

University of California, Berkeley

Berkeley Program in Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies
Center for Slavic and East European Studies
Institute of International Studies

**Institutions, Identity, and Ethnic Conflict: International
Experience and Its Implications for the Caucasus**

May 2-3, 1997

Conference Report



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Working Paper Series**

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Editors: Marc Garcelon, Kari Johnstone, Alexandra Wood, Enna Eskin
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***Institutions, Identity, and Ethnic Conflict: International Experience
and Its Implications for the Caucasus***

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Ethnolinguistic Groups in the Caucasus Region



INSTITUTIONS, IDENTITY, AND ETHNIC CONFLICT:

DAY ONE

Introduction

Robert Price

The Berkeley Program in Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies, its Graduate Training Program on the Contemporary Caucasus, and the Berkeley Program on the Politics of Cultural Identity in the Institute of International Studies all welcome you to our two-day conference on institutions, identity, and ethnic conflict. The Berkeley Program on the Politics of Cultural Identity is dedicated to examining how, when, and why ascribed social categories such as ethnicity, race and religion become politicized. The Program is committed to the comparative study of patterns of ethnic and religious politicization as they are manifested across time and space in different political and institutional arenas. For the past year, the Berkeley Program in Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies has also been studying the politicization of ethnicity and religion, but with a focus on a single, volatile, and ethnically heterogeneous area—the Caucasus.

Today's workshop exemplifies the symbiotic relationship between comparative and area studies that has evolved in the social sciences here at Berkeley. Of late, area studies in the United States has undergone something of a crisis, driven in part by two developments: changes in the foundation world, and the fact that various social scientists, mostly in political science, have aggressively pushed the notion that comparative analysis and area studies are mutually exclusive enterprises, with comparative theory rendering superfluous, or at best marginal, the study of the history and culture of particular societies. Viewed from Berkeley, this line of argument appears strange and tangential, in part as a consequence of debates held here in the Institute of International Studies in 1963 and 1964. These debates gave rise to a complementary vision of the relation between comparative theory and area studies which has thrived in the social sciences here ever since. Indeed, at Berkeley, we tend to view area studies and comparative theory as two sides of the same coin. Theory that lacks a firm grounding in the empirical study of particular historical and cultural settings has generally been viewed here as vacuous, while deep empirical knowledge of a particular country or region that lacks a solid grounding in comparative theory has generally been viewed as sterile. Today's workshop embodies the harmony of interests between comparative and area studies, theory and rich empirical knowledge, which distinguishes Berkeley social science. We begin with broader theoretical examinations of the issues of identity, nationality, and institutional design. These examinations will be followed by presentations on how the politics of identity and nationality play themselves out in four distinct settings: Canada, the Crimea, India, and Russia. Tomorrow, the conference will continue its examination of identity, institutions, and conflict, but with an empirical focus on the Caucasus, a single region whose heterogeneity lends itself particularly well to comparative analysis.

Changing International Norms of Self-Determination, Secession, and Autonomy

Hurst Hannum

This morning I examine the concepts of self-determination, secession, and autonomy, and their meanings in international law. International law reflects politics and practice. It is not imposed from above but is developed and adopted by state leaders as a consequence of mutual interests, a fact that suggests international law may be biased against non-state groups. In analyzing regional conceptions and perceptions of ethnic conflict, self-determination, secession, and autonomy, it is thus important to understand the extant international legal framework for dealing with these issues, as this framework shapes the broader political setting in which various groups seek support.

The term *self-determination* is most commonly used today by groups seeking political power. A review of the diplomatic and legal history of the concept of self-determination suggests that the use of the term has evolved through three distinct phases:

Phase one: the mid-19th century through the League of Nations era (to 1945)—self-determination as an ethnic and cultural-based right. In this phase, self-determination was not a legal norm of international law but a political principle of international diplomacy. This principle entailed a belief that groups defined principally in terms of language, and occasionally in terms of ethnic or cultural criteria, ought to be granted either independent statehood or a form of autonomy endowed with sufficient political power to promote ethnic, cultural, or linguistic interests. The most common criteria cited in arguments favoring either independent statehood or autonomy were cohesiveness, economic and political viability, and compatibility with the extant world order. During this phase, the political principle of self-determination was applied almost exclusively in Europe. For example, while no European statesman argued in favor of Irish self-determination, some favored self-determination for Poland. Moreover, self-determination was seen principally as a means for dealing with politically unstable situations, most importantly the dissolution of multi-national empires at the end of the First World War. As such, it was viewed as a way to resolve inter-state conflicts, either by creating new states or promoting minority rights within existing states. The term was thus predicated on a linkage between politics, on the one hand, and cultural and ethnic identity, on the other.

Phase two: the United Nations era (1945-1980s)—self-determination as a territorial-based right. After the Second World War, the earlier meaning of self-determination emphasizing ethnicity and minority rights was replaced by the complementary notions of individual human rights and equality. The principle of self-determination, enshrined in the United Nations Charter, remained largely a political principle between 1945 and the 1960s but subsequently evolved into a binding legal norm. This norm

held that territories based on colonial boundaries had a right to independence. Two significant consequences followed from these changes. First, self-determination was more explicitly linked to independent statehood. Second, the principle was no longer applied to “peoples”—that is, cultural, ethnic, or linguistic groups—but to “territories,” which became the subjects of the right to independence. This period ended with the completion of the decolonization process, when essentially all colonial territories that wanted independence achieved full statehood.

Phase three: 1980s-present—Self-determination as a territorial and ethno-cultural right. The concept of self-determination has lately acquired a new definition, one no longer based on the imperative of decolonization. Rather, in the current period non-state actors are attempting to revive the ethno-cultural meaning of self-determination familiar from nineteenth-century diplomacy in order to combine it with the territorial emphasis on independent statehood from the United Nations phase. In contrast, states have attempted to restrict the meaning of self-determination in international law to one of two formulas inherited from the early twentieth-century political and legal discourse of Woodrow Wilson’s day. Wilson and his contemporaries entertained two meanings of self-determination: 1) external self-determination, understood as independence from some foreign power; and 2) internal self-determination, which in today’s parlance we call democracy, understood as the right of a people living under a given state’s jurisdiction to have a say in their fate through political participation and the exercise of other rights guaranteed within the framework of a constitutional system. In my view, we have yet to translate this second meaning into viable guidelines. Indeed, we are currently searching for more meaningful ways to address the demands of ethnic and cultural minorities for statehood without conceding a right to full statehood. This would provide us with criteria for deciding whom to support when faced with intra-state conflicts between minorities claiming self-determination rights, on the one hand, and states and/or cultural majorities, on the other.

Many contend that secession is an essential component of self-determination and essentially *the* way to meet demands for self-determination. International law, however, has not traditionally viewed secession as a right and has not concerned itself with secession (i.e., determining who controls the government of a given state or group). Rather, the tendency has been to view secession in terms of civil war. Despite recent events in the former countries of Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and the Soviet Union, this view has not changed. International bodies, such as the UN, still emphasize both territorial integrity and statehood in all resolutions dealing with self-determination. The concept of territorial integrity collides directly with the principle of self-determination and enjoys a slightly higher ranking in international law. As states dominate the crafting of international law, and have an obvious interest in territorial integrity, this rank-ordering comes as no surprise. Nevertheless, exceptional circumstances

may be viewed as justifying secession in certain cases, for example, where gross human rights violations intersect with the possible destruction of an entire culture. Tibet is a prime example of such a possible exception. As suggested by the philosopher Alan Buchanan, secession may also be seen as an appropriate way of addressing historical injustices, as in the Baltic states. The problem with this, of course, is that the entire world was built on historical injustices and every state is founded on conquest. On the whole, secession is not a solution to the problem of self-determination. International law has yet to develop legal mechanisms for managing secession, although it can tolerate and even amicably assent to secession in certain cases, as recently seen in Eritrea, Czechoslovakia, and the Soviet Union. Autonomy may be the answer to some of the most difficult questions surrounding the problems of self-determination and secession, in part because it has yet to acquire a fixed meaning in international law.

Over the last fifty years, the rise of the idea of universal human rights has prompted the creation of an additional layer of international law. Of course, the defense of human rights was officially enshrined as a guiding principle of the UN at its founding. Prior to the creation of the UN, international law did not include provisions protecting human rights or minority cultures or languages. The only way for minorities to protect themselves was to withdraw from the political domination of a majority and its state and develop an independent state. Today, in contrast, the UN embodies international norms protecting culture, religion, and language, so that oppressed groups have an alternative means of appealing to the international community (which has also moved from a highly individualistic view of rights to one increasingly concerned with collective rights). Indeed, the concept of human rights enjoys much greater acceptance around the globe than does the principle of self-determination.

The protection of these rights, however, is difficult from a theoretical point of view, as it requires international intrusion into the internal processes of states. Thus many implicit norms of contemporary discourse on human rights do not have binding authority over the international community. There is, however, general agreement on at least two of these norms: 1) the right to the protection and preservation of one's identity, the individual and collective value of which is becoming widely accepted; and 2) the right of minorities to participate effectively in the government that holds political power over them. What constitutes "effective" participation may vary, of course, across cases. Indeed, effective participation increasingly means more than "one person, one vote," the notion of effective participation long dominant among Europeans and Indians. Participation here does not mean that groups should have veto power over policies that affect them; rather, it means that states are under some obligation to do more than simply allow the minority to vote in a technically fair way, especially if technically fair elections result in minorities losing every election. As an implicit norm insisting on the protection of minority values and the guarantee of meaningful minority participation in politics gains currency around

the globe, the simple removal of openly discriminatory practices comes more and more to be seen as insufficient.

I suggested ten years ago that international law might in fact be developing a right to autonomy that fruitfully combines the concepts of self-determination and autonomy. While this has not yet occurred, we are moving in this direction, in part because international law is a very flexible instrument. Today, there are many international actors besides states, such as multi-national corporations, cultural communities, non-governmental organizations, and so on. Domestic non-state actors are now legitimate international players. Thus, we see how various forms of autonomy capable of both addressing human rights concerns, and legitimating the demands of ethnic or cultural groups for a voice and a presence in the international community, are coming into being. Autonomy is not an automatic solution to the international problem of “collective rights.” It is, however, likely to prove more practicable than the concepts of self-determination, ethnic homogeneity, and territorial integrity in developing new international legal norms for managing intra-state conflicts, and for encouraging new forms of government structure responsive to rapidly changing conditions in the international and domestic arenas.

Institutional Protections for Endangered Languages

Leanne Hinton

In this presentation, I discuss some of the pressures on small languages and the kinds of institutional arrangements that might be needed to preserve endangered languages, as well as some of the ethical issues raised by these institutional safeguards, including considerations of the risk of greater conflict over language rights. The Caucasus, as Johanna Nichols argues, is one of the world's residual areas, where languages have tended to accumulate over time rather than replace each other. I will begin with a rough overview of the languages of the world.

The latest edition of *The Ethnologue*, which lists all of the known languages of the world, lists about 6,700 languages, in a world with less than 250 independent states. Ninety to ninety-five percent of the world's languages have no official status in their countries. Fifty-two percent of the world's languages are spoken by fewer than 10,000 people, while 28 percent are spoken by less than 1,000 people. Eighty-three percent of all languages are spoken only in one country and thus are particularly exposed to governmental policies. On the other hand, ten languages are the mother tongues of more than half of the global population. Increasingly, we are becoming aware of the fact that many minority languages are facing extinction. It has been estimated that more than half of the world's languages will disappear in the next fifty years.

UNESCO's *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger of Disappearing* includes a list of endangered and extinct languages. *Extinct* languages are those that have gone extinct since classical times. *Nearly extinct* languages have only tens of speakers (under 100), all elderly. *Seriously endangered* languages have a more substantial number of speakers, but practically no children among them (this is one of the longest lists). *Endangered* languages have some children speakers actively using at least some vocabulary, but decreasingly so. *Potentially endangered* languages have a large number of children speakers, but lack official or other such prestigious status. *Not endangered* languages are secure in their transmission to new generations.

The number of languages known to have gone extinct in Europe since ancient times is very small compared to the number of languages currently endangered. This indicates the novelty and the currency of today's linguistic crisis. In America, language death is predicted to be ninety percent over the next fifty years. The indigenous languages of the New World are dying at a fast rate. California is one of the worst places in the world in this respect—all of the nearly fifty indigenous languages are nearly extinct. There are almost no native speakers of these languages under sixty years old. For most of these languages, there will be no native speakers left a decade from now. Many are already "silent languages,"

retained in the memories of living people but not used. While California is especially extreme, even those Native American speech communities with the most speakers are seeing their languages decline. Navajo, for example, would be classified as an endangered language, because although it has 40,000 native speakers, the number of children who are native speakers is declining (only one third of children entering kindergarten are fluent in Navajo).

Currently, community movements for language revitalization around the world coexist with these disturbing threats to language diversity. To what extent should governments and organizations get involved in such movements? To what extent should they tolerate them, and to what extent should they aid linguistic revitalization? I will first discuss some of the arguments for and against supporting minority languages. As Hurst Hannum noted, the right of a people to speak its native language, preserve folkdances, and so forth has gained wide acceptance in recent decades. Language, though, is not like folkdance, and is not treated as such by either governments or communities. Language is used to promote and enhance differences other than language, such as geography, history, religion, race, or cultural practices. Language has often been used politically to empower or disempower people. In the first half of this century, for instance, the US government pursued a policy of officially discouraging the use of minority languages. Yet, the United States has at times pursued diametrically opposite policies. The California Labor Department in the 1940s, for instance, argued that multi-lingual labor groups were preferable to mono-lingual groups, due to the belief of Department officials that multi-lingual groups of workers were less likely to organize. In another example, Japanese in San Francisco were forbidden to attend public school and were forced instead to go to private Asian schools. These cases illustrate how much recent US language policy has developed in reaction to immigration.

Other arguments against the support of small languages also have played important roles in shaping language policies. One such argument is based on the pragmatics of governance, a crucial problem in much of Africa. How do you govern a multi-lingual nation? How do you set up schools, curricula, educators, and books if you support education in all local languages? Such arguments have been buttressed by the enormous expense of translating educational materials into many languages. Another concern of governments disinclined to support indigenous languages is their suspicion that language maintenance encourages moves toward secession. Beyond this fear of separatism and secession, official opposition to government support of indigenous languages often reflects fears within the dominant language group of a loss of linguistic hegemony. Much language conflict in the US revolves around such fears. For example, in Monterey Park, California, which has witnessed rapid growth in the Chinese population in recent decades, the 1980s saw a determined attempt by the English-speaking city council to mandate the predominance of English on all signs in the city. Such repressive

language policies usually originate in a dominant group's perception of a threat to its hegemony. In the end, such language conflicts are actually about power, not language per se.

In the 1990s, treatment of indigenous languages and immigrant languages has varied widely. Earlier repression of indigenous languages has been overturned by the Native American Languages Act, which declared them national treasures and recognized the government's responsibility to work with Native American communities to protect and preserve their languages. This act was passed at the same time that arguments favoring the designation of English as the official language of the US were beginning to be heard in Congress. Of various bills proposed along these lines, the one that came the closest to passing was House Resolution 123, which would have made English the official language, required the US government to contact its constituents in English, repealed bilingual ballots, and mandated that the Oath of Citizenship always be given in English. Attempts to pass such laws and constitutional amendments are getting stronger and tend to be directed against immigrant, not indigenous, languages. Fear of a loss of power on the part of the linguistic majority, together with an attendant desire to curb immigration, drives the impetus to enact such laws.

There are a number reasons why indigenous languages have recently been treated more favorably than immigrant languages in the United States. First, in recent decades, the justice of claims by indigenous minorities of a right to speak their indigenous languages has been widely recognized. Moreover, Native Americans lately have come to be seen as a central element of the American cultural heritage. By contrast, immigrant languages are new, threaten the status quo, and are perceived as "not belonging here." In addition, indigenous languages are spoken by groups that have virtually no power in the United States, and which are therefore not seen as a threat in the same way that Spanish or Chinese speakers are.

Many arguments in support of minority languages beyond the simple invocation of the general value of cultural diversity, or the recognition of the justice of indigenous efforts at cultural preservation, have also recently been articulated. For instance, much recent research demonstrates the positive aspects of multi-lingualism. The US experiment of eradicating indigenous languages has shown that eradicating a language does not necessarily eradicate the minority group or its cultural identity. There are many groups of Native Americans whose languages have been lost and who still perceive themselves as a people with a separate identity. So the loss of language itself does not solve the problem of linguistic conflict in the way that many expected it would. In fact, people are now trying to reclaim their languages as a way of trying to regain parts of an identity that they feel had been previously lost. We are also coming to realize that in this complex world, we do and even must have a constellation of identities. Recognition of the value of multiple group and individual identities in turn fosters greater appreciation of

the value of speaking more than one language. A single individual, for instance, can be both American and Navajo. The weakening of national boundaries and the decline in some countries of a feeling of patriotic attachment to the nation-state today combines with increasing global economic interdependency to render the notion of a “national language” less important. Finally, the strengthening of support for both human and group rights adds another argument in support of the preservation of minority languages.

Many institutional supports for endangered languages have recently emerged. Not only are nations beginning to create institutions for the support of minority languages, but also pan-national organizations are forming that support some of the more endangered languages. For instance, the European Bureau for Lesser-Used Languages promotes the endangered languages of Europe and their associated cultures. The Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights, drafted in June 1996 by various groups, provides another institutional support. In the US, the Center for Endangered Languages funds the use of endangered languages in all contexts, providing grants for support work. Various other groups active in the defense of endangered languages have appeared in the past five years as well, including private foundations.

To conclude, two simultaneous trends lying on opposite ends of the political spectrum mark recent attitudes and policies toward minority and endangered languages. On the one hand, a vast crisis threatens the disappearance of over half the world’s languages. On the other hand, there is a growing movement on the parts of communities to preserve their languages, and a growing willingness on the part of governments and organizations to recognize these languages.

Identity and Ethnic Violence

David D. Laitin

Secession-seeking nationalities living in one region of a state have emerged as a major threat to peace in the post-cold war period, as witnessed in Croatia and Bosnia in the former Yugoslavia, Abkhazia and Ossetia in Georgia, Transdniestria in Moldova, Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan, the Basque region in Spain, and Chechnya in Russia. Not all attempts at secession have led to violence (examples include the attempted secessions of Quebec from Canada and Catalonia from Spain, and the successful secession of Slovakia from Czechoslovakia), but they belong to a genre of conflict that is ever-more prominent on the international stage. The destabilizing consequences of such conflict underlies the ad-hoc appearance of an international *gendarmarie* with a keen interest in cauterizing nationality-related violence before it spreads. The question thus arises: how can this be accomplished in the face of conflicts between claims for self-determination by nationalities, on the one hand, and claims of territorial integrity by sovereign states, on the other? Clashes between these two types of claims often lead to conflict, and have triggered a great deal of violence in the lands of the former Soviet Union.

An article written by Stephen Van Evera, published in the journal *International Security*, and republished in the Charles A. Kupchan volume *Nationalism and Nationalities in the New Europe*, offers a seemingly powerful answer, an answer Van Evera believes will lead to world peace. Although he discusses many issues related to nationalism and war, I will show why Van Evera's answer would lead not to world peace, but to an increased likelihood of violence. In a nutshell, he argues that autonomy should be granted to those who desire it and who pursue this desire by non-violent means. Van Evera claims that, in the end, this will result in a world in which each nation will have its own state. As we know all too well, the gruesome policy of "ethnic cleansing" encourages people to murder or expel other people from a territory in order to assure achievement of the desired end of "one nation, one state." I call Van Evera's increasingly popular alternative to violent ethnic cleansing "liberal ethnic cleansing," because it seeks the same ends without the terror. I believe this approach is wrong because it totally misunderstands the nature and origin of nationalistic ethnic groups, and is thus dangerous in its naiveté.

There are three points I would like to make about Van Evera's peace argument. His basic assumption is that peace increases when the ratio of nationalities to states is equal to one, when there are just as many states as there are nationalities. To the extent that this ratio can be brought to the value of one, Van Evera argues we increase the likelihood of peace in the post-cold war world. I would point out that 1) this ignores the sources of the numerators, and particularly how nationalities come about; 2) a high ratio of nationalities to states can be peaceful in certain circumstances, especially in Africa; and 3)

the ratio can go down without granting autonomy, but by pushing for a certain form of assimilation. One of my arguments against Van Evera is that his “solution” will raise the value of the numerator.

Van Evera relies for his definition of nationalism on what Ronald Suny has called the “sleeping beauty” view of nationalism (i.e., when you awaken a dormant ethnic group with the kiss of freedom, it will blossom beautifully as a lovely nation seeking its own state). Suny has effectively brought to bear a number of counter-arguments against this benign view of nationalism. The historical literature is filled with examples of what Suny calls the “son of Frankenstein” view of ethnicity, which suggests that ethnic identities are constructed by people but subsequently grow beyond their control. For instance, there is a research tradition in political science built on the premises of Eugene Weber’s *Peasants into Frenchmen*, which shows that the boundaries of France are quite arbitrary, and that the nationality situation in French history has been remarkably diverse.

Another important work, Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger’s *The Invention of Tradition*, demonstrates how national ideologies *followed* the creation of states, and that national definitions and cultures are quite recent phenomena. We thus see that few national myths and practices are genuinely ancient. In Africa, Crawford Young’s work, amongst many others, demonstrates why groups we tend to call “tribes” did not exist until the colonial period provided incentives to associate along tribal lines. My own research in Somalia over a number of years took me on the long road from primordialism to a more constructed view of nations. I made many observations in my dissertation that demonstrated a constructed view, but I set them in an ironic tone. In 1974, I smiled as the Somali foreign minister announced that Somalis are not African, but Arab, which got them the second highest OPEC aid package in all of Africa. I laughed at that, too, but then Arabic began appearing in the curriculum.

It was only after conducting research for an article on ethnicity that I saw the full flowering of these national ideologies. In examining the chaotic wake of the Somali irredentist war of 1977-78, I began to see the possibility that a variety of different “nations,” with different boundaries, could be configured within the territory of the Somali state, “Somali” being only one of them. There was the possibility of a break-up into a set of clans, with separate “Darood,” “Isaaq,” and “Dir” nations. Already at the time of writing, Isaaq politicians were beginning to construct a narrative of the unique characteristics of the Isaaq, which merited a separate political entity. (In the 1990s, in the wake of the secessionist “amputation” of the Isaaq-dominated former British colony from the rest of the carcass of Somalia, this narrative became widespread.) But there were other possibilities. Since Somalia claimed a national right to the Ogaden desert, it was rather an embarrassment to its leaders when officials from the United Nations High Commission on Refugees began to find significant numbers of Oromos refugees in the Somali camps. The Somali government and many strong nationalists sought to suppress this

knowledge. When they found this impossible, they began to suggest that the Oromos (because they, like Somalis, were Cushitic speakers) were really brothers, and quite distinct from the hated Amharas who currently ruled the Ogaden. An emergence of a “Cushitic” nationality was yet another possible reconfiguration.

Thus we see that nationalities, of whatever kind, are not static “things” out there waiting to be kissed back to life. Nationalities are created out of particular social and economic circumstances that divide and re-divide people in different ways; they are most definitely not mere correlates of a fixed number of nations out there waiting to be catalogued. The notion that you can count nationalities, and thus ascertain a stable numerator for use in calculating a nationalities/states ratio, is thus entirely erroneous.

My second argument against Van Evera’s claim concerns the problem of nations bisecting borders. Because the existence of a boundary alters perceptions of membership, we only see a boundary-bisecting nationality as a problem when it contributes to state-building failures. Peter Sahlins’s book on boundaries shows that the French-Spanish border which separated the Catalans has been largely unproblematic for 300 years. In fact, a border culture developed that saw advantages to being so separated. Having co-nationals across the border may be an advantage for individuals and for peace, as the example of Mexicans in the southwest United States shows. In this case, the presence of family across the border, and the possibility of leaving Mexico, serve as safety valves in Mexican politics to relieve economic deprivation at home. In my work, I found that people in Somalia, while totally nationalistic about unifying all of Somalia, were also very happy that there was a Somali community in Kenya, as this meant they could get what were called “Harrabee” passports when they were being oppressed by their own people. Many of them surreptitiously crossed the border to Kenya, bribed a sheik to sign a statement that they were born in Kenya, and received a Kenyan passport. Thus, people were able to escape oppression and travel the world because they had a co-national community outside of their own borders.

Van Evera, in support of his claim that nation-bisecting boundaries often provoke wars, cites Hungary and the Slovaks and the Russia-Ukraine boundary as classic examples of potentially explosive situations. He does not, however, cite Galicia, a large Portuguese-speaking community in Spain that has been peaceful for centuries; Swedes in Finland; nor the many nation-bisecting African boundaries Anthony Ijaola Asiwaju discusses in *African Boundaries, Barriers, Conduits and Opportunities*. I suggest that if Van Evera or his students were to code boundaries on the basis of whether or not they bisect nations, and then determine the probability of war based on these two types of boundaries, the null

hypothesis would invariably result. In short, split boundaries in themselves do not seem to pose a special menace to international peace.

My third point confronts the argument linking the “nation/state” ratio to war and democracy, which relies on two theoretical traditions. The first is that ethnically homogeneous societies are more likely to be stable democracies. This idea was initially proposed by John Stuart Mill and introduced into American political science by Robert Dahl. The related argument that democracies do not fight each other derives from the notion of “democratic peace” identified by Kant and reintroduced into current debates by Michael Doyle. The combined chain of reasoning asserts that as the “nation/state” distinction narrows toward unity for all states, the probability of a democratic world goes up, since democracies do not attack other democracies. In this world, the probability of war approaches zero.

There is both an empirical and theoretical problem with this chain of reasoning. As Lijphart has shown, consociational agreements in Belgium and Switzerland allow for democracy with more than one nation residing in the state. Canada provides another example of a multi-national state, where secession is possible, but the probability of war is about zero. These arguments also illustrate the problem of endogeneity. Perhaps democracy creates a perception of common nationality, in which case it could be argued that democracies have caused the nation-state ratio to approach one. Take the Ebonics debate in the US, for example. One could say, from a linguistic point of view, that Ebonics is further from standard English than Serb is from Croat. Or you could say that the linguistic distance between Black English and American Standard is greater than Kievan Ukrainian and Moscow Russian. Why do we emphasize our common English-speaking base in the US, while Ukrainians tend to emphasize their linguistic differences from Russians? It may be democracy, which gives us a sense of having a common American culture, even if on purely linguistic grounds our differences may be greater than ones in which the speakers see those differences as requiring separation. In the United States, democracy reduces tensions between many nationalities, rather than the opposite premise that the existence of many nationalities undermines democracy.

Perhaps my biggest problem with Van Evera’s argument lies in its endogeneity. In order to elucidate what I have in mind here, I first need to address several conceptual and empirical issues concerning the question of what nations really are. This will allow me to get to the heart of Van Evera’s argument. He proposes recognizing as independent states those nationalist groups that are nice. I suggest that this policy will in the end *raise* the ratio of nationalities to states.

The “floral” model of language proposed by Abram de Swaan illustrates beautifully the logic behind my argument. Think of a state-building nationality group as the stamen of a flower (e.g., the French of Ile-de-France), with all mono-lingual Frenchmen bounded by that stamen. Intersecting the

stamen are a set a petals (which do not intersect each other) representing linguistic groups within the state's boundaries (e.g. the Bretons, the Catalans, the Alsatians, the Corsicans). In early periods of state construction, most of the petals do not intersect the stamen. That is to say, most people in the petals are monolingual in the regional language. Those people in the union of the stamen and petal are bilinguals, and de Swaan proposes that they receive rents as "monopoly mediators" between center and region. These mediators have an interest in keeping "their" own people monolingual, so that they can receive benefits for translation.

De Swaan uses this theory to explain why bilingual cosmopolitans have a greater interest in nurturing the nation than do the peasants in the periphery who have an interest in assimilation into the center's culture. What remains unclear is why the regional population, which has an interest in becoming bilingual, supports local nationalist leaders. I contend that in fact regional populations pursue two strategies simultaneously. On the one hand, they vote for nationalist leaders. On the other hand, they privately try to learn the central language, secretly subverting the public good as defined by such leaders. They thus privately undermine the nationalist project that they publicly support, and this dual strategy of non-elite regional actors leads to very powerful national movements. If you try to be nice to the mediators, you create incentives that create more of them. This is how Van Evera's suggestion is endogenizing this ratio. Examples of cases in which incentives to nationalist leaders have created new nationalist groups are numerous, exemplifying Donald Horowitz's "law," as described in the famous Glazer/Moynihan volume. According to Horowitz, as the importance of a given political unit increases, it raises the importance of the highest available level of identification immediately *beneath* the level of that unit. So every time you grant some group its sovereignty, you unleash an independence movement at the level below. To conclude this section: if you raise the rewards for being considered a nation, the "nationality/state" ratio will rise, thereby undermining the goals of the liberal ethnic-cleansing project.

De Swaan's model demonstrates the incentives people in the regional "petals" have to bypass monopoly mediators in search of increased economic and social opportunities for their children. Assimilation creates greater social mobility, but this calls for a nuanced view of assimilation as a type of appropriation by peripheral people of the cultural repertoires of dominant groups in the center, an appropriation aimed at increasing opportunities. The secondary consequence is likely to create real assimilation two generations down the line. As a cultural investment in the interim, we get what Juan Linz calls "layered identities," where people have a constellation of identities, including regional and national ones, under the conditions of assimilation. These conditions may be far more peaceful than granting a form of autonomy that pushes minorities off into the corners of a state. Data from Tedd Gurr's *Minorities at Risk* shows that the probability of violence goes up with greater territorial

concentration. Therefore the Linz definition of assimilation is likely to be more beneficial to peace than liberal ethnic cleansing.

What might an alternative framework look like? Van Evera suggests that we should give robust guarantees of minority rights. I suggest that this provides incentives to create new minorities. Granting minority rights alone is not enough, and in some circumstances can even be dangerous. Rather, high opportunities should be provided at the center for the participation and assimilation of regional minorities. This “most-favored-lord” approach to territorial governance is the least likely to pull states apart. Moreover, minorities should be extended protection from their own monopoly mediators, a goal that is routinely overlooked in current discussions of nationality and conflict. We tend to negotiate only with the latter, while they may not represent the genuine interests of minorities themselves. Giving minorities the possibility of bypassing nationalist leaders and evading potentially violent patterns of regional political expression should be an important aim of minority policy.

The search for “real” nations living within “real” boundaries is a chimera. Legitimizing that search will exacerbate the problems we are trying to solve. Unblocking mobility opportunities for aspiring regional minorities at the center is a better strategy for national peace than promising them UN seats if they are nice.

Contested Models of Autonomy: the Cases of Quebec and Crimea

Dominique Arel

I will discuss today the problem of autonomy in two sub-state regions, Quebec and Crimea. Rather than conducting a detailed comparison of these cases, I will use them as sources of empirical evidence to illustrate a few general points about the problem of autonomy. The points I raise are thus of less ambitious scope than those made by presenters in the morning session, as I limit my comments to what I call “mobilized minorities in non-violent cases,” leaving aside for the time being the problem of a universal approach to autonomy in multicultural situations.

Let me briefly define the core terms I will use here. My working definition of *minority* is almost coterminous with the mainstream use of “ethnic group” or “nation” in the literature. This definition turns first on a belief in common descent by the group (as opposed to actual descent). With the addition of other groups through integration, a belief in common origins may be diluted or even come to be seen as less important, initiating a transition to what some would call a “civic” definition of group identity. However, we should be careful to distinguish that which is truly civic from that which is merely less ethnic, as the emergence of a civic sensibility within a region in no way resolves the problem of tensions between regional group identity and central states. Second, a group may also claim that a particular cultural marker is a crucial component of group identity. In both Quebec and Crimea, that marker is language. A third component of minority identity stems from an attachment to a “homeland,” which is at least partly mythical. While a given minority can be quite internally diverse, and many mythic elements ascribed to a particular identity may be contested within the minority group itself, I will use the term homeland in reference to a single group as an analytic shorthand.

In Quebec, the notion of the francophone Quebecois group claiming French as a marker of identity and an attachment to Quebec exceeding that to Canada is probably now believed by eighty percent of the francophones, up thirty to forty percent from a few decades ago. Conversely, the belief that francophone group identity is French Canadian—that is, an attachment based on territory—has decreased considerably, giving rise to a situation of contested identity. Now it is a political fact of the 1990s that the Quebecois view of identity clearly has the upper hand. Crimea here presents an interesting comparison. In Crimea, regional identity is more Soviet in the sense of non-Ukrainian (assuming “Ukrainian” in terms of group identity as it is commonly understood by the populace of Western Ukraine today). Crimean regional identity has thus developed in part as a reaction to claims now being made at the level of the Ukrainian state. The consensus among many Crimeans in the 1990s

is that “we” are not “Galician” or “Ukrainian” as defined in Galicia, but “Russian” in the sense of identification with language as a cultural marker.

I use the term “mobilized” in reference to groups that have access to institutions, not merely rhetoric, and thus are capable of putting immediate political pressure on a central state. Regional government in Quebec has existed since the eighteenth century, first as a French, and then as a British colony. The Constitution of 1791 first created a government in Quebec, originally called Lower Canada, and then, after 1867, the Province of Quebec. The ability to exert pressure on the central state through the mechanisms of a regional governmental structure has thus long been an institutional reality in Quebec. Crimea also has an institutional legacy of regional government, in this case inherited from the Soviet era, when Crimea was part of Russia. At first, the Soviet-era “Crimeanness” of the territory explicitly linked regional identity to the Crimean Tatars. However, all this changed after Stalin deported the Tatars in the closing phase of the Second World War, abolished Crimean autonomy, and then Khrushchev “gave” Crimea to Ukraine in the 1950s. It wasn’t until the mid-1980s and the rise of Gorbachev that the Tatars were allowed to return. When regional autonomy was finally restored in Crimea with the creation of an autonomous Soviet republic in 1990, it was in reaction to demands of local ethnic Russians, not Tatars. For political reasons, the powers-that-be in Kyiv feared that Soviet (and then Russian) authorities would demand that historical wrongs be righted by restoring Crimean autonomy within the federal structure of the Russian Republic. This has been the context of the struggle between Crimea and the Ukrainian state over the last six or seven years, though the Ukrainian state has recognized all along the legitimacy of regional demands for a governmental structure called the Crimean autonomous republic.

The term “non-violent” applies to both cases, as there has been no violence in Quebec since the terrorism of the 1960s, and very little in Crimea. The populations thus have not been “cleansed.” While Van Evera’s argument regarding the irreversibility of partition in the wake of ethnic violence and large-scale “ethnic cleansing” may be true, this argument is irrelevant to Quebec and Crimea, as no such upheaval has scarred either region.

What can be learned, then, from these two cases of minorities mobilized in non-violent, pro-autonomy movements? Autonomy for me entails three main characteristics—group status, effective forms of regional political control; and access to economic resources—as spelled out in Milton J. Esman’s 1994 book, *Ethnic Politics*. I will leave aside the economic dimension, due in part to lack of time and in part to my uncertainty as to how one can separate economic viability from the first two characteristics of autonomy. I will therefore focus on the problems associated with group status and effective forms of minority political control.

Group status encompasses psychological and political imperatives in both Crimea and Quebec. The psychological imperative derives from a group's impulse to overcome feeling like a minority, what Horowitz calls "the fear of minoritization." The political imperative translates into a perception that the group's language is endangered. In both of these cases, the perception of a threat to group language is an artifact of politics, as neither French in Quebec nor Russian in Crimea are endangered. Thus, the demand for autonomy in both cases translates into a demand for linguistic preeminence, not parity, on the territory where the minority is concentrated. Such a demand is inherently conflictual. The francophones in Quebec, for instance, demand a single, official language and completely refuse to accept second-rank status for English. This has meant that immigrants to Quebec, which has one of the lowest birth rates in the world, have had no options regarding primary language of instruction in education. Moreover, English is virtually absent from public signs. The Supreme Court of Canada has mandated the clear predominance of French on signage in the province, but the Quebecois demand "no English" to create a psychological imperative to learn only French and to underscore to everyone that Quebec is truly French. All of this generates routine social unpleasantness on the level of everyday life, such as when people refuse to speak English as a matter of principle.

In Crimea, the Russian language dominates public life, despite the fact that ethnically the population is twenty percent Ukrainian, sixty to sixty-five percent Russian, and approximately fifteen percent Tatar. Yet local demands for a still-higher official status for Russian over Ukrainian continue to proliferate, despite the near-total hegemony of Russian. Why? In Sudeten Egerland, the northwestern part of Bohemia, where no Czech was spoken historically, the smallest symbolic inkling that the use of Czech might be tolerated provoked an outcry. This is analogous to the Crimean situation: the fear that the first sign leads to a second, and then a foreign element comes in and "we" are no longer in control of "our" destiny. Predictably, this creates all kinds of indignant reactions from the other side. This pattern of conflict colors current debates in Ukraine over a future constitution for Crimea. The Crimeans demand that the Ukrainian state declare itself not only bilingual, but also bicultural, thus legally recognizing that Ukraine is comprised of two cultural groups. The latest compromise in this debate appeared in the constitution adopted last year, which remains semantically extremely vague and does not give Russian special status. The result is that Ukrainian is the only state language, and while Russian is included in a vague formulation regarding the protection of minority languages, it is nowhere explicitly given a formal legal status. By the way, the tendency of concentrated groups to protect their languages by giving them formal, legal linguistic preeminence, not parity, is the norm in the West, in countries or regions such as Belgium, Switzerland, Catalonia, and Finland.

The second characteristic of autonomy concerns the form of regional political control, and takes the form of demands by groups that they be recognized as politically autonomous entities at the central level. In Quebec, this translates into a demand to enshrine the distinctiveness of Quebec society in the Canadian constitution. This is a reaction against the 1992 bill of rights, adopted against the wishes of Quebec, which is grounded on the notion of individual rights and does not include a clause recognizing that there is one particular territory in Canada with a distinct culture where individual and collective rights may collide. The absence of such a clause has been the focus of debate over Quebec autonomy for the last fifteen years. Similarly, Crimeans demand to be recognized as a distinct “Crimean people” because of their belief that their distinct territorial identity developed over time as a part of the Russian Republic, an identity that differentiates them from Eastern Ukrainians. This demand is currently denied at the top. In both cases, claims for political control also include demands for control of migration and expression of cultural and national symbols.

Let’s now turn to regional forms of autonomous political control as seen from the perspective of the central state, whose political imperative is to attempt to smoothly integrate regional entities into the central state. The establishment of central safeguards and some representation at the center meets the first three conditions in Lijphart’s consociational model, including granting a group a veto on vital cultural issues and proportional representation in civil services. The fourth criterion of consociationalism, which is enjoying growing support in international law, is for territorial autonomy. I would argue, however, that this territorialization of political power would create conditions for an escalation of demands, especially under conditions of democratization. It also creates incentives for international actors to use these borders to justify recognition of independent states, as was the case in Yugoslavia in 1991. Whatever the normative claims for supporting secession, encouraging secession would create a domino effect and leave the basic problem of how to manage demands for autonomy unsolved. This consideration constitutes a compelling reason to develop alternative policy options.

In the case of Quebec, from 1791 in theory and in the last twenty to thirty years in practice, regional representation in the central government was guaranteed. Moreover, regional government has been led by Quebecois for the last thirty years. There are many Quebecois in the national government, and they are proportionally over-represented in the civil service. Nonetheless, in Quebec, political power has been extensively territorialized, though a national veto has not been granted the province. Some observers claim that Quebec is the most powerful sub-state actor in the world in terms of autonomous powers; but the Quebecois debate focuses on how the federal government is encroaching on provincial power. Hudson Meadwell has argued that Canada’s combination of both federalism and consociationalism explains why Quebec is the only serious candidate for secession in the West.

In Crimea, we see the opposite process. The Ukrainian state is trying to deterritorialize political power by limiting the Crimean parliament, excluding the possibility of the autonomous election of the leader, allowing no presidency, and denying the right of association to Crimean parties. The speaker of the Crimean parliament is appointed by the Ukrainian president. As David Laitin argued earlier, the state should try to channel elites to the political center. This must be done, however, while guaranteeing the rights of minorities. In short, Crimea has no real political power. Although it is wise to limit political powers in Crimea, Crimeans need to feel both that they are a part of a political elite and that they are consulted on issues dear to the region.

Is it possible to decouple political and cultural demands or to grant cultural autonomy without political powers? In Ukraine, the state should give Crimeans some opportunities to join the central elite. In Quebec, on the other hand, the balance of power lies in provincial hands. It is impossible to emasculate the powers of Quebec, as the province already enjoys *de facto* power.

Ethnicity, Federalism, and National Development: India's Institutional Design and Experience

J. Das Gupta

This afternoon I will discuss the relationship between ethnicity, federalism, and national development with particular reference to India's institutional design. India has five decades of experience with federalizing institutions in a democratic framework. The process of institutional learning, a process shaped by the context of a democracy evolving in a vast country marked by deep social divisions and distressing poverty, raises many interesting questions about the comparative analysis of national and federal development. Indeed, India's experience presents important examples of how to institutionally contain, coordinate, and accommodate—if not incorporate—regional units, some of which may be marked by an ethnic consciousness or inhabited by a set of ethnic groups tied together through a shared sense of regional belonging.

What are the implications of building and sustaining a federal polity based on democratic governance and fully competitive democratic politics in a multiethnic and multicultural environment like India? By evaluating how the process of democratic politics operates within India's federal political structure, we can analyze the balance and connections between individually-based rights of liberal citizenship and the collective rights of ethnic groups. When a multi-ethnic developing country engages in the novel political adventure of democratic federalism, where can it turn for historical models and exemplars? What lessons regarding the democratic incorporation of communities can be drawn from the history of long-established federations in the developed world? It turns out that the literature on comparative federalism does not do justice to the problems of trying to build democracy and federalism simultaneously in a poor country with India's great ethnic diversity. Does the Indian experience demand a departure from the extant literature on democratic federalism, and if so, can we draw new comparative lessons from this experience?

My major concern shall be to examine why federal institutions generally have been valued by national, regional, sub-regional, and individual actors as viable instruments for conducting politics, despite such actors' frequently expressed misgivings about both federal institutions and each other. Due to its high degree of centralization, Indians have often voiced skepticism about federalism. However, such sentiments do not constitute a practical rejection of federalism and rather should be understood in the context of the developmental requirements of India. Conventional studies of federalism tend to focus more on issues of power balancing and resource distribution between central and regional units. These studies lack sensitivity to the developmental imperatives of institutional coordination between the center, the states, and the sub-state formations as they collaboratively produce political power and material

resources. I argue that the developmental trajectory of the federal structure and the effects of concomitant political processes offer important clues to the forces that sustain Indian federalism. It is in this context that we can understand why the centralizing tilt of the Indian federal design has been accepted in practice by most of the participants in the political process. One of the benefits of a long institutional tenure is that over the last five decades almost all the parties have, at some time or other, attained power at different levels of the system, including the center. The emphasis, then, is not simply on the division of power but on the collaborative production of power.

Federal institutionalism in India has some interesting pre-independence roots. This was particularly evident at the very beginning of the nationalist movement. India's social and cultural diversity and the different timing of colonial consolidation in the coastal, hinterland, and border areas made for an uneven expression of nationalist consciousness in different parts of India. Without going into details, it may be stated that the rise of political associations in initially-isolated pockets like Bengal, Bombay, Madras and so on put leaders at a basic disadvantage in relation to the colonial authorities who commanded centralized power. By the last quarter of the nineteenth century many important regional nationalist associations came together to build one, unifying organization: the Indian National Congress. Created in 1885, the Congress initially served as an inter-regional coalition reflecting the country's cultural and social diversity.

The simultaneous need for centralized forms of power to resist English rule and for respect of the individual and group-differentiated rights of Indians led nationalist leaders both to fashion a platform of national unity and to deliberately cultivate a federal culture. From the very beginning of the Congress's organization in the 1880s, its leaders demonstrated a commitment to constitutional procedure and federal culture that continued through the drafting of India's constitution after independence in 1947. The Indian government inherited a pattern of incredible administrative disarray from the British empire that required extensive reorganization. The question was how to bring order out of chaos. In 1950, India's government was reorganized into four categories. This was not a case of federalism based on well-formed regions; rather, it was a case of post-colonial territorial reorganization related to widespread pre-independence sentiment against the adoption of a unitary state. The federalizing process unfolded in three phases: 1) federation-building and state reorganization, 1950-1964; 2) political decentralization of power, 1964-1977; and 3) federal legitimization, 1977-present.

In the first phase, from 1950 to 1964, many leaders, including Nehru, were reluctant to make a strong case for autonomy, in large part owing to fears of secessionism and violence in the early stages of independence. The new constitution with its federal provisions was introduced in 1950. The founding leaders inherited a territory fragmented into more than five hundred uneven pieces, including nine

provinces and nearly five hundred princely states and principalities, each representing diverse administrative structures and political histories. The provinces were arbitrarily created, administrative units lacking any social basis of political or ethnic unity. The reorganization of these fragments into coherent states in a federal system required a tremendous effort to reach a national agreement concerning the allocation of relative power between the union and the units. The federal leaders tried to avoid administration along linguistic lines between 1950 and 1956, but in the end, reorganization was carried out in response to popular movements advocating language-based state formation. The final distribution of power, not unexpectedly, left a long list (99) of important powers in the hands of the national government (Union), including defense, foreign affairs, and the all-important power of control over financial resources. The state list (61) included public order, public health, agriculture, and state taxes and duties. A concurrent list (52) of powers for the Union and State Legislatures that included subjects like criminal law, civil procedure, education, and economic and social planning was also drawn up. But the most controversial aspect of the distribution of powers has been the extraordinary powers vested in the national government in times of emergency threatening the nation as a whole, or during a failure of the constitutional machinery of the state.

The second phase of state formation began after Nehru's death in 1964. During the first decade following independence, the Congress Party retained a steady level of support in the Hindi-speaking states. Almost all of the prime ministers came from this area. This base, however, gradually eroded, and the Congress's regional backers began shifting their support elsewhere. This occurred following grudging concessions to certain regions by Congress leaders at the center, concessions entailing a federal reorganization granting autonomy to several linguistic states. This reorganization in fact created new, unexpected bases of strength for central leaders. The growing importance of regional forces, whether in the form of factions in national parties, or in the form of regional parties, increasingly implies that the conventional notion of an Indian "center" dominating regions in a centralist fashion needs revision, if not rejection. Indeed, the process of party pluralization has created a new fluidity at the center. Even national parties have evolved as coalitions of regional parties. The changing composition of the central coalition thus prepared the ground for a new phase of constructive collaboration between the center and the states, ensuring new inclusionary and incorporative possibilities absent during the earlier decades of single-party dominance.

The spectacular victory of a non-Congress coalition in the national elections of 1977 began a new phase of plural access and inclusion that was repeated in 1989 and 1996, ensuring a wider range of legitimization of the federal system. As new forms of access to federal power emerged, a concomitant feeling developed that it was now possible for regional powers to obtain not only large chunks of

regional state power but also of national power. Continued party alteration at the center and the state levels, as well as the steady erosion of the Congress Party's support structures, facilitated the emergence and sustenance of a new structure of support and legitimization for the federal system, as well as for the competitive institutions of democracy. After all, these institutions kept routes of access to power and incorporation in other institutions open. As central power is now within regional reach, this developmental trajectory has diluted suspicion about "over-federalization," tempering hostility toward India's relatively high degree of centralization.

What role did ethnic groups play in this process? The experience of five decades of democratization has been important for ensuring the *individual* citizen's political engagement. At the same time, the federal processes facilitated the exercise of the collective rights of groups differentiated by claims of community affinities expressed in ethnic, regional, religious, cultural, language, and other terms. The combined pursuit of these individual and collective rights by means of democratic participation was difficult, but it represented the only viable route to democratic institution-building in a country of such multiethnic and multicultural diversity. The multiethnic, multicultural context of Indian society, in turn, was itself also progressively affected by the social and political deepening of participative processes. The progressive political activation of citizens and groups was generated by widening the scope of political and economic development. This widening scope of development, in turn, resulted from the state's promotion of planned national development. Regional affinities, to take one example, have usually been expressed by political spokesmen in terms of mostly peaceful claims for autonomy, based on language, culture, and community within the federal system. The six Hindi states, with nearly forty-two percent of the nation's population, and fifteen other states containing another fifty-four percent, exemplify such institutional processing. The episodes of conspicuous violence (in Nagaland and Mizoram during the 1950s and 1960s; in Punjab between 1984 and 1991; and in Jammu and Kashmir in the 1990s) occurred in regions which together account for less than four percent of India's population—in fact, much less when one considers the large minorities (or even majorities) of opinion in these regions opposed to violence and secessionist politics. The history of international war and external involvement in Jammu and Kashmir probably makes it a special case. Also, this state has a special status in the constitution. Normal elective processes were interrupted between 1990 and 1996, though in late 1996, elections for the state assembly took place with substantial turnout, and the regional elected government is now integrated into the national government. Meanwhile, Punjab has had two elections, one in 1992 and another in 1997. The Northeastern states had regular elections, and in recent years most of these have returned to the Congress Party, though much of the rest of the country has rejected the Congress.

There is a third tier of federalism. The federal design in India adds a sub-regional dimension not normally discussed in the literature on comparative federalism. Special constitutional provisions for autonomy, group rights, and representation have been adopted for certain sub-regional levels, such as autonomous district councils. Though initially designed for the Northeastern states, these provisions have more recently been extended to some other areas. These sub-regional units will have a direct link with central authorities and can bypass the state level if they desire. It is now mandatory for all regions having democratic elections at local levels to have special linkages with central structures.

Stories of violence and secessionism make exciting press copy, but the extensive institutional processing of community demands easily escapes notice in the press and even in scholarly treatment. It is also important to note that regional units, subregional units, and local communities do not act merely to make demands on the system. They also make extremely valuable contributions to the conduct and the sustenance of both the democratic and the federal systems. At the same time, the center is a fluid body that functions as a mediator for various forms of groups, parties, and regional representation. The Indian experience with federalism has repeatedly demonstrated that yesterday's adversaries can turn into tomorrow's strong supporters. Though a constantly changing set of ethnic and regional tensions continues to buffet Indian politics, institutional mechanisms for resolving such tensions are firmly established. Finally, we need to take into account the important function of the national developmental network, in part guided by the system of planning, in creating a structure of support for federal institutions and thus stabilizing the development of Indian democracy. The structure of federal resource dependence creates a strong reciprocal relation between the center and the states, giving us a sense of what keeps Indian federalism working. The ethnic aspect is thus only one dimension of group-identity in contemporary India, a dimension that has receded to a less prominent position than what we normally encounter in the comparative study of federal politics.

Asymmetrical Federalism in Russia

Steven Solnick

My talk differs from others presented earlier today. I assume that the roster of a country, and the groups that belong within it, is more or less determined. The primary question I address is how nations stick together, not how they form. My purpose is to model as clearly as possible what goes on in negotiations over the rules of the state. In the process, I question many common assumptions about the distinctiveness of ethnic cleavages. I then discuss the puzzle of asymmetry, particularly in federal states. By this, I mean two things: the heterogeneity of regions and the asymmetry of benefits. Different territories get more from the central government than others, or pay higher or lower costs. The questions these points raise are why a strong territory would yield power to a center that could later use that power against it, and why a low-status region would settle for being viewed essentially as a second-class citizen? When looking at federations around the world, such asymmetries are quite common; substate units do not, as a rule, share the same benefits and costs. Indeed, most federations display systematic differences in status among regions and in benefits conferred. Nowhere is this truer than in Russia.

Before turning to the Russian case, first I will construct an informal framework for analyzing federations in their formative stages and the rules that govern them. Then I will examine the interplay between heterogeneous units, on the one hand, and the asymmetry of benefits that accrue to these units, on the other. I will suggest that both of these patterns of variation in center-subunit relations are important factors allowing a weak, nascent, or formative central government to hold a union together until it can accumulate sufficient power to begin evening-out some of these asymmetries. I then will discuss the importance of asymmetries for understanding the Russian case. Russia, like India before it, has embarked on a process of both federalization and democratization in the context of a poor state. What differs significantly from Professor Das Gupta's discussion of India is Russia's absence of national parties. We thus need to specify why and how the Russian state has manipulated regional asymmetries, which regions have gained advantages as a consequence of these asymmetries, how we have tended to view manifestations of the central state's pressure for symmetry, and some implications of center-regional dynamics for the future, particularly the consequences of moving too fast.

The abstract model of a federation I am using assumes that such federations contain a certain number of territories and a central government, usually as defined by previous regimes. The center and the regions engage in an on-going bargaining process over the shape of the state. The primary issues around which bargaining proceeds include: 1) which level of government has exclusive jurisdiction over which policies; 2) how conflicts over jurisdictional division are resolved; 3) how the costs of providing

the center's public goods will be divided among territories; and 4) how the public goods themselves will be divided. The first two are constitutional questions, while the latter two are distributional. The key to the argument is that the center does not need the support of all of the regions in a federation. All the center needs is acquiescence from the territories in collecting enough money to function, and the ability to exert power over enough territories to provide the public with the goods that it needs to provide in order to justify its existence and to be able to put policies in place at the central level without being vetoed. The latter matters in a democratic system, not an authoritarian one. If the parliament matters at the federal level, then the center must be able to get its policies through parliament without having them vetoed by a coalition of regions.

Coalition is the key. In bargaining, it is a tricky question to understand which actors are strong in a coalition and which have bargaining resources. The simplest answer is that an actor is strong if it is a member of many potential dominant or winning coalitions. If a region is strong, so this line of reasoning goes, it is more likely than weaker regions to cripple the center. The implication is that a strong region should receive more public goods at a lower cost as a result of its privileged status. Weak regions, in turn, should get fewer benefits at a higher cost. I will argue that this, however, is not what we see.

Essentially, I have created a matrix of regions with "high" and "low" bargaining resources on one axis, and "privileged" and "non-privileged" status on the other (see Figure 1). The key areas in this matrix are the southwest quadrant, labeled "pivotal" regions, and the northeast quadrant, labeled "alienated" regions, as they deviate from our expectations. The former has low bargaining resources and a privileged status, while the latter has high bargaining resources and a non-privileged status. Why do we see weak subunits privileged? One suggestion is that weak regions can bargain collectively. The other puzzle lies in the northeast quadrant and why supposedly strong regions are not privileged. I suggest that strong subunits can also be weakened and divided by the state through its manipulation of internal conflicts or support of sub-regional actors. This explains the relatively weak bargaining position of a region like Tiumen, an oil and gas producing subunit in a relatively weak bargaining position: by threatening to privilege sub-regional actors, the center can threaten regional leaders in Tiumen with the dismemberment of the regional power-structure itself. Thus, if we do not see a clear link between a region's bargaining power and the privileges that it receives from the federal government, then this suggests that the most interesting dimension of center-regional politics turns on *coalition bargaining*. And it is precisely in such bargaining processes that the rules governing the emerging federal structure are up for grabs.

Figure 1

**Territorial Units and Center-Regional Dynamics:
*Typology of
Bargaining Resources and Asymmetrical Costs/Benefits***

	“Privileged” Status	“Non-Privileged” Status
“High” Bargaining Resources	<p><i>“Essential” regions,</i> Coopted by Center</p> <p>(e.g. Sakha, Tatarstan, Moscow city)</p>	<p><i>“Alienated” regions,</i> Exploited by Center but also hostile to Central authority</p> <p>(e.g., Kemerovo, Tiumen’)</p>
“Low” Bargaining Resources	<p><i>“Pivotal” Regions,</i> Secure high benefits/status by a) Collective bargaining b) Strategic joining of support coalition</p> <p>(e.g., smaller republics)</p>	<p><i>“Irrelevant” regions,</i> Ignored by the Center</p> <p>(e.g., most “Red-belt” oblasts)</p>

What is wrong with asymmetry? First, it is not a stable equilibrium, as relatively underprivileged regions have strong incentives to try and attain more privileges. Second, every time a new category or incentive is introduced at the federal or regional levels, it introduces a new element over which to bargain. Thus, every time one region gets a concession from the central government, every other region wants the same concession. Several consequences follow from this. First, the texts of center-regional agreements remain unpublished, as the center tries to keep other regions in the dark about the details of such agreements. Second, some regional governments, like St. Petersburg, argue that any agreement they sign must include a clause automatically granting them any new benefits the center might offer any other region in the future. Thus we have a classic illustration of an escalating spiral, as the costs of renegotiation are prohibitively high. Third, perceptions of unfairness are particularly acute in asymmetrical situations, a fact of great importance in a democratic country. Fourth, as such perceptions often coincide with ethnic cleavages, an ethnic federation is more volatile, due to the potential for the “ethnification” of the conflict. Finally, asymmetry undermines any attempt to establish the rule of law because *ad hoc* agreements and deals are extra-constitutional. What we should see is the non-privileged regions and the center trying to eliminate the cleavage between privileged and non-privileged subunits entirely; that is, attempting to move toward a symmetrical system. Why, then, do we not see moves toward symmetry in places like Russia?

Four sources of bargaining power and asymmetry exist in Russia today. The size and population of regions constitute the first of these. Large and populous regions such as Moscow, Ekaterinburg, and Tatarstan are the most likely to be essential parties in coalitions. Second, industrial bases or extractable resources create opportunities to bargain with the center if they are revenue-generating and if they give disproportionate resources to the center. Sakha, for example, retains more of the revenue it produces from diamonds than other resource-rich regions, and thus its status is viewed as “privileged.” Third, the distance from the capital also affects the potential strength of the bargaining partner, due to increasing costs of monitoring and enforcing agreements associated with greater distances. Finally, ethnic minorities within a region affect its bargaining status: if a region can threaten to mobilize a hostile minority against the center, it has a better chance of calling the shots during the bargaining process.

What are the manifestations of asymmetry, and how do we tend to view relative privilege? First, we see asymmetries directly in the constitutional differentiation of status, such as in the class of twenty-one republics which enjoy both the status of republic, and rights to their own constitutions, their own citizenship, and, in many cases, their own central banks. This includes many smaller republics in the southwest quadrant of figure one whose claim to privileged status lies in their status as ethnic republics.

INSTITUTIONS, IDENTITY AND ETHNIC CONFLICT:

DAY TWO

Introduction

George W. Breslauer

The opportunity to organize this conference was made possible by a number of funding sources that we are especially pleased to be able to acknowledge publicly. They are the MacArthur Foundation, the US Department of Education, and in particular the Ford Foundation, which gave Berkeley a grant for a multi-year program for the study of the Caucasus that has been absolutely essential to the development of both the activities and the human capital that we have been able to generate on campus for purposes of studying the region and holding these kinds of events. We are immensely grateful to the Ford Foundation for that funding.

Yesterday, as part of this two-day conference, we focused on larger theoretical issues and case studies that transcended regions or compared different regions of the world. Today's conference is entirely devoted to the Caucasus—to the institutions, identity, and ethnic conflict in the region. The study of the Caucasus has great intrinsic importance as a geopolitical phenomenon, as global powers—including Russia, Turkey, Iran, and other countries with large oil companies—have great stakes in the region. The Caucasus is also a fascinating laboratory for scholarship, both for comparative analysis and analysis of international relations; and for testing hypotheses about the dynamics of intra-ethnic relations, inter-ethnic conflict, and interstate conflict. The region is also of great humanitarian interest, as people search for ways to alleviate human-rights violations, suffering, and injustice in an area in which all of these are so prevalent.

In that spirit, we will be making a comprehensive examination of the problem of ethnic conflict in the Caucasus today, both in terms of geographic coverage and in examining matters of identity and institutions and how they influence the appearance and escalation of ethnic conflict to violence and large-scale suffering. We will begin this morning's panel by focusing on Chechnya and the North Caucasus, where Russia has been involved in very large-scale violence.

Prelude to Conflict: Bilateral Negotiations Between Moscow and Grozny, 1992-1994

John B. Dunlop

To help paint a fuller picture, I will discuss the background to the events that developed into conflict in Chechnya beginning in 1991. Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, the former acting president of Chechnya, wrote in his memoirs that on 22 June 1991 he received a note from Sergei Stankevich, then deputy chairman of the Moscow city council, requesting a meeting in Grozny, at which he denied the full right of Chechens to self-determination and openly threatened the use of force to stop them. This indicates that less than a fortnight after Yeltsin's election, influential Russian leaders were considering armed incursions into Chechnya. The formal announcement of General Dzhokhar Dudayev's election as Chechen president on 30 October 1991 ushered in a particularly tense period in Russian-Chechen relations. Three days later, the Fifth Congress of Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic deputies, meeting in Moscow under Ruslan Khasbulatov's chairmanship, decreed that the Chechen elections were unlawful and that they directly contradicted the RSFSR constitution. On 1 November 1991, Dudayev declared Chechnya to be fully independent, a move endorsed by the new Chechen parliament. In response, the Russian leadership decided to initiate a military take-over of Chechnya. On 7 November, Yeltsin issued a presidential decree on the introduction of emergency rule in Chechnya. Unfortunately for Yeltsin and his associates, the crackdown occurred too late, for by November 1991, all federal organs of power in Chechnya had already been disbanded and all military garrisons blockaded. As Emil Pain and Arkadii Popov have noted, the suppression of Dudayev would have had to have been attempted in early October 1991, at the latest, in order to have had any real chance of success.

In response to Yeltsin's decree, on 8 November the newly formed Chechen parliament swiftly granted Dudayev emergency powers and Dudayev introduced military rule. Yeltsin's November 7 decree *inter alia* removed Dudayev from power and placed the republic under the control of Akhmed Arsanov, a Chechen deputy to the federal parliament. On 8-9 November planes touched down with RSFSR Interior Ministry, or MVD, troops in Grozny, but the Chechen national guard blockaded the airport. On 9 November a mass meeting took place throughout the day in Freedom Square in Grozny. Tens of thousands of people attended the meeting in support of Chechnya's declaration of independence and the Dudayev leadership. The threat of an invasion by Moscow served palpably to unite the Chechen people in support of Dudayev. That same day, an agreement was reached to release the RSFSR troops from the airport, and they were taken out in buses. The decisive moment in this episode was the refusal by Gorbachev, then still president of the USSR, to send *federal* Soviet troops.

During the course of his July 1995 presentation to the Russian Constitutional Court on the constitutionality of the invasion of Chechnya, Russian Deputy Premier Sergei Shakhrai noted that there had been a series of more than ten meetings and consultations between the Russian and Chechen leadership during 1992. One that he mentioned occurred 12-14 March in Sochi. The two sides agreed that agenda items for future discussion would include political, economic, legal, and collective security questions. The protocols included a point that referred to the recognition of the political independence and state sovereignty of the Chechen republic. Russian and Chechen negotiators were seeking an agreement that would have recognized Chechen independence and facilitated the development of collective security and close political, legal, and economic ties. By late March, however, there was a shift on the Russian side back toward coercion. On 31 March Moscow-backed opposition forces in Chechnya attempted a coup on the day scheduled for the signing of the new Russian Federation treaty. The clearly pro-Russian allegiance of the Chechens who carried out this coup attempt led many Chechens to rally around Dudayev in order to defeat the *putsch*.

Moscow had become an unpredictable negotiating partner. On 14 March 1992 a high-ranking Russian official from the Supreme Soviet signed an agreement that recognized the independence and sovereignty of Chechnya. On 31 March other officials in Moscow backed an armed coup aimed at overthrowing the Dudayev leadership. When the coup failed, Moscow was forced to continue the dialogue. Bilateral talks resumed on 25 May 1992 and continued for three days. In these negotiations, Moscow's representatives behaved at first more truculently than they had in March, insisting that the agreed-upon March protocol was no longer binding. The official, signed protocol of these May negotiations, however, specifically confirmed the protocol from the March meetings, handing the Chechen side an apparent victory. As now seemed to be the pattern, threats by Russia to invade Chechnya would alternate with offers to negotiate.

During the autumn of 1992, Russian vice-president Alexander Rutskoi unexpectedly involved himself in the negotiations, holding meetings with leading Chechen officials. This marked the first time that a member of the Russian executive branch joined the negotiations. These meetings led to decisions to establish both an official Chechen representative in Moscow and an official representative of the Russian Federation in Grozny, as well as to lift the economic and air blockade of Grozny. At another high-level meeting in September 1992, the first deputy chairs of the Russian Supreme Soviet and the Chechen Parliament met. By November 1992, the Russian side had grown weary of the negotiation process, and as in November 1991, a military solution appeared to be a feasible alternative. Ostensibly to combat the threat of arms coming across the Chechen-Ingush border (related to the Ingush-Ossetian conflict) and to prevent Chechens from coming to the aid of the Ingush, Russian forces moved rapidly

eastward across Ingush territory toward Chechnya on 10 November 1992. The same day, Dudayev threatened retaliation if the Russian troops failed to withdraw from land historically claimed by Chechnya. This threatened Russian invasion led also to the mobilization of the Confederation of the Peoples of the Caucasus under the leadership of an ethnic Chechen. The moment was exceptionally tense, and at one point, tanks on Russian and Chechen sides stood face to face on the unmarked Ingush-Chechen border. According to one observer, the tense standoff could have escalated into the outbreak of a new Caucasian war, which would have involved all Caucasus mountaineers in a fight against Russians, Cossacks, and possibly Ossetians. In the opinion of many observers, this war would have been far more devastating than the one that eventually erupted in December 1994, when other regions of the North Caucasus had essentially lost interest in full secession from Russia.

Yusup Soslambekov played a leading role as negotiator in late 1992 and early 1993. In late 1992, his delegation met with Rutskoï and Yuri Yarov. This followed the well-known meeting in Grozny at which documents were signed defining the basis of a peaceful resolution of relations between Chechnya and the Russian Federation. A key problem of the negotiation process at this point was that it avoided the participation of Dudayev. By late 1992, Shakhrai had reached an agreement with Chechen negotiators on a draft document, "Treaty on the Separation of Power and Authorities between the State-Governing Bodies of the Russian Federation and the Governing Bodies of the Chechen Republic." However, Dudayev rejected the negotiations and the treaty as "private negotiations." Nevertheless, negotiations continued and in January 1993 a treaty was worked out. Dudayev, however, sharply criticized it and publicly declared that he took exception to the term "delimitation of power." Dudayev's acting vice-president, Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, has contended that these negotiations sharply decreased the level of cooperation between the Chechen Republic and the Russian Federation, as compared to what had been reflected in previous agreements.

Pain and Popov have noted that the Chechen constitution of 1992 officially accorded the determination of domestic and international policy to the Chechen parliament; therefore, the negotiation of a treaty with Russia became the responsibility of the parliament, not the president. By late 1992 and early 1993, however, a sharp conflict between the Chechen parliament and president had already occurred. In January 1993, Dudayev decided again to take control of the Chechen side of the negotiation process. A large Chechen delegation with various Chechen ministers was sent to Moscow to meet with Riabov, the Deputy Chairman of the Russian Supreme Soviet, and Vladimir Lysenko, a former deputy chairman of *Goskonnats*. According to Yandarbiyev, "by itself, the process of the negotiations inspired hope." The focus of the negotiations shifted to economic and trade relations, as well as cooperation in the struggle against crime, thus postponing talks on more difficult political questions. This approach

appeared promising until the head Russian negotiator, Riabov, suddenly declared he had to consult with the head of the Russian parliament, Khasbulatov. After meeting with Khasbulatov, Riabov declared that Russia could no longer continue negotiations, as the Chechen delegation had repudiated what was earlier agreed upon in Grozny concerning the delineation of powers. In response, the Chechen delegation left Moscow. What was perhaps the most promising trend in negotiations had come to an abrupt end.

According to Pain and Popov, the leadership in Moscow hoped that the implacable Dudayev would be removed and therefore negotiated with other influential persons in order to cast doubt on Dudayev's legitimacy as Chechnya's leader. The attempt to exclude Dudayev from all negotiations resulted in an impasse. Talks with Chechen delegations continued in Moscow from January through May 1993, but once again Dudayev broke off the negotiations. The second half of 1993 brought no constructive movement toward a political resolution of the conflict.

Early 1994 brought a brief flicker of hope for productive negotiations as the two sides worked out a draft agreement that foresaw a single defense space. The Russian side, according to Chechnya's negotiators, pledged to provide the Chechen military with weapons, hardware, and ammunition; to repair Chechen military equipment; to prepare Chechen officer cadres; and that it would *not* use its armed forces against Chechnya. For their part, the Chechens agreed to participate in a common defense system with Russia against external enemies, consented to joint maneuvers with Russian forces, and agreed to the use of military bases on Chechen territory by the Russian air force during a time of war or external conflict. Chechnya also pledged that it would not enter into any military blocs against Russia and that its army would not exceed 1.5% of its population in peacetime. Unfortunately, this promising draft agreement was neither signed nor pursued further.

In February 1994, a bilateral agreement between Russia and Tatarstan brought the latter back into the fold of Russian control and left Chechnya out in the cold as the sole hold-out for autonomy. Russian officials immediately began pushing the Chechens to adopt a solution modeled on the Tatarstan agreement. According to Lysenko, the successful agreement with Tatarstan made Russian officials "dizzy with success," and as a result, they decided to force the issue with Chechnya. One can argue in hindsight that the belligerent stance toward Chechnya taken by Shakhrai, the Russian official in charge of nationality and regional affairs, rendered the December 1994 military invasion of Chechnya the most likely outcome. The period from March to May 1994 witnessed increased Russian attempts to push the issues and to adopt a "half-force" strategy, sponsored by Shakhrai, under which anti-Dudayev Chechens were to be encouraged and assisted in ousting Dudayev. There was also a well-planned attempt to assassinate Dudayev in late May 1994. By mid-July it became apparent that the Yeltsin leadership had

agreed to attempt to overthrow Dudayev in a “black operation,” as had been done successfully elsewhere in the Caucasus in 1992.

On 11 December 1994 Russian Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior units entered Chechnya. The invasion force consisted of 23,700 men, supported by 80 tanks and 208 armored vehicles. As he had in November 1991, Yeltsin disappeared from view, allegedly for a minor nose operation. A full-fledged war with Chechnya had begun.

Ethnicity, Alliance Building, and the Limited Spread of Ethnic Conflict in the Caucasus

Paula Garb

The past two centuries of history in the Caucasus offer dramatic examples of attempts to build alliances among linguistically- and culturally-related ethnic groups for the purpose of combating military invasions. These alliances have been based on promoting the idea of a shared cultural identity. There have been temporary successes, for instance, during periods of wars in the Caucasus against Russian conquests in the latter eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Overall, however, the alliances have been short-lived and not pivotal. In this presentation, I will examine the most recent, failed attempts at alliance-building in the context of the war in Chechnya. As John Dunlop just mentioned, if an armed conflict had broken out in Chechnya in 1992-93, when the situation was ripe for an alliance between Caucasian peoples, it seems that a full-blown Caucasian war would have resulted. That is what some observers, including myself, predicted when the invasion occurred. Many thought that the probability was high that the war would spread throughout the Caucasus. I would like to present a view from inside the Caucasus in order to understand why that did not occur.

To better understand why the conflict in Chechnya did not spread beyond its borders, my presentation examines the factors that have promoted and discouraged the development of such alliances. I consider the potentially powerful symbolic and affective factors that might shape a pan-Caucasian identity and alliance. I then analyze how these factors have been utilized by political activists and why attempts to mobilize a significant pan-Caucasian solidarity movement in this particular situation failed. I argue that the alliance movement, not unlike similar attempts to mobilize sustained movements on the basis of pan-national ideologies in other parts of the world, could not supersede the powerful forces of state-building in the newly-constituted republics and the attendant reinforcement of ethnic identities and particularism. No one has yet made a comprehensive comparative study of pan-national ideologies, in part because these ideologies develop in different environments and therefore, their aims, forms, and methods diverge. However, the repeated failure of pan-national ideologies displays certain similarities relevant to the situation in the Caucasus in the early 1990s. First, these movements seem to be most visible during wars and other periods when opportunities for redrawing borders are greatest. Second, they are most successful when they gain international support or the support of the states in which they arise. Third, when they fail to secure such support, or face significant obstacles at the state level, the beliefs in common roots that form the heart of pan-national movements do not seem to be strong enough to sustain themselves against competing particularist identities. As history has often demonstrated,

nationalism has a better chance of success than pan-national movements in the political arena, due to the former's ability to generate stronger sentiments and deeper loyalties.

I would like to begin by considering why specialists of the Caucasus were certain that there was a high potential for the spread of a conflict throughout the region in the early 1990s and how different groups in the Caucasus conceptualize their relationship to each other. The "Caucasian Idea" was originally based on a belief in the common roots of Caucasian peoples. Generally, North Caucasians (Chechens, Ingush, Daghestanis, Kabardians, Ossetians, Cherkess, Adyghey) and Abkhazians tend to see themselves as related to each other in terms of culture and language. There seems to be little disagreement that North Caucasians and Abkhazians share similar roots and cultural histories, and we know this is perhaps the most powerful defining factor in the politics of ethnicity. Kinship phraseology that uses the images of blood, family, brothers, sisters, mothers, ancestors, and home is a powerful tool in appealing to ethno-national sentiments. The following statement, made to me by both North Caucasians and Abkhazians, typifies these groups' sense of shared cultural roots: "Look at our dances, listen to the music, read the tales of the Narts, our legendary heroes. You can see by the similarities that we have had the same culture since ancient times." Another common argument I heard from both North Caucasians and Abkhazians about their shared pre-Russian history in the Caucasus invoked the absence of historical borders between their peoples, as though they lived in one country. "We rode our horses from one area to another, not knowing any boundaries. Under the Soviet government, artificial borders were drawn to separate us from each other. We almost forgot that we were related." Anthropologists and historians of the Caucasus also know about the widely-practiced customs of fosterage, adoption, and intermarriage across Caucasian language groups, customs that were practiced in order to forge strong bonds and alliances among these diverse groups.

The idea that the Caucasian peoples were genetically and culturally similar was never officially denied in the Soviet Union. Indeed, the Caucasus was designated a separate historical-cultural region, thus promoting the notion of a common ancestry among the Caucasian peoples. Even today, this notion is widely promoted in Russia, no doubt unintentionally, by the newly invented bureaucratic term *litsa kavkazskoi natsional'nosti* (literally, "people of Caucasian nationality," a designation lumping all Caucasian peoples together, including the peoples of the Transcaucasus).

However, when I asked people "who comprises 'the Caucasians'," everyone had a different list. Nonetheless, there does not seem to be any ambiguity among Circassians (Abkhazians, Abazins, Adygheys, Kabardians, Cherkess) about common roots. Bagrat Shinkuba, a prominent Abkhazian poet, told me that in the 1970s he was first made aware of the extent to which some Circassians had maintained this sense of common identity throughout the Soviet period, despite extant borders and all

attempts by the Soviets to weaken and obliterate the sense of kinship. When Shinkuba was visiting a Kabardian village, one elder told him that in all likelihood the elder was an Abkhazian and Shinkuba was a Kabardian. The elder then proceeded to tell the confused writer a story of how, long ago, a vendetta was about to be carried out between a Kabardian and Abkhazian family, and that it had the potential to turn into warfare between the two peoples. In a successful effort to prevent such developments, the elders of both communities agreed that one hundred Abkhazian and one hundred Kabardian mothers would be blindfolded and exchange their infants, thus making the peoples relatives and therefore exempting them from the rules of blood revenge. That is how it was entirely possible that Shinkuba could very well be a Kabardian and vice versa. Similarly, an Abkhazian friend in her late thirties recently told me that when she was a child, her grandfather, a prominent academic, continually reminded her that Abkhazians had ethnic relatives in the North Caucasus. “My grandfather would often tell me, pointing to the veins on his arms, ‘Don’t ever forget that we all have the same blood running through our veins.’”

Another factor in the strength of the Caucasian Idea is a sense of a common history of oppression. The Caucasian wars provided a strong symbol to the peoples of the North Caucasus and could well have served as a spark to ignite the region again. In fact, the shared history of oppression is the most common justification offered for the need for a pan-Caucasian movement. The organization that reflected these ideas most prominently and which played the largest role in trying to unite the Caucasian peoples after 1989 was the Confederation of Peoples of the Caucasus (CPC). In the end, it included Russians and all peoples living in the Caucasus. The CPC was founded after riots occurred in Abkhazia in July 1989. When fighting erupted between Georgians and Abkhazians, several dozen young North Caucasians spontaneously went to support their “ethnic relatives.” They said that they came with the blessings of their elders, who told them it was the right thing to do. This sparked the idea of building a confederation of peoples that would come to each other’s aid in such situations. Because of the escalating conflict with the Georgians, Abkhazians were the most active organizers. Due to their own independence drive, Chechens were also heavily involved in the leadership. Both Abkhazians and Chechens were motivated to mobilize their related Caucasian neighbors because, among other things, they sought to tip the balance of power in their favor by multiplying their numbers with the help of a solidarity movement.

However, building unity quickly proved difficult. In addition to representatives of indigenous related linguistic groups, the North Caucasus is home to a number of other language communities, most notably Iranian and Turkic peoples with their own histories and cultures. Moreover, tensions between several of these ethnic groups have long and complex histories. For instance, conflict over disputed

territory between the Ossetians on the one hand—with their Iranian-speaking, Christian heritage—and the Ingush on the other—with their Veinakh-speaking, Muslim heritage—constituted a primary impediment to Caucasian unity. In addition, the leaders of the CPC had their own interpersonal conflicts. Despite the power of this “Caucasian idea” in building an alliance, by the winter of 1994, when the war in Chechnya began in earnest, the CPC—the only Pan-Caucasian effort that had remained on the political scene for any length of time and the only one with any experience as a military alliance—was clearly not a force to be reckoned with in the North Caucasus.

The reasons for this breakdown in solidarity are complex and interrelated but resemble dynamics that have led to the demise of earlier pan-national movements in other regions. These dynamics precluded the likelihood that the peoples of the republics neighboring Chechnya would cross state boundaries to fight against the Russians. Among the factors that undermined pan-Caucasian support for the Chechen cause was the experience of many pan-Caucasian militants in Abkhazia, an experience which directly deterred them from fighting in Chechnya. Those who actually fought in Abkhazia were unwilling to fight again. Even more important to our discussion, in the time I spent in the area before and after the war in Abkhazia, I was struck by the degree to which the wars reinforced the *specific* identities of the Chechens and Abkhazians. These two ethnic groups had been the most prominent leaders of the pan-Caucasian movement, and the shift in their own identities towards a more particularistic ethnic direction clearly affected the alliance. Russia’s demonstration of military power also was a major factor discouraging the military involvement of any group otherwise inclined to show solidarity with the Chechens.

Earlier, I discussed how people conceptualize their common roots as part of “the Caucasian Idea.” Now, let’s consider what divides these groups. After all, we tend to hear much more about what divides ethnic groups from their neighbors than about what unites them. A common remark among my informants, no matter where they lived in the North Caucasus, was “The Caucasus will never unite because we’ve been divided beyond repair, so much that we cannot trust one another. Besides, we can never fully unite because not only Caucasians live here, but also large Russian communities. And the Cossack movement is being revived.” An Ingush physician had the following to say about Chechen and Ingush culture and why they cannot coexist:

We have clans that represent contradictory political and economic interests, and different religious trends within Islam. Islam is not the unifying force it was in the nineteenth century. My cousin and I are of these two different groups. KGB agents among us use this small religious difference. They say to him, “You’re more pure than your cousins” and they say the same to me. This makes us want to fight each other. In the Caucasus we can be like roosters or cocks ready to attack one another over the slightest

provocation. I would like to be able to resist this provocation, but we have our interests to protect.

Similarly, an Adyghey graduate student complained about Caucasian men no longer being real Caucasians as an explanation for why they were not helping the Chechens:

Caucasians will never fight the Russians *en masse* because they have degenerated. They no longer follow their ancient traditions to the extent necessary for men to take up arms on a scale that would be meaningful. Our men say they are ready to fight for their ethnic brothers and cousins, but few really are. I suppose this makes their mothers happy, but to me it is a sad state of affairs.

Finally, the following comment reflects how several Abkhazians interpreted their shared combat experiences with the North Caucasians and whether or not they grew closer or farther away from each other as a result of these experiences: “In the battlefield we got closer to our brothers from the North Caucasus and our diaspora and realized how very different we were. It’s like marriage. When you become close you learn about a person’s shortcomings.”

The conflict between the Ingush and Ossetians was one of the biggest obstacles to the CPC’s success. No matter how hard it tried, it could not pacify the representatives of these two peoples. When I went back and forth between Ingushetia and Ossetia, I was struck by the similarity of the comments made about the other group. Here is a typical statement I heard on both sides of the Ingush-Ossetian border: “They aren’t like us. They are tricky and thieves. They reaped all the benefits of the republic, lived much better than us, and then they turned on us.” I grew confused, because I quickly became unsure of who was dominating whom.

I would like to conclude that pan-Caucasian ethnic identity is at best embryonic, and it is doubtful whether it will ever really congeal, though we continue to witness endless talk about how to create or revive such an identity. I do not think we have heard the end of the story, because with the end of the war in Chechnya, the situation may change again. However, the divisive lessons of the Soviet and pre-Soviet periods are still deeply ingrained. The boundaries that lie between these peoples are largely the same as they were under the Soviet government. Many of the key decisionmakers are also the same. The elite of the republics feel that Russia still provides them with more stability than they would enjoy if they broke from Moscow. Furthermore, even if this dependence were to decline and economic and political incentives for secession were to multiply, Russia’s demonstration of its willingness to use military might to quell the Chechen independence movement has discouraged any North Caucasian group, alone or aligned with others, from launching a military operation against Russia.

The absence of a strong pan-Caucasian identity and movement is further reinforced by the process of state-building and privatization and by the preference for individual ethnic identity over a common Caucasian ethnicity. This process obviously limited previous efforts to forge a pan-Caucasian alliance. The internal interests of each group were primary in forging the alliance and were dominant in motivating the alliance, but it was precisely this self-interest that ultimately doomed the alliance effort to failure. Ostensibly the alliance was an integrative enterprise, but in fact the particularistic interests of the separate groups were the primary roadblocks that impeded its success. The wars in Abkhazia and in Chechnya dealt the final blow, further reinforcing particularistic forms of ethnic nationalism among these diverse peoples.

Chechnya in Regional Comparative Perspective

Gail W. Lapidus

The dissolution of the Soviet Union, although remarkably peaceful by comparison with Yugoslavia, has been accompanied by a number of serious, and in some cases deadly, conflicts. While the overwhelming majority of cases have been managed peacefully, serious armed clashes broke out in twenty places, and six conflicts escalated into regional wars that involved regular armies and heavy arms—in Karabakh, Abkhazia, Chechnya, Tajikistan, Transdniestria, and South Ossetia. It is significant that all except Tajikistan have involved conflicts over sovereignty demands by former autonomous republics of the Soviet Union or—in the case of Transdniestria—regions whose populations constituted ethnic minorities in the newly independent states. Even before the brutal destruction in Chechnya, the toll had already mounted to some 60,000 dead or missing, over a million refugees, and severe economic devastation, not to mention the crippling effects of these conflicts on the development of democratic institutions in the region. While the number of casualties is still a subject of controversy—with a million people left homeless, the number of refugees in the hundreds of thousands, and the capitol city of Grozny and countless smaller towns and villages virtually destroyed—the war in Chechnya has been the most serious of recent conflicts on the territory of the former Soviet Union since the Second World War. It remains unclear whether the peace agreement bartered by General Alexander Lebed in the fall of 1996 will hold.

One of the fascinating challenges for social scientists is how to explain both the relatively peaceful process of accommodation and the cases of violence that have accompanied the break-up of this enormous empire. I hope to use the conflict over Chechnya to illuminate some broader trends in the Caucasus, as well as in the former Soviet Union. As a result of the break-up of the USSR, we have seen a number of political entities emerge on the territory of the former Soviet Union claiming sovereignty on the basis of the right of self-determination and exercising *de facto* control over territories. Often, this has occurred following a military success, with some degree of ethnic cleansing. There are currently a number of quasi-states ostentatiously draped with the symbols of statehood, none of which are likely to be recognized by the international community. Karabakh, Transdniestria, and Chechnya are similar in these respects.

The emergence of these quasi-states, all of which have very indefinite status, must be placed within the context of the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the struggle over who owns what. The disintegration of the Soviet Union involved two interconnected sets of processes which, for analytical purposes, can be distinguished from each other. First, the Soviet Union's dissolution left fifteen independent states within the borders and territories of the fifteen union republics. This process,

precipitated by the emergence of national movements, and in some cases, their radicalization, was preceded by protracted but unconsummated negotiations over a new federal union. The sudden, secret, and improvised character of the Belovezhsky Agreement establishing the Commonwealth of Independent States—which dismantled the Soviet federal structure practically overnight—played an enormous and very positive role in defusing tensions that had steadily grown between Union republics from 1984 to 1991. Had the long, protracted negotiation process continued, it likely would have culminated in a Yugoslavia-like scenario. The Belovezhsky Agreement is a historic achievement that secured the relatively peaceful dissolution of the Soviet Union and the recognition and legitimization of its constituent republics as new states by the international community. Rather than the culmination of independence movements, the peaceful negotiations to dissolve a federation into its constituent parts gave juridical and political support to the emergence of new states. It has also proven a barrier to challenges made to existing boundaries, most notably in the case of demands by extreme nationalist forces within the Russian Federation.

At the same time, a second process occurred partly parallel with, but distinct from, the first process. This second process began during the Soviet period and involved challenges to the political sovereignty and territorial integrity of several new states. In some cases (Tatarstan), these challenges have been resolved peacefully through agreements. In other cases, (Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, and Russia), nationalist secessionist movements operating on the basis of self-determination have emerged and escalated into violent challenges to extant borders. Sometimes, these challenges have succeeded on the strength of their own military capability, and sometimes with the aid of outside military forces. Such movements have been operating in an environment rife with opportunities to achieve long-desired ambitions. In the cases of Abkhazia and Karabakh, military success spearheaded processes of ethnic cleansing, which have eliminated potentially contentious ethnic groups. It remains unclear whether these quasi-states are merely a transitional form or whether they will become stable, endure, and eventually achieve some degree of international recognition.

I will focus on the case of Chechnya to illustrate several of the factors that culminated in political, and ultimately violent, conflicts in these areas. In all of these cases, the broader context was created by *perestroika*, which provided both an impetus and an opportunity for national self-assertion. These opportunities spread from the union republics to the autonomous republics, and to other institutional units in the Soviet federal hierarchy. When we look beyond the process of mobilization on national grounds to the question of why secessionism took the form that it did in Chechnya, we observe several factors that played roles here and elsewhere.

Only Chechnya and Tatarstan refused to sign the new federal treaty of the Russian Federation, and in the case of Tatarstan, a power-sharing agreement was ultimately negotiated without violence. Why was Chechnya the only holdout? First, the underlying legacy of antagonistic group histories—the relationship between Russians and Chechens which goes back to the Russian conquest of the Caucasus in the nineteenth century, and the Chechen leadership’s response to Russian conquest—contributed to the Chechen call for independence in 1991. Immortalized in popular culture through the literature of Lev Tolstoy, the Chechens were symbolic of the heroic struggle to preserve independence. This historical experience was mobilized in the contemporary construction of Russian and Chechen identities as imperialistic invader and heroic freedom fighter, respectively.

Second, Stalinist repressions, which took a particularly brutal form in Chechnya in World War II, exacerbated national tensions. In the context of allegations that the Chechen and Ingush populations had collaborated with the Germans, the republic was abolished and the population, roughly half a million people, was forcibly deported. It is estimated that one-third of the population died while being deported to Central Asia. It was only under Khrushchev that these people were posthumously rehabilitated and the survivors allowed to return to their homeland. Crucially, the trauma of exile strongly influenced General Dudayev himself.

Third, the structural legacy of Soviet nationality policy combined the ethno-territorial structuring of the Soviet system with repression of national aspirations, and meant that no mechanisms were ever developed for the peaceful resolution of conflicts within a broader political context. Historical grievances and Soviet policy reinforced and contributed to the preservation of clan structures and group identities in Chechnya. All of this was facilitated by low levels of industrialization and correspondingly low levels of Russian settlement in Chechnya. Among all the autonomous republics of the RSFSR, Chechnya also had the second-highest concentration of the titular population (70 percent) and the lowest use of the Russian language by a titular nationality.

Finally, I would argue that geopolitical factors played an important role in raising the stakes of the Chechen conflict. Due to its oil resources, Chechnya’s status was a major concern to Russian elites. Also, its external border made its drive for independence more viable than Tatarstan’s. While Tatarstan had a strong incentive to negotiate with Russia, Chechen leaders felt emboldened by their tactical advantages into taking a more intransigent stance.

All of these reasons, however, cannot explain the disastrous descent into total war in Chechnya. I would emphasize that the decisive factors driving the escalation of conflict were the nature of the transition, the attendant policy fluidity, the conflict of elites in both Russia and Chechnya, and the political process that made negotiations very difficult both between the Russian and Chechen leaders,

and among Russia and Chechnya's internal constituencies. Furthermore, the international community, which played an extremely constructive role in other newly independent states, failed to intervene in the conflict. Moreover, the Russian elite failed to take advantage of a number of potential avenues and standard mechanisms for resolving the conflict peacefully. Several proposals to use third parties as mediators were systematically rejected by Moscow, while bilateral negotiations at the top level were never conducted because of the decision to isolate and ostracize Dudayev. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the United Nations could have been used as mediating bodies, but the Russian elite resisted this course as "outside interference." Then Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev summed up the attitude of Russian leaders when he said that settlement of the Chechen conflict was an "internal affair" of Russia and "we need no foreign mediators to help us." Consequently, a variety of possible tools to resolve the conflict were ignored. Finally, the international community did not pressure the Russian government on this issue, and by December 1994, had lost whatever opportunities existed to avoid the conflict.

In view of the enormous potential for instability and violence that followed the break-up of the Soviet Union, it seems to me remarkable that the process of adjustment and accommodation in most cases has proceeded peacefully thus far, especially given that times of transition are periods of particularly great vulnerability. Given the relatively peaceful way accommodation has been managed over much of the former Soviet Union, we need to explain the episodes of violence as exceptions. First, I would focus particular attention on elite strategies and choices, which have played a decisive role in processes culminating in violence; and second, I would focus on the role of international actors and organizations. Such actors deserve a good deal more attention than they have received, especially in light of the way they have influenced elite strategies to accommodate minority groups in Ukraine and the Baltics. The very strong desire of new states to join the international community, through international institutions like the Council of Europe and even NATO, creates enormous incentives to comply with international norms on minority rights and creates opportunities for an extraordinarily intrusive role for international institutions like the OSCE and the UN.

Russia has been a notable exception, because of the rise of strong right-wing political forces and the fear on the part of international organizations of confronting Russian definitions of its own sovereignty. In general, conflict-prevention efforts have thus far been relatively successful, while international intervention following violence has been relatively unproductive. Where international organizations have intervened early in the conflict, they have been more successful. Where they have waited until after violence, as in Abkhazia and Karabakh, it has been extremely difficult to find ways to operate constructively. There was no effort to intervene to prevent the conflict in Chechnya, although I

would argue that the OSCE Mission played an enormously important role once the negotiations launched by General Lebed got underway. The OSCE Mission provided transparency, negotiating mechanisms, and guarantees that agreements would be carried out. I think the OSCE presence led to the success of those negotiations. Moreover, the expulsion of the mission and Russian resistance to its playing a continuing role is now once again exacerbating tensions between Grozny and Moscow. This is a very brief overview of the issues, but I hope that it will direct our attention more closely to the causes and mechanisms that have produced violence in a few areas of the former Soviet Union, and to the mechanisms that have tended to produce accommodation and the peaceful resolution of conflicts in the majority of these areas.

War and the Politics of Non-Natural Language Endangerment in the Caucasus

Johanna Nichols

In discussing the linguistic situation in the Caucasus one must first comment on the term “language.” Concerning the Caucasus, the question constantly arises whether two different groups are speaking dialects or two distinct languages, and linguistics provides no clear demarcation between languages and dialects. Suffice it to say that the vast majority of languages identified as such in the Caucasus *are* separate languages. Today I will focus on the maintenance of these distinct languages. *Language endangerment* refers to any process or situation that threatens the future survival of a language: a language that is endangered is not being transmitted; is not being transmitted in its entirety to younger generations; or is not functioning as an everyday vehicle for communication. In the US, endangered languages include all of the indigenous languages of the Americas, the vast majority of which are now extinct or are on the verge of extinction. Most immigrant languages in this country are also endangered and are eventually lost as the population assimilates; of course, in broader perspective, the languages themselves are not endangered as they have surviving speech communities abroad.

What does language endangerment have to do with the ethnic and political future of the Caucasus? Language distinctiveness is an important component of a distinct ethnic identity. If people cease to speak their ancestral languages, they will sooner or later cease to have distinct cultures and they will lose the trait that most obviously distinguishes their cultures from the dominant culture, which in this case is Russian.

Speech communities in the Caucasus range from a thousand or a few thousand speakers up to a few million. Large national languages, such as Georgian, Armenian, and Azeri, have a few million native speakers. The larger languages of the North Caucasus tend to have a few hundred thousand or about a million. Chechen is the largest, with a million speakers before the recent war. There are several languages that have numbers of speakers on the order of around ten to fifty thousand; a few have only a couple to a few thousand; and there are a few one-village languages whose entire speech community is limited to one village in the highlands. All of these languages are still being transmitted and spoken actively as the main vehicles of communication.

As far as we know, the Caucasus has been a hotbed of rampant linguistic diversity for millennia, with many different languages representing many different language families. If you look at the map of ethno-linguistic groups in the Caucasus (page viii), you will see that there are three language families in the Caucasus that can be regarded as indigenous and have no relatives outside the Caucasus. The Abkhaz-Circassian, or Northwest Caucasian language family, which is probably somewhere between

three thousand and six thousand years old, has a strikingly different grammatical structure from any other language to be found in the entire Old World. The Kartvelian, or South Caucasian, family, around four or five thousand years old, includes Georgian and three others, all of which are spoken almost exclusively in Georgia. The Nakh-Dagestanian, or Northeast Caucasian, language family has a large number of branches and daughter languages, many with very small speech communities. It is around six thousand years old. Also spoken in the Caucasus are languages from various branches of the Indo-European and Turkic language families, and the Mongolian language Kalmyck is spoken near the Caucasus. All of these are non-indigenous language groups in that they have kin and traceable origins outside the Caucasus. Representative languages of these groups, however, have been spoken in the Caucasus for centuries or even millennia (Ossetic, which represents the Iranian branch of Indo-European, may have been spoken in this region for as long as two millennia).

Language shift is the process whereby the speakers of one language become speakers of another language. This is a gradual process, occurring over the course of several generations, and is most often driven by the spread of bilingualism. Examples include language shifts from Irish and Welsh to English, and from Gaulish to Latin under the Romans. Language shift is a good example of natural language development “on the hoof,” when people shift from using one language to another not through coercion, but because they make up their own minds about what is beneficial to them economically and culturally. Time and again we see that the economically or politically dominant language, that is, the language that is used as a vehicle for inter-ethnic communication, wins out and spreads by language shift.

An interesting linguistic geography existed in the traditional Caucasus, mirrored in other mountain areas of the world, in which languages tended to spread uphill whereas people tended to migrate downhill. The reasons are mostly due to the relationship between climate and economics. In recent centuries the highlands generally have been economically weak, due to shorter growing seasons and lack of winter pasture, while better conditions downhill meant that the lowlands were economically strong. In this situation, the lowland language automatically dominates and spreads to the highlands, as it represents economic strength and facilitates inter-ethnic communication. In addition, in many highland communities of the Caucasus, men typically migrated downhill during the winter for jobs, leaving the women and children in the highlands. Such men typically became bilingual and accustomed to speaking lowland languages. When they returned to the highlands, they presumably continued speaking lowland languages with each other, at least on occasion, out of habit. Gradually the entire highland community became accustomed to hearing the lowland language, began speaking it at home, and eventually shifted entirely.

The modern linguistic map of the Caucasus shows the results of this process: there are still pockets of one-village languages in the highlands, and there are lowland languages with tens to hundreds of thousands of native speakers that are spreading uphill. There are no one-language lowland communities, and there are no large languages found exclusively in the highlands. This is natural language endangerment due to natural language shift. Such shifts seem to have happened in mountain areas everywhere, dating back to antiquity.

In addition, there are certain respects in which highland languages have long been functionally restricted. *Functional restriction* occurs when a language ceases to be used in certain, but not all, functions. A language that is used in the home but not in public discourse is functionally restricted, as is one used for oral but not spoken communication, for fiction but not expository prose, for secular but not religious activities, or in daily life but not in education. Long before the Russian conquest, there was a certain amount of functional restriction in the Caucasus, affecting certainly the highland languages and probably several of the lowland languages as well. The language used for reading and writing was usually Arabic; languages of the North Caucasus were generally not written. The languages used for inter-ethnic communication were in general not the highland languages but the economically-stronger lowland languages.

For reasons having to do with geography, the entire north Caucasian steppe has tended (at least for the last few millennia) to be occupied by a single language family at any one time. Thus, the lowland languages have tended to be closely related, in contrast to the diversity found in the highlands. In recent centuries, one or another Turkic language has functioned as the local inter-ethnic language across most of the north Caucasian foothills. The Turkic languages are quite closely related and have some degree of mutual intelligibility, so that anyone who knew a Turkic language could communicate with a good many different mountain peoples. This fact in itself has favored the spread of Turkic languages in recent centuries.

Functional restriction is not without its implications for linguistic structure. The work of Malcolm Ross on languages of small communities in New Guinea has shown that, in cases where both a local indigenous language and a language of interethnic communication coexist, the interethnic language usually influences the ethnic language and not vice versa. In addition, it is known that written languages generally influence spoken languages. Therefore Caucasian languages that do not function as inter-ethnic languages—i.e., highland languages—are subject to powerful influences for change, and their grammatical and lexical structures change subtly but inexorably in the direction of the lowland languages.

Throughout the Caucasus, language and national identity have not been equivalent. There is no clear and consistent analogue to national identity in the traditional North Caucasus. Ethnic identity is a complex, layered entity, with adherences to the clan, the clan confederation, the village, the larger village alliance or market community, the broad but very real community of North Caucasian mountaineers, and (in recent centuries) the community of believers of one's own religion. The boundaries of ethnic identities are less well described than linguistic boundaries. Languages have not always been objects of obvious loyalty, nor have they always been considered to be identity markers. There were no written languages in the North Caucasus traditionally, while in the southern Caucasus, Georgian and Armenian have long traditions as written languages, which has fostered their retention and has given them important status in ethnic identity. Local languages were not traditionally vehicles of education at any level, at least in the North Caucasus, where (with some exceptions in eastern Daghestan) education and writing were traditionally in Arabic. Recourse to a language like Arabic reflects long-standing practice in areas where local languages do not function as the language of education. Thus, many indigenous languages in the Caucasus were functionally restricted, a restriction that became a salient liability once education became widespread. Women and others who did not travel, hold jobs, or receive an education constituted a monolingual population for whom the language was not functionally restricted, and this fact probably stabilized small languages.

For one-village languages, as for small populations everywhere, the chances are relatively high of outsiders marrying into the community. In the Caucasus, it was almost always the women who married into communities, and where this entailed a language difference such women learned the languages of their husbands' communities, but probably spoke their own language to their children. Thus there was some incidence of bilingualism, and its statistical effect could have been appreciable in small communities.

So far I have provided examples of natural language shift and natural language endangerment. Natural language endangerment arises wherever non-coercive functional restriction and non-coerced or non-engineered economic or social advantage have favored shifting to another language. *Non-natural endangerment* is brought about through coercion or artificial restriction of the functional possibilities of a language. There are several ways that languages can become endangered and even extinct by means of non-natural endangerment. First, of course, language extinction can be brought about by the extermination of a language community through genocide. Second, the scattering or marginalization of the speech community is an effective vehicle of language endangerment and an effective facilitator of language shift in the long run. For example, the Circassians have seen their speech communities scattered substantially by conquest and deportation over large territories, and this has threatened the

viability of Circassian. In cases of scattering, many individuals speak their ethnic language natively and record it as their native language on census returns, but are in fact Russian-dominant bilinguals; i.e., bilinguals for whom Russian is the default vehicle of speech and thought and the ethnic language is used only when specifically needed. A scattered language community has many contexts in which the ethnic language is not used and tends to contain many bilinguals dominant in the other language. For these reasons, scattered communities typically do not retain their languages for long; they shift to the dominant language, regardless of the speakers' linguistic or ethnic loyalty.

Third, artificial narrowing of the functional use of a language is another means of engineering language shift. Soviet language policy engineered functional restriction of non-Russian languages. For instance, it restricted non-Russian language use in education, restricted the number of songs that could be sung in the ethnic language at concerts or on commercial recordings, encouraged non-Russian language use in fiction and poetry but not in scientific or expository writing, and so on. Anecdotal evidence indicates that these various quotas and restrictions were followed with particular zeal in the Caucasus.

Fourth, stultification of a language can also lead to endangerment. Examples of stultification include the bastardization of a language in textbooks and publications, the marginalization of it within the academic community, publication of poor language descriptions and inept dictionaries, and so on. All of this makes a language appear primitive and makes it difficult to teach, especially at the higher levels that are critical to development of the full spectrum of modern functions.

Even orthographies can have some bearing on the survival potential of a language, depending on the sociolinguistic circumstances of the language. A cumbersome and phonetically irrational system of orthography is in itself no obstacle to the maintenance of a language. Witness English and French, neither of which has a rational orthography and both of which are in very strong sociolinguistic positions. A cumbersome or difficult orthography can, however, be an obstacle to viability of a language if the speakers do not have the opportunity to develop the firm visual memories, or "word pictures," that are required for proper spelling and fluent reading of a language like English. This is exactly the situation of functionally restricted languages. Beginning in childhood, word pictures are developed through education in the language and everyday use of the language in reading and writing. If the position of the language in education, publication, and public discourse is marginal, speakers do not have opportunities to develop word pictures. Unless the orthography is closely adapted to the sound system of the language, people spell badly and read haltingly. Most adults, given the choice of using a native language which they speak fluently but in which they are marginally literate, or using a non-native language—Russian, in the case of the North Caucasus—in which they are fully literate, will opt for the fuller literacy in the non-native language. In effect, the very spelling system itself can be either a spur or

a hindrance to literacy in a given language. The more ready availability of full literacy in Russian is another powerful force inclining individuals and families toward shifting to Russian, again regardless of how strongly they identify with their own ethnic group and its language.

Many of the Caucasian languages have complex consonant systems that lend themselves poorly to the Cyrillic alphabet. Techniques for spelling complex consonant systems using Cyrillic tend to involve digraphs and trigraphs of kinds not otherwise customary for Cyrillic. This means unwieldy spelling, inefficient writing, and obstacles to the development of word pictures. Vowel alternations can also pose problems where the system of vowels is not in itself problematic for spelling. Consider the “e” in French, which is sometimes pronounced and sometimes silent: How do you predict the spelling and decide what and how to spell, unless you have internalized word pictures? Or consider the very different pronunciations of the various vowels imposed by stress shifts in English *photograph* and *photography*: spelling derivatives correctly requires ready access to a word picture for the base word. Alternations of these kinds—and they are common in the world’s languages—make for clashes between phonetic spelling and word-based spelling. Clashes are usually resolved (in viable orthographies) in favor of word-based spelling, but internalizing word-based spelling requires long-term and regular exposure.

Currently none of the north Caucasian languages have long-standing or indigenous orthographies. Some systems were devised in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but were supplanted by Latin and then Cyrillic orthographies devised in the prewar Soviet years. Debates about spelling reforms and alphabet shifts continue, and it is hard to decide whether a major orthographic improvement would improve or worsen a language’s prospects for survival. The resultant spelling might be less cumbersome and more nearly phonemic, thus less dependent on word pictures for efficient usage, but a change of orthographic norms—or worse yet a change of the entire alphabet—would strand all generations past school age, remove whatever word pictures they already have, and thus threaten the already marginal literacy and weaken the position of the language. Spelling reforms have been proposed in post-Soviet years for a number of languages of the North Caucasus, and it is hard to say whether they would be benign in outcome.

All of these considerations—scattering or dilution of speech communities, narrowed functional range of languages, stultification of languages and descriptive traditions, clumsy orthographies—are factors edging people toward abandoning their native languages as vehicles of writing and large-scale communication. All of them are factors over which people have some control, but mustering that control and engineering language development in the desired direction require a degree of organization and a wealth of resources rarely available to small language communities even in the best of social and economic circumstances.

What about violent means of language endangerment? War itself does not generally kill languages, although there are extreme examples of whole speech communities being destroyed by war or other violence. The near-extinction of Yiddish speech communities under the Nazis is probably the most extreme example of violent language death in our century, extreme because of the former number, size, and viability of the speech communities. I believe the only case of violent language death in the Caucasus is the virtually complete extinction of Ubykh, the language of a formerly sizable Northwest Caucasian group which was subjected to genocide and scattering during the Russian conquest of the Caucasus. The speakers were not completely killed off, but the survivors were scattered and assimilated linguistically to their neighbors. For the most part, wars in the Caucasus have not directly killed off languages through genocide, but social and economic chaos and out-migration in the aftermath of war have weakened the status of languages on their own turf and have edged people toward language shift or abandonment of their native languages. Thus, languages that survived the Russian conquest, the functional restriction and stultification of the Soviet years, and even the 1944-45 deportations have seen their positions weakened drastically in recent years.

Consider the case of Ingush and Chechen. Both bore the brunt of the mid-nineteenth century Russian conquest and underwent deportation. The deportations scattered language communities and were accompanied by proscription of the languages as vehicles of education and literacy, and they created an entire generation of Russian-dominant bilinguals. These are people who, though fully fluent in Chechen or Ingush, tend to use Russian by default, and they can be counted on to raise children who are primarily Russian-speakers, unless the wider community fosters regular use of Ingush or Chechen. In cities with Russian populations, this has indeed occurred, where there were young people who spoke Chechen or Ingush natively but with restricted vocabulary, imperfect command of complex sentence structure, and sometimes with Russian accents. I believe the recent war and the emigration of many Russians from cities in Chechnya have reversed this situation, but it has not been reversed in Ingushetia to my knowledge.

The recent spate of conflicts in the Caucasus has had little direct effect on language viability. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has not weakened the linguistic status of either Azeri or Armenian, but threatens to redraw the language boundaries. In Ossetia, the conflicts have not weakened Ossetian at all. In fact, they have prompted the out-migration of South Ossetians—many of whom were shifting to Georgian—to North Ossetia where they or their children will take up Ossetic speech again. In Abkhazia, war has not notably weakened the status of Abkhaz or Georgian. The Ingush-Ossetian conflict has exacerbated out-migration of Ingush from Ingushetia and weakened the survival prospects of the Ingush language. In Chechnya, the war with Russia has stopped the Russification process dramatically. To

avoid being dragged into the conflict by Russia, however, the Ingush publicly emphasized their distinctness from the Chechen, intensified Russification, welcomed investment and business ventures from outside of Ingushetia, and cut back the use of Ingush in the schools. Therefore, the future prospects for Ingush preservation have been dramatically weakened by a war in which the Ingush were not participants. (I should perhaps note that Ingush and Chechen are very definitely different languages, though closely related. There is a clear ethnic difference, and throughout their recorded history, when afforded the possibility, they have taken different courses on matters that can properly be called national. Though both resistors, they were not allies in the resistance to the Russian conquest of the mid-nineteenth century. They parted company as nations at the first opportunity in 1992. All in all, they are best viewed as distinct nationalities, though closely related and on good terms with each other.)

In general, the Caucasian languages with speech communities that number in the millions—namely, Georgian, Armenian, and Azeri—are in a very strong position for at least the first half of the twenty-first century. Those with hundreds of thousands of speakers are in fairly strong shape for the foreseeable future, with the possible exception of Ingush. For those with fewer speakers the prospects are unclear and probably variable. In the long run, the survival of languages in the Caucasus depends less on the direct avoidance of warfare and violence than it does on the prospects for economic stability, peace, jobs, a secure financial future in one's own community, and education in one's own language—in short, the same things that keep speakers of languages at home anywhere on earth.

The Politics of Representation in the Abkhaz Conflict

Catherine Dale

In contrast to other speakers on the panel, I will be focusing on one particular set of events. In August 1992, Georgian troops marched into the Abkhaz capital, Sukhumi, and within hours the Abkhaz leader called for full-scale mobilization. The Abkhaz withdrew from the city, and through the course of the next year three cease-fire agreements were made and broken. The battle raged until September 1993 when Abkhaz forces, with a degree of Russian backing, took the Abkhaz capital back and drove the Georgian forces back across the Inguri River. Almost four years later, a relatively effective cease-fire agreement is in place, enforced by Russian-backed CIS peacekeeping troops on the ground together with unarmed UN observers. But there has been no political resolution of the conflict. Instead, negotiations and most of the conflict-resolution rhetoric of both scholars and practitioners have focused on the political status of Abkhazia. Discussion has been restricted to two mutually-exclusive solutions: full independence or Abkhazian autonomy as a constituent part of Georgia. As negotiations have proceeded in fits and starts, each side has accused the other of “ethnicizing” the conflict, thereby making it all the more difficult to resolve.

One of my goals here today is to question how we tend to frame this conflict and its aftermath. I would like to analyze the Abkhaz case as a means of taking apart the discursive construction of ethnicity. In defining ethnicity, I exclude the notion of primordial identities or the search for the supposed “true origin” of the ethnic identity of either side. Rather, I am concerned with the way that political claims are grounded in and articulated through frames of specific narratives of violence, history, and identity. Furthermore, I am interested in how these narratives work strategically to provide answers to the two critical questions in the case at hand: the questions of ethnic borders and ethnic membership. These questions form the symbolic crux of the conflict. I thus propose an investigation into the construction and grounding of ethnic narratives, an “analytics of dissent” borrowed loosely from Nietzsche by way of Foucault. I suggest that intricate, mutually-exclusive representations of history and violence, representations made tangible through association with the material world and articulated by some of the figures actively engaged in conflict and negotiations, proves critical in understanding what is “ethnic” about the conflict and therefore help us to map possible solutions. I first note the zero-sum nature of negotiations; then I trace the distinct representations of history, as well as of the conflict itself and its aftermath, invoked by the antagonists.

For the most part, the negotiations themselves have been a conversation about the political status of Abkhazia. The new Abkhaz constitution states that “the republic of Abkhazia is a sovereign,

democratic, legal state established according to the rights of peoples to free self-determination” and “the territory of the republic of Abkhazia is entire, inviolable, and inalienable.” When I interviewed members of the Abkhaz government during the summer of 1996, everyone with whom I spoke insisted that, fundamentally, the Abkhaz are interested only in horizontal (that is, state-to-state) relations with Georgia. The foreign minister said, “while even one Abkhaz is living, we will not become part of Georgia.” A draft Abkhaz settlement at that time proposed a federative union, which represented a concession, moderating the previous Abkhaz insistence on confederation. The difference is mainly semantic, as both terms provide for one internationally-recognized state with one UN seat, but with all power vested in two horizontally-positioned governments, with one mutually-approved agreement that is superior and hierarchical in assigning certain realms of authority to central powers. Basically, the relationship between Tbilisi and Sukhumi would be that of equals. For the Georgians, the fundamental point is territorial integrity, which is based on the 21 December 1991 borders. The Georgian side accepts “the fullest autonomy” for Abkhazia, including that of language and political institutions, but only within the borders of Georgia. The Georgian constitution deals with Abkhazia only by mentioning that there are two state languages in Abkhazia, and does not even attempt to tackle territorial or status issues. From the official Georgian point of view, the bottom line is essentially that anything but horizontal relations would be acceptable. The conversation is thus at a standstill.

The goal of my current research project is to map the factors driving these negotiations. My first task is to reconstruct Abkhaz and Georgian narratives of history. Through the telling and re-telling of the history of Abkhazia, scholars, politicians, activists, and even people on the street have all contributed to the construction of these narratives. The stories tend to converge on a restricted set of themes, repeatedly reciting the same element and thus assigning it a general significance over time. Stories on all sides imply a natural legitimacy for their interpretation, a legitimacy justified by certain kinds of associations that either validate or invalidate the story.

The Abkhaz side emphasizes first of all that Abkhaz and Georgians are of different ethnicities and speak different languages. There are great efforts to stress the commonality of the Abkhaz language with those of the North Caucasus and their great distinction from the Georgian language. A second important point invoked is “1200 years of independent statehood” and an Abkhaz empire, including a great deal of self-determination in the Georgian Empire. They insist that Abkhazia joined the Russian Empire on its own, not as a part of Georgia. Another aspect of the Abkhazian historical narrative focuses on their forced resettlement within the Ottoman Empire in the mid-nineteenth century. This aspect of the Abkhaz narrative implies that by all rights there would be far more Abkhaz here if history had proceeded normally, and that the current population count is both anomalous and fundamentally wrong. They draw

attention to the Georgian imperial takeover of Abkhazia in 1917 and insist that the legal association between Georgia and Abkhazia is Stalin's doing. Georgianization policies are emphasized in this narrative, especially those from 1937-53. The Abkhaz also contend that Georgian constitutional arrangements in the end left Abkhazia out, in effect giving the Abkhaz the right to adopt their own legal structures and constitution. There is a narrative that explicitly describes an independent Abkhaz territory going back thousands of years, a territory illegitimately taken from Abkhaz control in which the rightful population has been artificially diminished. This narrative stresses that the internationally recognized borders inherited in the wake of the post-Soviet collapse are really a Stalinist construction, and therefore, illegitimate.

The Georgian response to these same points contends that both Georgia and Abkhazia have ancient histories but essentially that they have been culturally one people for thousands of years. Abkhazia was a political construct, and the key feature of the mainstream Georgian narrative therefore focuses on the shared culture of the region. It asserts that the incorporation of Abkhazia in 1917 was based not on imperialism but on anti-Bolshevism. It contends that Georgia should not be held accountable for Soviet policy that came from Moscow, such as the Georgianization policy. It also holds that the immigration of ethnic Georgians into Abkhazia was not the fault of the Georgians, but rather due to labor needs. In the end, they also stress that the 1989 census shows that Abkhaz represent only a small minority (17.8%) of the population of Abkhazia in any case. Today, these two historical constructs directly and starkly confront one another. They tell the same story, only interpreting the same events quite differently. Representation, not statistics, becomes the arbiter of truth.

My next task is to reconstruct the narrative account of the Abkhaz-Georgian conflict of the early 1990s. For the Abkhaz, the war concluded with victory; for the Georgians, the end of the war represented a triumph for mindless destruction and chaos from which no one will benefit in the long run. A principal issue here is the framing of the violence, and particularly the invocation of the term genocide as the last word in Abkhaz and Georgian accounts of the conflict and its nature. The Abkhaz view maintains that Georgian troops are responsible for endless physical torture and dismemberment of ethnic Abkhaz, along with the destruction of cultural monuments and records, in an intentional campaign to eradicate the Abkhaz people. The Georgian story also compiles lists of horrors and contends that ethnic Georgians were forced to flee Abkhazia on ethnic grounds, which constitutes genocide or, at the very least, ethnic cleansing. The embellishment of these narratives with specific details and the testimony of witnesses renders them all the more powerful. Georgians say that it is an Abkhaz-specific policy, carried out by Abkhaz scholars, to inculcate the notion of a mono-cultural Abkhaz nation. Both genocide and ethnic cleansing have become an almost incidental part of the rhetoric of scholars and practitioners on

both sides, including top-level politicians such as Edouard Shevardnadze. The point is to note how widely the terms “genocide” and “ethnic cleansing” are used by different participants, and how this use is grounded by reference to specific acts of violence that most everyone can personally recall, has heard about from some friend, or can easily imagine because the narrative imagery is so vivid.

A third common element of both narratives focuses on the aftermath of the conflict. The key questions in dispute concern ethnic borders and populations—in particular, how they are named and bounded, who belongs where, and who should decide. These questions arise in the course of complex discussions involving not only Abkhazians and Georgians, but third parties as well. Through the telling and re-telling of the history of Abkhazia, the reality of the situation on the ground also works to name and bound who is who and where they belong. The question of who is an “Abkhaz” versus who is a “refugee” remains contested. The most hotly disputed issues concern the previous Georgian population of Abkhazia, and especially the Georgian population of the Gali district in south Abkhazia. During the war, much of the Gali district’s population fled across the Inguri River. Since the cease-fire, many of these refugees have ventured back, but who has returned and who left in the first place remain hotly disputed. In the November 1996 Abkhaz elections, official figures for both residents and eligible voters were contested, as the determination of who counts as a member of the legitimate population, and therefore who can vote, radically effects the outcome of any election. At the same time, the Georgian government held a plebiscite on whether parliamentary elections should be held in Abkhazia before territorial integrity is restored and repatriation occurs. Georgia gives a contested figure here as well for the results of that vote. Again we see that statistics are not the arbiter of truth on either side.

A further example is a recent Abkhaz survey project which asked real or potential members of the population of Abkhazia what they thought of the Abkhaz government, the legitimacy of the Abkhaz constitution, the causes of the war, and about their own citizenship. This survey conflates issues by confusing the responses of the returnees with the attitudes of the displaced persons in Abkhazia as a whole. To further complicate the picture, most of the residents of pre-war Gali were neither Georgian nor Abkhaz, but Mingrelian. After the 1926 census, that category ceased to exist on official Soviet censuses, so actual population numbers become confused. There is much rhetoric on how the Abkhaz are becoming Mingrelianized and the Mingrelians are being Georgianized, such that it becomes problematic to trace origins. A specifically Mingrelian identity is becoming part of the rhetoric. Zviad Gamsakhurdia, the late Georgian president, was a Mingrelian, and the memories of the civil war remain quite sharp and are often rehashed among Abkhazians, in effect limiting support for Shevardnadze there.

Another issue in the differing narratives of the post-conflict period concerns the role of peacekeepers and who enforces borders and group membership. Peacekeepers are well positioned to do

this. The United Nations has a mission of 136 observers who monitor a Commonwealth of Independent States force of 1,500 to 2,200 people. They are deployed along the Inguri River, which separates Abkhazia from Georgia proper. Georgia had opposed the *de facto* recognition of this division of territory because it seemed to recognize the Abkhaz victory. Regardless, UN peacekeepers are highly visible in patrolling the security and restricted weapons zones and keeping tabs on CIS peacekeepers. The peacekeeping forces work to name and bound on two levels. First, through representation they become a focus for Georgia's frustration and reluctance to ratify and continue the CIS mandate in the area. For Abkhazia, the UN represents justice, marking off the border and essentially working to protect Abkhazia. The UN peacekeeping force thus works to name and bound both through its close ties with Russian troops (troops implicated in Georgian eyes by their intervention on the Abkhaz side during the conflict) and through the *de facto* demarcation of the Inguri River. So the UN is restructuring the political context, not only through its involvement, but also by becoming a part of the narrative of both sides.

In general, my purpose was not to reify ethnic categories, but rather to trace ways in which the rhetorical constructions of ethnicity are grounded in history, violence, and the physical presence of people in conflict situations. I suggest that what we see is a constantly renegotiated exercise in naming and bounding categories, where certain representations tend to become powerful and thus persistent. Those representations in turn are grounded in material things and in the physical bodies of the people who are being defined. I hope these observations will help us reconstruct how the Abkhaz-Georgian conflict developed and why it is not an ethnic conflict pure and simple. Moreover, I hope I have shed light on the nature of the cultural frames that participants in the Abkhaz-Georgian conflict bring to the negotiating table.

Nationalism and Subnationalism in Georgia

Ghia Nodia

I will speak today about nationalism, subnationalism, and ethnic identity in Georgia. According to the last Soviet census, in 1989 there were 5.4 million people living in Georgia, seventy percent of whom were ethnic Georgian. The other thirty percent included Armenians (approximately 7.5 percent), Russians (6.5 percent), Azeris (5.7 percent), Ossetians (3 percent), Greeks (1.9 percent), Abkhaz (1.8 percent), Ukrainians (1 percent), Kurds (0.6 percent), Jews (0.5 percent), and others (1.5 percent). Each of these peoples has its own identity, and these identities are related to some political definition of their role and place in the world of nation-states. Additionally, there are regional, sub-ethnic groups of Georgians, such as Mingrelians or Adzharians. Each Georgian has a regional, or sub-ethnic, identity. This second level of identity may also be or become a political problem. Today I would like to try to draw a map of nationalism, subnationalism, and ethnic identities.

Rather than expand on theoretical points, I simply begin by assuming that *nationalism* means the existence of a political project of representing and organizing a group calling itself a nation. It is based on the belief that each nation should have one political unit, Georgia for Georgians, Armenia for Armenians, and so on. I call *full nationalism* or *complete nationalism* that kind of political project which both demands fully independent statehood as a right and has clearly articulated a nation-building project recognized as such by the international community. Full nationalism is based on the belief that “there is nothing between our nation and the world; primary sovereignty lies with our state.” Nationalism invariably includes a vision demarcating enemies and allies. It carries with it a view of the general type of country “we” should be and what “our” place in the world is in terms of culture and civilization, be it European, Muslim, or whatever. The strength of nationalism correlates with its ability to override other political or economic considerations.

There is only one full nationalism in Georgia, Georgian nationalism, based on the idea that anything less than full statehood is unacceptable. Building a nation-state is thus its central aim. There is a more or less clear understanding of the political enemy, Russia, because Georgian independence means independence from Russia. It does not mean that Georgians hate ethnic Russians. In a sense, Georgia and Russia have a complicated, love-hate relationship. However, in the political project of Georgian nationalism, Russia is *the* enemy. All other enemies are imagined as branches of this main adversary. For example, all ethnic minorities have been portrayed as Russia’s agents or accomplices. The main ally is the West, because the dominant orientation of the Georgian elite is Western and because of the

Georgian aspiration to be a Western country. Georgia wants to be democratic, not because Georgians are democrats by nature, but because it is not possible to be Western today without being democratic.

There are two specific features of Georgian nationalism that are important: it is non-imperialist and non-assimilationist. From the point of view of the Abkhaz, however, Georgians are imperialist, a view also held by Russians who empathize with the Abkhazians, such as Andrei Sakharov. What do I mean by non-imperialist, then? What makes Georgian nationalism non-imperialist is the acceptance of the border inherited from the Soviet period as clearly demarcating the land that Georgians claim by right of history and the simultaneous renunciation of any territorial claims beyond these borders. From the Georgian perspective, Abkhazia is a historical part of Georgia, which is why we want it to remain a part of Georgia, not because we want to conquer it. Georgian nationalism is more self-centered than imperialistic; it is not interested in helping others. It is not happy when others attempt to assimilate themselves within it. Some representatives of minorities in Georgia, especially the Armenians and Ossetians, wanted to assimilate, but Georgians resisted their attempts. This distinguishes Georgian from Turkish or French nationalism, which are very assimilationist.

Within Georgia the second nationalism is Abkhaz nationalism, which is not “complete” in the sense that the Abkhaz have not articulated a clear, unambiguous political project. Abkhaz nationalists are preoccupied with the preservation of their ethnic identity and feel a threat from Georgian nationalism to their group identity and their future existence. The Abkhaz political project thus shifts with the immediate situation. In 1989, a congress of Abkhaz people called for the unification of Abkhazia with Russia. However, at other times they have called variously for full independence or for a federation or confederation with Georgia. A political project of state-building is thus not the central focus of Abkhaz national awareness. What is clear, however, is that the Georgians are the enemy. Abkhaz identity thus comes into being as the antipode to the “enemy” Georgians, an image that has evolved on the basis of historical experience. The historical Abkhaz Kingdom was part of the Georgian political realm. If we apply the Gellnerian distinction between “high culture”—culture based on cultural literacy and nobility—and “folk culture” to historical Abkhazia, we immediately see that Abkhaz high culture is indistinguishable from Georgian high culture, because there was no Abkhaz alphabet and literacy was achieved only recently. The Abkhaz nobility was culturally and politically part of or close to the Georgian nobility. Ethnically, however, the Abkhaz people are not Georgians. They are linguistically different, and their kings lived in the North Caucasus.

This cultural and historical duality created today’s problem of Abkhaz identity. When the Abkhaz identity began to emerge at the end of the nineteenth century, it was marked by a dual orientation. The minority believed the Abkhaz future lay with Georgia, while the majority saw Abkhaz

identity as separate, on the basis of its folk, or popular, culture. This ethnic revival ultimately favored the Circassian identity, to which Abkhazians are ethnically and linguistically closest.

Among Abkhazians, then, differing opinions exist regarding the Abkhaz relationship to Georgia. The internal problem that the Abkhaz face is to define themselves as non-Georgian, because Georgian was the high culture from which they had to emancipate themselves as a distinct community, a problem shared by the Ukrainians vis-à-vis the Russians. This was exacerbated historically by political problems and by the period of resettlements and abuse of the Abkhaz under Soviet rule. The Abkhaz blame the Georgians for Soviet oppression because Stalin and Beria were ethnically Georgian. The bottom line for the Abkhaz is to escape assimilation into Georgian society. They have two allies: the people of the North Caucasus, based on culture and kinship; and Russia, based on political alliance. However, these allies also have created problems for the Abkhaz identity.

Ossetian nationalism exists in both North and South Ossetia. North Ossetia, which lies in Russia, is Ossetia proper, in the sense that the majority of Ossetians live there. Georgians are not the primary enemy for Ossetians as a whole. As relative newcomers in the North Caucasus, Ossetians often feel isolated for cultural and linguistic reasons, and tend to see Russia as their major ally and protector, especially against other northern Caucasian groups. This explains why they do not show intense resentment of those Georgians who live in South Ossetia, who are simply one among several groups of “bad guys,” indeed, far from the worst. The worst are the North Caucasians, particularly the Ingush. The territory’s name is the primary political problem for Ossetia, as is the case in the conflict between Macedonia and Greece over the use and meaning of the term “Macedonia.” Indeed, territorial names are clearly very sensitive political issues. Since one group of people, separated by an artificial, political border, shares the same name, the primary political project inevitably becomes the unification of north and south. However, North Ossetia never really supported the idea of full independence, as it was always an ally of Russia. For Georgians, the name Ossetia legitimized the unification project and thus has been viewed as a Russian creation to divide Georgia. In terms of peacemaking efforts, the situation in Ossetia is much more advanced than in Abkhazia, but the cornerstone issue remains the problem of how to name South Ossetia.

There are a number of different ethnic groups in Georgia, although not all have supported separate, nationalist aims. The second- and third-largest ethnic groups now living in Georgia—Armenians and Azeris—did not support local drives for a distinct nationalism; rather, they supported the nationalist agendas of their “mother” countries. There was some fear of Armenian irredentism in the south part of Georgia adjacent to Armenia, but as a local Armenian nationalist movement failed to

materialize there, no real ethnic political problems developed. Moreover, in these two cases, each minority's "mother" country is interested in maintaining good relations with Georgia, and vice versa.

The "good minorities," from the Georgian perspective, are those who are not and cannot be imagined as having territorial claims. Their role is to allow the Georgians to demonstrate how well they treat their minorities. This is important, given claims that Georgia is an "anti-minority" state. Jews are clearly the favorite minority because they are the most loyal and do not claim any territory in Georgia. There are also Kurds who, in Georgia, are considered a very good minority because they do not claim any territory, even though elsewhere, where they do have territorial claims, they are considered very bad. Finally, Greeks fall within the category of "loyal minorities."

Last but not least, there are also sub-ethnic identities, or so-called "second-layer" identities, in Georgia. Some have become or may become problematic. Three are now considered to be problematic: the Mingrelians, the Suans, and the Adzharians. The former two are problematic due to linguistic differences, as their languages are incomprehensible to other Georgians. Some linguists, including many in the West, say that Georgians are oppressing these sub-ethnic groups by forcibly assimilating them. In particular, the linguistic differences give Mingrelians and Suans a feeling of being quite distinct from Georgians. As a result, the Mingrelians and Suans are the most nationalistic of these sub-groups. This is especially true in Mingrelia. During the civil war, Zviad Gamsakhurdia was based in Mingrelia, and part of Mingrelia was *de facto* separated from Georgia. This raised suspicions in Tbilisi of a Mingrelian separatist agenda. At the same time, however, Mingrelians themselves are proud of being the most loyal minority to Georgia and the best Georgian nationalists. Indeed, there has never been a separate political ideology of "Mingrelianism."

Fragments and Forms: National and Supernational Identities in Georgia

Ronald G. Suny

You may be surprised by my presentation, which delves back into medieval history to make a point about the fluidity and constructedness of identity. People often think about nations as natural, given, ancient, primordial; on the other hand, scholars often talk about them as imagined, constructed, and modern. Professors like to grade nations, sometimes on a scale of incomplete, old, and a little bit older. Israel is a real nation, Palestine—not quite. Maybe Georgia and Armenia can be considered nations, but Central Asian states are seen as newcomers and therefore not taken as seriously. It seems to me that all of this is mistaken. My book, *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, was criticized because a book about the “making” of Georgia should be a book about ancient history and not about modern Georgia. The point that the reviewer missed is that I was arguing that nations are largely modern constructs, largely a product of the last 200 to 250 years of history. They exist within a particular discourse of the nation, a particular way of thinking about political communities that is quite distinct from the way people in earlier periods thought about political communities. So today, I will try to take us back to see what pre-modern people thought about this particular Georgian community, and then perhaps comment on how Georgians came to be where they are today.

Let me first say a word about identity, because this word has become so popular in current academic circles and has seen such wide usage of late. “Identity” today does not resemble what we once took it to be. In the past, the word identity denoted the stable core, the center of who “we” were as a person, as a group, or as a nation. It was a reliable and stable position. Given the way people now think about social categories, identity has today taken on a much more fluid meaning and offers at best a hope of provisional stability in a world of change. It promises us an understanding about ourselves and an awareness that we have made some kind of choice about our identity. In either case, identity tells us who “we” are and who “they” are. Identity is thus always about difference and distinctions between in and out, we and they, us and them, and “the other.” People need some kind of provisional identity to predict others’ behavior and determine their own interests. Identity gives one a repertoire of practices and a means of identifying and interpreting the actions of others.

We are particularly interested in identity because we are living in a most unstable world, the world of the modern and post-modern condition. Identity-searching is related to the destabilization of social categories and the de-centering of the individual subject that has accompanied the move from easy, realist, objective, and positivist confidence in a world of bounded categories, toward a world in which we see these categories as socially and culturally constructed. Academics seek to reconstruct the

genesis of such categories and explain the reasons why they resonate in a given social context. Now, even the most radical advocate of a constructivist view of social categories recognizes that identities cannot easily be taken on and off, like a piece of clothing, and thus are not completely arbitrary. The questions at the heart of our investigations is why do some identities prove durable, and how do they mesh and conflict with other kinds in the layering of identities?

In general, identities are formed within broader universes of understanding or meaning, what today are often called “discursive formations” or “universes of shared meanings.” They are reproduced, if they are durable, through practices of various kinds. They are durable insofar as they go unquestioned, forming a “taken-for-granted” element of prevailing common sense. The real trouble comes when they begin to be questioned, as in the present time. Zygmunt Bauman has argued that the modern problem of identity has long been a problem of constructing and maintaining solid and stable identities, while the new problem of post-modernity is how to avoid fixed boundaries and keep options open.

It would be easy enough to look at almost any nation and see the way in which self-representations of identity change over time. In Georgia and the Caucasus in general, an area in which identities have been unusually fluid over its extremely long history (4,000 or 5,000 years, with 1,500 years of written history), there is a highly differentiated population living with mutually non-intelligible languages, as Johanna Nichols and others discussed this morning. Yet, those different languages did not always correlate precisely with political and cultural identities. Indeed, polyglotism, in the form of the use of a *lingua franca* and the learning of the languages of your neighbor, has been a common feature of Caucasian societies for centuries. Secondly, when many states thrived in the area, as in the ancient medieval periods, or when the tsars’ or Soviets’ empires consolidated political power over the region, the Caucasus witnessed an unusual amount of mobility and interaction, in the sense of changing languages, identities, cultures, and even religions. This was especially true in the towns, which were remarkably multilingual and multicultural. Social democrats, including Lenin, thought Tiflis (Tbilisi) and Baku provided a model for the future in which people learned to get along with each other. For much of its history, Tiflis was either a Muslim city, as many in the Caucasus were, or Armenian; it had an Armenian majority and mayor until the Revolution in 1917. Even in the Soviet period, children in Tiflis could speak Russian, Georgian, Armenian, and Azeri.

Identification with clear, fixed territories is largely a product of the Soviet period. Under Soviet nationality policy, territory was increasingly identified with a singular, titular nationality. The history of the place became identified with the titular nationality that lived there, not the history or literature of the peoples who lived there or of literature written on that territory. The Soviets thus nationalized territory

and territorialized nationality, which of course created the problem of disenfranchised minorities. Minorities became minorities because they were no longer identified with the dominant nationality, and in many cases they saw their only protection as coming from the imperial Russian power.

What kinds of identities and self-representations existed in Georgia before Russian and Soviet rule? Much of the evidence is found in the early Georgian chronicles. The first thing that is evident about how educated Georgians in the medieval period viewed themselves is the closeness of the major Christian communities in the Caucasus. These communities lived in complex, continuous symbiosis in a changing world that involved intimate interrelations (intermarriage was common at the highest levels), the blending of cultures and cultural practices, migration, and the fluctuation of frontiers. Neither Georgia nor Armenia was for long unified under a single ruler. Indeed, many principalities existed at any given time, often at war with one another. Loyalty was always to the local lord, rather than to any national community spanning frontiers.

Rather than cultural or linguistic signs of loyalty, in the medieval period we find that religion served as the key aspect of identity. Georgia converted to Christianity in the fourth century and shortly thereafter developed its alphabet. Georgians employed Armenian models in developing a written language, as these were close at hand and had developed somewhat earlier. The Georgian and Armenian churches were practically identical until the sixth century, when the Georgian, Eastern church—the Kartvelian—freed itself of Armenian dominance and identified itself with the Greek Orthodox church. In the eleventh century, again we note the closeness of Georgians and Armenians. Georgians in this period were even labeled by later Georgian nationalists as “Armenophiles.” Both dynasties claimed descent from the House of David, and thus, as true Christian powers, they claimed legitimacy through their supposed descent from the ancient Jews of Israel. The earliest Georgian text, *The Life of the Kings*, tells how the ancestors of Georgians and other Caucasian peoples all had a single forefather, Torgama, a descendent of Noah. Thus we see that the earliest known Georgian historian, writing around 800 AD, was no nationalist; rather, he faithfully received and transmitted the Armenian version of regional identity, though modified for a Kartvelian audience.

In the second stage of Georgian history, the High Middle Ages, more and more distinctions were made between Georgians and Armenians. These Georgians, the Bogratids, increasingly perceived the Kartvelian identity as distinctive, emphasizing language, historical tradition, and their distinct religion. Descent from the great legitimizer, King David, was emphasized over biological descent. The Bogratids established the autocephaly of the Georgian church, as they now had their own legitimate state and their own dynasty. Thus it was a short step to the creation of an independent church. In the Bogratid period, we thus see the beginning of the symbolic exclusion of Armenians from a distinct, pre-national,

ethnically-Georgian identity projected mythically back into the past. Above all, this new identity also represented a kind of ideological independence.

The new ways of understanding Georgia that developed in the High Middle Ages were subsequently intensified by early modern nation-makers in the third stage, which began in the eighteenth century. At this time, Georgian nation-builders appropriated the more exclusive Bogratid view, in the process progressively forgetting connections between inter-Caucasian civilizations and emphasizing the continuity of their independent and separate existence. This occurred at the moment that nationalism was beginning to develop in the West, and constituted a re-imagining of an ancient people as a nation. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries witnessed a forgetting, a selective silencing, a repression of the ways in which Armenians and Georgians were interconnected, and instead saw a rendering of the other as foreign. In the Georgian sense of self, Georgians are always a very generous people, with whom others could always come and live, as Georgians see themselves as receptive and amicable hosts. Armenians would recall that guests do not stay forever and might always be asked to leave.

It is a very different thing for people to see these places as common to all than to see them in a very territorialized, nationalist way. Though this latter tendency has a long pedigree, it is neither natural nor inevitable. In the case of Armenia and Georgia, this sense of self, of being different from those around, is clearly traceable back about 1,000 years into the past. What is clear from the reading of both Georgian and Armenian chronicles, however, is that a different tradition exists. Now largely silenced and suppressed, this tradition emphasizes the common roots of the Caucasian peoples. But it might become available again, if anyone takes the time, and in many ways represents an alternative vision of identity more appropriate and useful for the multinational future.

The Borders of Belonging: State and Citizenship in Armenia

Nora Dudwick

Citizenship in Armenia is a new subject for me, and therefore my conclusions are tentative. My interest in the subject was spurred by three catalysts. The first was the surprise appointment of Robert Kocharian, president of the self-declared Nagorno-Karabakh republic, as prime minister of Armenia. Other foreigners were appointed to government posts shortly after independence in 1991, when Armenians wanted fresh views and needed people with breadth of experience in government. However, this is no longer the case in 1997, which made me think long and hard about the significance of appointing a man as head of the government of the Armenian state who also heads a self-declared republic that Armenia does not even officially recognize, and who has spent most of his life in Azerbaijan, which still claims him as a citizen. The second catalyst that directed my thoughts to the question of citizenship and territory in Armenia was an article by David Reiff in the March-April 1997 issue of *Foreign Affairs*. Reiff notes the vague status of the Armenians living in the region between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. Do these people now live in Armenia, Nagorno-Karabakh, or in occupied Azerbaijani territory? The final catalyst for my paper was research I conducted in 1995 on the construction of images of violence and death in relation to the war in Karabakh, as well as images of borders and enemies among Armenians. All three catalysts generate a set of related questions: how does independent Armenia define citizenship, how does it define borders, what sort of relationship does it postulate between these two categories or concepts, and what does this postulated relationship suggest for other post-socialist states?

I would like to frame this topic by first discussing the concept of citizenship; the cultural identification of nations; the relationship between territories and states; and historic forms of political participation and citizenship in Europe. Rogers Brubaker has argued that historically, two very distinct paradigms of nation-state and citizenship have emerged in Western society, as exemplified by French and German history. The two ideal types of the modern nation-state can be summarized as follows: the state constructs the nation (the French paradigm) and the nation constructs the state (the German paradigm). Civic self-definitions and patterns of civic incorporation differ accordingly. Brubaker points out that although these paradigms have changed significantly over time, their distinctiveness remains. For instance, the French naturalization rate is ten times that of Germany, which never established an automatic procedure by which second- or even third-generation immigrants become citizens. Brubaker relates the nation-state to citizenship in the following way: "Every state claims to be the state of and for a particular bounded citizenry, usually conceived of as a nation. The modern nation-state is in a sense

inherently nationalistic.” Its legitimacy depends on furthering, or seeming to further, the particular interests of a particular bounded citizenry.

The modern concept of citizenship as membership in a nation-state crystallized around the time of the French revolution, but subsequently developed along several different paths. In France, a bureaucratic monarchy shaped the state within a particular territory to which national consciousness became anchored. Linguistic unity was advocated for political, not cultural reasons, to promote dialogue and secure for citizens equal access to public office. Political nationhood preceded cultural nationhood; the underlying push was to make all citizens speak French, rather than make all French-speakers citizens. Eighteenth-century Germany consisted of numerous polities and principalities in which localized linguistic and religious identities coexisted within a loosely shared interpretive frame of belonging to a larger empire. In Germany before the late nineteenth century, neither the nation-state nor the political frame of national citizenship existed. With the development of statehood, both the notions of citizenship and of belonging to a state developed in parallel with romantic notions of ethno-cultural affiliation. Today, political and ethno-cultural conceptions of nationhood coexist in an uneasy tension in Germany, a tension rooted in the notion that statehood is or should express the dominant frame of cultural nationhood. Hence, the notion of blood relationships—the idea that the people of a nation share a common origin and common ancestors—allows Volga Germans who have lived many generations on Russian or Soviet territory to immigrate and receive citizen rights, while ethnic Turks who have lived in Germany for several generations officially remain foreigners. In sum, in the French model, state borders precede the formation of the nation and, by implication, a language and culture defined as national, while in the German case, language and culture should determine the borders and the essence of the state.

In a sense, the Soviet Union constructed a state by combining both models. Even in regions where ethnic groups were extensively intermingled, a particular ethnic group became “titular,” borders were drawn, and new administrative entities created. These entities received all the symbolic, if not the real, benefits of national statehood and were encouraged to develop a de-politicized cultural nationalism. At the same time, a supranational, Russianized but not Russian, state identity was imposed on people throughout Soviet territory. Consequently, overlapping and distinctive identities arose, some rooted in the national-ethnic character reified in Soviet passports, and others rooted in the notion of Soviet citizenship. This was an uneasy amalgam, giving rise to clear but complex and idiosyncratic distinctions: a Jew living in Russia or Armenia was never identified with Russia or Armenia, but was seen as a Soviet citizen like his Russian or Armenian neighbors.

Where does the Armenian notion of citizenship fit in? If one traces it back over time, one also comes up with a complex amalgam. In many respects, German romantic notions of folk nationhood

influenced not only Armenians but also other national minorities in nineteenth-century Europe. Armenian nationalists and revolutionaries sought to inspire Armenian people linked in many cases not by a shared language but by a shared affiliation to the Gregorian church. The aim here was to develop a national consciousness by revitalizing Armenian history, fostering an enlightened literary movement, and forming political parties. Despite the promises of European powers to support statehood, the slaughter and mass deportations of Armenians after the First World War dispersed the Armenian community and eventually ended hopes for independence, at least on the territory of the Ottoman Empire. The new Soviet Armenia thus became the new symbolic homeland.

Several kinds of identities formed among Armenians in the USSR, resulting in a complex, layered Armenian national identity. A series of regional identities among the many Armenian communities scattered throughout the Soviet Union emerged, including the “Tiflis Armenians” (not “Georgian Armenians”), the “Karabakh Armenians” (not “Azerbaijani Armenians”), the “Baku Armenians,” and so forth. There were also “Hajestanis” living in the national republic of Armenia, Hajestan. Beyond these regional identities, we also see the emergence of both a local “Caucasian identity” and a genuine Soviet identity, in the sense of a felt attachment to people of other ethnicities usually mediated through the Russian language. After the 1960s, with the return of exiled Armenians and contact with Armenians outside the Soviet Union, the de-compartmentalization of Armenian nationality began, and an intensified sense of belonging to a de-territorialized nation of Armenians spanning states and continents developed and intensified. In the 1970s and eighties, the notions of an external diaspora (that is, outside the USSR) and an internal diaspora (outside Armenia, but within the Soviet Union) became commonplace. A further kind of diaspora also gained recognition; namely, the internalized diaspora (that is, within Soviet Armenia proper) of second and third generation West Armenians, who had fled into eastern Caucasian Armenia from the Ottoman empire. For these “internal exiles,” the homeland was still Western Armenia, in present-day Turkey, and many spoke of themselves as outsiders in Soviet Armenia.

Still, Armenians identified with each other, with local communities, with the Armenian Republic, with the USSR, and with diaspora Armenians in a relatively unproblematic way, although at times these identifications were disturbed by changes in the political context and by the layering of identities. The borders of the Armenian republic were permeable, administrative borders, impeding neither trade nor contact. These borders were thus only very partially ethnicized. The Karabakh war changed this by radically intensifying the ethnicization of extant borders, spurring the growth of a much more specifically nationalist consciousness within Armenia, increasing enmity toward Azerbaijanis, and increasing the level of armed conflict at the border. These changes cumulatively drove home the

message that “this is us, that is the enemy,” further transforming administrative boundaries into borders between enemy peoples.

However, I was struck in 1995 by how uneven the process of ethnification really was. In the midst of heated discussions on the conflict, people would say “Relations were excellent and will be again. We had a lot more in common with them; we went there to trade and buy our vegetables. It is the hotheads from the city on both sides that are exacerbating the conflict.” Armenians from Karabakh in Armenia, who had suffered greatly, said surprisingly similar things, such as, “I feel like an alien in Armenia.” We thus observe a strong sense of attachment among Armenians, not to national or territorial identity, but to local Armenian communities. I heard very nuanced and conflicting expressions of identity, as when people said, “Actually, I was better friends with my Azerbaijani neighbors.” Soviet identification remained very strong as well, especially among Armenians outside of Armenia and among refugees from other parts of the former USSR.

In Armenia and Azerbaijan, the Soviet collapse definitively transformed a localized conflict both into an undeclared war between two independent states and into a war for secession, as internal administrative boundaries between republics were transformed into external borders dividing newly independent states. These borders matter, although cross-border flows of people and goods have not stopped. While the development of independence has given these states considerably more power to affect the lives of people living within them, the Soviet collapse and the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh have made the task of simultaneously defining territorial boundaries and political citizenship all the more difficult.

Armenians today must choose between a civic and an ethnic or “blood” model of the state. An ethnic model means trying to draw the borders of the new state around people who call themselves “Armenian,” even if they live outside current boundaries. Thus, the ethnic model leads to an attempt to extend borders to encompass Karabakh. The civic model, in contrast, would give precedence to existing borders and try to consolidate and determine political membership in terms of the people who already live within them. The war in Karabakh, by creating an enemy, pushed Armenia toward a strongly ethnic definition of boundaries and citizenship, and has interfered with attempts to consolidate relations between state and citizenry along more civic lines. The task now, as I see it, is to define the relationship between the boundaries of nation and state. Is the Armenian state to be the expression of the Armenian nation? If so, what are the boundaries of the state, of the nation, and how do you bring them into correspondence? An ethnic definition would require dual citizenship, a bit like the Israeli right of return, so that Armenians anywhere would have the right to a voice in the governing of their territory and the right to a choice of becoming citizens. Armenians would have to define state boundaries as far as

possible to incorporate all Armenians, including Karabakh. The state should therefore be enshrined as the will of the nation in the constitution, as in Croatia and Slovenia.

Post-socialist states are dealing with this common problem in different ways. Poland, for example, grants citizenship to immigrants with Polish ancestry, but not to the relatives of long-time non-Polish residents, such as Jews. Ukraine has another approach: if you can show birth on Ukrainian territory, you can become a citizen. Interestingly, Russia preserves elements of the Soviet model, both French and German. Anyone can become a citizen if he or she is a “bearer of Russian culture” living on post-Soviet territory, while at the same time citizenship is defined in civic terms. The language now has two terms: while a *rosiyan* is a citizen of Russia, a *russky* is an ethnic Russian. If Armenia adopts a civic model, it must start drawing a distinction between citizens and Armenians. This could create barriers or intensify existing tensions between people inside the state, on the one hand, and ethnic Armenians outside of the present state, in Karabakh and in the diaspora, on the other. Moreover, Armenia might have to accept a more detached attitude toward Karabakh and Armenians originating there.

Armenia is at a crossroads. On the one hand, the constitution emphasizes citizenship, not nationality, and rejects the notion of dual citizenship. On the other hand, it speaks of protecting cultural minorities, which implies the dominance of a cultural majority. The rhetoric of the current president is relatively measured, insofar as he favors the language of Western citizenship. This reflects Armenia’s self-image as European and its ambition to join Europe and be considered a part of the West. On the other hand, opposition and popular discourse are marked by a strongly ethnic-national rhetoric. Such ambiguities between official and popular discourse are particularly pronounced in regard to the Karabakh question. Refugees from Azerbaijan are only partly recognized as citizens, while people from Nagorno-Karabakh are seldom viewed as true refugees. Indeed, popular sentiment favors the return of people from Karabakh to the enclave. Moreover, the status of Karabakh proper remains unresolved in Armenian political and popular discourse. Karabakh as a political entity is not officially recognized by Armenia, and the ultimate political and national status of its residents remains problematic.

Soviet citizenship allowed for three types of nationhood: 1) a national-blood affiliation, 2) a national territorial affiliation, and 3) a supranational Soviet identity. The collapse of the USSR eliminated the third option, leaving people to choose between a national identity defined in terms of either blood or territory. If Armenia decides on blood affiliation, Armenians in Karabakh and elsewhere would seem to have an automatic right to citizenship; if the state opts for territorial affiliation, then Armenian national identity should encompass everyone currently living on the Republic’s territory, regardless of ethnic identity. The way the situation in Karabakh plays out, and the future relationship of Karabakh Armenians to Armenia proper, has much to teach us about the ways the Soviet Union

preserved stability by combining potentially conflicting forms of identity, as well as how the decoupling of the principles of blood and territory in favor of the blood principle might contribute to future instability.

Negotiating Post-Communist Ethnic Conflict

Charles H. Fairbanks, Jr.

Unlike today's other presentations, mine will focus on policy and what people *ought* to do. Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia won the war with Azerbaijan, but neither side is satisfied with the *status quo* in Nagorno-Karabakh. Are there any means by which one could reach a situation in which one or all sides would be happy? The most common Western answer is that there needs to be a process of negotiation, which there is now, perhaps involving international mediation. I will argue that there are some problems in that approach. We have learned much about the dynamics of negotiating an agreement from the many arms control talks of the last twenty-five years; it is worth reviewing here what it is that we have learned.

What do negotiations require of the parties involved? First, they require a summing of the subject of negotiations as a totality, or within a frame, rather than as a continuous experience. Therefore, negotiating tends to make people see the weaknesses of their position and to try to fix those weaknesses. For example, when the United States, Britain, and Japan were negotiating the Washington Naval Treaty in 1921, the United States noticed that the British had sixty modern cruisers to its three; this led to a major US cruiser-building program. Negotiations also make people see opportunities that they did not see before. Often this happens because negotiations require a more careful comparison with the other side, as well as more precision about who will get what. The SALT I treaty in 1972 did not cover cruise missiles or intermediate- or short-range ballistic missiles; the treaty thus triggered the US Cruise Missile Program and the development of the Pershing system. Similarly, with the SS-20, the USSR returned to producing intermediate-range missiles for the first time in a decade.

When you negotiate, you divide up a pie that is defined in some way, a fact of particular importance in negotiations over territory. Negotiations tend to threaten coalitions. For instance, it was the attempt to negotiate territorial agreements, among other things, that broke up the Bosnian-Croat coalition. Negotiations encourage attempts to use the process itself to achieve other kinds of advantages. For example, in the Nagorno-Karabakh negotiations, Azerbaijan tried to use the definition of the line of contact between forces in order to show that Armenia was also involved in the war. Negotiations paradoxically breed difficulties in the process and remind us of the truism that "agreements encourage cheating" (you can't cheat without an agreement) and a search for loopholes. Both the Washington Naval Treaty and SALT I, for example, encouraged cheating.

In the case of Nagorno-Karabakh, several independent sets of negotiations were established after the major fighting ended, namely: CIS negotiations under Russian leadership, beginning in December

1991; the CSCE Minsk group negotiations, beginning in March 1992; and private negotiations between Azeri and Armenian security advisors. This process of multiple negotiations involving different mediating groups created enmity between Russia and the other CSCE countries and between Armenia and Russia, which had worked together fairly closely throughout most, though not all, of the war. The official Russian Foreign Ministry outline of the negotiation says the following: “Since January 1992, Baku and Yerevan have been involved in a diplomatic effort against the Russian plan.” Fifteen truce agreements were all broken in minor ways. While there have been a number of incidents, the most recent cease-fire agreement has generally held. A political-territorial agreement has also been drafted, but to date has not been signed.

The experiences of negotiating final settlements for post-communist ethnic conflicts show that they share many things in common. The wars tend to run down and peter out, unlike the First or Second World Wars, in which the warring nations poured every national resource on the fire until there was nothing left. In contrast, post-communist ethnic conflicts tend to lead to more and more truces as time passes. Today, renewed war is unlikely in Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia, or South Ossetia. Political and territorial agreements usually are negotiated and drafted, but they rarely conclude in agreed-upon language or reach the point of a signing. In roughly eleven serious post-communist ethnic conflicts, there have been only three final settlements: in Gagauzia, which is tiny; in Bosnia; and in Croatia. The Bosnian deal was imposed by the United States and is clearly very unstable. The Croatian settlement was imposed by a Croatian military victory and seems rather solid.

Now I turn to some special characteristics of negotiating post-communist ethnic-conflict settlements. First, there are several problems with unrecognized entities, such as Transdnistria, Krajina, Srbska Republika, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia. What kind of status such entities receive, and who speaks for them, are problems not usually encountered in past negotiations. Moreover, given that such entities lack internationally-recognized status, they have a tendency to attract criminals and adventurers. For these reasons, international law lacks effective mechanisms for managing post-communist ethnic conflicts.

Second, such negotiations tend to have more than two parties, which makes them even more complicated. Western mediators and external patrons are extremely important in these conflicts. For example, important patrons in current conflict-resolution negotiations include: Serbia in Bosnia and Croatia; Croatia and the US in Bosnia; and Russia and Afghanistan in Tajikistan. These external parties neither necessarily share the same interests as their clients in the negotiations, nor do they merely constitute disinterested third parties. For example, in the Nagorno-Karabakh negotiations, the Russian draft, still being used nominally as the Minsk Group text, provides that Russia and Finland should decide

how long the peacekeeping forces will remain. This allows Russia to use the settlement mechanism as a means of achieving a major strategic objective in the Caucasus; namely, the establishment of a sustained Russian presence, with the regional influence such a presence brings. Western mediators in these conflicts also know many things to be true, which they are nonetheless trying to persuade the parties involved are not true.

Third, most of these governments are weak (with the exception of the Armenian government, which is unusually strong). This is particularly true of some mini-states or non-states that have never had a state structure in the modern sense, such as Abkhazia, Chechnya, or Bosnia. Such weak state structure makes it very difficult for the parties to agree on the terms they will seek in negotiations or to sign terms that would mean giving something away. The end result is that each side comes to the negotiating table with unrealistic terms.

Fourth, the participants are very weak relative to their external patrons, and sometimes, relative to the international organizations involved, such as NATO in Bosnia and the OSCE in Nagorno-Karabakh. Such a situation tempts the participants to use negotiation as a weapon of war rather than as a means of reaching a settlement. Parties often try to win by manipulating a patron. For example, both Azerbaijan and Georgia have unsuccessfully attempted to regain parts of their lost territories by playing up to Russian policies.

Fifth, the general post-communist flight from public life, combined with the feudalization of states and the criminalization of the war zone, leads to powerful forces with a definite interest in maintaining instability. This was quite important in both Armenia and Azerbaijan. The army and interior ministry (MVD) had an interest in continuing the war. In general, the structure of these wars was such that the elite already enjoyed the advantages of peace; as a consequence, they evinced little concern if ordinary people enjoyed these advantages or not. This flight of elites from the public world, combined with the inexperience of communist-era publics in politics, leads to a very abstract type of political discourse. The energies of the citizenship tend to be poured into an abstract nationalism focused on status and territorial integrity, thus generating thoroughly incompatible demands when it comes time to negotiate with the other side.

Where do negotiations over Nagorno-Karabakh now stand? There is the Minsk Group, of which the US is now also a co-chairman, but these negotiations have gone nowhere over the last sixteen months. There had been some progress through the private channel negotiations between security advisors from each side, but this channel has now been lost as a result of the recent Azerbaijani diplomatic victory at Lisbon, following which bilateral talks were broken off. In general, all three sides' positions have become even more extreme as time has passed. Furthermore, the appointment of Robert

Kocharian as the Armenian Prime Minister seems to confirm the worst Azerbaijani nightmares concerning the Armenian-Karabakh common interest and the joint “war of aggression.”

I now briefly turn to the question of how we might address these situations. First, we must realize that not all problems can be solved. Second, we must admit that what is best from America’s point of view may differ from that of Armenia, Azerbaijan, or Nagorno-Karabakh. We need to ask whether the use or threat of military force might make a settlement more likely. My answer would be that such a course would be successful only in a limited way and as part of an integrated strategy that included a definition of limited war aims and of diplomatic goals. At present this is not very likely, given the weakness of the governments in question and the strength of external interference. Regarding the use of threats, I believe that neither Azerbaijan nor other Caucasian states will find acceptable terms without first developing more credible military options.

Despite the recent hardening of positions witnessed in the Armenian-Azeri conflict, the passage of time may nonetheless contribute to more propitious negotiating prospects in the region, due to a distinctive feature of post-communist societies. In brief, neither the populations nor the elites of these societies are particularly “warlike.” These societies are essentially dominated by private, that is, economic and family concerns. It is human nature that people do not want to be at war forever. As long as an actual war is not underway, social contacts and economic interdependency among post-communist societies will gradually increase, eventually producing an easing of political tensions. The greatest obstacle to such an outcome are the economic blockades that have been used so effectively as instruments of foreign policy by Azerbaijan and Georgia in recent years. To the extent that economic interdependency deepens, it creates alternative forms of interstate leverage and thus lessens the probability that states will resort to blockades as an instrument of foreign policy.

Gender, Religion, and Ethnicity in Post-Soviet Azerbaijan: A Regional Perspective

Nayereh Tohidi

Given the special geopolitical situation of Azerbaijan, any analysis of its national identity must be conducted from a regional perspective. Factors that contribute to Azerbaijan's unique geopolitics include the following. First, Azeris are a divided people, with about 20 million Azeris living in Iran and 7.5 million living in Azerbaijan proper. Second, Azerbaijan forms a borderland between Europe and Asia, Islam and Christianity, Russia and Turkey, and Iran and Turkey. Third, the historical, ethnic, and political ties between Azerbaijan, Iran, Turkey, and Russia represent a complex historical legacy that shapes contemporary Azerbaijani society. Fourth, Azerbaijani politics is deeply enmeshed in present international and regional oil rivalries over the Caucasus and Caspian littoral. And finally, of course, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict casts a long shadow over society. All of these factors have turned Azerbaijan into a stage upon which regional politics are played out. Indeed, Azerbaijan is now a testing ground for regional power politics, in which conflicts between Russia and Turkey, Russia and the United States, Iran and Turkey, Iran and the United States, Iran and Israel, and Iran and its largest minority group, the Azeris (who comprise one third of Iran's population), all collide.

Given Azerbaijan's historical background and present situation, it is only natural that it has maintained a multi-faceted identity, reflecting both local characteristics of the Caucasus and the regional influences of Iran, Russia, and Turkey. This identity has been shaped and reshaped through several turning points or crises. The first turning point, as perceived by the Azerbaijanis, was the Russian-Persian wars in the nineteenth century, which resulted in treaties that divided their people between two empires. After that point, Azerbaijanis experienced colonial domination under Russia. The second turning point was the short-lived period of independence between 1918 and 1920, during the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic. It is this period to which Azerbaijanis today often refer proudly as the most important turning point in the development of a new national identity, a turning point that helped transform the previous Muslim identity into the more modern, secular, national-Azeri identity. Many Azerbaijanis today speak proudly of this state as the "world's fairest democratic and secular Muslim state." In 1991, photos of Lenin were replaced by those of the head of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic. The third turning point was the Bolshevik takeover of Baku and the Soviet era that followed. The fourth and latest turning point is the present, post-Soviet era, which has in some sense put Azerbaijan back in a situation similar to that of its first republic. Today I intend to show how the present process of identity reconstruction and formation has, as in the past, been a gendered process, and how ethnicity, religion, and regional power politics interplay in this process.

I will begin with an illustration. The first time I was in Azerbaijan was in 1991, when it was still part of the Soviet Union. I was struck by a glamorous picture of a blond, smiling, Turkish beauty, which was plastered on the walls of many stores, offices, and homes. In addition to other by-products of *perestroika* and *glasnost* from the last days of the Soviet Union, certain Western images sharply deviating from socialist ideals were openly promoted in almost all the republics, such as Sylvester Stallone's "Rambo" character. In the context of Azerbaijan, this particular image of a Turkish beauty queen conveyed both gender-related messages and an important political message related to the growing ethnic and nationalist orientation of society.

In 1995, less than four years later, another new image entered into the country's fluid popular culture: namely, a portrait of a demure young girl, veiled in a white scarf, timidly looking down at a set of prayer beads in her hands. The portrait was embossed with a saying from the prophet Mohammed concerning the virtues of prayer. This image stands in sharp contrast to both the secular, pro-Russian, and pro-Soviet ideas of the past and the secular, modern, nationalist, pro-Western, and pro-Turkish orientation of contemporary Azerbaijan. Like the earlier picture of the Turkish beauty, this new image conveyed certain messages about gender roles and identity. While the previous image reflected the common post-Soviet, post-communist culture of display, emphasizing physical beauty and Western fashion and consumerism, the portrait of the veiled girl signaled modesty, morality, spirituality, and Islamic values. The popularity of such apparently contradictory images is suggestive of the complexity, diversity, and fluidity of national cultural identity in post-Soviet Azerbaijan, confirming the thesis that, as in many colonial and post-colonial contexts, gender issues are intertwined with issues of class, nationality, ethnicity, and religion.

Recent changes in identity politics indicate that in Azerbaijan, as elsewhere, national and political identities are highly fluid and shifting, rather than rigid and primordial. Identities are highly changeable and are socially constructed. If a conflict does not force people to dichotomize their identities, many people may prefer multiple and complementary identities. In Baku, several people told me how much they regretted the loss of the varied and cosmopolitan identity of the city, and how many misgivings they had about the city's new, more polarized, conflict-ridden, and dull (in their words) sensibility. Indeed, Baku's identity is today tainted with prejudice and intolerance. While some Azeri pan-Turkists are still insisting on an ethnically-based course of nation-building, others have distanced themselves from this more extremist trend. While some feel nostalgic for the peaceful ethnic co-existence that marked cities like Baku, others are seeking to reassess their cultural and national identities by looking backward and forward simultaneously. They are digging into their Islamic and pre-Islamic history, religion, traditions, and legends. Interestingly, there is a revival of Zoroastrianism, both in Iran

and Azerbaijan. People are also searching for identity among the present alternative models in the East and West. Debates among intellectuals revolve around the necessity of creating a new national ideology to replace communism or, as some have argued, the need to get rid of ideology altogether. Since independence, three tendencies have emerged in identity-formation: Turkism, Islamism, and Azerbaijanism. Some people, such as former President Elchibey, have tried to integrate the three tendencies while giving prominence to one; others have tried to maintain a balance among all three, as current President Heidar Aliyev is trying to do. Others see the three components opposing each other.

I will briefly review these three trends and how they have complemented or contested each other in the past six or seven years. Gender relations and roles, and especially women's place in the new society, represent important targets of the new quest for identity. As in the pre-Soviet and Soviet eras, women in post-Soviet Azerbaijan continue to be not only an object of national, international, and regional contestation, but also a determinant agent of the direction and fate of such contests. Azerbaijani women, especially the younger generation, need no longer define themselves primarily in comparison with or in contrast to Russian women. Now they are pushed and pulled by three new role models, images, and discourses of womanhood, which are interrelated to the three tendencies discussed earlier. These include, first, the Western model as perceived in the mass media, especially in the television and films of neighboring Turkey. However, Turkish images themselves are increasingly complex and varied, reflecting shifts in Turkish cultural identity related to the spread of Islamic tendencies in Turkish society. The second model is the Islamic model, as presented in the Iranian media, some Saudi Arabian media, and by Azerbaijan's array of homegrown Islamic groups. Again, due to fascinating gender dynamics in Iran in recent years, this model is also fluid, evolving in a multi-faceted direction from a singularly repressive, black-veiled image. A third model lies in what the Azerbaijanis call the authentic, virtuous, patriotic Azerbaijani model, supposedly rooted in the pre-Islamic, pre-Russian ethnic and national heritage of the Azeri people, and symbolized by both mythological female imageries and by real, popular female figures from recent history. Which models will prevail among women will depend on how women fare in the transition process. I will now look to see how attitudes towards these role-model variants have been playing out in Azerbaijani society.

Right after the outbreak of conflict in Karabakh, a pro-Iranian tendency—mistakenly portrayed by the Russian media and by some Western media as fundamentalist—emerged, manifesting itself during the first mass demonstrations and sit-ins held at the border between Azerbaijan and Iran. At this time, border fences were torn down and demonstrators crossed the Aras River to join their ethnic brethren in Iran. Had the nature of politics at the Iranian national level been different, the whole orientation of Azerbaijan today would probably also be different. The demonstrators' pro-Iranian tendency was soon

overpowered by a pro-Turkish tendency, promoted by the Azerbaijan popular front, which grew into a sort of infatuation with Turkey and, via Turkey, with the West. The peak of this infatuation was manifested during the early days of Elchibey's government and in the victory of the pro-Turkey side in the heated debate over the alphabet (this victory led to the use of the Latin alphabet).

Several factors have mitigated the influence of the Western model on the formation of Azerbaijan identity in recent years. First, the pro-Turkey or pan-Turkist trend has stumbled as the great expectation that Turkey would play the role of savior has not been substantiated. Moreover, the idealized version of Turkey as a nation has been eclipsed as a result of increased contact with the Turks. Such contact reminded Azeris that Turkish society, like societies everywhere, has many problems. The idealized image thus began to crumble, a process aggravated by the patronizing and arrogant "big brother" attitude of many Turks towards Azerbaijanis; the less than brotherly treatment of Azerbaijanis in newly established Turkish businesses throughout Azerbaijan; and the treatment of Azeris in Turkey. The realities of business competition in Azerbaijan also mitigated this relationship. Many Azerbaijanis are now complaining that Turkey is taking over Azerbaijan as a new province, with Turkish businessmen buying houses, properties, et cetera. The end result has been increased resentment and disappointment with Turkey.

Regarding the Iranian model, many Azerbaijanis feel a sense of rejection by Iranians, especially Iranian Azeris, as the latter have not shown the same enthusiasm for reunification. Azerbaijanis also did not receive any support from their "brothers" in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Iran even betrayed them, they say, when it sided with Armenia and Russia on the Caspian "sea versus lake" and oil debates. Iranians have also tried to impose their vision of Muslim identity on Azerbaijan, fearing Azeri national identity and, like many Turks, trying to play the role of big brother. The regressive and unappealing vision of society, and especially gender roles, implicit in the Iranian model also contributed to the diminishing appeal of the model among Azerbaijanis. Finally, a conflict of business interests has emerged between Azerbaijan and Iran in the regional market. A common phrase heard in Azerbaijan with regard to Iranians is, "They are exploiting us; they have taken our metals and industrial products following the collapse of the Soviet Union, but have given us in return plastic dishes, chewing gum, poor-quality food products, and nothing else." This statement underscores the economic dimension of Azerbaijani disappointment driving the decreasing popularity of the pro-Iranian trend. The waning of this trend was particularly evident in the recent sentencing of members of the Islamic party of Azerbaijan to ten years imprisonment on charges of spying for Iran.

These days I sense a decreased intensity of anti-Russian, and even anti-Armenian, sentiment among Azerbaijanis, as both Iran and Turkey are losing grace. It is now acceptable to speak Russian

again, and the intellectuals who rushed to learn Azeri during the first days of independence have started saying, “After all, the West, Turkey, and Iran are not treating us much different than Russians, so why not reconcile with Russia and work with everyone?” There is more emphasis today on the Azerbaijani identity and “way,” the definition of which is still contested and interpreted differently by each individual. Some still emphasize more particularistic dimensions of their identities, such as locality, kinship ties and family, and region. For example, there are still rivalries between Nakhichevanis and Bakinskis, exacerbated by Aliyev’s Nakhichevani background. Some intellectuals are trying to fashion an Azerbaijani identity that is neither Turkish nor Iranian. This is particularly relevant in regards to religion, given that for the most part Azeris are Shiite Muslims, unlike Turks, who are Sunni. They also hope to create their own way of being Muslim. Finally, many intellectuals are trying to cultivate a civic identity instead of an ethnic identity.

How does gender play out in the process of Azerbaijani identity formation? One sentiment I often heard, expressed with deep resentment, was that “Russians in seventy years could not dishonor us, but our own Muslim brothers did in only five years.” Given the adverse effects of the transition in many post-Soviet republics—effects such as poverty, disproportional unemployment among women, and the effects of war and internal displacement—women have become the target of a new business in prostitution and pornography. Baku is becoming a new Bangkok: a whole industry that profits from the exploitation of women and sexuality is thriving in the capital city. This has created much resentment, especially among Azerbaijani men, who see the rise of the sex industry as dishonoring the whole country.

Why is honor such a sensitive and gendered issue not only in Azerbaijan, but also in many other parts of the world, especially in the Muslim world? It goes back to the gendered nature of nationhood. Feminists have argued that nations are patriarchal constructs steeped in masculine imagery. On the other hand, many nations are personified as women, have feminine names, and are referred to by the feminine pronoun. Conversely, women often serve as symbolic markers of a group’s cultural identity and are viewed as repositories or custodians of a nation’s culture, as reproducers of its authenticity, work force, and soldiers. It is argued that if women are dishonored, the nation is dishonored. Ethnic and national identities are often viewed as a big family with a father figure at the top; in such cases, women are responsible for both the biological and social production of its members. Gender relations are thus central to this process, and the focus on the proper role of women is often a mask for the political processes of state formation.

A code of behavior for women becomes an identity marker and a means of demarcating “us” from “them.” In this time of war and conflict, people often compare Azerbaijani women with Armenian

and Russian women. The cults of virginity and ethnic loyalty have grown alongside the increasing expectation that Azeri women will marry endogamously. Indeed, endogamy is now widely expected of women, though not necessarily of men. Women activists, whose age range is usually between thirty and fifty, are even more nationalistic and intolerant toward ethnic Armenians and Russians than men are. I think this goes back to the practice of endogamy, with its increasing number of widows and decreasing opportunities to marry as the number of women increasingly exceeds that of men. This is made worse by the fact that many of the remaining men are migrating. Women are left without support, in a culture that remains very traditional, in which marriage and bearing and raising children remain the woman's sole purpose. Thus the material privations suffered by many Azerbaijani women generate a more receptive attitude among many women towards a patriarchal construction of Azeri national and gender identity.

***Institutions, Identity, and Ethnic Conflict: International Experience
and Its Implications for the Caucasus***

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