3.2.6 Anomie:

As mentioned in the chapter on Chechnya, nowadays anomie presents a serious problem in the case of the Caucasus. Its roots lie in nearly two decades of economic depression, rising unemployment and social inequalities as well as in the loss of respect to the traditional authorities of *adat* and Sufi clergy among some segments of society. Yet the process of anomisation of any given society is rather a long-term issue. In the early 1990s the frameworks of this phenomenon were laid, through the deterioration of the economic and social situations in the Republic. Yet the above mentioned crisis of official Sufi religion started to appear later and it will be discussed in the chapter dealing with Dagestan after 1999.

Anomie can be considered as a factor which was present in Dagestan in the early 1990s, yet because it is a phenomenon which needed time to develop into its current scope it should not be overestimated at the given period.

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[142] Mikhail Roschin, „Dagestan's Economic Crisis: Past, Present and Future", *North Caucasus Analysis* 7, č. 42 (14. 2. 2013)

3.3.6 Capacity to act:

3.3.1 Rough Terrain:

Mountains and plains, mountain dwellers and nomads, these are four elements shaping the character of Dagestan. The territory of the Republic has a very diverse character, with the Great Caucasus mountains in the south reaching the highest peak of 4,466 m (Bazardyuzi)[144]; these are the traditional home of mountainous nations sharing many traits with Chechens, such as Avars, Dargins and Leznins, and the beginning of the Caspian depression stretching to Kazakhstan, inhabited by various originally nomadic nations such as the Nogais and Kumyks. So in Dagestan we can find both types of terrain, one ideal for short-term yet intense ethnic cleansings and one ideal for long-term separatist movements. However, the case of Kizlyar, which as a lowland region became one of the hotspots of insurgency, illustrates that even lowlands can provide shelter for rebels if wooded and having many rivers.[145] As the case of the Caucasian war shows, mountain dwellers of Dagestan were improving the latter already 200 hundreds years ago.

The factor of rough terrain is present in the case of Dagestan.

3.3.2 Ethnic kin:

The question of ethnic kinship presented a complicated issue already in the case of Chechnya, however it is even more complex when analysing Dagestan. Not only do many different identities overlap; from an ethnic point of view we can encounter many small nations often lacking distinct borders. Therefore talking about ethnic kinships per se in the case of Dagestan would be misleading. Yet as there is some level of conflict between mountain and plain dwellers, there exists some level of shared mountainous identity, mentioned above. However it manifested itself in the past and potential separatists could count on some level of sympathy or even limited support from other

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[143] Ibid., (14. 2. 2013)

[144] "European Russian and the Caucasian States Prominence Page, 12 Peaks with Prominence of 1,500 meters or greater," http://peaklist.org/WWlists/ultras/CaucasusP1500m.html, (accessed March 1, 2013)

[145] Valery Dzutsev, "Is Dagestan's Kizlyar District Becoming a New Flash Point in the Regional Insurgency?," *North Caucasus Analysis* 12, Issue: 17 (September 6, 2011), http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=38368 (accessed: March 1. 2013).

mountainous groups, this factor cannot be considered to be present in the case of Dagestan. Only Chechens would be probably willing to give some support, yet Chechnya and Dagestan still have territorial disputes. However the western Caucasus remained stable, with Ingushetia and North Ossetia waging mutual war, having no intention to anger Moscow.

In the early 1990s no ethnic group in Dagestan could count on large-scale support either from ethnic kin or from some other mountainous ethnic group, which would significantly increase its capacity to wage separatist campaigns against such a power as the Russian Federation.

3.3.3 Access to Weapons:

As well as in the case of Chechnya, dwellers of Dagestan (especially in the mountainous areas) are famous for their love for weapons, no matter what size or calibre. This is obvious when attending local weddings where firing from automatic weapons became a part of tradition, resulting often in injuries and deaths. Especially during the early 1990s, weakened state structures enabled the massive rise of the arms black market, and according to recent research Dagestan has become its epicentre.[146]

It is hard to precisely assess the level of rearmament of Dagestanis in the 1990s, although we can build a partial picture from the fact that the invasion to Dagestan by Chechen insurgents of 1999 was repelled by locals, rather than security forces and new shelters full of weapons are found in Dagestan on a weekly basis.[147] So we can assume that the "home arsenal" of locals was big enough to effectively resist unexpected invasion lacking heavy armament, yet carried out by well-armed and trained units.

Existing evidence from Dagestan suggests that the factor of access to weapons is present in the case of Dagestan.

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[146] Darya Luganskaya "Chernyy rynok" oruzhya: Makarov za 100 („Black market"of weapons: Makarov for 100 dollars), *BBC Russia*,
http://www.bbc.co.uk/russian/russia/2012/12/121128_guns_illegal_market.shtml, (accessed: February 17, 2013).

[147] Actual information about amount of weapons found in Dagestan are usually to be found on kavkaz-uzel.ru.

3.3.4 Ethnic geography:

Ethnic geography plays a crucial role in understanding developments in Dagestan in the early 1990s. Extreme national diversity resulting into the situation, when there is no ethnic group strong enough to become dominant makes it extremely difficult for nationalist separatism in Dagestan to occur. The shared identity of being a dweller of Dagestan started to develop in the course of the Caucasian wars and persists to this day. However it was national identities that flourished for seven decades under communist rule, thus becoming much more important than in the 19th century.

Another important aspect is that above mentioned ethnic fragmentation results in a situation where ethnic groups challenge each other rather than Moscow. This became obvious in the early 1990s, when the ideological vacuum stemming from the weakening of communist ideology resulted in short-lasting but intensive nationalist revival. New radical nationalist movements such as *Tenglik* did not ask for separation from Russia, but rather from Dagestan, challenging other ethnic groups.

Unlike in the case of Chechnya the factor of ethnic geography was not present in a way, it could increase the capacity of radical nationalist separatism from the central government, but on the contrary, it significantly limited it.

3.4 Catalysing factors: Weak state as stabilizing factor?

3.4.1 From transformation to anomie: Why remain a part of Russia?

The transformation of the USSR, launched by the policy of perestroika influenced all spheres of life, gradually leading to the freedom of speech and the right to demonstrate, thus awaking old ethnic grievances, followed by the appearance of new, often radical leaders. This wave of destabilization, when the stagnation started to develop into a serious crisis, led swiftly to elite conflicts in the Communist party itself. However for ordinary people all around the Soviet Union, the power struggle among communist leaders was not the theme of the day. It was rather the radical worsening of the economic and social situation of what had become the most vivid memory of the early 1990s for many of them. Dagestan was not meant to become an exception.

Transformation severely undermined the social welfare of local residents, while creating a new super-rich class. In the context of weakening of the state structures

following the transformation, in combination with the local traditions of clientelism and nepotism linked to clan rivalry, a huge amount of subsidies from central government started to be syphoned off by a circle of the most prominent clans. As a result around only 0.3% of Dagestan's population became rich in the transformation to capitalism; with around another 20-25% which managed to raise their income mildly and around 70% of population below the line of poverty.[148]

At this point we can see the same picture as in the case of Chechnya; the economy was collapsing, people were losing their jobs, crowds of often educated unemployed youngsters hung around the streets. Yet on the other hand "the new Dagestanis" appeared, driving extremely expensive cars and constructing luxurious mansions. In Makhachkala to this day , luxurious mansions of "New Dagestanis" neighbor whole districts without proper access to water and electricity.[149] The transformation has been a major loss for most locals and, due to the sharp rise of the social stratification, inevitably frustration and anomie started to take hold. Under these circumstances the question appears, why didn't major anti-Russian movements appear in Dagestan as they did in Chechnya?

Continuing the comparison with the Chechen case, we can also observe that although similar in the scope of economic crisis, and appearing anomie, one important factor of will was missing in Dagestan, namely the mythification of past conflicts with Russia. As shown above, the majority of Dagestanis identified themselves with the Russian state in the 1990s, a result of the republic's quiet prosperous development in the Soviet period, and (unlike in the case of Chechens) the memory of major oppression or atrocities is absent. Therefore, although the transition led to economic depression and growing anomie in Dagestan, there was not enough fertile ground for radicals to breed contempt toward Russia. This may to some extent explain why a much higher amount of deprivation didn't focus on the Russian Federation as in the case of Chechnya.

Under these circumstances, the absence of the factor of the mythification of the past conflicts seems to ease (to some extent) the anti-Russian separatist trends in Dagestan. However this absence cannot fully explain the lack of nationalistic separatism (in relation to central government) in Dagestan and should not be overestimated. We have seen many other regions around Russia with no significant conflicts with Russians,

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[148] Robert Bruce Ware, Enver Kisriev, "Dagestan: Russian Hegemony and Islamic Resistance in the North Caucasus," 44-45.

such as Tatarstan, where at least demonstrative separatism appeared, aiming at achieving the greatest possible autonomy from the central government. Therefore some other factors blocking the emergence of nationalist separatism as a response to transformation, weakened state structures and economic hardships, had to be present in Dagestan.

3.4.2 From transformation to ethnic rivalry: Fighting each other rather than central government?

It has already been mentioned how many different identities may become dominant among Dagestanis, from Djamaat, through ethnic, Dagestani and mountainous to religious. The one seeming to be the most prominent in the early 1990s was the ethnic identity, or rather more than 30 ethnic identities which soon started to shake the foundations of Dagestan itself.

In Makhachkala, as well as in Grozny, the communist era elites avoided adopting a radical nationalist view, but still too many inter-ethnic disputes, which were supressed for decades started to occur, producing their own alternative leaders from the bottom upwards. There were (and to some extent still are) three main types of inter-ethnic conflict in Dagestan, namely: (i) formerly deported Akkins vs. newly settled Laks and Avars, (ii) highlanders settled into lowland vs. lowlanders traditionally inhabiting these regions, and (iii) the issue of the neo-Cossack movement in the North Caucasus, linked to some extent to the issue of inter-ethnic conflicts.

When returning to their ancestral lands from deportation after 1956, Akkins found themselves in a similar situation to other Chechens, with their homes occupied by newcomers (Laks and Avars), and their region traditionally called Aukhovski, renamed to Novolakski (New Lak region). Akkin families, although allowed to return, were meant to become homeless in their own homeland. They had to build new houses, usually on less fertile soil and watch their old homes being occupied by strangers. Already in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Akkins started openly to demand their houses and soil back under the banner of the *Vainakh* movement. By that time, a series of incidents had occurred in which the Akkins tried to reclaim the houses and soil of their

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[149] Sergei Israpilov, "V Dagestane zhutko khorosho, (In Dagestan, it is badly good), www.sknews.ru," http://www.sknews.ru/main/19887-v-dagestane-zhutko-xorosho.html, (accessed March 3, 2013).

forefathers by force.[150] Major conflict was temporarily avoided by promising to move Laks and Avars further into the lowland and return the houses and soil to Chechens; however this plan just provoked even more serious conflict on the plains.

A certain level of mutual mistrust between lowlanders and highlanders has always existed in the Caucasus,[151] yet as a result of the forced migrations of Avars and Laks into lowland Dagestan during the Soviet period, existing mistrust started evolve into serious conflict. In fact, in the early 1990s, highlanders already dominated some of the regions which were traditionally considered to belong to lowlanders. Conflict erupted when the local government announced the above mentioned plan to resettle other Laks and Avars from the Novolakski region to the lowlands, thus allowing the return of the Akkins to their homeland. The reaction of lowlanders was swift and radical: Kumyks established the *Tenglik* movement calling for creation of Kumystan which would be a part of the Russian Federation, yet outside of Dagestan's jurisdiction, mostly to avoid another migration from the mountains into the Kumyk lowland. The Avar-Kumyk conflict became tense, especially in the Khasavyurt region, deteriorating considerably in 1991. Similar developments appeared among the Nogais, united in the *Birlik* movement, which demanded the unification of all Nogai regions into one republic which would also become an autonomous part of the Russian Federation. In their struggle they later cooperated with Cossacks calling for Nogai-Cossack republic.[152] Yet the actions of the Birlik have never reached such a level of radicalization as in the case of Tenglik, and the tensions among Nogais faded away soon after.

As mentioned above, Russians residing traditionally in the Kizlyarsky and Tarumovski regions of Northern Dagestan became involved in the existing highland-lowland struggle after the increased immigration of the Lak population. As a result of neo-Cossack movements allied with Nogais, both ethnic groups started to require the ban on Lak and Avar migration into their regions, provoking strong reaction of both Avar and Lak nationalist movements, the Imam Shamil Front and *Kazi Kumukh*.

As it will be shown later, the bloodshed has been avoided in all cases and inter-ethnic conflicts in Dagestan have been moderated to some extent, yet the factor of

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[150]S. M. Markedonov, "Etnonacionalnyy I religioznyy factor v obshchectvenno-politicheskoy zhizni Kavkazskogo regiona, (Ethno-national and religious factor in the political life of the Caucasus region)", 77.

[151] It can be seen not just in relation among highland and lowland nations, but also in mutual relations of highlanders and lowlanders of the same ethnic origin, as in the case of Chechens, author.

difficult ethnic geography resulting in high interethnic competition has had far-reaching consequences for Dagestan, especially in combination with the absence of the factor of mythification of past conflicts.[153] After the transition appeared and state structures weakened, unlike in Chechnya where only Chechens and Russians lived, the nationalist movements in Dagestan turned against each other, and the central government was meant to play rather the role of arbiter. In the past, dwellers of the mountainous regions of Dagestan managed to unite on the basis of shared mountainous, Dagestani and religious identities against Moscow. However in the early 1990s when a major conflict or feelings of neglect toward Moscow disappeared, the weight of mutual conflicts significantly overbalanced any possible conflicts with the new-born Russian Federation.

3.4.3 From transformation to decentralization: Weak central government as stabilizing force?

Also in the case of Dagestan, the process of transformation followed by weakening of state structures led to elite rivalry on both levels, of central government and local government in Makhachkala.

The system of maintaining the ethnic power balance which developed in Soviet Dagestan was based on a rule that the three most influential ethnic groups (Avars, Dargins and Kumyks) would occupy the three most influential positions in the republic (so called troika), namely the Secretary of the Dagestani regional committee of Communist Party, Chairman of the Cabinet of ministers (Sovmin) and the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet. The praxis was that no position should be held by a representative of a certain group if it had been held by that group in the last term; this in combination with the need for balance led to the situations where the change on one post led directly to changes on another posts. For example when an Avar who headed the Sovmin was about to step down, his position was taken by a Kumyk or Dargin. Yet if a Kumyk would take this position, another Kumyk being for example Chairman of the Supreme Soviet, he had to step down for an Avar to be appointed on his place.

This system started to collapse soon after the process of transition was launched and new elites started to appear. This was the situation where the elite rivalry appeared

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[152] S. M. Markedonov, "Etnonacionalnyy I religioznyy factor v obshchectvenno-politicheskoy zhizni Kavkazskogo regiona, (Ethno-national and religious factor in the political life of the Caucasus region) author's manuscript, 76- 82

not just between new and old elites, but also among members of the nomenclature itself as well as among various nationalist leaders representing competing nationalist projects.

In the late 1980s the situation of old nomenclature in Dagestan became untenable; for decades its members had been appointed from above by the Kremlin and most of their power flew from this direction. However in the period of the late 1980s power-flow from above started to fade, and more adaptable members of the nomenclature soon started to derive their power from the opposite direction: the Djamaats. The djamaats, however, demanded material support in exchange. This relation later became the framework of so called ethnoparties, which came to dominate Dagestani politic during the whole period of the 1990s.[154]

On the highest level, the rivalry flared between three key representatives of Dagestan and three dominant groups around 1987. These groups were represented by three politicians. One of them was Magomedaly Magomedov of Dargin origin, considered at that time to be no match for other two figures, yet a politician who later transformed Dagestan and ruled it for more than a decade. Second was Abdurazak Mirzabekov of Kumyk origin and third Mukhu Aliev, an Avar who headed the Communist party and considered to be the strongest of the three men.

In 1987, Magomedov was moved to the position of the Chairman of Dagestani Supreme Soviet, which was considered at that time to be rather a pre-retirement vacation with no real influence. With Magomedov politically ousted, Aliev, backed by his Avar brethren, started to dominate the political spheres of Dagestan. This trend would probably continue not being of similar elite struggle on-going on the federal level in Kremlin, resulting in an unsuccessful putsch and Yeltsin's rise to power. As a result, the Communist party was banned and Aliev in the position of the Head of the Communist Party lost his job and all his power, while after enhancing the roles of the parliaments, suddenly Magomedov became the most influential figure in Dagestani politics.

Although the putsch didn't lead to radicals seizing the power as in the case of Chechnya, Magomedov faced some serious problems. Firstly Avars, despite being the dominant group, lost their influence over Dagestani politics and started to radicalize. In

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[153] Conflicts with Russia, author.

[154] Ethnoparty is a term used by Ware a Kisriev which refferes to a political party which doesn't represent some ethnic group, but rather concrete djamaats and creates elites which aren't nation but rather djamaat based, for more information about ethnoparties see: Bruce Ware, Enver Kisriev, "Dagestan: Russian Hegemony and Islamic Resistance in the North Caucasus," (London, New York: M. E. Shrpe, 2010).

response, Magomedov began to forge a new highly decentralized system of ethnic balance, counting on smaller but influential groups such as Lezgins, Aghuls or Tabasarians in order to counteract the power of discontented Avars. Instead of one, two deputies of Chairman of the Supreme Soviet had to be elected and three deputies of prime minister. These were the positions reserved for representatives of smaller groups, so they could for first time reach the higher positions in the republic.

Yet Avars still felt underrepresented, especially when the conflict with Kumyks started to escalate. In October 1991 the Tenglik movement staged huge demonstrations against Avar claims on the position of deputy Chairman of the Supreme Soviet, resulting in the blockade of the vital Baku-Rostov highway and Makhachkala airport. In response the Avar movement – the Imam Shamils Front led by Gadzhi Makhachev mounted a counter-rally in Makhachkala. At one point, Makhachev and his followers stormed an assembly of parliament and gave Mogamedov an ultimatum for ending the blockade carried out by Kumyks and Akkins, or Avars would do so. In the days that followed, Magomedov managed to restore order and afterwards Avars overthrew the Kumyk leadership of the DUMD by force and appointed Said-Akhmed Darbishgadjiev, who decided to support them. Paradoxically by this last major act of interethnic violence, the ethnic balance had been restored, and nationalism has gradually faded away under a new highly decentralized system.

Soon after, a very specific model of decentralized consociational democracy was adopted in Dagestan, establishing the collective head of the republic, the so-called State council hosting delegates from each official ethnic group of Dagestan.[155] In combination with this very specific mixed electoral system, even the smallest ethnic group became represented in parliament and the Avar-Dargin-Kumyk troika was complemented by Lezgins. Under these circumstances the Djamaat based ethno-parties started to dominate the Dagestani political system. These parties didn't advocate the interests of any one particular ethnic group but rather a particular Djamaat and by doing so, they to some extent suppressed the national mobilization of the early 1990s and furthermore weakened radical nationalists.

Although also in the case of Dagestan, the transformation and weakening of state structures launched elite rivalry; unlike in Chechnya, this did not result in the seizure of power by nationalist radicals. Because of the specific ethnic geography and lack of

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[155] Robert Bruce Ware, Enver Kisriev, "Dagestan: Russian Hegemony and Islamic Resistance in the North Caucasus," 42- 87

mythicized conflict with the center, radical nationalists were divided and fought each other rather than challenging the old nomenclature or central government. Also the factor of weak state structures allowed Dagestani elites to remodel the old Soviet system of ethnic balance, and decentralize it even more. By allowing all groups to participate in governance and create a system in which none of them could monopolize too much power, which meanwhile started to be obtained from various Djamaats rather than ethnic groups, nationalism gradually began to fade. Existing system of ethnoparties and high decentralization reflected to some extent the needs of local residents and became a significant stabilizing force, allowing Dagestan to safely navigate through a turbulent period of transition.

Conclusion:

In the 1990s, Dagestan managed to avoid both the separatist conflict with central government as well as internal disintegration. In comparison with Chechnya, three important factors were not present in case of Dagestan, namely: (i) mythification of past conflicts, (ii) ethnic geography, and (iii) radical elites at the head of Dagestan. As a result of no fresh memory of mass grievances, strong identification with the Russian state developed in Dagestan during the Soviet period, when older conflicts became just material for historical publication, but no real tool of mass mobilization against the central government. In the context of difficult ethnic geography, this led newly established nationalistic elites seeking to challenge old nomenclature to mount campaigns against each other, rather than against Moscow. In Chechnya, where Chechens were dominant over Russians with no other significant majority, the general frustration could be fully oriented against Moscow, especially taking into account that by that time the memory of atrocities, carried out by central government during deportations, was still fresh. Last and probably the key issue was the fact that transformation and elite rivalry have not led to a situation in which radicals grasped official power in the republic but instead the old nomenclature, which was far more experienced and moderate, could stay in power and lead the country through the period of transition. In Chechnya the appearance of this catalysing factor was the moment which started a chain of events leading in combination with specific reaction of the center to the separatist conflict. Also the weakening state structures described in the

theoretical literature as being a factor that significantly increased the likelihood of violence to occur[156] led, in the case of Dagestan, to the creation of a highly decentralized system, specific from the rest of the Russian Federation which, however, matched the needs of Dagestani society and stabilized it in the course of continuing transition.

The last issue worth mentioning is the role of cultural and religious differences played or rather did not play in both conflicts. They have been significantly present in both Chechnya and Dagestan; however they seemed to play no significant role in the chain of factors leading to the Chechen conflict, but rather just of an ad hoc means of mobilization once the conflict started to appear. Therefore the factor cultural and religious differences may be understood as present yet inactive and it will be interesting to analyse what role has it played in case of Dagestan after 1999.

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[156] Svante Cornell, "Autonomy and Conflict, Ethnoterritoriality and Separatism in the South Caucasus – Cases in Georgia", 21- 61.

4. Dagestan after 1999: When the State Gets a Bill for Blood

Before approaching to the analysis itself, the role of factors of will and factors of capacity has to be briefly mentioned. In this chapter, I will not analyse each and every factor again, but rather try to focus on changes of FoS which appeared at the end of the 90s. Let it just be reminded that factors of will identified as present in Dagestan in the 90s were: factor of cultural and religious differences, economic factors of both relative deprivation and disadvantaged ethnic group(s) in disadvantaged region as well as emerging anomie. As for factors of capacity, the rough terrain and access to weapons have been identified as present in Dagestan, both of them persisting without change till these days. The main goal of this chapter will be to examine whether the rise of insurgency in Dagestan was caused by deepening of the above mentioned factors and if so, if it was just a belated outcome of transition or a set of other factors appearing after 1999 can be identified. If so, the question stands, whether they were a result of external activities or had local roots.

4.1 From the Transition to the Transformation and Back?

Since the factor of transformation has been identified as the crucial one, standing at the beginning of a vicious chain which led to a significant destabilization of both Chechnya and Dagestan[157], it should be examined deeper before we assess the role it played later in the 90s.

It has been shown earlier in this study that the process of transformation (a result of unsuccessful transition of Gorbechev's era) played a significant role as a factor which weakened state structures, led to the rise in elite competition, decentralization of Russian Federation and, in combination with specific catalysing factors, to successful

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[157] Although as a result of different set of catalysing factors Dagestan maintained its fragile stability, the fact remains that the factor of transition has created a set of serious problems Dagestan has to face till these days, and at some points following the 1991 coup attempt in Moscow, the republic was on the brink of collapse, author.

ethnic separatism in Chechnya. At this point it should be reminded that the aim of this study is not to analyse whether Russia as a "hybrid system" presents a transformed state today or the process of its transition still continues. In terms of FoS we operated with phenomenon of transformation rather than transition. The process of transformation as FoS appears in August 1991 after the unsuccessful coup of conservative forces and the collapse of the Soviet Union. This factor terminated after the constitutional crisis of 1993, when the elite struggle in the Kremlin ended with Yeltsin's victory and a new constitution was adopted. At this point, the process of sharp and destabilizing transformation once again altered into a smooth transition.

Yet even now, the factor of weakened state structures still persists in the Russian Federation and manifests itself by inability of the center to regain control over the de facto independent Chechen Republic, as well as by its weak control over many other regions. However, when the instability caused by transformation passed, the factor of weak structures was kept alive mostly by the unenviable state of the Russian economy. In this period, the Russian state had to face a general lack of funds, which disabled not only the desperately needed reform of Russian army shattered and demoralized in the course of The First Chechen War, but even the regular payment of pensions and wages to state employees. This all started to change around 1999, when Vladimir Putin became the head of the Russian Federation. Not only was he younger and much more active than the exhausted and to some extent broken Yeltsin; what was even more crucial was the rise in global prices of Oil that happened in the same period. The influx of money into the federal budget allowed the Kremlin to push on policy of strengthening the state structures. As a result, the factor of weak state structures started to disappear around 1999. One could expect that the absence of the factor which paralyzed Russian central government, prevented it from applying its full sovereignty over autonomous regions and significantly helped Chechen separatism to prevail back in the early 90s, will have a stabilizing influence on the Russian state and its ethnic autonomies such as Dagestan. Raised capacity of the state structures allowed Moscow to pacify Chechnya by crude force and re-centralize the federation, yet at the same time Dagestan started to change. On the following pages I will try to analyse, whether there is causality in correlation between reinforcement of state structures of the Russian Federation and deterioration of situation in Dagestan. This could help us answer the question, whether this destabilization of the biggest North-Caucasian ethnic autonomy is of post-transformation character. If so, the Russian government could be facing a "new wave"

of separatism in the Northern Caucasus, unrelated to the collapse of Soviet Union; but more importantly, it could be facing a paradoxical situation of the separatism on its territory having been caused by unlucky policies (adopted in the region) which resulted from the process of its actual inner stabilization and strengthening.

4.2 The Picture of a Different Dagestan

In the previous chapter, while analysing Dagestan in the 90s, we could follow the story of successful transition in extremely unstable period in rather a vulnerable region. However, the story of success was not meant to last long and around 1999 the Republic turned on the path of sharp destabilization with situation deteriorating on a yearly basis. However, the reaction of the Kremlin on the new development in Northern Caucasus following The Second Chechen War was fast and determined, creating bleak years full of explosions, kidnappings, murders of state and religious officials and rise of insurgents in the mountainous areas.

It is a fact, that at the time when President Dmitry Medvedev marked the end of a decade-long war against terrorism in 2009, this phenomenon continued to rise around Russian regions and in Dagestan especially. As a consequence of terrorist attacks, 92 people died and 332 were injured in the Russian Federation in the same year, increasing the number of victims by 60 percent, comparing to the year 2009.[158] In the next year this trend culminated by 151 dead and 656 wounded.[159] The trend is that in recent years, there has been a relative decline in the rate of violence in Chechnya and Ingushetia. According to the 2010 results, the amount of attacks carried out by insurgents in these areas has decreased to 37 in Chechnya and 54 in Ingushetya percent compared to the previous year, but at the same time, there has been a 63 percent increase in violence associated with rebels in Dagestan.[160] The overall stabilization of the region, which the Kremlin expected in connection with the pacification of Chechnya, recentralization and

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[158]„Ugroza terrorizma v Rossii sokhranaetsya (The terrorist threat in Russia persists)", *www.rosbalt.ru*, http://www.rosbalt.ru/style/2010/02/21/714695.html (February 21, 2010), (accessed March 29. 2013).
[159]„Genprokuror predlozhil zashishatsya ot terraktov samim' (Attorney general advises civilians to protect themselves from terrorism) ", *www.bbc.co.uk*, http://www.bbc.co.uk/russian/russia/2011/04/110427_chaika_speech_terror.shtml, (accessed March 29. 2013).
[160]„Vojna ma Severnom Kavkaze smeščaetsja v Dagestan i KBD), (War in the North Caucasus spreads to Dagestan and KBD)" *www.kavkaz-uzel.ru*, http://adjaria.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/182170/, (accessed March 29. 2013).

the introduction of pre-emptive strikes against both real and potential radicals in other republics of the Northern Caucasus did not materialize. In Dagestan, destabilization has been the most visible, thus transforming the once exemplary stable republic into the bloodiest subject of the whole Russian Federation. According to the Kavkaz-uzel "the casualties from the armed conflict in Dagestan in August 2012 show that the republic lives in a never ending cycle of anxiety: there were 103 casualties, of which 70 were killed and 33 people injured. Out of the 27 police officers targeted in the attacks, four were killed and 23 were injured, while 21 suspected rebels were killed and three were injured. Twenty-two civilians were killed and seven more were wounded as a result of militant attacks."[161]

Insurgency in Dagestan has not changed only in quantity, also its character altered significantly. The founding fathers of Chechen and Dagestani Salafi insurgency managed to establish a new generation of leaders and fighters. A new generation of Jihadists aged around 20 have replaced old cadres aged around 30-35. However, this youth is unequivocally anti-Russian, blaming the Kremlin for all the socio-economic problems paralyzing the republic already for two decades. What is even more important, the social profile of rebels has changed significantly; earlier insurgents used to be recruited from a poor youth, descending from remote rural mountainous areas. Nowadays one can find many educated youngsters with secular background from cities among the ranks of insurgents.[162] As a consequence, also the insurgent-related violence descended from mountains into the lowland and cities.

The radical worsening of the situation and the extent of discontent local dwellers feel towards both Moscow and Makhchkala (only ten years after Ware's and Kisriev's research showing huge support of the Russian Federation rather than Islamists), becomes obvious also from the fact that the center decided to stop drafts of Dagestani youth to Russian army, because of huge level of mutual mistrust.[163] Also the base of financial support to radicals started to shift from abroad to Dagestan itself. Reports

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[161] "V avguste zhertvami vooruzhennogo konflikta na Severnom Kavkaze stali 182 cheloveka (In August 182 people died as result of fighting in North Caucasus), (September 5, 2012), *www.kavkaz-uzel*, http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/212194/, (accessed March 29, 2013)."

[162] Mirabek Vatchagaev, "The Evolution of Salafism in North Caucasus," *North Caucasus Analysis* 13, Issue: 17, (August 16, 2012), (accessed March 29. 2013).

[163] Paul Golbe, "Ending of Draft in North Caucasus Threatens Moscow's Control of Russian Federation", *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 9, No. 130 (July 10, 2012), http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=39602, (Accessed: March 29, 2013)

estimate that in 2010 even the state employees and local businessmen contributed almost \$4 million to insurgents.[164]

Once again, we have to ask which factors appeared around 1999 and caused such a significant circle of destabilization in Dagestan. Was it some kind of Wahhabi invasion from abroad, making Dagestan a battlefield of global Jihad or are the roots of widespread rebellion rather of local character? On the following pages, I will first focus on the theory of foreign mujahedeen intervention generally denied by scholars, yet supported by officials in the Kremlin. Then I will move to the analysis of alternative, local FoS which could explain the rise of widespread uprising in Dagestan after 1999. This will be undertaken by analyzing the changes of factors of separatism in comparison to Dagestan of 1999. By doing this, it will be possible evaluate the role Factor of transition played in the belated destabilization of Dagestan. It will also help us answer the question, whether this "new wave of destabilization" presents a late, yet inevitable result of transition, or whether it was caused by specific policies of the center with unexpected outcomes in the context of specific North Caucasian realities.

4.3 The Issue of Islam: Dagestan as a Battlefield of Global Jihad?

In the second chapter it has been argued, that neither foreign Salafists nor Islam itself have caused The First Chechen War. However, once the war broke up, the rebellious republic became increasingly popular among mujahedeen veterans of Afghanistan, such as Black Khattab who came to Chechnya through Dagestan as late as spring 1996. Their influx has been to some extent a result of Dayton Agreement, which ended the war in Bosnia, when mujahedeen started to be pushed out from Balkan. In spite of the fact that the Chechen government led by Dudaev was looking for the support of Western countries, mujahedeen became valuated allies, having already plenty of experiences from guerrilla wars gained in Afghanistan and Bosnia. However, as Brian G. Williams argued, it does not necessarily imply close links between Chechen separatists and mujahedeen prior to 1996. Under the circumstances Chechens had to

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[164] „Situatsiya v zone konflikta na Severnom Kavkaze: otsenka pravozashchitnikov. Vesna 2011g. (Situation in the zone of conflict in North Caucasus: assessment of human rights defenders. Spring 2011)," www.kavkaz-uzel, www.kavkaz-uzel, http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/189517/#6, (accessed 14.4. 2013)

face in 1995, "Dudaev would probably accept help from Christian fundamentalists as well."[165]

In this period Chechnya was a war-torn country and became unable to offer enough resources for its inhabitants. Mujahedeens backed by capital from NGO's and charities from gulf countries such as *Al-Haramain* became increasingly popular especially among local youth. Mujahedeen in fact did not offer only religious salvation, but also material goods such as fancy cloths, weapons or even cars. These were the things many Chechen youngsters desperately desired as a means of escaping the shapeless mass of poor and unemployed. As a result, some young Chechens were enrolled into Salafi battalions soon after their arrival.

At this point one could assume that the factor of foreign intervention appeared on the North-Caucasian stage; yet in fact the direct intervention of foreign mujahedeen to Chechnya and soon after to Dagestan seems to be rather limited. Radical Salafists could surely provide training for Chechen forces and recruit local youngsters into their ranks. But although Russian officials estimated the number of foreigners in Khattabs battalion to be around 6000, the real numbers were probably much closer to 80.[166] Foreign mujahedeen can hardly be considered a factor leading to Chechen separatism, yet there still remains the question of its role in launching Dagestan's insurgency.

Links between mujahedeens in Chechnya and Dagestan existed already in the 90s. This claim is supported mostly by their activities in the above mentioned Kadar zone and Khasavyurt raion.[167] Also after The Second Chechen War it has been mountains of Dagestan where remnants of crushed mujahedeen have found their refuge. Although the radical Salafist invasion into Dagestan has been pushed back by local Dagestanis in 1999, just twelve years later the support of radical Salafists reached 12% among Dagestani youth plus 10% for moderate Salafists and only 10% for Sufi, the traditional branch of Islam. These results become much more striking once we realize that the survey has been conducted in big cities only, while traditional bastions of

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[165] "Allah's Food Soldiers, An Assessment of the Role of Foreign Fighters and Al-Qua`ida in the Chechen insurgency," In: *Ethno- Nationalism, Islam and the State in the Caucasus, Post- Soviet Disorer,* ed. Moshe Gammer et al. (New York: Routledge, 2008),165

[166] Ibid. 161

[167] There was an official alliance signed in autumn 1999 between Islamic Djamaat of Dagestan (so called Kadar zone) and radical Islamists and mujahedeen in Chechnya, author.

radicals are to be found rather in mountainous areas, implying that real support for radical Salafists has to be much higher.[168]

Since the end of The First Chechen war, the Russian government advocated the theses of North Caucasuian insurgency as a result of "international" Wahhabi intervention, with significant numbers of foreigners among the ranks of insurgents. By doing this, Moscow tried to deny any claims that the roots of insurgency were of local character. Although in the late 90s general sympathies of the Western countries were rather on the side of insurgents than Moscow, the situation started to change soon after 11/11/2001. In the period following the terrorist attacks on WTC, the Kremlin managed to push a view that both Russia and USA are fighting the same enemy, namely a huge international terrorist organization creating havoc all over the world from Afghanistan through the Northern Caucasus to American cities.[169] Soon all the acts of violence all around the Northern Caucasus (either caused by nationalist militants or mere results of widespread lawlessness and criminality) started to be ascribed to international terrorists. Yet not just battalions of Al-Qaeda warriors were supposed to fight in the mountains of Caucasus, soon a new image started to appear in the media; the image of Caucasians fighting in ranks of Al-Qaeda against coalition troops in Afghanistan and Iraq. Although these claims have been denied by analyses of many authors such as Brian Glynn Williams,[170] the image of Caucasian insurgency as a part of the worldwide terrorist conspiracy persists to some extent till these days, ignoring the fact that all killed insurgents are almost without exception of local Caucasian origin, with even some cases of Slavic converts[171] but merely any foreign mujahedeen. This reality has already been indirectly admitted by local authorities, namely by establishing a special commission for reintegrating rebels back into civilian society. Adaptation commission led by Abbas Kegedev, a huge authority among moderate Salafists and brother of Bagautdin Kebedev, an infamous leader of radicals, was solely aimed at local population

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[168] Valery Dzutsev, „Support for Salafists among Dagestani Youth Reaches Record Level", *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 8, No. 227 (December 14, 2011), http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=38780, (Accessed: March 16, 2013).

[169] Emil Souleimanov, „Internacionalizace Čečenského Konfliktu a Islamistický Komponent" (Internationalization of Chechen Conflict and its Islamic Component), in: Emil Souleimanov eds. *Politický Islám (Political Islam)*, (Prague: Eurolex Bohemia, 2007), 206.

[170] Brian Glynn Willians, „Shattering the Al-Qaeda-Chechen Myth", *Chechnya Weekly* 4, Vol. 40 (November 6, 2003) http://www.brianglynwilliams.com/shattered_ll.pdf, (accessed march 16, 2013).

[171] In fact, an increasing number of people of Slavic origin have engaged in terror attacks in recent years, for more information see: Mirabek Vatchagaev Is the North Caucasus Rebel Movement Spreading Beyond the North Caucasus?, *North Caucasus Analysis* 12, Issue: 16 (August 4, 2011), (accessed March 30, 2013).

acknowledging that the core of mujahedeen originates in Caucasus rather than other Moslem regions.[172]

In fact, there is hardly any strong evidence supporting the claim that the Factor of foreign intervention (of Mujahedeens from Moslem countries) is the main reason for Dagestani insurgency. In Dagestan, a significant army of foreign insurgents fighting holy jihad is very unlikely to be found. However, one can find here battalions of well-armed local Dagestani men willing to fight the central government. Similarly to the Chechen case, the factor of foreign intervention is clearly absent in case of Dagestan after 1999; but it has occurred in a limited scope. The dact that pioneers of radical Salafism in Dagestan were of foreign origin and veteran mujahedeen from abroad helped to train local volunteers should not be overlooked; yet their preaching would go to waste had it not been for the fertile soil in Dagestan, which allowed the radicalism to grow. It is worth mentioning, that Salafism has been brought to Dagestan not just by foreigners but also by local dwellers who went studying abroad after the collapse of the USSR.

At this point a question arises: if Dagestanis themselves repelled the onslaught of radical Salafists from Chechnya back in 1999 and if there was no massive intervention of foreign mujahedeens into the republic, why did the situation in Dagestan deteriorate so much in the last decade? And even more, why are many Dagestanis who fought radical Salafists in 1999 now fighting the central government in their ranks?

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[172] Mirabek Vatchagaev, "Sufis and Salafists Temporarily Unite in Dagestan," *North Caucasus Analysis* 13 Issue: 10 (May 18, 2012), (accessed March 30, 2013).

4.4 From Stabilization to Re-centralization: Anomie Deeper than Ever Before?

"They (young people) do not listen to parents anymore. I think that young people below thirty will become totally wild, because they do not know the old ways, and have not seen the new ones. I recon, that tension will grow."[173]

End of Mountainous Horizontality:

Anomie, as a state of social instability in the society or on the individual level, caused by the erosion of traditional values and standards of behavior as well as the absence of goals and ideals in one's life[174], became one of the most pressing problems the North Caucasus including Dagestan has to face. The economic situation in Dagestan and its influence on goals and ideals of local youth have been introduced earlier in the text (describing the 90s), yet the phenomenon of erosion of traditional values and respect to state institutions has to be analysed as well, so we could get a deeper understanding of the roots and the scope of anomie in Dagestan, as well as its influence on the rising insurgency.

The formation of anomic environment in Dagestan is also linked to the criminalization of society, limited efficiency of state institutions as well as a decreasing respect towards them among the locals. In recent years, the general trust of population towards state institutions has hit the rock bottom. This reality is indicated by an extremely low participation of Dagestani population in both local and nationwide elections. Due to the official proclamation of the government the participation of registered voters in Dagestan reaches nearly 100%. However, based on the testimonies of local observers and ordinary citizens, the real picture is a bit different. For example, Islamagomed Nabiev, the Chairman of the Independent Union Dagestan of Entrepreneurs and Drivers, witnessed that voter turnout was extremely low in Makhachkala during the parliament elections in 2011. He spent the regional parliament

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[173] Respondent from the North Caucasus about the current state of youngsters in the region, for more information see: *North Caucasus: Views from within, Peoples perspectives on peace and conflict*, Safeworld's report, March 2012, http://www.saferworld.org.uk/downloads/pubdocs/North%20Caucasus%20PPP%20English%20revised.pdf, (accessed April 9, 2013). 38.

[174] "Anomie", Encyclopaedia Britannica, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/26587/anomie, (accessed March 16 2013).

election day in one of the polling stations, Nabiev counted only 131 voters, representing 6.6% of the registered voters in the district.[175]

A similar scenario repeated during the last year's presidential elections, where also another pattern appeared; namely a huge official support to the ruling garniture. In terms of electoral frauds and pre-election pressure on both media and employees of state companies, Russian elections have traditionally been the subject of considerable doubt on the part of western observers. However, in this respect Dagestan stands out to such extent that it no longer meets even the low criteria of "illiberal democracy".[176] Although electoral offences were (to some extent) reported on the whole territory of the Russian Federation, in Dagestan the winning percentages achieved by Vladimir Putin reached an irrational value of 93.22% of votes. After Chechnya, Dagestan became the region in which Putin celebrated the most crushing victory.[177]

Such an extreme electoral success of Vladimir Putin in the territory, which started to deteriorate in the period of his first tenure, raises questions especially in contrast to the electoral results in other regions all over the Russian Federation. And indeed, shortly after the election, Russian media were flooded by testimonies of local residents who witnessed a pressure leading up to statistical increase of participation in elections. Civil servants and employees[178] of state enterprises were often threatened by their supervisors in a sense that they should go to the polls (to improve the picture of empty voting rooms all over Dagestan) because their participation in the elections was to be controlled back on the workplace. They also often got a friendly recommendation to vote for Mr. Putin.[179]

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[175] Valerij Dzutsev, „Voters' Low Interest in Elections Casts Doubt on Their Legitimacy", North Caucasus Analysis 12, no. 6 (March 16, 2011), http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=37653&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=514, (Accessed: March. 7. 2013).

[176] Illiberal democracy as a concept has been defined by Fareed Zakariaom in his article "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy." It is a system in which the elections are held regularly and are often relatively free. However, there are other important aspects of liberal democracy such as free and independent media. Basically, these are the states, where the Constitution formally fulfills the liberal democratic criteria, but their practical application is significantly limited. For more information: Fareed Zakaria, The Rise of Illiberal Democracy, Foreign Affairs 76, no. 6, (Nov. 1997): 22 – 43.

[177] Valery Dzutsev, „Putin Faces Mounting Challenges in the North Caucasus Following Election Win", *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 9, no. 47., http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=39105&cHash=12f9f5f313fc9f41fe74b7889e4015bb, (accessed April 8, 2012) (accessed April 8, 2012)

[178] As has been mentioned above, the process of privatization has never been fully finished in Dagestan and therefore a huge amount of local dwellers works in state companies, author.

[179] Akhmed Magomedov, "Residents of Makhachkala report about pressure with the aim to increase the turnout at presidential Russian elections" (2.3. 2012), *www.kavkaz-uzel.ru*, http://www.eng.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/20288/, (accessed April 4, 2013)

All over Dagestan, cases of multiple voters have also been reported. These "professional voters" are Dagestan residents who managed to vote in many different districts under different names, thus multiplying the weight of their vote several times. Due to testimonies, they often seemed to be organized and were transported in cars to various districts.[180] Frequent duplication of voters' names has been probably avoided by the extremely low interest of local dwellers to participate in the elections. Unlike many other regions in Russia, Dagestani elites did not solely rely on sophisticated methods of fraud. Soon after the elections, a video from a web-camera shooting the course of the popular vote in Tarumovskij rayon of Dagestan leaked to the internet. On the tape appeared a picture of massive filling of the ballot boxes soon after the election. Under the weight of evidence, the court had no other option than to admit a large scale election fraud in Tarumovskij rayon and has nullified its results.[181]

In Dagestan, the ruling elite basically exploit the widespread anomie and apathy of local residents towards any elections and sell their votes to the ruling garniture in the Kremlin. At this point, two questions arise. Namely: is there any link between this phenomenon and the rise of anomie among local Dagestanis? Why is it that local dwellers do not see the point in going to the polls anymore, and let the ruling elite trade with their votes in exchange for the Kremlin's support?

As has been already mentioned, a very specific system of consociational democracy was created in Dagestan in the early 90s. Not only did this system allow more fair power distribution among smaller nationalities and included a system of checks and balances; but as Ware and Kisriev argue, its key characteristic and stabilizing trait was that this system, having its powerbase in particular Djamaats, allowed the existence of "mountainious horizontality", which is supposed to have a stabilizing influence on Dagestan as an autonomous unit of a bigger state, unlike the violent application of "lowland verticality" alien to the local traditions.[182]

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[180]Akhmed Magomedov, "Residents of Makhachkala report about pressure with the aim to increase the turnout at presidential Russian elections" (2.3. 2012), *www.kavkaz-uzel.ru*, http://www.eng.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/20288/, (accessed April 4, 2013)

[181] "Istochnik: rezultety na uchastke v Dagestane, gde pod veb-kamerami provodilis vbrosi budut otmeneny, (Source: Results in the district, where web-cameras captured pictures of voting fraud will be cancelled)," Gazeta.ru (4.3. 2012), http://www.gazeta.ru/news/lenta/2012/03/04/n_2228469.shtml, (accessed April 4, 2013).

[182] For a detailed information on Dagestan's political system in 1990 see: Robert B. Ware, Enver Kisriev, "Ethnic Parity and Democratic Pluralism in Dagestan: A Consociational Approach," *Europe- Asia Studies* 53, No 1. (Jan., 2001) 105- 131, jstore.org, (accessed Aril 13, 2013).

In practice, this system has led to a significant vote buying not only of individuals but of the whole Djamaats. However, in return these Djamaats obtained economic benefits and material investments from the politicians they backed on the elections. Especially in rural areas, being the most affected by the economic deprivation, such deals could (to some extent) damp its omnipresent consequences. The support of this system among local residents is well illustrated by the fact that all Magomedov's attempts to create the post of President of Dagestan were brushed aside by referendums.

At this point, it is good to mention that adoption of this specific horizontal model unique for the Russian Federation was allowed by the general decentralization of Russian state under Boris Yeltsin. We have to realize that this process of releasing Moscow's grip over regions was not just a result of Yeltsin's dalliance with ideas of liberalism in the early 90s, but rather a result of factors of transformation and especially of the following factor of weakening of state structures. It is a fact that the Dagestan Constitution probably contradicted the federal constitution in some of its aspects, yet this reality was effectively ignored by the weakened center in the course of the 90s.

Significant changes to the existing system were launched shortly after the onset of Vladimir Putin. They were related to general centralizing tendencies of the new president enabled by strengthening state structures, following the global rise in oil prices and general inner consolidation of the Russian state. The Dagestan Constitution and laws were very specific in their core, but due to the new policies they had to be altered so they would align with the federal constitution. Soon after, the State council was abolished to be replaced by the post of Dagestani President. Under these circumstances, the executive power was accumulated into the hands of one person (person of specific ethnic origin), appointed by the president of the Russian Federation, instead of being elected by peoples of Dagestan.[183] Also the local proposal on bicameral parliament of 121 representatives was rejected by the center; instead, the unicameral parliament of only 71 representatives has been created, thus limiting fair and proportional representation of all ethnic groups.[184]

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[183] In 2012, president Medvedev has announced that the heads of federal subjects should be elected by popular vote once again. However, in Ingushetia and Dagestan the local elites have already forged a deal that the president will be elected by parliament because of the instable situation in both republics. In general, the possible impact of this change will be analysed later, author.

[184] *Zakon respubliki Dagestan ot 01. 11. 2006 n. 50 o vyborakh deputatov narodnogo sobraniya respubliki Dagestan (prinyat narodnymcobranem RD 26. 10. 2006)* (Law of the Republic of Dagestan

However, the change of the electoral system, which broke the link between Djamaats and political processes in Dagestan and eliminated local ethno-parties, seems to be one of the most destabilizing ones. This has been accomplished especially by "the law on political parties"[185] from 2001 on the basis of which political parties have to be newly represented in at least half of the subjects of the Russian Federation. This step virtually destroyed the local Dagestani ethno-parties representing the interests of particular ethnic groups and Djamaats. New political parties became much more dependent on the center than local communities and are unable to deliver on particular local needs as ethno-parties did. These changes ultimately led to the spread of deprivation of the local population and especially the accumulation of power in the hands of a small number of families representing a minimal number of Djamaats. Under these conditions, the general apathy of local residents towards political issues developed in the course of the early 21st century.[186] This apathy, which manifests itself also in general reluctance of locals towards popular votes, is capitalized by the local Dagestani elites being allowed massive electoral frauds. As Ware and Kisriev argue, the old system had many disadvantages as well; it was corrupted, it fragmented Dagestani society to such an extent that some pressing problems such as economic stagnation and organized crime were difficult to tackle, yet on the other hand it neutralized nationalism, prevented the centralization of power in the hands of a narrow circle of clans and foremost it provided democratic pluralism in which local population had a reason to participate in political life in the republic and which they could to some extent influence.[187]

As a result of the recentralization, this imperfect yet very specific and stable system of inter-ethnic and inter-djamaat balance has been replaced by a system which opened wide the Pandora's box of inter-djamaat and clan rivalry, causing a radical increase of corruption and opening of social scissors. Local dwellers did not just lose their influence on political affairs, they also lost a significant amount of material subsidies ethno-parties could provide them in exchange for their support, thus strengthening the overall impact of the economic deprivation. Once the power was

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from 11.01 2006 on election of members of the National Assembly of the Republic of Dagestan), http://lawru.info/legal2/se2/pravo2433/index.htm, (accessed: March 22., 2013).

[185] *Federalnyy zákon o politicheskikh partiyakh, statya 3/1*, (Federal law on political parties, chapter:3 paragraph 1.), http://base.consultant.ru/cons/cgi/online.cgi?req=doc;base=LAW;n=133799, (accessed: March 22., 2013).

[186] Robert Bruce Ware, Enver Kisriev, *Dagestan: Russian Hegemony and Islamic Resistance in the North Caucasu,s 184- 185.

maintained from the above, there was no need for popular support of ruling elites anymore.[188] The close link between local elites and the Kremlin is not characteristic only by the constantly growing subsidies for Dagestan from which local elites syphon their share, but also by a significant number of representatives of the North Caucasian elites on the candidate list of United Russia to the state of Duma. The North Caucasus makes up five percent of population of the Russian Federation, while they make up over 7% of United Russia party electoral list.[189] Under these circumstances, especially young people (not just) all around Dagestan became fed up with the corrupted state institutions controlled by a closed circle of a dozen of clans, often hindering them in their social advancement. At this point, we can identify another source of popular discontent and anomie, namely the disrespect to official institutions (beside the persisting economic deprivation).

The situation, in which the factor of anomie became much stronger in the case of Dagestan, was indirectly caused by the retreat of the Factor of weak state structures and the government's reaction on this new reality. Inner consolidation and strengthening have led the Kremlin to abolish the policy of a weak federation, caused by its weakness in the 90s, and led it to adopt the policy of recentralization. This, however, caused the destruction of the specific political system of Dagestan and led to the above mentioned vicious circle where general apathy of local population allows a narrow ring of ruling clans to trade with their votes and siphon subsidies from the center. The people's apathetic stance towards popular votes thus increases even more and results in a rising disrespect towards official institutions, which strengthens anomie of some segments of population. Yet the bleak economic situation of majority of Dagestani families and loss of respect toward political institutions are not the only sources of anomie and discontent raising their will to rebel; also the traditional religion and values became the target of a rising criticism of especially the younger segment of local population.[190] Kazikhan

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[187] Ibid., 203- 217.
[188] Ibid., 203- 217.
[189] Valery Dzutsev, Divergent Election Results Between North Caucasus and Rest of Russia May Spark Russian Nationalist Backlash, *North Caucasus Analysis* 12, No. 19, (September 28, 2011), http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[swords]=8fd5893941d69d0be3f378576261ae 3e&tx_ttnews[any_of_the_words]=emirate&tx_ttnews[pointer]=7&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=38456&tx_ttnew s[backPid]=7&cHash=1382237c4c943d716f9b0dc49c3cbb93, (accessed: April 14, 2013).
[190] Dagestanis started to express their discontent with the corrupted government also by civil forms of protest such as on 3 October 2011, when approximately 500 people joined the rally against corruption in the streets of Makhachkala, for more info see: Valery Dzutsev, "Dagestan Dubbed the Most Dangerous Place in the North Caucasus," *North Caucasus Analysis* 12, No. 19,

Kurbanov, the deputy head of the Tabasaran District Anti-corruption Committee, articulated feelings of many ordinary Dagestanis when saying: "We have shown that people do not go to the forests [i.e. join the insurgents] for nothing. They go there because they do not see any other way for themselves. The government does not want to talk to the people; it does not care about the people. People are tired of this lawlessness. To win a victory over terrorism, we first need to win a victory over corruption."[191]

Erosion of traditional religion, values and inter-generation conflict:

The problem of the traditional Sufi Church lies to some extent in its Soviet past when many of its leaders actively cooperated with the atheist regime.[192] However, this unwelcomed heritage of the Sufi Church itself cannot fully explain rapid decline of its support among the Dagestani youth. Otherwise we could observe exactly the same development all over the Russian Federation. This phenomenon is rather linked to the official strategy for Sufism in the North Caucasus adopted by the Kremlin after September 1999, when the law prohibiting "wahhabism" was adopted in Dagestan. This legislature was based on an *a priori* ban of Salafism in general, no matter if moderate or radical, and opened wide the door for unprecedented harassment of religiously practicing youth. Targets of this often brutal mobbing are chosen only because of their longer beards without any deeper inquiry of their links to the radicals. This was the case of an inhabitant of the city of Derbent, Zaur Agamuradov, who told the Kavkazsky Uzel website that he had been taken to the Derbent police department and told by its chief, Arif Magomedov, that he had to shave off his beard. According to Agamuradov, Magomedov told him "that they have a government directive to shave all Muslims." Agamuradov added: "Magomedov notified me that I only had one day, otherwise the police would forcibly shave me." Agamuradov told the website he had worn a beard for religious reasons for a long time and would not shave it.[193] Similar practices are well

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http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=38492&cHash=3180f8c07d15ec1e 93e3e2ba9a8e4840, (accessed: April 14, 2013).

[191] Valery Dzutsev, "Peaceful Dissent Grows in Dagestan in Opposition to Government Corruption," *North Caucasus Analysis* 12, No. 20 (October 12, 2011), http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=38514, (accessed April 14, 2013).

[192] However, this is far from being just a case of Islam, this phenomenon was also typical for other religions in the post-Soviet space, author.

[193] "Insurgency-related Incidents Reported in Dagestan and Chechnya," *North Caucasus Analysis* 12, No.21 (October 28, 2011), http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=38973, (accessed: April 14, 2013).

known among Dagestanis and lead to the rise of compassion with the harassed religious youth. The centralization of religion in Dagestan after 1999 was also linked to the promotion of Sufism as the official religion which is expected in exchange for federal support to back all the steps the central government takes. Yet the close alliance between the central government and Sufi clerics seems to be mutually beneficial. The Kremlin did not support just the ban on Wahhabism (prohibiting both armed radicals and moderate Salafists) but it systematically helps oppressing any possible competition Sufi clergy faces. In 2010, Alexander Kholopin[194] declared the creation of Islamic learning centers in Dagestan, which were supposed to be strictly under the government's control, thus avoiding any alternative studies of Islam than the Sufi version approved by the central government. Many obstacles have been also raised by the state for Dagestani youth willing to study religion abroad as a reaction on alternative religious cadres educated outside of the reach of Sufi clergy.[195]

This has led to the situation, when the traditional Sufi Islam starts to be closely connected with the very unpopular regime in the eyes of many ordinary Dagestanis. Local imams often lack respect in their communities because of their links to unpopular official authorities. Therefore, the traditional authorities of the Sufi church, which shaped the spiritual character of Northern Caucasus for centuries, are now being increasingly perceived as an extended hand of Moscow and corrupted Makhachkala. This fact led to a situation when especially youngsters start to lose respect for traditional values of Sufi Islam and *adat*, thus becoming more vulnerable to anomie. Under these circumstances the "Salafi choice", although distant to local traditions, becomes a welcomed alternative to corrupted Sufism for some of the anomic youngsters looking for spirituality and salvation. Since Sufism is not just a religion, but it is closely connected to local pre-Islamic traditions and *adat*, the erosion of traditional religion, caused by its subjection to the governmen,t then goes hand in hand with a reluctance towards traditional values among youngsters sympathetic to Salafism and materializes itself in a rise of an inter-generational conflict.

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[194] Alexander Kholoin is the envoy of the Russian Federation president to the in 2010 newly created North Caucasian Federal District.

[195] Valery Dzutsev, „Lost Between Words and Deeds: Dagestan's Government Fails to Influence Rebel Surrender", *North Caucasus Analysis* 12, No. 1 (February ^% 2011), http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=37320&tx_ttnews%5Bback Pid%5D=514, (accessed March 16 2013).

In recent years, Salafism – no matter if moderate or radical – attracts especially young people who have finished or at least began studying at university and became dissatisfied with their bleak life perspectives in the corrupted and economically devastated republic. The older generation, on the other hand, over the years managed to build some social and material status and therefore became less affected by anomie and less attracted by radicalism. As a result, an inter-generation conflict rises in many families all over the republic. An illustrative case took place in August 2010. The local chief investigative group of the Ministry of Interior Chulataev Yunus was murdered by his 18-year-old son Gadjimurad. It turned out that the reason for the murder was the shame Gaddjimurad felt among his peers and friends about the fact that his father served in the hatred militia.[196] This extreme case, but not a unique one, is an example of the extent to which the anomie radicalized social relationships in Dagestan.

One could find more reasons for the law prohibiting "wahhabism" in Dagestan after 1999. A significant role seems to have been played by Chechen radical Salafists invading Dagestan and proclaiming it Islamic republic. They showed the central government the scope of possible threat Islamic radicals presented, taking into account the fact that there already was one Islamic zone in Dagestan at that time. On the other hand, Dagestanis themselves repelled the onslaught of Islamists, and the data collected at that time in Dagestan by Ware and Kisriev also illustrate how limited the support of radical Salafists was in Dagestan in the late 90s. From this point of view the harsh reaction of the government, characteristic by a prohibition of any form of Salafism, accompanied by a large scale a priori persecution of youngsters who are only suspected from sympathizing with other forms of Islam than with the state promoted Sufism, seems to be overreacted. To some extent, this harsh policy has been fuelled also by a regained self-esteem of the federal centre, following the strengthening of state structures and inner stabilization of the Russian Federation. Nevertheless, this policy resulted into a wave of disrespect towards the traditional religion especially among the younger generation in Dagestan, causing the rise of both inter-generational conflicts and anomie.

As it has been shown earlier, the emergence of discontent and anomie in the Dagestani society in the 90s has been caused mainly by the worsening socio-economic

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[196] Alexandr Artemev, Alena Pustovalova, eds. „V Dagestane les spustilsya s gor, (In Dagestan Forest Spreads into Plains) ", Gazeta.ru (April 13. 2011
http://www.gazeta.ru/politics/2011/04/13_a_3583421.shtml , (accessed 23. 4. 2013)

situation and deepening of social differences of the republic, following the process (factor) of transformation. Yet paradoxically, as the transformation changed from transformation to transition and Russian state structures started to strengthen, the anomie in Dagestan deepened, despite increased financial subsidies showered over the republic by the central government. The centralization of the Russian Federation led to a significant alteration of the specific decentralized and horizontal political system of Dagestan, thus diminishing ethno-parties and significantly tightening the circle of clans participating in the power. Under these circumstances, taking into account factor the clan rivalry in Dagestan, huge subsidies from Moscow have not been divided among all the segments of Dagestani population, but rather syphoned by few dominant clans, deepening the social differences in the republic even more. At the same time, this step has resulted into a rising disgust towards politics and popular votes, followed by erosion of respect towards official institutions and rise of discontent among Dagestanis.

Another source of anomie and general discontent is linked to the tightening of the Kremlin's grip over Dagestan's religion, following the 1999 ban on wahhabism. This resulted in an official collaboration between the Sufi clergy and the Kremlin, as well as the harassment of followers of other Islam branches, be they radical or moderate. The policy of centralization of the government's control over religion in Dagestan mirrors the rise of disrespect towards both Sufism and local traditions, causing the rise of discontent and anomie, as well as serious inter-generation conflicts. The rise of anomie can also explain why still more and more educated people with good material background volunteer to join the ranks of insurgents. These people are not joining them because they are poor and cannot find any job, but because they became disgusted by the existing "order" and values to such an extent that they have no other choice than to seek alternative values and order radical Salafists are seemingly offering to them.

This chapter presented evidence supporting the argument that the deepening of anomie and the rise of general discontent, which results in a strengthened position of Islamic insurgents, is caused, to some extent, by Moscow's recentralizing attempts. They are a result of disappearance of factors of transformation and weakening state structures in combination with persisting socio-economic problems of Dagestan.

4.5 Repressive Policy in Dagestan: When the State Drowns in a Vicious Circle of Blood Feud

"If the officials want war on the long-suffering soil of Dagestan, they should tell us about this openly. If not, they must react to the disregard for the law and arbitrariness on the part of law enforcement officers in a tough and principled manner"[197]

In the early morning of 28 August 1999, the Kadar village residents woke up at the thunderous sound of the Grad systems and firing of dozens of machine guns. This day, which followed the unsuccessful invasion of Chechen Islamists to Dagestan with which the Independet Islamic territory of Dagestan (Kadar zone) was allied, the security forces of the Russian Federation mounted a campaign to destroy this radical Salafic enclave in the heart of Dagestan. After a few days, when the fighting ended, the razed villages of Kadar zone lied in ruins and radical Salafists had to go in hiding. Yet what seemed to be a successful operation, intended to cut out the sprout of radicalism in this territory, marked a new era of pre-emptive repressive policy of the Kremlin all over the territory of Dagestan and the era of critical worsening of the security situation and rise of Islamic insurgency. However, because correlation is not always causality, on the following pages I will analyse the impact of the Factor of Repressive Policy on the security situation in Dagestan after 1999.

As it has been shown, the destabilization of Dagestan is a result of more factors influencing each other. The factor of economic depression is a heritage of transition of the early 90s and in combination with the factor of clan rivalry it leads to an unbalanced social stratification and a sharp rise of social differences. This situation was worsened even more when the factor of weak state structures started to disappear and the process of recentralization was launched all over the Russian Federation, destroying the natural decentralized and horizontal political system of Dagestan and effectively discrediting the Sufi clergy. As a result, a general wave of discontent started to spread over Dagestan, strengthening anomie of some segments of its population. At that moment,

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[197] The official statement from the organizers of the rally against violence of federal security services in November 2011, for more info see: "V Makhachkale uchastniki mitinga potrebovali ot glav Rossii I Dagestana prekratit "proizvol silovikov v regione (In Makhachkala, the protesters demanded the heads of Russia and Dagestan to stop the arbitrariness of the siloviki in the region)," *kavkaz-uzel.ru*, (November 22, 2011), http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/196237, (accessed April 15, 2013).

the Russian state enters with its security strategy to break the spiral of continuous destabilization. Here, once again, a similar pattern as in the case of Chechnya appears, namely the absence of the Soft power on the side of the Russian state which is substituted by a crude force. The usual reaction of the Kremlin to (often just a potential) threat of Salafi resistance is the further centralization and implementation of a "tough regime", which in practice means strengthening of the coercive means at the expense of individual freedoms of local residents.[198] In combination with the general lawlessness and venal security forces in Dagestan, instead of pacifying the insurgence the above mentioned policy misfired. The problem is that over the years some employees of Dagestani security forces have found a way how to earn some "pocket money" by capitalizing on the pre-emptive repressive policy. Fabricating the evidence of links to insurgents and following arrests of usually innocent people are accompanied by letters to their families asking for a bail (ransom) for their beloved ones. These arrests often resemble abduction, when the family of the "arrested" has no idea what happened to their family member for a couple of weeks. Those are often tortured and humiliated by the security forces and there is ample evidence supporting the claim that people are being arrested under similar circumstances all over Dagestan. However, the terror of state security forces may have a much more massive and organized form than just individual kidnappings.

Zachistka, the term referring to a pre-emptive special operation of Russian security forces, became a symbol of the post-1999 policy of the central government towards Dagestan. Similar special operations usually take place in the early morning without any earlier warning to the authorities of the settlement which is subjected to *zachistka*. The village is then surrounded by security forces and local residents are woke up by firing from machine guns, houses are stormed, furniture destroyed and some of the locals kidnapped either for ransom or to reach a statistical increase in the number of killed "militants". Such a special operation may last for days and effectively paralyze the whole life in the subjected settlement. As the report of Memorial states: "The excessive application of force during special operations, kidnappings, the killing of suspected rebels during special operations rather than arresting them and putting them

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[198] Nabi Abdullaev, Simon Saradzhyan, „The Trade- offs between Securitys and Civil Liberties in Russia's War on Terror: The Regional Dimension", *Demokratizatsiya* (Summer, 2006), 361- 386.

on a trial, are still widely practiced, adding that many of those killed, including innocent people, are posthumously identified as rebels."[199]

An illustrative case of a brutal pre-emptive *zachistka* took place in the Avar village of Gimry in April 2013. Due to testimonies, villagers were woken up by firing at 8:00 AM on April 11. By 14:11 AM the village was encircled and attacked by a large amount of masked security officials who stormed houses, shouted there and smashed equipment. As a result, five elderly residents died of a heart attack caused by the unexpected visitors. In the second phase of an operation launched on April 14, all residents, no matter how old, were pulled out from their houses and made to leave Gimry without food or warm clothes. Due to a local resident, Hadizhat Rasulova, in the course of this operation the security forces started to slaughter the animals and cut or burn the fruit trees which often serve as the most important food resource for the locals.[200] As we can see, the only result of the special operations is often a terror cast on ordinary citizens rather than actual systematic uprooting of insurgents.

This is also the point where the factor of blood feud starts to play a significant role. Once freed, after being paid off by the relatives, the people who were subjected to kidnapping, torture and humiliation often start to seek revenge to wash away the shame. Such an individual swears revenge on a member (or members) of security forces and by doing so also indirectly on the Russian state. Paradoxically, in such cases the state is not a direct target of the revenge but it becomes a part of it through corrupted members of its security forces. On the other hand, the one who plans to carry out revenge against heavily armed members of security forces needs some assistance to successfully accomplish his goal. In such cases, it is often the Islamic insurgents who seem to be able to provide such assistance. As a result of this mechanism, many young people without any strong affiliation to the ideas of radical Salafism end up in the ranks of Islamic insurgents. The outcome of the strategy of pre-emptive repression, which give the security forces in Dagestan an excuse for often criminal wilfulness, is that the Russian state becomes indirectly involved into originally intra-Dagestani conflicts, which results in the rise of the ranks of Islamic insurgents. People who are originally seeking only

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[199] Valery Dzutsev, "Memorial Report Attributes Improved Security Situation in the North Caucasus to Increase In Russian Troops," *North Caucasus Analysis* 12, No.16 (August 3, 2011), http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=38274, (accessed: April 17, 2013).

[200] „V Dagestane zhiteli seleniya Gimry zayavlyayut o massovykh pravonarushebyakh v khode spetsoperatsii (In Dagestan, villagers from Gimry witness about mass violations in the course of the special operation)," *kavkaz-uzel.ru*, (April 16, 2013), http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/222960/, (accessed on April 16, 2013)

personal revenge are then getting under the influence of radical Salafis and later can, in fact, reach high positions among the rebels.

Such situation is also described by Gulbariat Shalamov, the widow of Magomedali Vagabov, the former leader of Dagestani insurgents. Vagabov in her words studied Islam in Pakistan but later he decided to return home to educate villagers in his native country. Automatically, although not being sympathetic with radicals, he became the target of constant bullying and terror by the FSB and the police to such an extent that one day he was forced to flee into the woods and join the insurgents in fear of his life.[201] That such cases are not rare was shown in November 2011, when the rally organized by the relatives of people kidnapped by security forces turned out to be the biggest expression of general discontent in Makhachkala yet.

In the recent years, the discontent with the terror caused by security forces, which instead of protecting people often terrorize and kidnap them, has begun to reach still wider strata of the Dagestani society, as was illustrated by the case of Magomedkhan Baisultanov from Khasavyurt. Baisultanov recalled how his house was stormed by law enforcement personnel who killed his daughter-in-law and wounded his son in the process. Later, the security services admitted that they had made a mistake, but Baisultanov's attempt to sue the authorities and call for justice was a vain effort. According to Baisultanov, in reaction to his case even Dagestan's Prosecutor General Andrei Nazarov advised him to join the insurgents and take personal revenge against the officials for his daughter-in-law's death.[202]

The problem of general lawlessness and terror performed by security forces in Dagestan has actually a much bigger scope than it might appear. More than 3000 cases of people kidnapped by security forces or the Russian army have been documented in the North Caucasus since 1999, not including the people killed in the course of special operations and the people who managed to run into the forest before anything happened to them.[203]

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[201]Igor Rothar, „Harsh Measures only Strengthen the Insurgency in Dagestan", *North Caucasus Analysis 8*, no. 63 (March, 31. 2011),
http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?cHash=42abb036815e2cfd367dfda82903fecf&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=37729, (accessed April 15, 2013)

[202] Valery Dzutsev, "Has the Arab Spring Arrived In Dagestan?," *North Caucasus Analysis* 12, No.23 (November 28, 2011), http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=38708 (accessed April 15, 2013)

[203] Igor Rotar, http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=39666 "Kidnapping in the North Caucasus Is Prevalent but Varied Across Region," *North Caucasus Analysis* 13, No. 15, July 24, 2012, (accessed April 15, 2013)

However, the factor of repressive policy in Dagestan has indeed a double-edged character. Not only do the special operations cause blood feud of local residents towards members of security forces, and thus indirectly towards the Russian state, the fatal special operations are often the result of blood feud executed on a specific village by the members of security forces. This was the case of the infamous Borozdinovskaya special operation in a predominantly Avar village in the Shelkovsky District of Chechnya on 4 June, 2005.[204] This *zachistka* was so brutal that even the usually reluctant Federal authorities openly denounced it.[205] In the course of the special operation conducted by the members of a Chechen battalion Vostok, 11 men were detained, never to be seen again, a 77-year-old man was burned alive, and around 200 hundred men were herded in a local sport hall to be beaten and tortured. Soon after the village was robbed with several houses burned down.[206] However, the reasons for the Borozdinovskaya special operation seem to be rather interesting. From a short-term point of view, it was probably a result of blood feud performed by a member of the Vostok battalion, after his father was killed in the surroundings of the village by a group of rebels which were believed to haave originated from Borozdinovskaya.[207] This is the above mentioned pattern, when the blood feud works on both sides for the rebels as well as for the members of security forces and eventually turns into a vicious circle of never-ending violence.

Yet in this case, another pattern appears; namely the fact that the members of the Vostok battalion were not Russians but Chechens. And these concrete Chechens were led by Sulim Yamadaev and his men who had some unfinished business with the Avar population of Borzdinovskaya, way back from the 90s (we can now ignore the fact that there are some complicated issues between Chechens and Avars in general).

This case just highlights what has already been mentioned earlier; namely that bloody incidents between security forces and local population are often not organized by Moscow (or Russians), but they are an intra-Dagestani business in which the central

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[204] Although officially on the territory of Chechnya, this village has strong links to Dagestan because of its Avar origin, author.

[205] Jean-Christophe Peuch, "Russia: Officials Say Pro-Moscow Chechens Involved In Deadly Raid On Avar Village," *globalsecurity.org* (July 2005), http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2005/07/mil-050729-rferl06.htm, (accessed: April 17, 2013)

[206] "Sentence for Borozdinovskaia passed in Chechnya," *kavkaz-uzel.ru*, (October 27 2005), http://abhazia.eng.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/4558/, (accessed April 17, 2013)

[207] „Memorial details events in Borozdinovskaya," *North Caucasus Analysis* 25, No.30, (June 30, 2005), http://www.jamestown.org/programs/nca/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=30593&tx_ttnews[backPid]=187&no_cache=1, (accessed: May 5, 2013).

government gets involved indirectly. However, it was the rapid increase of security personnel in Dagestan and the policy of pre-emptive strikes adopted by the Kremlin after 1999 which altered local violence into a vicious circle of blood feud and put the Russian state into an epicentre of this vortex. It would be inaccurate and simplistic to state that the centre is oppressing the poor dwellers of Dagestan by the boots of Russian soldiers. However, it was the centre which provided some Dagestanis with weapons so they could oppress, mob or simply slaughter their neighbours, because of an old feud or simply materialistic motives.

It seems that both leaders of Dagestan and the Russian Federation, officially supporting the idea of international jihad, also started to realize the real roots of the uprising in Dagestan and since Magomedsalam Magomedov's[208] presidency cautious attempts to facilitate soft power have started to appear. Already in the autumn 2010, Magomedov announced the necessity to organize a third Congress of Nations of Dagestan, where all the pressing issues republic has to face could be openly discussed and possible solutions suggested. The congress took place in December 2010 and it was important that for the first time since 1999 also the voice of moderate Salafists could be heard there. The fact remains that the decision to organize a Congress of Nations of Dagestan reflects how desperate the situation in the republic is. Before, there were only two similar congresses in the history of Dagestan, namely in 1920 when the Dagestani statehood was announced and then in 1992, which followed the collapse of the Soviet Union.[209] Ideologically, the presence of moderate Salafists at the congress was presented as an attempt to establish a dialogue. In practical terms, it was an attempt to establish normal relations with the moderate Salafists and try to get at least part of the insurgents "out of the woods" and back into civilian life. In fact, in the course of Magomedsalam's tenure, the framework for normalization of relations with moderate Salafists has been established; they appear more in public and also gained some space in the media.[210] Another major shift appeared in January 2012 when Dmitry Medvedev as an acting president passed a law which reintroduced the direct election of governors in

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[208] Son of Magomedali Magomedov, author.

[209] „Situatsiya v zone konflikta na Severnom Kavkaze: otsenka pravozashchitnikov. Osen 2010 gg, , (The situation in the conflict zone in the North Caucasus. fall 2O1O)," *www.kavlaz-uzel.ru* (February 2. 2011), http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/180493/, (accessed 26.4 2013)

[210] Situatsiya v zone konflikta na Severnom Kavkaze: otsenka pravozashchitnikov- Zima 2010- 2011 gg. (The situation in the conflict zone in the North Caucasus: review of human rights Watch-Winter 2010 - 2011)", *www.kavkaz-uzel.ru*, (May 10, 2011), http://azerbaijan.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/185186/, (accessed: 26.4, 2013).

the regions of the Russian Federation. The legislation stipulates that parties and individuals may compete for the leadership in a region and that individuals only need to collect a sufficient number of signatures in support of their candidacy, but that the procedure itself will have to be defined by the regions themselves.[211]

Although to some extent this (in essence decentralizing) decision may lead to inner democratization of Dagestan, we should be careful with optimistic predictions. As we could see on the previous pages, the factors of insurgency in Dagestan are much more comprehensive. The direct election of the head of the republic does not solve the problem of politicians corresponding much more to the Kremlin than the local residents. Neither does it solve the problem of shamelessly rigged elections and a small circle of clans dominating all the political power and most of the scarce resources. While the first cautious steps on the way to soft power are tested, many ordinary residents of Dagestan still do not feel any obligations to the corrupted government, and since the vicious circle of violence has been forged the same people terrorized by their own kin have started to blame the centre (which their oppressors officially represent); and it is the Russian state that has to pay the price for blood. However, this has never been low in the Caucasus.

Conclusion:

The main goal of this chapter was to analyse if there were any significant changes of FoS after 1999 in Dagestan, which could explain its substantial destabilization. Foremost, we had to deal with the question, whether the rise of insurgency in Dagestan is the outcome of a foreign intervention and therefore should be understood in the context of fighting with global jihad, or whether its roots are rather of a domestic character. It has been shown that there is not enough evidence supporting the claim that it has been a catalysing factor of foreign intervention carried out by mujahedeen who worked behind the sharp spread of rebellion all over the republic. At this point it became likely that FoS which caused the destabilization might rather be of a local character. However, the question stands: was the deteriorating situation (caused by

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[211] Valery Dzutsev, "Return to Popularly Elected Regional Leaders Could Bring Sweeping Political Changes to the North Caucasus," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 9 No. 12, January 18, 2012, http://www.jamestown.org/programs/nca/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=38894&tx_ttnews[backPid]=169&no_cache=1, (accessed: April 26, 2012).

unsolved FoS from the early 90s) caused by the process of transition, or could we identify some new factors working in the background and emerging around 1999?

In fact, all the factors of will and capacity from the 90s have persisted in Dagestan till these days, and as it has been shown, an "imperfect stability" has existed under these conditions. However, what has changed was the fading of two catalysing factors, namely the factor of transformation and the factor of weakened state structures. It is a paradox that under the weak Russian Federation, which did not have enough strength to tightly control Dagestan, the republic could be organized by its specific rules, thus maintaining its inner stability. However, once the factors of transition and weakened state structures faded, the centre started to tighten its control over the republic in two main ways, namely: the (re)centralization and the repressive policy. Both of them turned out to be catalysing factors which significantly disturb the fragile stability of Dagestan achieved in the course of transformation.

The factor of centralization has led to the narrowing of the circle of ruling clans, which could easier syphon subsidies from the centre, which in combination with the persisting economic factor causes opening of social scissors and a rise of discontent among local residents. It could be argued that, in fact, this catalysing factor led to the deepening of the economic factor in Dagestan, making it to some extent stronger than it was in the 90s. However, the catalysing factor of centralization has influenced and strengthened also the factor of anomie in Dagestan on two levels. First, it created a huge barrier between political elites of Dagestan and its inhabitants, once it submitted these elites much more to the Kremlin than to the people they are supposed to represent. Second, it led to an intensified collaboration between the highly unpopular government and the Sufi church after the official ban on "wahhabism". By doing so, it cast doubt on both the traditional church and traditional values. This development increased the anomic state of the society as well as the appeal of Salafism. In this sense, the results of this study support the argument made by Ware and Kisriev, although the factor of the repressive policy has to also be taken into an account as another significant source of general discontent.

This factor appeared as a result of an attempt to pre-emptively destroy bases of radical Salafists in Dagestan after The Second Chechen War and it was accompanied by an increase in armed personnel in Dagestan as well as by brutal special operations and kidnapping of often innocent people. Generally, similar policies promote the growth of dissatisfaction among population. However, as it has been illustrated on concrete cases,

this factor is multiplied in Dagestan as a result of the specific local factor of blood feud. Therefore the emergence of the factor of repressive policy in Dagestan has forged a vicious circle of bloodshed fuelled by blood feud, forcing often even unreligious locals to take arms and join Islamic insurgents.

To sum up, the analysis conducted in this chapter supports the claim that the current insurgency in Dagestan is neither a result of intervention of Islamic radicals from abroad, nor it is a belated outcome of the early 90s' transformation. It has rather been caused by an opposite process of strengthening state structures in the background of the Kremlin's historical inability to facilitate soft power and its reliance on much harder measures. It is important to note that in general the roots of the rebellion (which is Islamic in its form) are not of religious origin and that religion serves rather as a mobilizing force. This seems to be caused by the absence of the factor of ethnic geography in Dagestan, which precludes ethnic mobilization as a menace in the form of unified pressure on the central government (because of ethnic competition in Dagestan). Under these conditions, the insurgency in Dagestan, which itself is causing terror, is to a significant extent a direct response to the recentralization as well as the terror caused by security forces of the Russian state itself.

Conclusion:

Despite of the rising economic performance of the Russian Federation and its re-establishment on the international field, 14 years after the decisive defeat of Chechen separatism the Russian state faces a second wave of inner destabilization. This time, however, the Kremlin is not challenged by spontaneous nationalist movements rivalling each other, but by various officially Islamic movements united by their shared animosity towards the Russian state. Nowadays, rebel units can be found in vast majority of the North Caucasian regions from Dagestan to Kabardino-Balkaria. The need to stop the spiral of destabilization of Muslim regions of Russia becomes even more pressing since the strategically important and rich Volga region, which is home to Muslim Tatars and Bashkir, starts to destabilize as well. The loss of the North Caucasus would be demoralising; however, the Russian state would easily survive without this territory. Yet the spread of "Islamic insurgency" into other Muslim regions of the Russian federation could have fatal consequences, and not just for Russia.

Therefore it becomes more pressing than ever before to get a deeper insight into the grassroots of at least one case of the new wave of separatism Moscow has to face. In this study, I tried to contribute to a better understanding of this complex but significant issue. To analyse the real character of insurgency in Dagestan (and the wider region of the North Caucasus) a series of questions had to be answered, namely: (A.) Was the Chechen separatism caused by the factor of transition and what are the characteristics of a transition based separatism? (B.) Why did Dagestan remain stable in the period of transformation? (C.) Is separatism in Dagestan also caused by factors linked to transition or does it have post-transitional character? (D.) Is insurgency in Dagestan a result of an international mujahedeen intervention or are its roots of local origin? (E.) And finally, what is the role of religion (Islam) in the separatism, why do insurgents not mobilize on the nationalist base anymore?

Before approaching to the analysis itself, a proper conceptualization of analytical tools had to be conducted in the first chapter. Although I have used the framework for analysing separatism and ethnic conflicts created by other authors (especially Svante Cornell), specific local factors had to be included and explained here as well. As it has been shown in the course of the study, these factors often played the crucial role.

In the second chapter of this study, which has dealt with the Chechen separatism in the early 90s, it has been revealed that it was to huge extent caused by the factor of transformation and factors linked to transformation, in combination with the "hard power" used by the center. In the case of Chechnya we could identify most factors of will: cultural and religious differences, national conception of the Chechen statehood adopted by Dudaev's government, mythification of the past conflicts. To some extent, among some segments of society also anomie started to appear at this period and only radical autonomous elites were absent. From factors of capacity we have identified the rough terrain, access to weapons and ethnic geography. Factor of ethnic and religious kinship could be present under some circumstances; however, as the analysis has proved, this was not the case.

Having both factors of will and factors of capacity fairly represented in the case of Chechnya, the chain of catalysing factors leading to violence had to be identified and the role of transformation had to be evaluated. It has been shown that the process of transformation was really the one which appeared at the beginning of an imaginary domino, leading to violent separatism in Chechnya. First, the transformation caused significant worsening of the socioeconomic situation of Chechens, thus raising a general discontent and clearing the path for the rise of anomie. Second, it led to the weakening of state structures of the Russian Federation, causing the rise of elite struggle for power in the Kremlin as well as in Grozny. It was here, where the first specific factor appeared, namely the radical elites in the lead of Chechnya. This factor resulted into adoption of a strictly national conception of the Chechen statehood leading to acceleration of the conflict with Moscow. At this point, the Kremlin entered the existing conflict with its traditional policy relying on "hard power", leading to the factor of intervention of the center. Under these circumstances, the catalysing factor of intervention interfered with the strongly present factor of mythicized conflicts of past and led to a massive mobilization of the Chechen society against the central government. At this point, we can answer the first question by claiming that the Chechen separatism can really be understood as a transformation-based one.

The third chapter focused on the question why Dagestan avoided destabilization and radical separatism in the turbulent period of the early 90s. Earlier, the analysis of transformation based separatism in Chechnya provided us with the framework for a comparison with Dagestan at the same period. As a matter of will to express dissatisfaction by separatism, fewer factors appear to be present in the case of Dagestan

in the 90s than in Chechnya. In Dagestan, similarly to the whole Russian Federation, the economic factors and rising anomie appeared and supplemented the ever present factor of cultural differences and religious among Russians and dwellers of Dagestan. However, unlike in Chechnya, two factors or will were absent, namely: mythification of past conflicts and adoption of ethnic identity by the ruling elites. As for capacity, both Chechens and dwellers of Dagestan had access to a rather large amount of weapons and the region they live in provided them with a terrain suitable for a long-term guerrilla separatist campaign. Similarity can also be found in the absence of actual ethnic or religious kin, willing to support their separatist claims. Yet one significant difference has been observed; namely the absence of the factor of ethnic geography in the case of Dagestan. In fact, Dagestan, with more than 30 nationalities, presents an extreme case of ethnic fragmentation. However, it has been shown that there are more layers of identity in Dagestan. They offer alternative sources of mobilization against the center, such as shared religious or mountainous identity. However, at this place we can observe mutual interaction of different factors. Effective mobilization against the central government based on ethnicity is highly unlikely in Dagestan, since the factor of ethnic geography is absent. Other layers of identity were supressed during the Soviet period, so once the central government weakened in the course of transformation, many competing ethnic projects appeared in Dagestan in the early 90s. These could be bypassed by capitalizing on religious or mountainous identity which would allow a more united pressure on the center; however, the fact remains that Dagestanis lack the will (or the reason) to rebel against Moscow. Unlike in Chechnya, past conflicts were not mythicized and the level of animosity against Moscow was generally low in Dagestan. As a result of absence of mythicized conflicts, ethnic nationalist movements started to challenge each other rather than the Kremlin. Unlike in Chechnya, in Dagestan, where the autonomous elites have been well established, the elite competition did not lead to the radical elites in the lead of the republic, and therefore the strictly civic model of state has been adopted. At this point, once again the state enters the stage by its policies. Since Dagestan presented no significant challenge to the central government, the Kremlin, weakened by both transformation and serious separatist movements, did not interfere in Dagestani affairs. Not only did not any intervention occur, but the power over Dagestan was significantly decentralized. To sum up, Dagestan avoided the violent separatism as a result of absence of the factor of ethnic geography in combination with a lesser presence of factors of will than in the Chechen case, resulting into the situation

when mutual conflicts of major ethnic groups outweighed the possible conflict with the Russian state. Regarding catalysing factors, as a result of the weakness of the state structures in combination with no separatist challenge from Dagestan, the Kremlin avoided using force and ignored the specific decentralized development in this territory.

The last, fourth chapter has been the crucial one, providing us with answers to the remaining questions raised at the beginning of this paper. First, I have presented serious evidence against the claim that the insurgency in Dagestan in the new millennium has been a result of an international Islamic intervention, showing that its core is rather of local origin. At this point two important questions appeared: What was the real reason for the radical rise of separatism in Dagestan after 1999 and what is the role of Islam? The analysis of FoS conducted in this chapter revealed that the capacity of Dagestanis to mount a separatist campaign did not change and also the same factors of will, the cultural and religious differences, economic factors and anomie remained. Thus, seemingly both the capacity and will of Dagestanis to rebel against the central government should be the same as in the 90s. Then why is it that rising numbers of local dwellers "run into the forest" to join the separatists?

The answer started to appear, once we have approached the analysis of the changes on the level of catalysing factors. Here we could observe that the diminishing factors of transformation and weak state structures have had far reaching consequences in Dagestan. The government's response on this new reality marked the emergence of two catalysing factors of re-centralization and repressive policy. Both catalysing factors did not simply increase the will of Dagestanis to resist by changing the balance from seeking of peaceful negotiation with the Kremlin towards armed separatism, but once they appeared they started to interact with the already present factors, multiplying to some extent their impact. For example, recentralization did not just discontent locals because the political system became less democratic, but in combination with the factor of elite rivalry, it also created a situation when a narrow circle of clans drains the government's subsidies, thus significantly increasing the impact of economic factors and deepening the anomie of local youth. Moreover, the policy of repression, which can itself increase discontent of local residents, significantly empowered in combination with the specific local factor of blood feud, minting the vicious spiral of violence, forcing often innocent and moderate people to join the rebels. The results of this chapter support the claim that current separatism in Dagestan has a post-transitional character and it has been a result of inner stabilization of the Russian state. It has also been

illustrated that religion (Islam in this case) is by no means a factor of separatism. The religious faith does not turn Dagestanis to anti-Russian insurgents. The religion is just a means of mobilization covering the actual non-religious roots of insurgency. This is to some extent due to the absence of the factor of ethnic geography in Dagestan. As general discontent, frustration and disgust of locals rose over the years after 1999, they could not unite on the national basis because of ethnic fragmentation. Under these circumstances, the shared religious belief became the means of by-passing ethnic mobilization and launching united action against the Kremlin on a different basis. Therefore, although religion may play a significant role in separatism, it does not seem to be the factor leading to it.

In general, this study provided us also with a few remarks on the research of ethnic conflicts and separatism. (1) However, we can follow similar patterns in various separatist conflicts, using similar analytical tools, and find out that each region and conflict has its specifics. Therefore, before approaching the actual analysis, the set of specific local factors shall be identified. It is these factors such as blood feud of clan rivalry which may play the crucial role. (2) We should not imagine ethnic conflict or separatism as some kind of scales which can be simply overbalanced to peace or conflict by adding either the factors supporting the appearance of conflict on one side or the factors suppressing it on the other. We can rather observe a vivid chain of interactions among various factors. Under some circumstances, one factor can act as a factor supporting the appearance of a conflict and in other it can block it. Also, we can observe inactive factors such as blood feud, which has always been presented in Dagestan, but activated only in contact with the catalysing factor of repressive policy. (3) Although the factor of cultural and religious differences has been present in all cases and periods, it does not seem to take part in the chain of factors leading to violence. Therefore, the mere fact of cultural and religious differences does not seem to be a factor leading to violence, but rather just a means of mobilization. (4) Although the factors of will and capacity reflecting mostly the situation in the minority region are necessary preconditions for violence to appear, the will and capacity of an ethnic group itself does not automatically lead to separatism. At this point, the catalysing factors which often (not always) reflect the steps conducted by the central government play the crucial role. Therefore, it seems that radical separatism is not caused only by minorities, but also by central governments. This pattern has been fairly illustrated on cases of both

Chechen and Dagestani separatism, which were to huge extent a result of the policies conducted by the Kremlin.

A proper understanding of how these policies, which are aimed at pacification of potential separatist movements, provided the catalysing factors necessary to cross the border between the will to act and the actual violent action becomes a topic of current importance. With the Russian Federation facing an increased instability it is a hot issue not just in the Caucasus but also in the Volga region, where the political elites once again flirt with the idea of centralization and reliance on "hard power".

Resumé:

Daná práca sa venuje otázke vzostupu ozbrojeného separatizmu v Dagestane po roku 1999 a teda v období, kedy sa Ruský štát začal spamätávať z následkov rozpadu ZRRS a dochádzalo k jeho vnútornému posilňovaniu. Jej primárnym cieľom je identifikovať faktory, ktoré viedli k vzostupu napätia a povstaleckých skupín v do tej doby stabilnom Dagestane a tým pádom definovať skutočnú podstavu súčasného separatizmu v regióne. Hlavnou tézou práce je chápanie separatizmu v Dagestane ako svojím charakterom fenoménu „post-transformačného" a vo svojej podstate nie náboženského. Konflikt v Dagestane tak rozdiel od ostatných konfliktov v regióne nie je následkom rozpadu ZSSR a oslabenia centrálnych vlád. Práve naopak, je dôsledkom konca transformácie a posilnenia Kremľa, ktorý svojimi neprimeranými zásahmi nabúral krehnú stabilitu Dagestanu. Taktiež korene konfliktu majú skôr sociálny ako náboženský charakter, pričom Islam predstavuje mobilizačnú silu schopnú zjednotiť nespokojných miestnych obyvateľov s rôznorodým etnickým pôvodom.

V prvej časti práce sú analyzované staršie teoretické modely založené na výskumoch fenoménov etnického konfliktu a separatizmu v iných regiónoch. Následne je vytvorený teoretický model nosný pre danú štúdiu. Ten je výsledkom ako poznatkov zozbieraných ostatnými odborníkmi na danú tematiku, tak zohľadnením špecifických miestnych reálií.

V druhej kapitole sa venujem analýze Čečenského separatizmu v 90-tuch rokoch na základe ktorej je dokázané, že primárnym faktorom, ktorý umožnil radikálne zhoršenie situácie v Čečensku bola skutočne transformácia.

Analýza procesu (interakcie rôznych faktorov), ktorý viedol k Čečenskému separatizmu sa stáva kľúčovou pre pochopenie toho, prečo sa Dagestan v 90-tych rokoch vyhol podobnému osudu. Práve komparácia vývoja v Dagestane v období transformácie s vývojom v Čečensku umožňuje identifikovať faktory ktoré v Dagestane prispeli k nastoleniu krehkej stability 90 rokov.

Posledná kapitola sa následne venuje analýze zmien, ktoré nastali po roku 1999 a viedli k súčasnému separatizmu. Jej výsledky do značnej miery potvrdzujú tézu vyslovenú v úvode práce.

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Annexes:

Annex no. 1: Factors of Will in Chechnya and Dagestan in the 90s.

Factor	Chechnya	Dagestan
Rel. and cult. differences	**Present**	**Present**
Ethnic conception[212]	**Present**	**Absent**
Radical autonomous elites	**Absent**	**Absent**
Mythification of past conflicts	**Present**	**Absent**
Economic factors	**Present**	**Present**
Anomie	**Appearing**	**Appearing**

Annex no. 2: Factors of Capacity in Chechnya and Dagestan in the 90s.

Factor	Chechnya	Dagestan
Rough terrain	**Present**	**Present**
Access to weapons	**Present**	**Present**
Ethnic geography	**Present**	**Absent**
Ethnic kin	**Absent**	**Absent**

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[212] Ethnic identity on regional level, author.

Annex no. 3: Appearance of catalysing factors in Chechnya and the chain of interactions leading to appearance of radical separatism

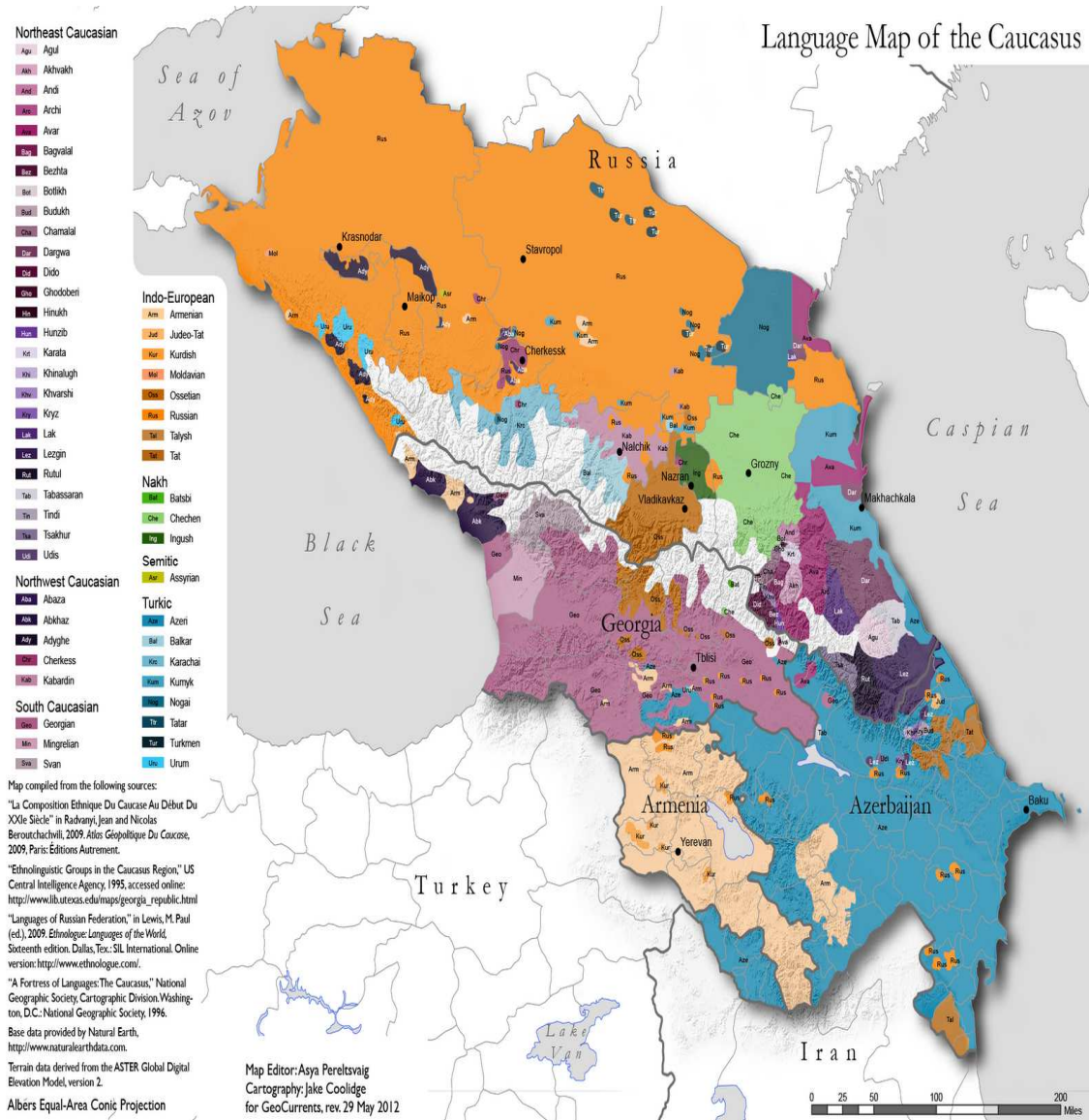| Factor	Description	Interaction with	Result
1.Transformation	Result of the collapse of the USSR following the unsuccessful putsch attempt from August 1991.		Appearance of: ***Economic factor*** (worsening of the socio-ec. situation). ***factor of weak state structures*** and ***factor of elite rivalry***.
2.Economic factor	Transformation causes collapse of the existing socio-economic system, leading to relative deprivation.		As a result ***anomie*** starts to appear.
3. Weak state structures	Decreased capacity of the central government to effectively control the country.	**Elite rivalry on federal level**	Appearance of the ***factor of radical elites*** in the lead of Chechnya.
4. Radical elites	Radical elites in the lead of Chechnya in praxis decline the civil conception of the Chechen state.		Adoption of ethnic conception of the state increasing the outflow of non-Chechen population and stimulating the conflict with the central government.
5. Clan rivalry	Rivalry among Chechen clans was omnipresent even during the Soviet period. However, as a result of the weakened central government it significantly increased.	**Radical elites**	With the country fragmenting on the inter-clan lines, the radical government in Grozny had to increase the nationalist sentiment to promote national unity. By doing so it limited its space for negotiation with the Kremlin.
6. Intervention of the central government	Making no progress in negotiations with Grozny, the central government decides for armed intervention.	**Mythification of past conflicts**	Strong mythification of past conflicts with Moscow cause a large scale mobilization even among Chechens who were against the independence of Chechnya and the conflict becomes inevitable.

Annex no. 4: Appearance of catalysing factors in Dagestan in the early 90s

Factor	Description	Interaction with	Result
Factor	**Description**	**Interaction with**	**Result**
1.Transformation	Result of the collapse of the USSR following the unsuccessful putsch attempt from August 1991.		Appearance of: *Economic factor* (worsening of socio-ec. situation). *Factor of weak state structures* and *factor of elite rivalry*.
2.Economic factor	Transformation causes collapse of the existing socio-economic system leading to relative deprivation.		As a result *anomie* starts to appear.
3. Weak state structures		**Absence** of *factor of ethnic geography*	Instead of one dominant movement, many different radical nationalist movements appeared in Dagestan in the early 90s.
4. Radical elites representing different nationalist projects		**Absence** of factor of *mythification of past conflicts* with Russia	As a result of low level of mythification of conflicts with the Russian state, various nationalist projects lacked the common enemy and challenged each other, thus significantly lowering the possibility of separatism aimed at Moscow. As a result, moderate elites with nomenclature background prevailed in Dagestan.

Annex no. 5: Chain of Factors leading to separatism in Dagestan after 1999

Factor	Description	Interaction with	Result
1.Disappearance of **Factor of transformation**	The period of transformation passed once Yeltsin prevailed over parliament in 1993 and was replaced by smoother transition.		Gradual disappearance of *Factor of weak state structures*.
2.Disappearance of **Factor of weak state structures**		Inability of the Kremlin to use the *"Soft power"*	*Factor of recentralization* and ***Factor of repressive policy***.
3.Factor of recentralization		Factor of clan rivalry	Strengthened impact of *Economic factor* and *Anomie*. Increased dissatisfaction and will to act.
4.Factor of repressive policy		Factor of blood feud	General dissatisfaction caused by repression multiplies and alters into a vicious spiral of violence. Increased dissatisfaction and will to act.
Significantly increased dissatisfaction of dwellers of Dagestan and their will to act.		Absence of Factor of ethnic geography	Ethnically based separatism as a means of expressing general dissatisfaction is unlikely.
Unlikeliness of nationalist separatism		Increasing level of general dissatisfaction and will to act	Religion as an alternative means of mobilization for people with different ethnic backgrounds.

Annex no. 6: Language map of the Caucasus[213]

[213] Source: www.geocurrents.info, http://geocurrents.info/place/russia-ukraine-and-caucasus/caucasus-series/re-mapping-languages-of-the-caucasus, (accessed: May 11, 2013)