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Supplemental file

Words of Welcome from the Editors

Dear Reader,

We are pleased to announce the release of Volume XIV, Issue 2 (April 2020) of *Perspectives on Terrorism* (ISSN 2334-3745). Our free and independent online journal is a publication of the *Terrorism Research Initiative* (TRI), Vienna, and the *Institute of Security and Global Affairs* (ISGA) of Leiden University's Campus in The Hague. All past and recent issues are available online at URL: https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/perspectives-on-terrorism.

Perspectives on Terrorism (PoT) is indexed by JSTOR, SCOPUS, and GoogleScholar. Now in its fourteenth year, it has nearly 9,000 registered subscribers and many more occasional readers and website visitors worldwide. The Articles of its six annual issues are fully peer-reviewed by external referees while its Research and Policy Notes, Special Correspondence, Resources and other content are subject to internal editorial quality control.

The current issue is a **Special Issue**, focusing on political violence and conflicts in the North Caucasus. It is guest-edited by Julie Wilhelmsen, Senior Research Fellow at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI). Dr. Wilhelmsen is an expert on Russian foreign and security policies as well as radicalisation of Islam in Eurasia. In the opening article, she and co-author Mark Youngman introduce the topics and authors of the seven research articles in this Special Issue.

Our Resources section opens with a bibliography that supplements the literature cited in the articles of this Special Issue. This includes books, articles, theses as well as grey literature on terrorism in the Caucasus, Russia and Central Asia, and has been compiled by Judith Tinnes. Joshua Sinai, PoT's book reviews editor, presents more than fifty books on terrorism and counter-terrorism, while Nina Käsehage introduces a new German publication on the role of former extremists in German educational programs to counter radicalisation.

Next, Judith Tinnes provides a major bibliography on Women & Terrorism, followed by Berto Jongman's regular survey of new web-based resources on terrorism and related subjects. Reinier Bergema offers an overview of recent and upcoming conferences and workshops on terrorism and related subjects, many of which might still be cancelled or have already been postponed due to the current coronavirus epidemic.

In the Announcements section, we introduce Leah Farrell, Jeff Kaplan and Craig Whiteside, three scholars who have recently joined *Perspectives on Terrorism* as Associate Editors. Since we have been receiving article submissions on a daily basis in recent months, the current editors were compelled to expand the Editorial Team to cope with the growing workload. We have also expanded the Editorial Board, our main body of reviewers, which now includes Max Abrahms, Colin Clarke, Aaron Hoffman, Brian Nussbaum, Brian Philipps and Ahmet Yayla. Their short biographies can also be found in the Announcements section.

The articles for the current issue of *Perspectives on Terrorism* have, as mentioned above, been guest-edited by Julie Wilhelmsen. She has been assisted by the principal editors of our journal, Alex Schmid and James Forest. The technical online launch of this journal issue has, as usual, been in the hands of Associate Editor for IT, Christine Boelema Robertus, while Editorial Assistant Jodi Moore contributed significantly with editing and proofreading.

Violent Mobilization and Non-Mobilization in the North Caucasus

by Julie Wilhelmsen and Mark Youngman

Following the appearance of the first reports of Chechen involvement in the Syrian conflict in 2012 and the subsequent large-scale migration of foreign fighters to the Middle East—particularly after the proclamation of the Islamic State (IS) in 2014—the North Caucasus has again become popularly associated with violence and terrorism. Although official figures have been varied and inconsistent, Russian President Vladimir Putin estimated in May 2014 that 4,000 Russian citizens had travelled to fight in Syria and Iraq.[1] Interior Ministry statements indicate that residents of the North Caucasus have accounted for the majority of these, with approximately 1,500 people from Dagestan, almost 800 from Chechnya, and around 200 each from Kabardino-Balkaria and Ingushetia.[2]

These developments have, in turn, fed domestic security concerns, with the overlapping challenges posed by concerns of the potential threat posed by returning participants of the conflict in Syria and Iraq; the formal incorporation of the remnants of the North Caucasus insurgency into the 'caliphate'; and terrorist attacks carried out by individuals inspired by, and claiming to act in the name of, IS. Between September 2015 and April 2018, IS claimed responsibility for 26 attacks in Russia, with several further attacks since then. Reliable news sources like *Caucasian Knot* routinely report on violent incidents and efforts to either reintegrate or prosecute returnees.[3] At the same time, the North Caucasus itself has become increasingly difficult for researchers to access, and—for Russian researchers seeking to understand their own country—even dangerous. As understanding the region has become ever more important, so have the challenges of obtaining, verifying, and analyzing information about it increased.

This special edition of *Perspectives on Terrorism* is part of an effort to facilitate ongoing research into the causes and limits of violent mobilization, to help researchers to better understand and contextualize these complex issues. It also represents an effort to maintain a dialogue between Russian and Western research communities working in this area. The contributors are diverse: they are trained in different disciplines and academic traditions, and they rely on diverse theoretical and methodological approaches. What unites these contributions is an effort to answer the broad research question *why has violent mobilization in, and from, the North Caucasus occurred (or not)?*

The contributing authors to this Special Issue use a variety of terms to describe the phenomenon they are studying: radicalization, terrorism, insurgency, jihadism, fundamentalism, violent extremism, foreign fighting, or transnational activism. However, in this introduction, and as organizing concept of the Special Issue as a whole, we have chosen the label *violent mobilization*. We have done so because many of these terms have become fundamentally contested and politicized and often infer Islam in a problematic way.[4] Violent mobilization alludes to a wide range of collective human activities that move beyond peaceful political contestation into the realm of armed conflict. Such action can be mobilized by means of any ideology or framing (be it Communism, ethnicity, nationalism, religion, etc.). The contributors of this Special Issue contend that adopting broader sociological, context-specific, and process-oriented perspectives that recognize the antagonistic relationships which conflict entails offer the best avenues for explaining why and when violence is likely to occur—or not.

More than anything, this Special Issue aims to contribute towards filling an empirical gap in the literature. Academic work on jihadism, terrorism, radicalization, and violent extremism is vast, growing, and cross-disciplinary in nature.[5] The North Caucasus, however, remains peripheral to this scholarly endeavor—except in the work of a handful of dedicated scholars—many of whom are featured here.[6] Our hope is that, by bringing this scholarship together in an open-access publication, we can stimulate further interest for, and consideration of, the region and integrate it into broader debates.

Table 1: The North Caucasus

Regional Overview

The North Caucasus spans the northern part of the Caucasus mountain range, from the Sea of Azov and Black Sea in the west to the Caspian Sea in the east. Unlike the South Caucasus region, which consists of sovereign states, it is part of the Russian Federation. The region consists of seven republics—Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachay-Cherkessia, North Ossetia-Alania, and the Republic of Adygea. Stavropol Kray and Krasnodar Kray are also considered part of the broader North Caucasus region, sharing historical and cultural ties with the republics.

	Size (in 1.000 sq km)	Population (2010 census)[8]	Major ethnic groups (2010 census)	Religious groups (Arena 2012 survey)[9]
Adygea	7.6	439,996	Russian 63.6% Adyghe 25.8% Armenian 3.7%	Orthodox 35.4% Non-denominational religious 29.8% Islam 12.0% Atheist 9.2%
Chechnya	17.3	1,268,989	Chechen 95.3% Russian 1.9%	Islam 95.0% Atheism 3.0% Orthodox 2.0%
Dagestan	50.3	2,910,249	Avars 29.4% Dargins 17.0% Kumyks 14.9% Lezgins 13.3% Laks 5.6% Azeris 4.5% Tabasarans 4.1% Russians 4.1%	Islam 80.6% Non-denominational religious 8.6% Orthodox 2.4% Atheist 2.2%
Ingushetia	3.6	412,529	Ingush 94.1% Chechen 4.6% Russian 0.8%	Islam 96.0% Orthodox 2.0%
Kabardino-Balkaria	12.5	859,939	Kabardin 57.2% Russian 22.5% Balkar 12.7%	Islam 54.6% Orthodox 15.6% Non-denominational religious 11.8% Atheist 6.6%
Karachayevo-Cherkessia	14.1	477,859	Karachay 41.0% Russian 31.6% Cherkess 11.9% Abazin 7.8%	Islam 47.0% Orthodox 13.6% Non-denominational religious 11.8% Atheist 6.6%
Krasnodar Kray	76.0	5,226,647	Russian 88.3% Armenian 5.5% Ukrainian 1.6%	Orthodox 52.2% Non-denominational religious 22.5% Atheist 13.2% Islam 1.4%
North Ossetia-Alania	8.0	712,980	Ossetian 65.1% Russian 20.8% Ingush 4.0% Armenian 2.3% Kumyk 2.3%	Orthodox 49.2% Folk religion 29.4% Islam 4.0% Atheist 3.0% Non-denominational religious 0.8%
Stavropol Kray	66.2	2,786,281	Russian 80.9% Armenian 5.9% Armeno-Tat 2.0% Dargin 1.8%	Orthodox 46.9% Non-denominational religious 19.3% Atheist 16.4% Islam 1.9%

Russia and the North Caucasus: Conflicting Identities

The North Caucasus is—from the perspective of ethnicity, language, religion, and culture—one of the most diverse regions on the planet (see Table 1). Nevertheless, as a result of their common Soviet heritage and their incorporation into the post-Soviet Russian state, the people of the region have shared historical, political, and social experiences. The processes of violent mobilization in the region cannot be properly understood without reference to the events surrounding the collapse of the Soviet Union. The late Soviet policies of *glasnost* (openness), *perestroika* (reform), and *demokratizatsiya* (democratization) unleashed collective and public searches for rediscovering and obtaining external recognition of distinct ethnic and religious identities. This led to a general surge in mobilization of all sorts in a region that had always been distinct within the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic.[7]

In many ways, developments in Chechnya and the broader North Caucasus since the collapse of the Soviet Union mirror processes of de-colonialization seen elsewhere. The difference, however, is that these processes have taken place *within*—and thus far been successfully resisted by—the 'imperial' Russian state.[10] Under the presidency of Vladimir Putin, Russia has sought to strengthen and centralize the state. Following Putin's return to the presidency in 2012 in particular, Russia's efforts to (re-)define itself have acquired a stronger ethnic Russian and Christian Orthodox component—something that has naturally conflicted with its assertion of sovereignty over non-ethnic Russian populations.[11]

For the most part, the peoples of the North Caucasus are still in the process of nurturing their own ethnic and religious identities. For five out of the seven North Caucasian republics listed above, Islam is the dominant religion, and divergent Russian and local identities have often been the source of tension. Despite being fairly isolated physically, the North Caucasus has become part of a globalizing world where the Internet serves as an effective vehicle for disseminating various ideas and identities—as the contributions of Sagramoso and Yarlykapov, Youngman, and Wilhelmsen to this Special Issue testify. The result of these complex processes is a region that is simultaneously part of, and divorced from, both the rest of Russia and the broader 'Muslim world'—socially, economically, and legally.[12]

State and Sub-state Violence in the North Caucasus

The potential for broad processes of identity seeking and mobilization leading to conflict and violence was most clearly realized in Chechnya. Nationalists in the republic, led by Dzhokhar Dudayev, declared their independence from the disintegrating Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and proclaimed the existence of a sovereign Chechen Republic of Ichkeria (ChRI). This led to confrontations with the re-emerging Russian state and, after efforts to peacefully agree on a mutually acceptable framework for relations failed, the two sides fought a brutal war (1994–1996).[13] The ChRI secured a largely pyrrhic victory, but it was left to face a battery of social, economic, and political problems, including the devastation left by the war itself and the lack of post-conflict integration of the armed groups that had fought it.[14]

The instability that plagued the Chechen Republic and the failure to resolve Chechnya's legal status provided the backdrop for a return to war. Russia and Putin—first as prime minister and then as president—sought to reassert control over the secessionist republic, launching a second war (1999–2002) no less brutal than the first. This time, Russia succeeded in installing its own Chechen authorities in the republic, under the leadership of Akhmad Kadyrov. Following Kadyrov's assassination in 2004, power eventually transferred to his son, Ramzan, who to this day maintains dictatorial control over Chechen political and social life.[15] Violence, meanwhile, increasingly spread beyond Chechnya's borders to the broader region and became more radical in its orientation.[16]

As important as identity to understanding violent mobilization in the North Caucasus, then, is the heavy reliance

on the use of force by *both* the state and some of its opponents. The region has provided and experienced the starkest manifestation of the securitization of Russian politics.[17] Putin bolstered his initial authority through the use of strident rhetoric in the face of domestic security threats, and he opted to resolve the question of Chechnya's status through the use of brute force. The conduct of the Second Chechen War relied on an all-out military campaign, accompanied by crimes against humanity, but it was waged under the banner of a 'counterterrorist operation'.[18] This packaging served both to consolidate domestic support and avert criticism from external actors mired in their own 'War on Terror'.[19]

Since Putin's return to the presidency, a partial desecuritization of counterterrorism during the tenure of Dmitriy Medvedev (2008–2012) has been completely abandoned, and terrorism is once more framed as an existential question that necessitates a force-driven response.[20] More generally, the prominent role played by people with a security service background (*siloviki*) in the state apparatus, the centralization of power and the hollowing out of democracy, and the troubled relationship between the state and civil society are continuing, if not to say accelerating, features of Putin's Russia.[21] State repression has and will shape the context within which violent mobilization in, and from, the North Caucasus must be understood.

Russia's opponents, meanwhile, have demonstrated equal indifference to the human costs of their actions, which included major terrorist attacks like the 2002 Moscow theatre siege, the 2004 Beslan school siege, and several suicide bombing campaigns.[22] The Islamist faction of the insurgency that was a significant factor in the inter-war instability and provided the *casus belli* for the second war repeatedly challenged the authority of nationalist-separatists led by ChRI President Aslan Maskhadov. Over time, it emerged victorious in the internal struggle and came to dominate the entire insurgency.

Figure 1. Security Service Losses in the North Caucasus, 2006-2016 [25]
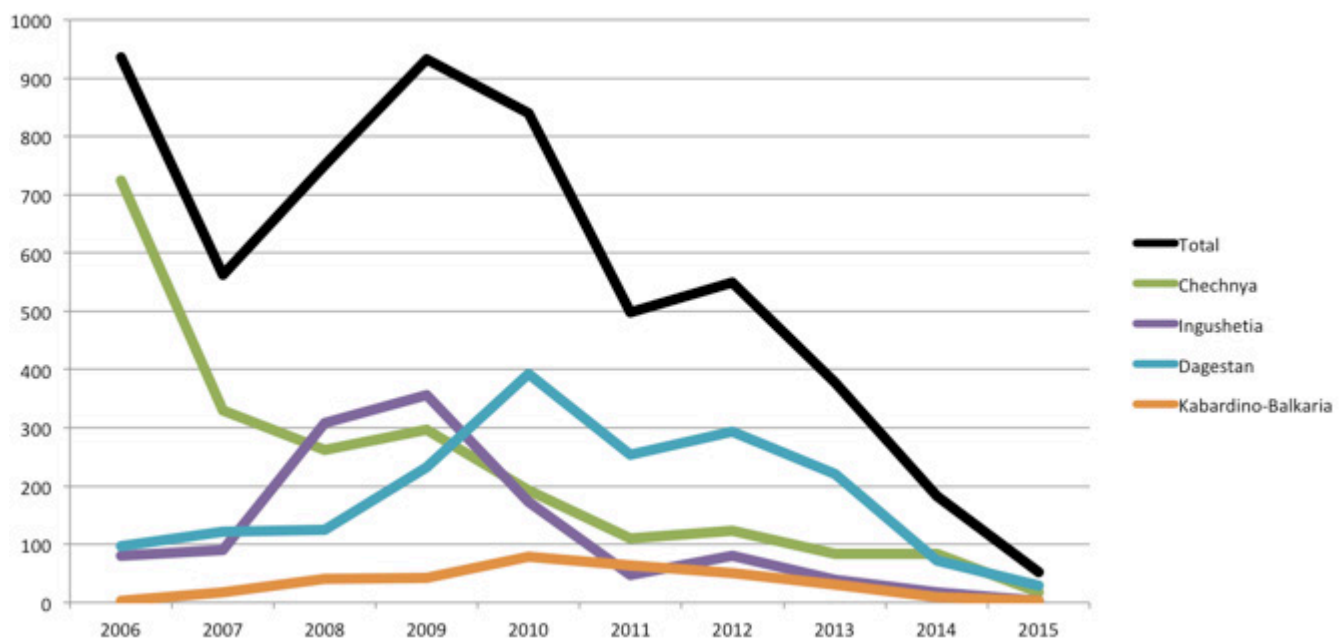
In October 2007, the gradual regionalization and Islamization of the Chechen conflict culminated in the abolition of the ChRI and its replacement with the Caucasus Emirate (*Imarat Kavkaz,* IK).[23] This was an explicitly jihadist, yet largely notional, polity that simultaneously united violent entrepreneurs in Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia, and Kabardino-Balkaria and aligned itself with radical actors elsewhere in the world.[24] Although overall levels of insurgent violence have declined since the Chechen wars (see Figure 1), the profile and locus of conflict have shifted, first to Ingushetia and Kabardino-Balkaria, and then to Dagestan. The North Caucasian region that has been the site of conflict since the collapse of the Soviet Union provides the context through which violent mobilization for Syria and Iraq must be understood.

Causes and Limits of Violent Mobilization

In seeking to understand the character of contemporary violence in the region, it is readily apparent that the more Islamized eastern republics of Dagestan and Chechnya have—with short-term exceptions—experienced more violence than the region's western territories. It is also true, as noted above, that they produced more recruits for the conflict in Syria and Iraq, although these figures need to be contextualized against the size of these two republics compared to other parts of the region. Nevertheless, we challenge the notion that the eastern parts are *inherently* more prone to violence because of the increased religiosity found there. In the ongoing debate over whether Europe is witnessing the 'radicalization of Islam,' as argued by Gilles Kepel, or the 'Islamization of radicalism,' as proposed by Oliver Roy, we side firmly with the latter.[26] Islam has served primarily as a medium for radical protest against society in the North Caucasus, rather than a source of violence in itself.

Indeed, despite the association with violence that often accompanies media portrayals of the region, in many ways levels of violent mobilization remain surprisingly low in the North Caucasus. The region has the lowest level of socioeconomic development in the entire Russian Federation, and its republics draw more than 50% of their budget revenues from the federal center.[27] Regardless of the socioeconomic measure used—per capita production of services, budget dependency, unemployment, social services and infrastructure, tax collection, salaries—and even taking into account the unreliability of government figures, the North Caucasus is a poorly performing region. Individual opportunities for self-realization without leaving the region are exceptionally limited. Corruption, bureaucratic arbitrariness, and human rights abuses by state officials and security service personnel are widespread. In the case of Chechnya, repressive practices extend even beyond these regional norms and federal laws apply only to the extent that the Kadyrov regime allows them to.[28] Overall, what one finds today is a strong, at times violently repressive, state seeking to manage a plethora of social movements, only *some of which* turn to violence. As much as this Special Issue seeks to understand the violent mobilization that did occur, its contributions also seek to explain the limits of that mobilization. Here the contributions of Starodubrovskaya, Koehler, Gunya, Shogenov, and Tumov are particularly relevant.

Introducing the Articles in This Special Issue of Perspectives on Terrorism

Mark Youngman examines the *ideology* of the IK across its lifespan, from its proclamation in October 2007 through to it being overtaken by the Islamic State (IS) and suffering the loss of its last known leader in August 2015. It shows how the movement's leaders failed to elaborate in detail what they were fighting against, or to overcome doubts about the efficacy of violent resistance and its ability to deliver genuine results. By moving beyond instrumental and doctrinal understandings of ideology, it complements various contributions to this Special Issue that demonstrate that the IK was a much more locally oriented movement than its advocacy of a global jihadist ideology would suggest. As has become clear, the IK ultimately failed to establish a genuinely trans-regional, much less transnational, insurgent identity.

Julie Wilhelmsen explores this focus on ideology and identity by investigating the social and relational terrain among Chechens, which violent entrepreneurs seek to exploit. Elaborating on the *othering mechanism* in the processes of violent mobilization, she examines the Chechen experience and shows how discourses of radical exclusion from Russia combine with an emerging inclusion and identification with a broader Muslim Self. She does this by tracing these identity constructions through texts and videos of Chechen fighters who left for the Middle East, showing how they portrayed violent resistance far from home as both legitimate and urgent.

Domitilla Sagramoso and Akhmet Yarlykapov shift the focus to Chechnya's neighbor, Dagestan, exploring the mechanisms and logic behind the flow of the republic's citizens to the conflict in Syria and Iraq. Drawing on Social Movement Theory, they examine the penetration of ISIS media into the region in 2013 and argue that aggressive online propaganda framed around effective messages of Muslim victimhood, the glories of

the Islamic State, and the duty to carry out jihad played a key role. They also show how social and personal networks became powerful instruments of recruitment and mobilization of young Dagestani Muslims to IS.

Jean-François Ratelle similarly addresses the question of why individuals from Dagestan who could have fought what they considered a 'legitimate' jihad at home travelled abroad instead. He argues that we need to appreciate the role of religious commitment alongside the opportunity IS offered for people to fight without some of the social and cultural baggage found at home. In doing so, his contribution dovetails with Wilhelmsen's and Kvakhadze's article in highlighting the role played by specific *socio-cultural codes* in explaining violent mobilization (or the lack thereof). It also aligns with Yarlykapov and Sagramoso's and Wilhelmsen's by finding that showing *solidarity* with Sunni Muslims under attack in Syria was a key driver of violent mobilization in the North Caucasus.

Aleksandre Kvakhadze subsequently examines a different and relatively understudied phenomenon: Caucasian female volunteerism. The mobilization of women from the Caucasus to Syria and Iraq was unprecedented when compared to both previous violent mobilizations at the regional level and global patterns in relation to this specific conflict. Like Ratelle, he shows how religious conviction and duty played a role in this mobilization but at the same time identifies *family relationships* as the primary factor. He also demonstrates that, once mobilized, Caucasian women played a restricted role that continued to reflect the position of women in their home societies.

Irina Starodubrovskaya puts the spotlight back on the North Caucasus to theorize patterns of conflict escalation in local communities. Building on rich ethnographic material drawn from fieldwork in North Caucasian villages, she attempts to model why some communities enter the stage of *conflict-violence*, while others stay at the level of *conflict-disagreement*. Escalation to violence, she argues, was most probable in socially closed, traditional communities that attributed little value to secular education, where Islamic youth had already previously participated in armed conflict, and where either security forces or insurgents (or both) were protagonists.

Finally, Jan Koehler, Alexey Gunya, Murat Shogenov, and Asker Tumov situate the rise of Islamic violent mobilization as well as other potential or manifest violent challenges in Kabardino-Balkaria in the context of Moscow's attempts to project state power over the North Caucasian periphery. Working from a sociological perspective on the relationship between violence and *political settlements* in limited-access social orders, the article traces the changing role violence has played in sustaining as well as challenging local political settlements since the disintegration of the centralized Soviet system.

About the Authors: **Julie Wilhelmsen** *is a senior research fellow at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs. She holds a PhD in political science and conducts research in the fields of critical security studies, Russian foreign policy and the radicalization of Islam in Eurasia. The two post-soviet Chechen wars have been a constant focus in her research and she leads network projects on developments in the North Caucasus. She has been editor of the Scandinavian-language journal Internasjonal Politikk.* **Mark Youngman** *is a lecturer at the University of Portsmouth. His research examines ideology, political violence, social movements, and leadership, with a particular focus on the North Caucasus insurgency. He is associate editor of the journal Caucasus Survey.*

Notes

[1] Alex P. Schmid and Judith Tinnes, (2015) "Foreign (Terrorist) Fighters with IS: A European Perspective", Research paper 6:8, *The Hague: International Centre for Counter-Terrorism*. Mark Youngman and Cerwyn Moore, '"Russian-Speaking" Fighters in Syria, Iraq and at Home: Consequences and Context,' Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats policy brief, November 2017; available at URL: https://crestresearch.ac.uk/resources/russian-speaking-fighters-full-report/.

[2] 'Natives from the Caucasus in the ranks of IS (ISIL),' Caucasian Knot, 21 May 2018, available at URL: https://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/251513/

[3] Mark Youngman, 'An Overview of IS-Claimed Attacks in Russia,' 11 April 2018, available at URL: https://mark-youngman.com/2018/04/11/an-overview-of-is-claimed-attacks-in-russia/. The majority of these attacks occurred in the North Caucasus, in particular in Dagestan. None of the attacks in the cited time period involved 'returnees,' some of the claims were questionable, and several demonstrated limited capacity, relying on knives and weapons obtained during the attack itself. Details of individuals attacks and claims of responsibility can be found by following Caucasian Knot <www.kavkaz-uzel.eu>.

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[6] Key works on different phases and aspects of the conflict include Julie Wilhelmsen, (2005) 'Between a Rock and a Hard Place: The Islamisation of the Chechen Separatist Movement,' *Europe-Asia Studies*, 57:1; James Hughes, (2007) *Chechnya: From Nationalism to Jihad*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press; Cerwyn Moore and Paul Tumelty, (2008) 'Foreign Fighters and the Case of Chechnya: A Critical Assessment,' *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 31:5, pp. 412–433; Moshe Gammer, (2008) *Ethno-Nationalism, Islam and the State in the Caucasus: Post-Soviet Disorder*. Abingdon: Routledge; Cerwyn Moore, (2010) *Contemporary Violence: Postmodern War in Kosovo and Chechnya*. Manchester: Manchester University Press; Marat Shterin and Akhmet Yarlykapov, (2011) 'Reconsidering Radicalisation and Terrorism: The New Muslims Movement in Kabardino-Balkaria and its Path to Violence,' *Religion, State and Society*, 39:2-3, pp. 303–325; John O'Loughlin and Frank D.W. Witmer, (2011) 'The Localized Geographies of Violence in the North Caucasus of Russia, 1999-2007,' *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 101:1, pp. 178–201; Domitilla Sagramoso, (2012) 'The Radicalisation of Islamic Salafi Jamaats in the North Caucasus: Moving Closer to the Global Jihadist Movement?,' *Europe-Asia Studies*, 64:3, pp. 561–595; Aurélie Campana and Jean-François Ratelle, (2014) 'A Political Sociology Approach to the Diffusion of Conflict from Chechnya to Dagestan and Ingushetia,' *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 37:2, pp. 115–134; Anne Le Huerot, Aude Merlin, Amandine Ragamey and Elisabeth Sieca-Kozlowski (Eds.) (2014) *Chechnya at War and Beyond*. Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 395–415; Mark Youngman, (2016) 'Between Caucasus and Caliphate: the Splintering of the North Caucasus insurgency,' *Caucasus Survey*, 4:3, pp. 194–217; Julie Wilhelmsen, (2017) *Russia's Securitization of Chechnya: How War Became Acceptable*. Abingdon: Routledge; Edward C. Holland, Frank D.W. Witmer and John O'Loughlin, (2017) 'The Decline and Shifting Geography of Violence in the North Caucasus of Russia, 2010–2016,' *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 58:6, pp. 613–641.

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[8] Vserossiyskiy perepis naseleniya 2010, [All-Russian population census 2010]. URL: https://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/perepis2010/croc/perepis_itogi1612.htm.

[9] Arena Atlas of Religions and Nationalities of the Russian, based on MegaFOM nationwide poll conducted 29 May–25 June 2012 in 79 members of the Russian Federation. Data available at URL: http://sreda.org/en/arena. Chechnya and Ingushetia were not included in the MegaFOM survey data based on small local surveys. *Caucasus Times*, (2010) 'V Ingushetii otnosyatsya k khristianstvu luchshee, chem v Chechnye,' [Christianity is better perceived in Ingushetia rather than in Chechnya] 20 May. URL: https://web.archive.org/web/20161007121221/http://www.caucasustimes.com/article.asp?id=20211; *Caucasus Times*, (2010) 'V Chechne nablyudayetsya vysokaya stepen religioznoy neterpimosti,' [Chechnya has a high degree of religious intolerance] URL: https://caucasustimes.com/ru/v-chechne-nabljudaetsja-vysokaja-stepen-r/.

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[11] Pål Kolstø and Helge Blakkisrud, (2017) *The New Russian Nationalism: Imperialism, Ethnicity and Authoritarianism 2000–2015*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

[12] The concept of the 'Muslim world' is itself problematic and of colonial origins, implying a political, geographical, cultural and linguistic unity that has never existed. See Cemil Aydin, (2017) *The Idea of the Muslim World: A Global Intellectual History*. London: Harvard University Press.

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[16] Julie Wilhelmsen (2005), op.cit.; James Hughes (2007), op.cit.; Ekaterina Sokirianskaia, (2008) 'Ideology and Conflict: Chechen Political Nationalism Prior to, and During, Ten Years of War,' *Ethno-Nationalism, Islam and the State in the Caucasus: Post-Soviet Disorder*. London: Routledge, pp. 102–138; Cerwyn Moore (2010), op.cit.; Domitilla Sagramoso (2912), op.cit.; Aurelie Campana and Jean-Francois Ratelle (2014), op.cit.; Mark Youngman, (2019) *Interpreting the Ideological Evolution of an Insurgency: Lessons from the North Caucasus, 2007–2015*, PhD thesis, University of Birmingham.

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Ideology along the Contours of Power: The Case of the Caucasus Emirate

by Mark Youngman

Abstract

The proclamation of the Caucasus Emirate (Imarat Kavkaz, or IK) in October 2007 marked a watershed moment in the evolution of conflict in the North Caucasus, one that changed the ideological rationale for armed resistance. Remarkably little attention, however, has been paid to the substance of that rationale. This article redresses this gap by examining how local leaders sought to shape the meanings of the conflicts that they were engaged in and mobilise people to action. It demonstrates that the IK's leadership articulated a weakly developed political program that often failed to explain what the insurgency was fighting against or seeking to achieve, instead focusing their attention on moulding local identities. In doing so, however, the leadership frequently failed to address practical concerns or overcome existing political boundaries to establish a regional insurgent identity. The article demonstrates the benefits of moving beyond instrumental and doctrinal considerations of ideology and reveals the insights that can be gained by considering important questions of identity.

Keywords: Ideology, identity, North Caucasus, Caucasus Emirate, insurgency

Introduction

In October 2007, rebel leader Dokka Umarov abolished the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria (ChRI), a self-proclaimed state that had fought two wars with Russia. In its place, he established the Caucasus Emirate (Imarat Kavkaz, or IK), an explicitly jihadist, yet largely notional, polity that united insurgents across the entire North Caucasus. This was a watershed moment in the evolution of conflict in the region, one that changed the official rationale for armed resistance and formalised the victory of the insurgency's Islamist wing over nationalist-separatists in its historic Chechen core. Remarkably little attention, however, has been paid to the substance of that rationale. Indeed, the label 'jihadist' has obscured as much as it has illuminated, creating the illusion of an ideology that is fully and easily understood. How the movement's ideology varied geographically and over time – from its emergence to its ultimate decline in 2015, when the IK collapsed under the combined pressures of sustained counterinsurgency operations and large-scale defections to the Islamic State (IS) — remains largely unexplored.

This article moves towards filling this gap by asking how the IK's regional leaders sought to shape the interpretations and meanings of the conflicts they were involved in. It asks how, through this meaning construction, they sought to mobilise people behind their cause, and what insights these efforts offer for our understanding of the insurgency. In order to achieve this, it examines what leaders claimed to be fighting for and against, how they justified their violence, and the rationale they articulated for engaging in armed struggle. It demonstrates that the IK's political program was underdeveloped, with leaders often failing to offer detailed assessments of the status quo or clear visions of what they were seeking to achieve. Instead, they focused on justifying their methods and shaping identities around the conflict. In doing so, however, they failed to address practical concerns regarding mobilisation or to overcome existing political boundaries to establish a trans-regional insurgent identity.

The article is structured as follows. First, it explains the author's conceptualisation of ideology, and its relevance to understanding political violence. Then, it introduces Social Movement Theory's concept of framing as a means to examine ideology in a methodologically robust manner. In the third section, a brief overview of the evolution of the North Caucasus insurgency, from a nationalist-separatist conflict in Chechnya to a regional

Islamist insurgency is provided. In the next section, framing theory is applied to a unique corpus of insurgent leadership statements. The discussion then turns to examining the ideology of the IK's regional leadership, exploring in turn the problems and solutions that leaders identified, differences in their attitudes towards the use of violence, and the distinct identities around the conflict that they evoked. Overall, it is argued that the IK was a weakly integrated and ideologically shallow movement that failed to address pragmatic concerns. This article demonstrates the importance of moving beyond questions of strategy and doctrine in considering ideology and suggest a greater focus on questions of 'how' and 'who' rather than 'whither' — especially in the case of non-intellectual movements like the Caucasus Emirate.

Ideology and Action

This article adopts an interpretivist approach to ideology. Differences in beliefs and interpretations of events and experiences can affect behaviour, and consequently also whether and how people mobilise in response to these.[1] Mobilisation for political violence is not an automatic response to characteristics and conditions, but instead requires that actors come to see a situation as problematic, and violence as offering a potential solution. No less important, it requires that actors construct for themselves and for their opponents identities that can form the basis for mobilisation.[2] If we accept that beliefs and interpretations matter, however, we must also consider the myriad forces that help shape them. Ideologies, which at their most basic level are "semantic systems for coding reality", constitute one such force.[3] This is not to attribute to them some kind of causal power, but rather to see them as a tool available to actors in the process of meaning construction. By studying ideology, we can better understand how violent political actors endeavour to shape interpretations of the conflicts they are involved in, and, through this, mobilise people behind their cause.

This, of course, still leaves us the challenge of determining what constitutes an ideology. How one conceptualises the term is of critical importance to how one understands its role, the data and methods that one can use, and the conclusions that one can draw. Exploring the plethora of approaches and understandings that exist, falls outside the scope of this article.[4] Nevertheless, it is important to clarify the understanding that informs this discussion. Ideologies can be seen as sharing a number of common attributes. First, they establish a group's distinct identity, the challenges it faces, and its aims and objectives in meeting those challenges.[5] More broadly, they establish the "ethical, moral, and normative principles that guide personal and collective action."[6] This article consequently defines ideology as,

> "A set of interconnected beliefs and attitudes, shared and used by members of a group or population, that relate to problematic aspects of social and political topics. These beliefs have an explicit evaluative and implicit behavioral component."[7]

In other words, ideologies set out a vision of the way the world is, how it should be, and how adherents should behave to bridge the divide between the two. Importantly, this definition does not impose any conditions of complexity. Too often, ideology is treated as a substitute for an intellectual edifice, and consequently viewed as something doctrinal, rooted in a core body of texts.[8] A lack of intellectual coherence or sophistication or ignorance of those texts is then used to support claims that actors are not ideological. In reality, ideologies can operate on a spectrum of complexity and coherence.[9] Focusing only on the intellectual end of the spectrum leads to a significant number of violent actors being declared non-ideological, thereby missing an important part of the interpretive process.

Understanding Ideology Through Framing

Discussions of ideology often remain at the theoretical level, supplemented by selected empirical examples. One of the challenges facing the study of ideology is to develop robust methodologies that can allow us to systematically interrogate ideology in practice. In order to meet this challenge, the author draws on Social Movement Theory's concept of framing, and in particular on the work of Holbrook applying this theory to Al-

Qaeda (AQ) leadership statements.[10] Framing theory seeks to address the challenge that,

> "Meaning is problematic; it does not spring from the object of attention into the actor's head, because objects have no intrinsic meaning. Rather, meaning is negotiated, contested, modified, articulated and rearticulated."[11]

Collective Action Frames are a specific category of frames that are action-oriented and seek to inspire and legitimise activities.[12] Among these, diagnostic framing provides the starting point for action by identifying what needs to be changed in a given situation and, just as importantly, who is to blame for it.[13] Prognostic framing involves articulating a solution to diagnosed problems, both in terms of establishing goals and the means for achieving them.[14] Finally, motivational framing addresses that most challenging of tasks: the efforts to transform spectators into active participants.[15]

Framing and ideology are not identical, despite the frequent blurring of boundaries between the two. Both shape interpretations of the world and have clear communicative dimensions. However, competing, even opposed, ideologies can use the same frame, movements may deploy certain frames as part of an effort to conceal aspects of their ideology, and not all frames are of an ideological nature.[16][17] Ideologies arguably need to demonstrate a complexity and degree of temporal consistency that is not required of framing. Moreover, by treating ideology and framing as synonymous, "we no longer have a vocabulary for distinguishing between the complex set of ideas and its invocation in a particular instance."[18] Nevertheless, frames can originate from and influence ideologies, and framing theory provides us with a rigorous set of tools for assessing the articulation of ideology through a consideration of ideological frames.[19] The decision to focus on specifically ideological frames invariably leads to a blurring of the boundaries between the two concepts, but it should not be read as an effort to collapse the conceptual boundaries between them.

From Nationalism to Jihad: The Road to the Caucasus Emirate (IK)

The contemporary North Caucasus insurgency has its origins in the two Chechen wars (1994-1996 and 1999-2002). Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, conflict between a re-emerging Russia and an independence-seeking Chechen Republic of Ichkeria (ChRI) led to war.[20] The ChRI emerged victorious, but its victory was largely pyrrhic, leaving it to face a battery of social, economic, and political problems, including a proliferation of paramilitary groups.[21] Amid widespread instability and criminality in Chechnya on the one hand, and renewed determination from Russia under the leadership of Vladimir Putin on the other, Russia renewed the war.[22] Over time, Russia drove the Chechen rebels out of the cities and installed its own leadership in the republic.[23] The conflict, meanwhile, increasingly spread beyond Chechnya's boundaries to its neighbouring republics, as a result of both a deliberate rebel strategy and the preferences of local actors.[24]

In ideological terms, the first war is widely regarded as a nationalist-separatist conflict, with Islam playing only a secondary, instrumental role.[25] War, however, accelerated and distorted region-wide processes of Islamic revival.[26] Within the separatist movement, a loose Islamic camp formed and — bolstered by 'foreign fighters' and ideologists who migrated to the republic from 1993 onwards — rose to prominence in the inter-war period.[27] This camp repeatedly challenged Chechen leaders for control of the entire insurgency and had a significant impact on its ideological orientation.[28] Regionalisation, too, played an important role in ideological change, as local actors in the neighbouring republics introduced their own preferences.[29] The dual processes of regionalisation and Islamisation culminated first in the proclamation of a Caucasus Front in May 2005, and then in the establishment of the IK two years later.

In comparison to this earlier evolution, the insurgency's ideology under the banner of the IK has been largely neglected. Root cause, rather than ideological, explanations have dominated, and ideology has often been treated contextually rather than as the primary focus of study.[30] Indeed, it is not uncommon to encounter assertions about ideology that make no or negligible reference to insurgent-produced materials.[31] Where ideology

has been given more serious consideration, attention has focused mainly on the insurgency's relationship with the 'global jihadist movement,' with authors observing rhetorical alignment and a convergence of goals between the IK and global actors such as AQ.[32] While offering important insights, such approaches have tended to overemphasise commonalities — ignoring, for example, that goals are frequently "vague, similar and utopian" and can be used to justify highly divergent strategies.[33] Key differences and nuances among actors, particularly at the regional level, have received limited attention.

Applying Framing to IK Regional Leadership Statements

The following discussion partially redresses this neglect by examining the ideology articulated by the IK's leadership in Kabardino-Balkaria, Ingushetia, and Dagestan.[34] From a unique and extensive corpus of insurgency-produced material compiled over the course of many years, the author selected statements issued in the name of the emir and *qadi* (Shari'ah judge) of each republic, as well as the top-level sector (Northern, Southern, Central, and Mountain) commanders in Dagestan to account for the larger size of the insurgency there.

Figure 1: Simplified IK Organizational Chart
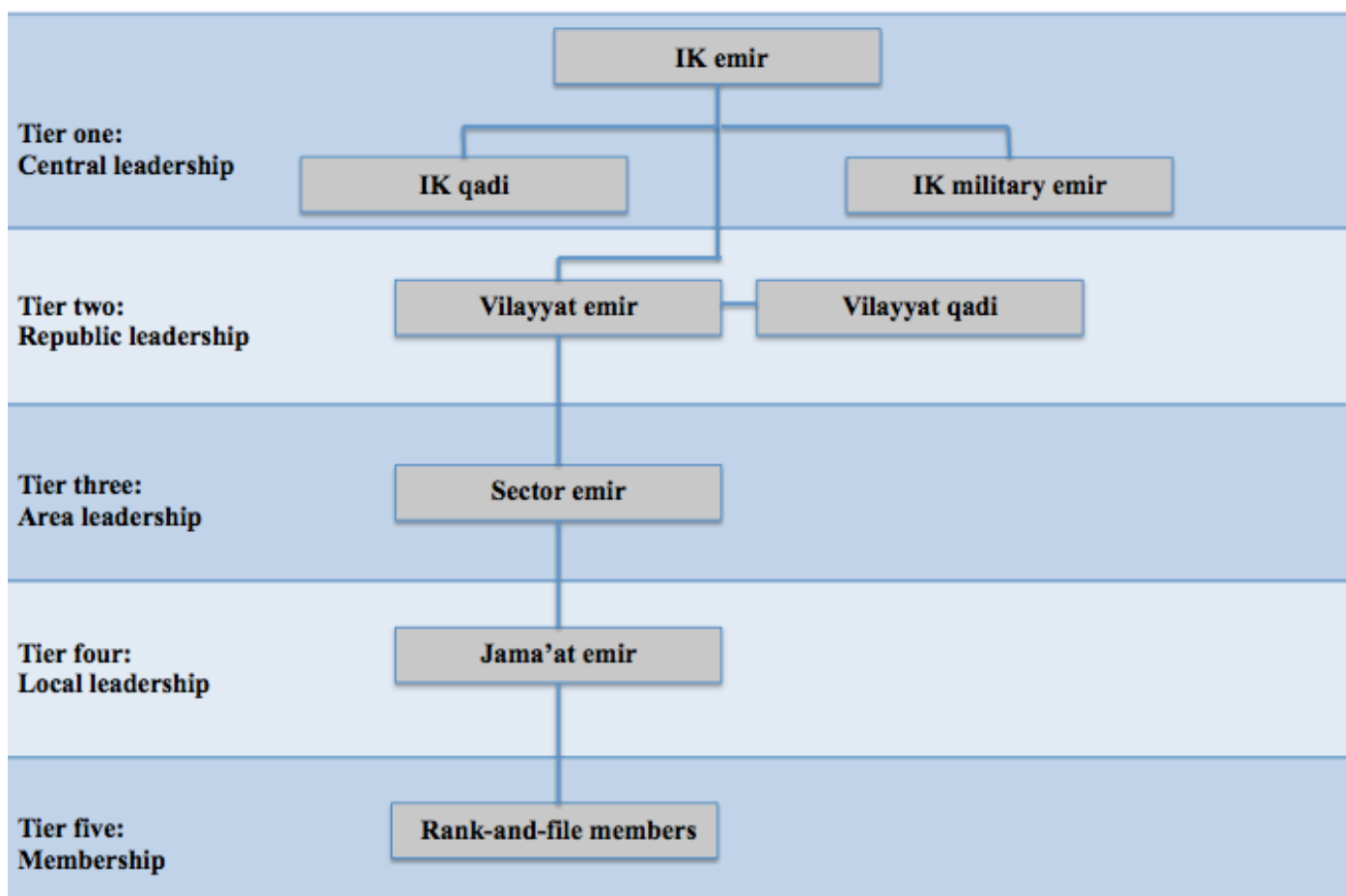
To these were added statements by Aleksandr Tikhomirov (Said Buryatskiy), a key ideologist who spent much of his time with the Ingushetian branch of the insurgency but did not occupy a formal position, as well as website statements issued in the name of the republics' general leaderships. In total, this amounted to 41 identifiable actors across the lifespan of the IK, and 178 leadership statements. The majority of the statements were in Russian.

Figure 2: Number of Communiqués by Republic and Year
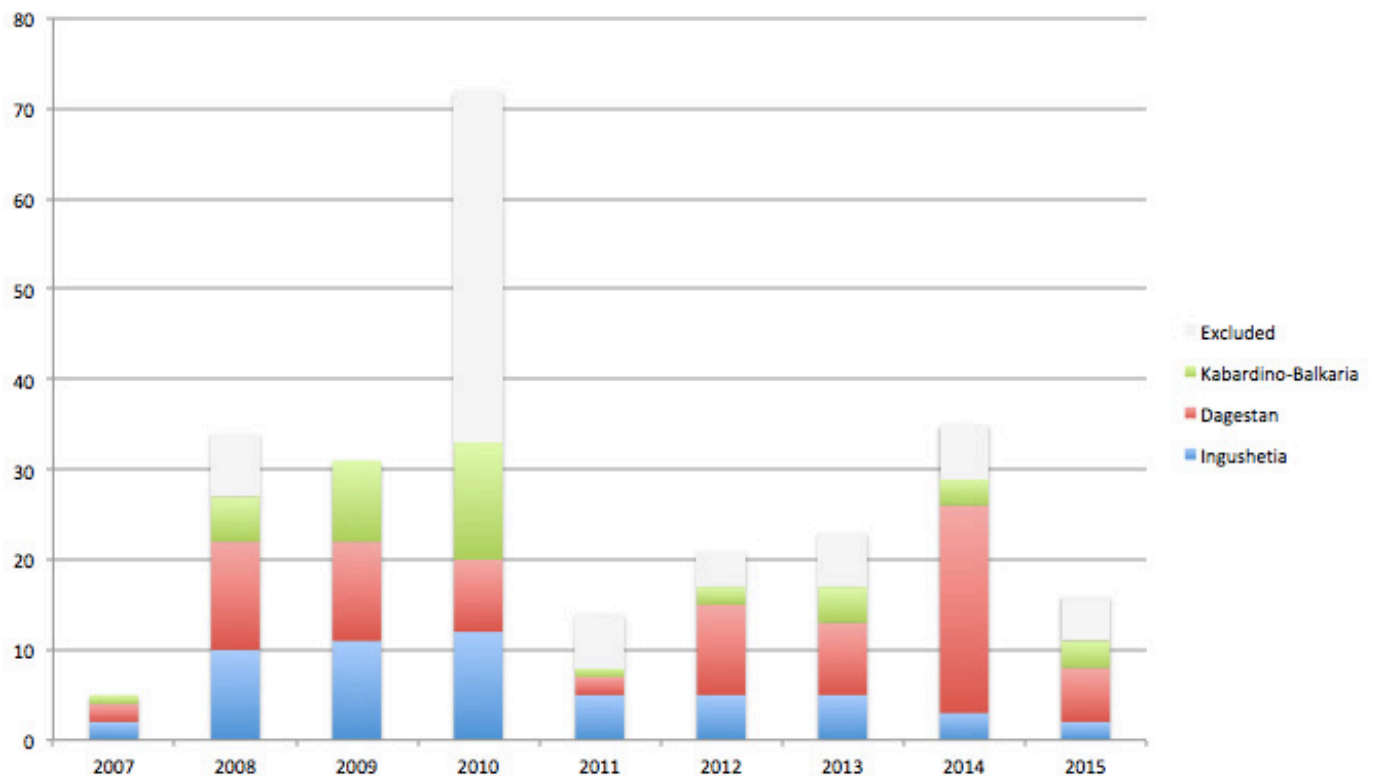
Building on a coding schema developed by Holbrook, the author developed a granular schema to capture ideology-related frames and applied it to the corpus of statements, coding at the sentence level.[35] Diagnostic codes captured characterisations of the way the world is, focusing on the identification of shortcomings with the status quo and the specific grievances that leaders articulated. For prognostic framing, the author coded for different aspects of the way the world should be, including long-term goals; and how people should behave to bridge the divide between these worlds, including the specific tactics that were endorsed. Finally, to reflect attempts to motivate a response, the author coded for the identification of specific audiences; references to obligations, potential rewards, and practical considerations; and how leaders sought to define 'in,' 'out,' and intermediary groups. The full coding schema can be found in the Appendix.

The result is not a comprehensive picture of Caucasian jihadism. There is considerable 'legacy' material from earlier phases of the conflict, and from actors who did not occupy a formal position in the IK; these cannot be considered here. Caucasian jihadism also clearly existed within a broader jihadist milieu, but in the space available here it is not possible to evaluate the role of non-Caucasian ideologues in the ideological trajectory of the IK. Instead, the aim is more modest: To identify the main features of the 'official' ideology of the movement at the regional level, and thereby understand how regional leaders sought to shape the meanings of the conflicts in their republics. The regional leaders acted as formal representatives of the movement and thus enjoyed a privileged position in the ideological ecosystem of the movement that warrants separate consideration. In evaluating the particularities of jihadism in specific contexts, moreover, there is clear merit in considering how ideas from elsewhere are translated and transformed for local audiences, whereby local leaders are one conduit for such processes.

From Here to Where? The Weakness of the IK's Political Program

On the surface, the IK's leadership offered a clear diagnosis and prognosis that explained what they were fighting against and aiming to achieve. Umarov's decision to proclaim the IK involved recasting regional armed

struggle as part of a transnational fight against the infidel, with the ultimate goal of establishing a Shari'ah-governed state in the North Caucasus.[36] The regional leadership clearly replicated this broad framing strategy, signalling their adherence to the ideological framework established by Umarov. Whether one compares leaders in Kabardino-Balkaria, Ingushetia or Dagestan; contrasts the IK's founding and last generation of leaders; or focuses on statements issued by specific leaders or those propagated by websites in the name of a general leadership – the definition of problem and solution were consistent. The IK rejected the rule of 'infidel' Russia and its 'local puppets,' and it advocated their replacement with Shari'ah governance. The same broad framing of the conflict can be found on the IK's websites.[37]

Scratch beneath the surface, however, and one finds remarkably little of substance. In Kabardino-Balkaria, Anzor Astemirov – an influential Islamic leader before joining the insurgency, and one of the architects of the IK – offered a comprehensive diagnosis that fully rejected the existing political system.[38] He portrayed democratic systems and values as incompatible with the core tenets of Islam, and he argued that inequality was inherent to "barbaric capitalist laws" that were in any case worthless in a judicial system as corrupt as Russia's.[39][40] Astemirov's critique of the existing political system moved between its inherent features and its practical manifestation to argue that nothing less than its total replacement was necessary. Yet Astemirov was alone among the regional leadership in articulating such a complex diagnosis. In Dagestan and Ingushetia, leaders in the early years offered at best a mid-range critique of social mores. They catalogued various social problems and vices — the availability of drugs and alcohol, prostitution, police impunity, corruption and so on — that would supposedly overcome the 'infidel' state.[41] The implication was that these problems were inherent to the system. Absent from such diagnoses, however, was any explication of underlying structural and systemic problems. Leaders focused on manifestations, practices, and behaviours, but did not translate these into political problems requiring political solutions. The IK, after all, was not merely seeking to change certain practices, but was demanding the revolutionary replacement of the entire social and political system. Yet, for the most part, its leaders failed to undertake the clarificatory work that explained why this revolution was actually necessary in the region.

The diagnostic framing that leaders deployed was instead heavily oriented towards grievance narratives. This framing displayed two distinct features. First, grievances were highly localised. Although leaders drew on broader jihadist ideas of infidels waging a war against Islam, they focused on grievances within their own republics. With the exception of Tikhomirov — an outsider who devoted as much attention to Chechnya as Ingushetia — it was rare for leaders in one republic to reference events, grievances, or even individuals in another. Even Astemirov, who claimed a regional role, achieved a broader perspective through abstraction — addressing the situation facing Muslims generally — rather than talking about specifics elsewhere. Second, grievance narratives were missing from a large number of statements and became less prominent over time. When Putin returned to the Russian presidency in 2012, the authorities replaced 'soft' policies oriented towards addressing the socio-economic drivers of conflict with hard-line measures designed to secure the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi.[42] The increased repression that accompanied this change, however, was not reflected in local rebel leaders' statements. Rustam Asilderov, the long-serving (2012-2017) leader of the Dagestani insurgency, focused almost exclusively on issues affecting the insurgents themselves, while other leaders made only passing references to grievances.[43][44] Only Magomed Suleymanov, Dagestani *qadi* and Mountain Sector emir (and later IK leader) persisted in identifying grievances.[45] If injustice "puts fire in the belly and iron in the soul," then insurgent leaders offered significantly less fire and iron than one might expect, and less and less as time progressed.[46]

Detailed examination of the prognostic framing strategy employed by leaders, and what they meant when they spoke of a Shari'ah-governed state, is similarly unrevealing. The numerous statements of Jama'at Shari'at, the banner under which Dagestani rebels operated until mid-2010, offered no substantive explanation of what Shari'ah law meant in practice or what its future state would look like. They spoke of fighting "until the black flag with *la ilaha illa'llah* [the *shahada*, or Islamic profession of faith] is raised above the *gossovet* [parliament building]," but offered few clues as to what would happen inside the building.[47] Kurbanov found a similar

shallowness of debate in his exploration of the *jamaatshariat.com* website, which was closely linked to the evolution of the group.[48] Again, it is only in Astemirov's statements that we find details on how he understood Shari'ah. Here, he was able to draw on his own pre-insurgency experience of adjudicating disputes within the Kabardino-Balkarian Jama'at.[49] He claimed, for example, that a Shari'ah court could find a solution to the contentious issue of land reform — the third rail of Kabardino-Balkarian politics. While he declined to explain this solution on the grounds that it could not be implemented in conditions of "occupation", his vagueness was no different to any opposition leader who lambasts corruption without specifying a plan to eliminate it.[50] For the remainder of the leadership, Shari'ah was a trope, a blank canvas onto which people could project their own ideas of justice. At times it functioned as a destination, something the insurgency was striving for; at others, as an existing reality that needed to be defended from the infidel. This ambiguity in many ways reflected the nature of the IK itself: A 'state' that both existed and yet made no pretence of exercising any state functions. Yet it testified to the shallowness of the IK's political program. On a doctrinal level, the group's ideology, as manifested through its regional leaders' diagnostic and prognostic framing, resembled a Potemkin village, a pastiche of jihadist ideas that lacked substantive development in relation to the circumstances to which it was to be applied.

Ways and Means: Justifying Violence and Addressing Practical Concerns

Prognostic framing is not restricted purely to the articulation of goals; it also encompasses the means by which such goals should be achieved. Analysis of such framing can, in turn, help us capture an important component of any ideology: *how* one moves from the undesirable present to the sought-after future. For insurgent movements, part of this bridging strategy relates to how leaders justify the use of violence, and whom they direct that violence against. Indeed, questions of targeting are often central to assessments of the ideology of insurgent actors in general, and jihadist ones in particular.

In considering the statements of the IK leadership, one can see a clear distinction between violence as theory and violence as practice. As an abstraction, there was considerable agreement among the leadership. Leaders made recourse to two interlinked framing strategies. First, and most obviously, they consistently leveraged the concept of jihad to portray their struggle as just. However, it is noteworthy that only Astemirov and Tikhomirov addressed in detail the applicability of defensive jihad to the North Caucasus.[51] The remainder of the leadership, most of whom were not theologically trained, simply took this applicability for granted. This left a gap in leadership explanations that could not be filled by reproduction of translated jihadist literature from elsewhere: it left space for accepting the broader legitimacy of jihad while disputing its application to the North Caucasus - an argument proffered by various actors in the history of the North Caucasus insurgency. Equally importantly, when conflict in Syria and Iraq arose, it meant that local insurgent leaders failed to make the theological case as to why the local insurgency should be prioritised over jihad elsewhere. Although these debates could be found elsewhere online, if one accepts that the official leaders were privileged voices within the insurgency, their inability to articulate a clear argument on this matter represented a significant omission. Second, as an abstraction, leaders portrayed violence as the only option: The state had transgressed acceptable boundaries, necessitating a response in kind. Virtually no consideration was given to alternatives. If movements typically choose from a menu of forms of contention and non-contention, then the IK's offering consisted of one item — violence — with the only choice being the size of the portion.[52] The greatest restraint was to be found in Kabardino-Balkaria, where Astemirov espoused a preference for persuasion over violence and Zalim Shebzukhov, the last leader, advanced his own interpretation of spiritual jihad.[53] A degree of restraint was also evident in Ingushetia, where the leadership distanced itself from threats to local businesses on the grounds that it was necessary to conduct *da'wa* (proselytising) first.[54] In Dagestan, alternatives were mostly considered only in so far as they supported violence, e.g. in the form of financial donations and material support. The three cases operated on a spectrum with regards to their attitudes to violence in the abstract, but across them scant attention was paid to non-violent forms of contention. Indeed, when the issue arose — during protests in Ingushetia or when an interviewer asked Jama'at Shari'at about engaging in political versus armed struggle — leaders explicitly rejected them.[55]

In framing actual violence, there were clear differences in attitudes, particularly in the IK's early years. In Kabardino-Balkaria, Astemirov and his successor, Asker Dzhappuyev, both dedicated considerable efforts to explaining individual attacks, demonstrating concern for civilian casualties and avoiding escalation, and differentiating between local and federal authorities and security service personnel. In doing so, they evidently sought to appeal to, and avoid alienating, local communities. In Dagestan, Jama'at Shari'at represented the polar opposite. Descriptions of violence were gratuitous, concern for civilians was mostly lacking, and there was no dividing line between opponents who had local roots and those that did not. The Ingushetian leadership occupied something of a middle ground, with concern for civilians coupled with disappearing boundaries between local and federal enemies. Over time, however, the differences became less distinct. After the deaths of Astemirov and Dzhappuyev, the Kabardino-Balkarian leadership devoted less time to justifying specific acts; after the demise of Jama'at Shari'at, Dagestani leadership statements became less bloodthirsty. Across the insurgency, violence became more and more abstract.

The rhetorical targets of violence, however, remained persistently local, and regional leaders demonstrated only negligible interest in the world beyond their own republics. Astemirov, a rare exception, employed the same hierarchy as Umarov – with Russia the main enemy and the local authorities playing a subordinate role – and was explicit that the West was not the insurgency's concern.[56][57] The remainder of the Kabardino-Balkarian leadership and leaders in Dagestan and Ingushetia, by contrast, focused almost exclusively on local targets: people associated with the authorities or undesirable social practices, or those accused of slandering or informing on the insurgency. Even as the insurgency itself moved closer to global actors and factions like AQ and IS, this was not accompanied by the identification of new enemies or priorities. Indeed, a notable feature of the statements of those who defected to IS was a lack of explanation for their decision.[58]

Although this article focuses on the content of the IK's ideology, rather than its receipt or impact, it is worth briefly considering the motivational question of efficacy. The literature on social movements clearly shows that it is insufficient to persuade people that your diagnosis and plan of action are meritorious — they also need to be convinced that the plans are practical.[59] Awareness of this represented a key difference between early and later IK leaders. One of the main themes of Tikhomirov's statements, for example, was providing a rationale for action. Like Astemirov, he rejected the idea that defensive jihad required strength, instead insisting that the insurgency's very weakness rendered jihad mandatory.[60] He spoke extensively about his own doubts about joining, and how they had turned out to be misplaced. Later IK leaders, by contrast, consistently failed to address practical concerns. This argumentative failure is relevant when considering the IK's mobilisation problems in its later years. The Syrian conflict demonstrated that a constituency sympathetic to jihadist ideas existed, but these people did not respond to calls for action in the North Caucasus.[61] A key difference between North Caucasus- and Syria-based appeals lay not so much in the visions they offered — for IS in Syria and in the North Caucasus, these were identical — as in the contrasting perceptions of the conflicts themselves. Particularly in the early years, IS' claims to be winning were promoted not only by jihadists, but by sensationalist mainstream media coverage. In the North Caucasus, by contrast, there was a widespread perception, acknowledged even by the IK leadership, that the insurgency had reached a dead end. The lack of effort by later IK leaders to address pragmatic concerns over the viability of jihad in the region consequently appears to represent a significant failing.

Incompatible Identities: Constructing the 'Self' and 'Other'

The IK's lack of a political program and failure to articulate a pragmatic plan for achieving its goals could leave the impression that the IK was not ideological in nature. This, however, is to miss the forest for the trees, and highlights the need to look beyond instrumental and doctrinal understandings of ideology. Of particular importance is how the IK's regional leaders framed identity, which represented the most developed and consistent component of the collected leadership statements. At the most basic level, leaders left little doubt that

they conceived of this identity as Islamic. The ubiquity of Islamic reference points — standard Islamic phrasing, quotes from the Qur'an and hadith, greetings on Islamic holidays, the deployment of visual symbology such as flags emblazoned with the *shahada* — can easily render us numb to their significance. Yet there is nothing inevitable about such references, and their universality and centrality serve to establish the actors as Islamic ones. In other words, since religion itself can be regarded as an ideology according to the definition used in this article, they cue the audience to the movement's broad ideological orientation.

They also provide the foundation for more specific motivational framing strategies around identity. In constructing an identity for themselves and their opponents, insurgent leaders fully embraced the Manichean dualism inherent to jihadism. On the one side of the barrier were mujahideen; on the other, infidels, hypocrites, and apostates. Leaders consistently portrayed the boundary between Muslims and non-Muslims as absolute and non-negotiable. In the words of Tikhomirov, "the hatred between Muslims and infidels is an integral part of this religion."[62] Notably absent from statements were recognition of the possibility of peaceful co-existence and stories of relationships or positive interactions crossing the divide.

Leaders reinforced this basic dualism by developing the themes of virtue and vice, often at the level of the individual. In doing so, they sought to encourage people to distance themselves from the 'other' and instead live up to the standards of 'true believers' — embodied, of course, by the mujahideen. Leaders repeatedly emphasised the valour, selflessness, and, of course, the religiosity of the insurgents. This almost attained the level of art in the statements of Tikhomirov, who constructed highly personalised narratives that emphasised the egalitarianism and fraternity of the mujahideen community.[63] The insurgency's opponents, by contrast, were routinely portrayed as malevolent, dishonourable, and devoid of redeeming features — all the more so the higher one went up the chain of command. The Ingushetian leadership, for example, recounted stories of how members of the security services failed to come to the aid of attacked colleagues or fled from the scene of insurgent attacks.[64] The contrast between those who are "the most zealous on Allah's path" and the "drunken occupiers and their murtad concubines" could not have been starker.[65] Leaders portrayed identity boundaries as absolute, and the necessity of choosing which side of the line to position oneself as unavoidable. Yet this Manichean depiction of self and other, the focus on the antagonistic relationship between the two, tells only part of the story. Between the republics, there were distinct differences in framing the 'self,' particularly with regard to accommodating ethnic identities. In Kabardino-Balkaria, leaders argued for the primacy of a common religious identity over Kabardin/Circassian versus Balkar differences. Astemirov, for example, criticised nationalist celebrations, claiming love for one's native tongue and people should not be placed on a par with religion or state ideology.[66] Islam served as a way of deemphasising ethnic boundaries by subordinating them to a Muslim one. In Ingushetia, particularly during the tenure of Dzhamaleyl Mutaliyev (mid-2010 to mid-2013), significantly more emphasis was placed on ethnicity. However, since the main dispute was with the "infidel" Ossetians, this could nevertheless be accommodated within a religious framing of the conflict. In both cases, the articulated identity was essentially Muslim first, ethnic affiliation second. In Dagestan, by contrast, leaders sought to overcome ethnic divisions by emphasising a Dagestani identity that was inherently Muslim. This aimed at the same goal: prioritising religious over ethnic identity, by arguing that people were Dagestani first and Avar, Lezgin, and so forth second. The consequence, however, of emphasising Dagestani identity was that it limited the salience of Dagestani leadership statements to non-Dagestani audiences, running counter to efforts to establish a region-wide movement identity. This is significant in a broader movement context, where over time both the communicative output and operational activities of the Kabardino-Balkarian and Ingushetian branches declines, creating a greater reliance on the Dagestani sector to sustain the IK.

One can also find differences between the republics in the construction of the other. Astemirov, for example, spoke of "Russian *giaors* [infidels] and local traitors," "Russian occupiers and their local accomplices," and "Russian masters, local maniacs."[67] Whatever their features, these two categories were never collapsed into a singular identity, and the stories of treachery on the part of the infidel sought to emphasise this internal divide. There was, moreover, a willingness to contemplate the possibility of crossing boundaries, of the local 'them' becoming 'us' if these local actors would only repent. Dzhappuyev similarly sought to maintain the distinction

between the Russian infidel and their local supporters, albeit in circumstances of escalating violence.[68] In Dagestan, by contrast, Jama'at Shari'at's condemnation of local pro-Russian actors was absolute, and refused to recognise either an intermediary position or the possibility of movement from 'them' to 'us.'

Conclusion: Ideology along the Contours of Power

This article has identified some of the key features of the IK's ideology, as evidenced by the ideology-related framing strategies employed by its regional leadership. It has examined how rebel leaders sought to shape the interpretations and meanings of the conflicts they were involved in, exploring the problems, goals, strategies, and identities that they advanced. Two features of this ideology emerge as particularly noteworthy. First, the IK's political program was weakly developed. Rebel leaders typically failed to offer a detailed diagnosis of what it was they were fighting against, and to translate complaints about particular behaviours and practices into a detailed systemic critique. Nor did the majority of them offer much by way of details of what the Shari'ah-governed polity they aimed to bring into existence would actually look like. They devoted more time to justifying their use of violence as a means of achieving these weakly articulated goals, but even here there was an increasing failure to attempt to persuade audiences that insurgent action was efficacious.

These failures of explanation and persuasion need to be placed in the political context of the North Caucasus. When we do this, they become less stark: Republican authorities frequently introduce policies without explanation, and there is often little vibrant public debate over problems and potential solutions. The IK was not so much competing in the marketplace of idea as aspiring to replace one monopoly of political thought with another. Tripp contends that resistance often follows "the contours of power," and there is strong support for this in the IK's articulated ideology of resistance.[69] All too often, rebel leaders did not seek to persuade so much as order, instruct, or admonish - much like the North Caucasian authorities. The opposing parties in the conflict therefore had much more in common with one another than either would care to admit.

Further support for Tripp's assertion comes from the second feature of the ideology: The IK's leadership relied heavily on identity to sustain its calls for mobilisation, but ultimately failed to create a unified one that transcended existing political boundaries. The IK tried to portray itself as part of a global jihadist movement that rejected Russian statehood, and in doing so it drew on both ethnic identities that sometimes crossed state boundaries and a supposedly transnational Muslim identity. At the same time, the IK patently failed to break free of the political system that produced it. It would perhaps be unfair — given the degree to which the imagined unity of this community is taken for granted in both scholarly and public debate — to point out that the very idea of the 'Muslim world' is a colonial construct having very little in common with the Qur'anic notion of the *umma*.[70] However, IK leaders showed themselves to be fully embedded within the Russian political realities they so fervently rejected. The problems they identified, the actors they rhetorically engaged with, and key components of the layered identities they evoked rarely crossed the boundaries of specific republics. The IK's leaders failed to construct an ideology that transcended intra-state, much less international, political boundaries.

Overall, this article demonstrates the importance of moving beyond instrumental considerations of strategy and doctrine in assessing the ideology of insurgent groups. In the case of the IK, these offer only limited insights. By focusing exclusively on them, one runs the risk of missing the broader role that ideology can play in shaping interpretations and meanings of conflict. By contrast, considering questions of 'how' and 'who,' and moving beyond superficial, top-level assessments to consider how these might vary within movements opens up avenues for insights into how leaders seek to mobilise people for conflict. The limitations found within IK leaders' statements reveal a degree of ideological weakness that encourages further consideration of its relationship to the movement's ultimate demise. Ideological shortcomings were not necessary a primary determinant of that decline – here, broader consideration of the security environment in which the movement operated is vital. Yet it is surely significant that the insurgency's leadership failed to offer anything resembling a complex justification for its claimed state and strategy that was capable of convincing in theory, much less in practice.

Note: All figures and tables in this article are originals produced by the author.

About the Author: **Mark Youngman** *is a lecturer at the University of Portsmouth. This article is based on his PhD research conducted at the University of Birmingham, which uses Social Movement Theory to examine the ideological evolution of the Caucasus Emirate and its relationship to changes inside the movement and in its operating environment.*

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Appendix: Coding Schema

Diagnostic Frames

Socio-cultural and normative issues	
	The undesirability of existing societies *References to how features of existing societies, such as man-made laws, democracy, etc., need to be replaced; criticisms of the current system*
Grievance narratives	
	Past events *References to specific events in the past highlighted as problematic, such as the Stalin-era deportations or the Chechen wars.*
	On-going events *References to on-going problems or causes of dissatisfaction, such as the mistreatment of Muslims*

Prognostic Frames

Strategic/political vision	
	Lauded past/existing societies
	References to past or existing societies that serve as models for emulation, or to their absence.
	Desired way forward and end result
	Specific policies that should be implemented in society, such as prohibiting the sale of alcohol, closing gambling halls. References to a desired end state, e.g. an independent state governed by their version of Shari'ah law, or to general goals.
	References to ideological systems
	References to specific widely recognized systems of belief, such as communism or nationalism.
	Debates over the proclamation of the IK
	Explanations of and references to why the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria (ChRI) was abolished and replaced with the Caucasus Emirate (IK). Efforts to demonstrate the legitimacy of the IK
Tactics and violence	
	Importance of violence
	References to the importance of insurgent activity and waging "jihad." References to and justification of specific attacks, the use of specific tactics, personal paths to violence.
	Political tools outside violence
	Advocacy and praise for alternatives to the use of violence and armed resistance, including proving support
	Constraints on the use of violence
	Explanations for when and why violence should not be used in certain circumstances
	Legitimacy of targeting non-combatants
	Justifications for carrying out attacks on civilians.
Direction/scope of solutions	
	Declared enemies
	Designation of other actors as enemies. Identification of actors as targets of action. Specific threats.
	Declared friends/allies
	References to individuals or groups who are either explicitly identified as friends or allies, or who are praised for their support and policies.

Motivational Frames

Message direction/audiences	
	Declared audiences *Explicitly identified audiences for a communiqué.*
Identity	
	Who are 'we' *Efforts to define the boundaries of the in-group, who 'we' are, what unites 'us,' and what characteristics 'we' have in common; references to cultural heritage and culturally bound concepts of honor.*
	Who are 'they' *Efforts to define the boundaries of the out-group, who 'they' are, what unites 'them,' and what characteristics 'they' have in common.*
	Who is in the middle *Efforts to define the boundaries of a group situated between 'them' and 'us'; portrayals of the group as needing to choose; references to why the group is not part of the 'us.'*
	Stories of boundaries between groups *References to events and behaviours that reinforce or weaken the boundaries between in-, out- and intermediary groups; references to social relations crossing boundaries.*
Obligations and incentives	
	Obligations *References to why people are obliged to act; references to* fard al-kifaya *(a religious duty incumbent on the community of believers) and* fard al-ayn *(a religious duty incumbent on every Muslim).*
	Rewards *References to the benefits that will accrue to those who act; eulogization of martyrs and references to the rewards that await them in the afterlife.*
Efficacy of action	
	Support and strength *References to public support for the insurgency or its absence; references to the relationship between support and the importance of action.*
	Trust *References to trust or the lack of it and how this affects mobilization and operation within the insurgency.*

Exclusion and Inclusion: The Core of Chechen Mobilization to Jihad

by Julie Wilhelmsen

Abstract

The article explores the broad social and relational drivers behind mobilization of Chechens into armed jihad in the Levant. It suggests that the core mobilizing tool in a process toward violent (re-)action is a narrative that projects the Other as so different from, and so dangerous to the Self that the use of violence is legitimized. Moreover, the shift to more radical representations of the other group occurs in a mutual pattern of imagining and interaction between groups. The mobilization of Chechens into armed jihad is explained with reference to the physical and social exclusion of Chechens in Russia and how these experiences have been interpreted and narrated on the one hand and the attempted inclusion of Chechnya/North Caucasus by the global jihadi milieu on the other hand.

Keywords: Chechnya, Russia, war, jihad, violent mobilization, Self/Other narratives

Introduction

Although the ranks of the insurgency in the North Caucasus have been drastically reduced in recent years and terrorist acts against the Kadyrov regime in Chechnya are rare, sizeable numbers of Chechens and other North Caucasians have left to fight jihad in Syria and Iraq from 2012 onwards. According to President Putin, 4.000 Russian citizens were fighting in Syria/Iraq in 2015; other Russian officials indicated that there were 2.200 Chechens in Syria in June 2015.[1] Barrett reported that there were 3.417 Russians in IS in October 2017, most of them from Chechnya and Dagestan.[2]

This article explores the broad social and relational drivers behind the mobilization of Chechens into armed jihad. The dire socio-economic conditions, weak rule of law and illegitimate authority in the North Caucasus are all likely to create a fertile ground for such mobilization.[3] Individual conditions and circumstances as well as cynical tactics on the part of the Russian government are also part of the picture. In this article, however, the author assumes that the core impetus behind Chechen mobilization springs from the post-Soviet wars (1994–1996 and 1999–2002) and is to be found in the domain of collective identification. It is argued that the much-discussed phenomenon of radicalization, here understood as mobilization for violent action, is a social, relational process in which escalating *narratives* of Self and Other are central. Such narratives stipulate paths for legitimate practices and actions within a group, also acquiring relevance through resonance with *experiences* of the past and how these are re-articulated in the group. Radicalization processes can be understood in the context of relational exclusion from one social group and the repeated narration of such exclusion on the one hand, and relational inclusion in another group on the other hand.

A set of narratives propagating armed resistance has emerged in response to the high levels of violence that Chechen society has been subjected to, and enmeshed in, during the past two decades. The narrative of Self and Other inherent in the discourse of, for example, Islamic State fits well with some of these narratives and can serve as an effective tool for mobilization if handled by skillful social entrepreneurs. Moreover, Chechen society has various *socio-cultural codes* that have been re-invented and reinforced with the wars, accentuating collective, radical narratives of Self and Other. Thus, jihadism along the lines of Islamic State may simply have appeared as the best-suited, most potent narrative for mobilization and resistance among young people from this region at this time.

This article weighs in on the side of explanations of radicalization and terrorism that look beyond the individual and the close-knit group level to the broader social processes that facilitate mobilization to violent action within larger social collectives. It is held that there is a connection between processes of radicalization in small

social units such as insurgent or terrorist groups, and the broader relational processes involving much larger social units such as ethnic groups, religions or states. This article aims to make two contributions to existing knowledge. First, it seeks to provide additional evidence of the othering mechanism in processes of violent mobilization by investigating a case where radical representations of Self and Other have been particularly evident.[4] This article does not only focus on the Chechen experience and discourse on their historical foe, Russia, but also on the recent Russian experience with, and representations of, Chechnya, which during the second Chechen war contained radical juxtapositions of Russia vs. Chechnya/Chechens as 'terrorism'.[5] Second, it explores not only how processes of exclusion by, and othering of, one social group enables violent action, but also how inclusion by, and close identification with, another group contributes to make such violent action appear necessary. By engaging the Janus-faced propositions of the social identification perspective, namely that social groups do not only identify Others but also Selves and that the boundaries of such identifications are malleable, the author aims to expand the use of this perspective for explaining violent mobilization.[6]

The explanation of Chechen mobilization into jihad in the Levant offered in this article is by no means complete. For example, it does not incorporate the leadership/entrepreneurial level and can therefore not explain an entire movement. Rather, it wishes to highlight the collective social and cultural terrain available to a leadership seeking mobilization. Thus, this article complements rather than competes with Youngman's contribution to this Special Issue, which addresses the ideology of the leadership level of the Caucasus Emirate (IK) and Sagramoso and Yarlykapov's contribution which describes ISIS narrative and propaganda efforts in the North Caucasus.[7] Overall, the article is—although presenting quite detailed empirics on the social conditions and narratives of Chechen insurgents and foreign fighters—primarily offering a theoretical contribution to a field which has been characterized as 'analytically barren'.[8]

The article opens by theorizing radicalization as a relational social process, presenting an explanation of Chechen violent mobilization that builds on general as well as culture-specific assumptions. It seeks to offer an explanation both in relation to the literature on terrorism and radicalization more generally and to the literature on the Chechen/North Caucasian insurgency. In the third section, the author draws Chechen experiences of social exclusion and inclusion, as well as the socio-cultural codes that help to solidify and spread narratives about this experience, into the explanation of Chechen mobilization to violent action. The fourth section offers an analysis of texts from Chechen fighters who travelled from Russia and the Pankisi Gorge in Georgia to the Levant. Here the representations of Self and Other in these texts are explained and the reasons given for joining the armed fight in a region that lies far from home are presented. This is an attempt at empirically validating core claims in this article, showing how the narratives of these fighters draw on the specific Chechen experience of exclusion but also incorporate new elements that are shared with other Islamists fighting in the Levant.

Concepts, Theoretical Approach and Explanation

In this article, the concept of *radicalization* is specifically applied in the sense of *mobilization for violent action*.[9] As several scholars have pointed out, the term "radicalized" blurs the distinction between ideas/beliefs and behavior in a problematic way.[10] Conceptualizing radicalization as mobilization for violent action and situating it within a discourse-theoretic understanding makes it possible to distinguish between narratives (ideas) and actual behavior, and also helps to clarify the link between them.

Mobilization for violent action occurs through an escalation in representations of Self and Other on a scale of difference and danger, to the point where violent means appear justified and legitimized—to fight the Other and secure the Self.[11] Representations within a collective narrative of Self and Other, on which all social units are based, are seen as stipulating paths for legitimate behavior.[12] Thus, the more different from, and dangerous to, your own group the representations of the other group are, the more legitimate and logical will it seem to undertake violent action against that group.[13] But there is no *necessary* link between identifications/narratives and behavior. Although most of the literature tacitly understands radicalization as a *process* moving individuals or groups into violent action, little is said about how to identify when a social group has reached the level of being *radicalized*.[14] However, by conceptualizing radicalization as mobilization for violent action

and constructing it as a discursive, relational process, one can identify a threshold for when a social group has reached this critical stage: it is when violent action has become legitimized in the collective narrative of Self and Other, creating conditions of possibility and legitimacy for violent action against the Other.

This conceptualization is premised on the understanding that when people are mobilized to violent action, this entails invoking the group as a collective social unit. Thus, in relation to the large body of literature on jihadism and terrorism, this article can be firmly placed on the side of collective (not individual) explanations. [15] Within the new wave of scholarship triggered by the 9/11 events that utilizes primarily collective explanations, considerable attention has been accorded to the group process within tightly knit jihadi networks of limited numbers with an eye on how to prevent terrorist acts.[16] While this focus is merited given the urgent threat that terrorist networks have posed in the past 20 years, it is also problematic. Such a narrow actor focus decontextualizes a phenomenon which cannot be properly understood outside the broader social dynamics *between* Islam and the West or Russia and Chechnya. In the social world, action is always in part re-action, at least as seen from the side of a given actor. Explaining the Chechen terrorism during the second Chechen war with reference to terrorist networks and their inner workings alone, as Russian authorities have sought to, is deeply unjust and has had tragic consequences for many people identified as Chechens. Therefore, this article moves beyond the narrow focus on tightly knit networks and for this reason does not provide much "inside information" on Chechen networks.

Rather, it aligns with the substantial literature on how structural 'root causes', 'situational variables' or, more specifically, 'grievances' explain terrorism.[17] This author seeks to create an explanation that incorporates such structural factors but at the same time gives them only a secondary status.[18] Structural 'root causes' such as poor socio-economic condition, lack of civil and political liberties or repression matter for violent mobilization when they are mobilized into radically juxtaposed Self/Other narratives.[19] This article shows how the broader, but still specific, social conditions under which Chechens have lived in Russia are reflected in collective identifications of Self and Other, thereby facilitating the mobilization of some individuals into armed jihad.[20]

It is necessary to stress that in the explanation of Chechen mobilization suggested below, the "Chechen experiences," "narratives," and "socio-cultural codes" are all conceived of as collective, social, and contingent phenomena. They are potential common references and resources for all those who identify themselves as "Chechen," but the content changes over time and there is no automatic attachment to, and use of, these resources on the part of individual Chechens.

Chechen Mobilization to Violence

The explanation offered here posits that there is a link between the Chechen experience of exclusion (verbal and physical) during and after the two recent wars with Russia (1994–1996 and 1999–2002) and the ideological changes in the movements that sought to organize violent resistance. The insurgency which grew out of the Chechen separatist movement slid from a national-separatist ideology institutionalized in the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria (ChRI), to the national-jihadist ideology eventually institutionalized in the IK in 2007, and then from this rather locally and nationally anchored jihad to a jihadist ideology focused more on transnational unity and the utopian idea of the Caliphate as being realized in IS.[21] This latter development took place after 2012 and was connected to the split in the insurgency.[22]

A large body of literature addresses these ideological developments within the North Caucasian insurgency, but these are often presented as occurring in a relational vacuum. If more radical references (starker juxtaposition between Self and Other, violence as legitimate strategy) are incorporated into the ideology, this is often explained by weakness within the insurgency itself, a need to replenish the ranks, or as a way of copying trends underway in the transnational jihadist milieu.[23] In accounts that do emphasize a link between repression and violent mobilization in the North Caucasus, this link is seldom theorized.[24]

The explanation in this article builds on the premise that violent mobilization is a *relational* phenomenon, in a double way: first, as noted, in the sense that such mobilization within a group hinges on radical narratives of Self and Other that serve to legitimize the use of violence; second, in the sense that ideological shifts, the transfer to more radical representations of the other group, occur in a mutual pattern of imagining and interaction *between* groups. The "radicalization" of the Chechen insurgency has developed in relation to increasingly radical representations of Chechens and North Caucasians in Russia and the use of radical means of violence against these groups by Russian and local authorities.[25] Moreover, this social exclusion has been mirrored in the emerging social inclusion of Chechnya and North Caucasian Muslims in global jihad discourses. The assumption that the "inclusion" of the group in one social setting in contrast to its "exclusion" from another finds support in the literature on jihadism in Europe. Nesser, for example, suggests that jihadi milieus succeed in mobilizing because they offer social gains—such as a clearly defined identity, spirituality, and a consistent ideology defining the wrongdoers of world politics.[26] In *Jihadi Culture,* Hegghammer shows how jihadi groups offer people not only a violent fight but also a full life that meets social, cultural, practical and not least emotional needs.[27]

Social exclusion (as well as inclusion) occur on two levels in society. On the first level, those directly subjected to social exclusion and violence need narratives that can explain their experience and their marginal status in society. Narratives of inclusion and exclusion are constantly provided in the "public debate" that goes on in any society; some of these narratives have an appeal and become widely spread because they "fit" with people's personal experiences. Empirical findings on insurgent groups in the North Caucasus support the linking of individual experiences of repression and mobilization to violent action.[28] The assumption of a link between social exclusion, verbal as well as physical, and ready mobilization into violent action is also echoed in scholarship on terrorism/jihadism in other parts of the world.[29] In work that focuses primarily on individuals and smaller groups in Europe, *isolation* or *frustration and resentment* are often presented as vehicles for radicalization.[30]

In this article the author assumes that the connection between social exclusion and repression, radical narratives and violent mobilization has relevance on a *second* level in society, among a much broader group than the individuals directly subjected to such treatment. This is in line with a finding by Nesser, who built on social movement theory and saw a *sense* of relative deprivation and social injustice as a starting point for mobilization in Islamist terrorist cells.[31] He noted that, although European jihadists may not necessarily have experienced socio-economic hardships or violence themselves, they still appear alienated and humiliated and thus vulnerable to jihadist propaganda.[32] This observation alerts us to the importance of focusing on the wider, collective level of group identification and how the experiences of a few can become the experiences of the many within a group. Social exclusion and violence as experienced by some group members can become the imagined experience of the entire group through narratives transmitted within the group. Such experiences can function as resources that mobilize people who identify with the group, but who have not necessarily been directly subjected to social exclusion and violence themselves.

This is not surprising. Human beings are social beings: we identify as groups.[33] The suffering or injustice experienced by our "brothers and sisters"—in nationality, gender, class, or faith—is transmitted within the group one identifies with, the communities we imagine ourselves as being part of.[34] Within large societal collectives such as "Chechens" or "Muslims" the radical narratives of the threatened Self and the dangerous Other provide formalized expression of the experience of being victims—as a group. Such narratives also imply justification for a violent struggle against the group represented as the perpetrator, often to achieve the common cause of *a better society*.[35] The existence of collective (albeit changing) understandings of exclusion thus offers fertile ground for social entrepreneurs seeking to mobilize recruits to the cause of violent resistance. Such understandings enlarge the pool of potential recruits far beyond those directly subjected to exclusion and violence.

Still on the collective level, the explanation incorporates Chechen-specific *socio-cultural codes* that enhance collective narratives of violent resistance and prescribe practices of physical protection and revenge. While all groups produce narratives of Self and Other that stipulate logical paths for action, it is argued here that Chechen society has certain cultural codes that contribute to spreading and harnessing narratives with stark

representations of Self and Other—and that encourage violent action as the correct response to exclusion.

As Bandura suggested, drawing on psychology, 'what is culpable can be made honorable through cognitive reconstrual.' '…destructive conduct'… such as killing… 'can be made socially acceptable by portraying it in the service of moral purposes.'(…) 'People can come to see themselves as fighting a legitimate fight against ruthless oppressors'…'The task of making violence morally defensible is facilitated when nonviolent options are judged to have been ineffective and utilitarian justifications portray the suffering caused by violent counterattacks as greatly outweighed by the human suffering inflicted by the foe.'[36] Socio-cultural codes and ingrained, radical Self/Other representations appear to serve as vehicles for such cognitive reconstrual of violence. And, the Chechen experience of suffering can easily be seen and projected as outweighing the human suffering of the foe.

Returning now to the Chechen experience of social exclusion, as regards how Chechens have been represented and how they have been treated physically, as well as the cultural codes that help solidify and spread the narratives about this experience. Here one also has to recap the attempted "inclusion" of Chechnya/North Caucasus by the global jihadi milieu. Mapping these elements in the collective social background of the Chechens can demonstrate why gripping accounts of the crises in Syria and the ISIS propaganda that reached the North Caucasus from 2012 onward (see Sagramoso and Yarlykapov in this Special Issue) have resonated amongst the Chechens, facilitating mobilization of some of them into the ranks of the armed jihadists in the Middle East.

The Chechen Experience of Social Exclusion

Representations

Throughout history, the Chechens have been represented as "different" and "dangerous" in Russian society, although such exclusionary representations were only sporadically included in official language in Soviet times. During the 1990s, few new ideas were launched by the rulers in Moscow as to what kind of state the new Russian Federation was and just who the people belonging to this state were.[37][38] Although this was obviously an inadequate strategy for nation-building, it also meant that the ethnically and religiously distinct North Caucasians were not explicitly excluded from the new Russian state by the country's leadership. Even during the First Chechen War (1994–1996) the "Chechens" were not securitized as a threat to Russia in official Russian discourse.[39]

This has changed over the past twenty years: deep identity divides in Russian society have been accentuated between "Chechens," "North Caucasians," and "Russians". In recent years Russian authorities have also begun to articulate a less inclusive Russian national identity: During the Second Chechen War (1999–2002), which was labelled a counterterrorist campaign, the Russian leadership employed the word "terrorist" rather than "Chechen" or "Muslim" when referring to the enemy. Nevertheless, the constant conjunction of the words "terrorist" and "Chechen" in public discourse during the war served to constitute and merge these social groups into a single category of danger and otherness. As documented elsewhere, the net effect of the campaign against Chechnya from 1999 onward has been the social exclusion of Chechnya from Russia and Chechens from Russian society.[40]

The problematic experience of social exclusion has been broadened after the Second Chechen War to include Muslims who adhere to Salafism.[41] Within Chechnya the installation of Akhmad Kadyrov as Moscow's middleman and the "Chechenization" of the republic from 2000 onward meant that new internal identity divides were accentuated. As Russell noted, the Kadyrov regime adopted the Kremlin vocabulary of "criminals", "bandits" and "terrorists" to denote Chechens who espoused separatist or Islamists agendas as well as diaspora Chechens.[42] Ramzan Kadyrov, son of Akhmad Kadyrov, who became head of the republic in 2007, has reinforced a broadly pro-Russian discourse that juxtaposes traditional Sufi Islam of the *Qadiri tariqat* to the Salafis in Chechnya, represented as "enemies of Islam" who must be "physically annihilated'. In effect, Kadyrov has created a new Chechen "common sense" that relies on singling out parts of the Chechen population as enemies, even as "evil."[43] Moreover, the manipulation and distortion of Chechen traditions at the hands of the

Kadyrov regime and the barring of internal adversaries from all political processes are likely to have created a sense of social exclusion amongst Chechens far beyond "Wahhabi" circles.[44]

Such processes of exclusion on the local level have been exacerbated by recent developments in the articulation of Russian identity by the Kremlin. Initially careful to project Russia as a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional state, the Russian leadership, faced with popular demands for a "more ethnic Russian" national identity articulation as well as for apartheid-like policies on the grounds of North Caucasians being "foreign" to Russia, moved to adopt a more ethnic state identity from 2012 onward.[45] With the annexation of Crimea, the accentuation of Russianness as constitutive of Russia's state identity became even more explicit in official rhetoric.[46] Judging by official statements in recent years, the Russian leadership is now retreating to a less ethno-nationalist state identity more fitting for a state such as the Russian Federation; but the projection and public articulation of a less inclusive Russian identity has already added a new layer of exclusion to the Chechen experience.[47]

This social differentiation and exclusion of Chechens/North Caucasians has been clearly expressed in words at the official, as well as at the popular levels in the Russian Federation. Such verbal exclusion has materialized in specific policies and practices that have made the lives of North Caucasians, and Chechens in particular, more vulnerable and "dispensable" than those of other Russians.

Wars and Violence

The Chechens have a long history as a punished people. The Russian conquest of the North Caucasus (1785–1871) was extremely violent.[48] In the Soviet history of repression and violence, the 1944 deportation of the Chechens (as well as other North Caucasian peoples), primarily to the Kazakh steppe, stands out as one of the most brutal events.[49] While the First Chechen War (1994–1996) was not popular in Russian society and ended with the defeat of the Russian Army, the large-scale devastation and physical destruction of Chechnya and the people living there is well documented.[50]

During the Second Chechen War, the Chechen population was again subjected to massive violence; exclusionary practices against the Chechens as a group were carried out in Russian society far beyond the borders of Chechnya.[51] Following the end of large-scale military operations in 2001, violent state practices were institutionalized as the prime instrument for curbing dissent and controlling Chechnya's population.[52] Akhmad Kadyrov's rule over the territory represented the continuation of this type of rule. Today, Russian governance in Chechnya, carried out by Ramzan Kadyrov, relies heavily on brute force.[53] Unlawful detentions, torture and forced disappearances remain widespread and systematic in the republic.[54] Moreover, Kadyrov's has applied force against the population in Chechnya and beyond with near-total impunity.[55]

Within this broader context of physical repression in Chechnya the special status of the Salafis must be noted. In Chechnya, as throughout the North Caucasus republics, a ban on the practice of Salafism was introduced during the Second Chechen War. This was followed up by a campaign of severe repression against suspected fighters and Salafi followers in the eastern part of the North Caucasus. As documented by Toft and Zhukov, the counterinsurgency strategy in this region has relied heavily on repression, focusing on the selective but widespread liquidation of insurgents.[56] Government forces usually opt to kill rebels instead of negotiating their surrender, and arrests of suspected militants are rare.[57] More specifically, when the Caucasus Emirate was routed in the North Caucasus in 2014–2015, this was achieved through extensive targeted assassinations of militants and their leadership in Dagestan, Chechnya, and Kabardino-Balkaria during Russian counter-insurgency operations.[58] Despite the exodus of fighters from the North Caucasus to Syria and Iraq and a decrease in the level of insurgent activity in the North Caucasus from 2012 onward, the preoccupation with "preventive" counterterrorist activities in the region only increased with the rise of the Islamic State, the Russian military engagement in Syria, and growing fears that radicalized fighters there could return to the North Caucasus.[59]

From this track record, it is easy to see that the Chechens and those claiming to fight the "just cause" of the Chechens and the Muslims in the North Caucasus have a collective experience of being subjected to violence and social exclusion on a large scale and over a long period. While this experience is not unique in a global setting, any explanation of Chechen mobilization into violent jihad that disregards it would be insufficient.

The Narration of Chechen Exclusion and Inclusion

Harnessing the Experience of Exclusion

Chechen experiences of verbal and physical exclusion are indeed *real.* However, in focus here is how these experiences are narrated and transmitted among Chechens and how the social entrepreneurs who have sought to mobilize a violent (re-)action have referred to these experiences in their narratives of "resistance".

The continuous and widespread self-understanding of Chechens as punished and Russia as a dangerous Other has emerged as a direct consequence of the accounts constantly told about the Caucasian wars, the deportations and the two recent post-Soviet wars. These stories have been part of everyday life in Chechen families, also in exile.[60] Moreover, there are specific cultural codes that serve to amplify the Chechen experience of exclusion and make the Chechens prone to repeating and spreading radical narratives of Self and Other. Although Chechen culture is changing, as are all cultures, it still seems to be an *honor culture* in certain respects. [61] Retaliation and the necessity of responding to an insult appear widespread in Chechen society today, as demonstrated when 200.000 Chechens gathered in the village of Geldagan in August 2018 for the burial of Yusup Temirkhanov, a Chechen sentenced for having killed a Russian military officer who had killed a young Chechen girl during the Second Chechen War.

Moreover, the duty of retaliation can be passed down to succeeding generations. The practice referred to as *seven generations* is arguably diluted among Chechens today, but implies that it is mandatory for Chechen males to remember the name of their male ancestors as well as how they died and the location of their tombstone seven generations back. Very often these ancestors are said to have died at the hands of Russian "colonizers."[62] Thus, narratives of a physically threatened Self/threatening Other as well as violent action as the correct "way out" become spread in Chechen society and sometimes even reverberate over generations. This quote from the Chechen warlord Shamil Basayev illustrates the point: "Everyone in my family, through seven generations, fought the Russians. I consider it an honour to fight because I must continue what my father and ancestors began."[63]

In sum, there is not only a stark history of continuous social exclusion and violence, there are also distinct cultural codes that serve to recirculate and spread narratives with radical representations of Self and Other within the Chechen community. These representations constitute a reservoir available to social entrepreneurs seeking to mobilize people to violent action. That is not to say that every Chechen can be easily mobilized to violent action, nor that other non-violent narratives do not exist. However, a review of the narratives implicit in the shifting ideology of the insurgency of the North Caucasus shows how these have all been radical narratives of violent mobilization and with obvious potential resonance within the Chechen social context. In the nationalist-separatist narrative of the early 1990s, the punished Self was defined primarily in terms of "Chechen," the radical Other in terms of "Russia" (the state)—and the way to achieve survival was through violent resistance. [64] Dzhokhar Dudayev and other independence leaders drew heavily on the Chechen legacy of suffering, representing the entire history from 1785 (when Russian colonization of the North Caucasus began) onward as one long struggle by Chechens against Russian domination.[65]

In the core narrative of the national jihad ideology which developed during the interwar period (1996–1999), the mistreated Self was no longer defined in terms of Chechens, but in terms of "Muslims of the Caucasus."[66] The radical, threatening Other was still primarily represented as "colonial Russia," but then came a shift towards emphasizing "Russia" as an "infidel": one of many in a broader transnational setting. Targeting "the West" was not a goal as such, but the Caucasus Emirate was projected as "part of a global jihad" and appeals were made to the worldwide Ummah for support to the suffering Muslims of the Caucasus.[67] Violent jihad, including the targeting of civilians in Russian cities, was projected as a legitimate means to achieve the goal of an independent, Sharia-based state.[68]

Emerging Inclusion?

As the evolution of these ideologies shows, there has been a widening of the threatened Self to include Muslims

beyond the Chechens, first in the North Caucasus and then in the Muslim Ummah as such. There has also been a widening of the definition of the Other, with Russia increasingly projected as one of many "infidels" in the broader transnational setting. This shift towards a narrative that parallels transnational jihadi ideology may be explained with reference to insurgents "copying" global trends, as is often the case.[69] But it can also be explained with reference to the experience of *social inclusion* and the continuous narration of such inclusion, fostering wider group identification. Just as the experience of social exclusion from Russia has created fertile ground for radical representations of Russia that legitimize violent resistance, the social inclusion of the Chechens in (different versions of) the Muslim community has paved the way for an expansion of the threatened Self beyond the Chechens, making acts of solidarity with Muslim brothers in the Middle East logical.

Historically the Chechens have a secondary but still significant identification as Muslims which has been accentuated in times of war. Resistance against Russian colonization in the North Caucasus in the late 1700 and in the 1800 was mobilized under the banner of *jihad/Ghazavat* and by invoking Muslim identity as well as *taip* or family ties.[70] While the Soviet period had a secularizing effect that was evident in the ideology of the separatist movement of the 1990s, the emergence of global jihad came to offer a type of social inclusion that the insurgency could not find elsewhere. The Chechen separatist movement had initially sought support from the liberal and rights-oriented Western states after the First Chechen War, but were disappointed by the lack of support. Disappointment grew when the West seemed to accept the Second Chechen War, as well as the accompanying gross abuses of human rights, as part of the War on Terror.[71] By contrast, the foreign jihadi fighters who joined the Chechen separatists during the First Chechen War were considered instrumental in winning it, and were decorated as heroes of Ichkeria after the war. Moreover, jihadi leaders such as Osama bin Laden increasingly projected and invoked the North Caucasus as part of the global jihadi front and the North Caucasians as belonging to his version of the Muslim Ummah. Offers of financial resources and education followed this verbal inclusion.[72]

Despite the "failure" of the transnational jihadists, who became very unpopular during the interwar period, there was a new wave of "offers" of social inclusion into violent jihad by transnational movements in the wake of Second Chechen War. The former leader of the Caucasus Emirate, Dokku Umarov, alluded to the growing pull of this transnational movement in stating "It was evident that people would not follow us, our ranks would not be replenished under the flag of Ichkeria… We were forced by the times themselves and the new generation of Islamic youth to proclaim the Emirate."[73] The internet has been a crucial facilitator of this more recent process of social inclusion and mobilization into transnational jihad. While Russian authorities did crush the insurgency by policies of assassination and border control, the radical narratives of ISIS/IS spread through the internet into the North Caucasus. According to Yarlykapov, by 2014 *#hijra* had become the most popular hashtag in the eastern parts of North Caucasus.[74] For young Chechens, *#hijra* can hold a strong appeal. Even though they had not experienced life in the Islamic State, the idea that models of governance offered by Islam could ensure much better lives than what they had experienced in Russia's Chechnya was widespread. Recent interviews conducted in Grozny showed that the majority of Chechen men and women surveyed preferred the vision of Chechnya as an independent religious state governed by a combination of Sharia law and the traditional Adat.[75]

In sum, the record shows an uneven yet expanding experience of inclusion in the global Islamic community that parallels the experience and narrative of Russian exclusion of Chechen society. This inclusion created grounds for the widening of the threatened Self, long underway in the narratives of the insurgency before the advent of the Islamic State project. Important to understand why some Chechens were mobilized to fight jihad in the Levant is to realize that already before the crises in Syria there was a strong basis of resonance that ISIS propaganda could play to—namely in Chechen narratives of Self as victim, Other as existential threat and violence as legitimate solution. When the Islamic State emerged in mid-2014 as a physical reality and apparent success story on the territory of Syria and Iraq, engaging in this struggle so far from home began to look increasingly worthwhile.

Texts of Chechen Fighters in the Levant

A review of 35 texts and videos from Chechen fighters in the Levant showed the expected type of merger of narratives and underlined the importance of including the broader, collective social terrain in explanations of mobilization for violent action. The idea of the mistreated Self is strong in these texts and invokes primarily a Muslim identity (much broader than the "Chechens"). Other Muslims are often referred to as "brothers" and "sisters." Internally, within the Chechen collective, there are indications of a divide, between the true believers and the *murtads* (those who no longer can be considered Muslims)—often with clear references to the Kadyrov regime.[76] This distinction connects the Chechen fighters more closely to fighters of other origin than to some of their own countrymen: we can see how for them the Kadyrov regime has become part of the threatening Russian Other.[77] Indeed, Russia as an existential threat that must be fought by violent means is still very much present in the narrative of the Chechen fighters. Direct reference is made to Putin and to Russians as such. There is still the idea of collective guilt, which implies that not only the Russian leadership, but the Russians as such are a legitimate target. Then, into this chain of radical and dangerous Others, Assad is added, as a "tyrant" like Putin or simply as part of the "external enemy".[78] As noted by Salakhuddin Shishani "Actually our youth came to this place to fight against Assad".[79]

Thus, judging by the representations of Self and Other, the fight with fellow Muslims in Syria is being waged against the same foe and is in many ways a continuation of the Chechens' struggle at home, which they are now prevented from taking part in because of the overwhelming use of force by the Russian state.[80] For the young Chechen fighters who have not fought in the North Caucasus, parallels and ties of solidarity are built in the opposite direction: the terrorist attack in Grozny in December 2014 is an inspiration, and calls are made to send money to the Caucasus rather than Syria.[81] The close affiliation of the struggle in Syria with the Chechens' own struggle in North Caucasus became a key factor in their mobilization. Ironically, it also became the key argument in favor of their later expulsion from the community of "proper" global jihadists in Syria.[82]

While there also are new elements, such as the reference to the Prophet's *hadith* about Sham (on the centrality of the Levant), the exclusion and violence suffered at the hands of the external enemy is a central element in the narrative. Note also how the suffering caused by violent counterattacks is portrayed as greatly outweighed by the human suffering inflicted by the Other.[83]

> "The main reason we are here is the Hadith of our Prophet about Sham. And then the *zulm* (cruelty/unjust acts of exploitation etc.) suffered by the Syrian people. That which the Syrian people are going through is not alien to us. We have suffered this *zulm* for years and we are the nation that best understands the state that the Syrians are in. We are alike in that. And we saw just how much of a friendly people they are. As it says in the Hadith about Sham, we met the nation for whom we do not mind fighting or dying for".[84]

Just as the references to the historical grievances of the Chechens have been a constant in the changing narratives of the insurgency, the grievances of the Syrians are projected as the main motivation for fighting alongside them. Reference is constantly made to the violence, suffering, and terror to which Sunni Muslims in Syria are subjected, and parallels are drawn to the Russian destruction of Chechnya and Chechens. Historically and more recently, appeals are made to fellow Chechens: it is their duty to protect these people.[85]

> "In Chechnya, I fought against those who terrorized my people, who killed both the strong and the weak, including women, children and the elderly, in order to subjugate them by intimidation. And here in Syria I fight against those who are terrorizing this people in the same way. …all this we had seen in Chechnya.…".[86]

Indeed, for some the duty to "continue to help weak and downtrodden peoples" seems more important than acting in solidarity with fellow Muslims.[87] On the whole, the narrative that emerges from the texts of Chechen fighters in Syria looks like yet another rehash of the ideologies of violent resistance that have been evolving in Chechnya ever since the early 1990s.

Given the representation of a Muslim Self existentially threatened by a radical Other that now includes Russia, Chechen Murtads, and Assad, violent response is justified:

> "….today you attacked our brothers. And today we are going to attack you….We will never accept this slavery, and as soon as Allah gives us the slightest chance to escape this situation, we will rush at them like lions and fight until we are liberated from them by the will of Allah... And today we hear how our heroes are throwing themselves at the enemy, with bare hands, so to speak, preferring death to humiliation and dying as martyrs, InshAllah".[88]

What will be achieved through this violent fight? It is "a society where life will be run according to the divine law, a society in which the rights that the Almighty gave to people will be returned to them, even if they are not Muslims," and a country where people "can freely practice their religion".[89] This vision represents the inverse of the Chechen experience in Russia—or at least how this experience has featured in the accounts told in Chechen society. This must be taken into account in explaining why some Chechens left to join jihad in the Levant.

Conclusion

The process of radicalization must be understood and studied as relational. The core mobilizing tool in a process toward violent (re-)action is a narrative that projects the Other as so different from, and so dangerous to, the Self that the use of violence is legitimized. Moreover, the shift to more radical representations of the other group occurs in a mutual pattern of imagining and interaction *between* groups. Over the past 30 years, the way has been paved for recruiting Chechens into armed jihad in the Levant by their social and physical exclusion in Russia, and how this brutal experience has been framed and amplified in collective narratives. In many ways this is simply an instance of the old dictum that violence breeds violence, which somehow gets forgotten or subdued when scholars seek to explain terrorism or radicalization. It is tempting to view a phenomenon like Islamic State as purely the product of itself, outside of any interaction with other political actors—but that does not hold.

While the Chechen experience of inclusion in a global Islamic community is far less tangible than that of their exclusion from Russia, there has been a growing sense of identification among Chechens and in the rhetoric of the insurgency of being part of a wider Muslim community. This has provided an audience for ISIS/IS propaganda. As the texts reviewed for this article showed, it has also meant that the plight of Muslims in the Levant could be recognized as happening to "us"—unleashing the resources of revenge, but also solidarity and the urge to offer resistance.

Taken together, the Chechen social contexts of exclusion and inclusion have resonated with the appeals of ISIS/IS propaganda as well as the evolving situation on the ground in the Levant. This social context, latent irrespective of the fate of the Islamic State, constitutes the main challenge for the Russian federal and republican leadership in their approach to the North Caucasus in the future. Future violent mobilization in Chechnya cannot be dealt with by eradicating "terrorists" or "radicals" through the use of force: it calls for a deliberate strategy of inclusion, in words and deeds.

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Notes

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[2] Richard Barrett, (2017) "Beyond the Caliphate: Foreign Fighters and the Threat of Returnees" *The Soufan Center*, p. 10; URL: http://thesoufancenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Beyond-the-Caliphate-Foreign-Fighters-and-the-Threat-of-Returnees-TSC-Report-October-2017-v3.pdf

[3] Anne le Huerot, Aude Merlin, Amandine Regamey and Elisabeth Sieca-Kozlowski (Eds.), (2017) *Chechnya at War and Beyond.* London and New York: Routledge; Wilhelmsen, Julie, (2019) "Colonized Children"; in: Kristin Haugevik and Iver B. Neumann (Eds.) *Kinship in International Relations*. New York: Routledge; Julie Wilhelmsen, (2019) "Russian Governance of the North Caucasus: Dilemmas of Force and Inclusion"; in: Derek Averre and Kevork Oskanian (Eds.) *Security, Society and the State in the Caucasu*s. London: Routledge. Also, Yarlykapov and Sagramoso, "What drove young Dagestani Muslims to join ISIS" in this Special Issue.

[4] Albert Bandura, (1990) "Mechanisms of moral disengagement" in Walter. Reich (Ed.), *Origins of Terrorism: Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 161–191.

[5] Julie Wilhelmsen, (2017) *Russia's Securitization of Chechnya*. New York: Routledge.

[6] Fredrik Barth, (1969) *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries.* Oslo: Norwegian University Press; Lene Hansen, (2006) *Security as Practice*. London: Routledge.

[7] Mark Youngman, "Ideology along the contours of power: the case of the Caucasus Emirate" in this Special Issue. Also, Yarlykapov and Sagramoso, op. cit.

[8] Jeffrey Ian Ross (1993) "Structural Cause of Oppositional Political Terrorism: Towards a Causal Model", *Journal of Peace Research*, 30:3, pp. 317–329.

[9] Arun Kudnani, (2012) "Radicalisation: the Journey of a Concept". *Race & Class,* 54:2, p. 3; Alex P. Schmid, (March 2013) "Radicalisation, De-Radicalisation, Counter-Radicalisation: A Conceptual Discussion and Literature Review", *Research Paper*, International Centre for Counter-Terrorism the Hague; Peter Neumann, (2013) "The trouble with radicalization", *International Affairs*, 4, pp. 873–893.

[10] Alex P. Schmid, (2013), op. cit.; Peter Neumann, (2013), op. cit.

[11] Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Japp de Wilde, (1998) *Security: A New Framework for Analysis.* Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner; Julie Wilhelmsen, (2017), op. cit.

[12] Lene Hansen, (2006), op. cit; Patrick T. Jackson, (2006) *Civilizing the Enemy: German Reconstruction and the Invention of the West.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, p. 16.

[13] Ibid.; Albert Bandura, (1990) op. cit., pp. 7–8 on palliative characterizations and level of violence.

[14] Minerva Nasser-Eddine, Bridget Garnham, Katerina Agostino and Gilbert Caluya, (March 2011) *Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Literature Review* (Canberra: Australian Government, Department of Defence, March 2011), p. 13; Alex P. Schmid, (2013), op. cit.

[15] Martha Crenshaw, (1981) "The Causes of Terrorism", *Comparative Politics*, 13:4, p. 380; Jeffrey Ian Ross, (1993), op. cit., pp. 317–329; Brynjar Lia and Katya Skjølberg (2004) "Causes of Terrorism: An Expanded and Updated Review of the Literature", *FFI/ RAPPORT – 2004/04307*. Kjeller, Norway: Norwegian Defence Research Establishment; Ole Martin Stormoen, (2016) *Global jihad Explained? A Critical Review of the post-9/11 Literature on the Causes of Transnational Jihadi Terrorism*. Master's Thesis, University of Oslo. Campana, Aurelie and Luc Lapointe (2011) divide studies on non-suicide terrorism into those focusing on the individual, the collective and the national level of analysis ("The Structural 'Root Causes of Non-Suicide Terrorism: A Systematic Scoping Review", *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 24:1, pp. 79–104: 88).

[16] Quintan Wiktorowicz, (2004) "Joining the Cause: Al Muhajiroun and Radical Islam", paper presented at "The Roots of Islamic Radicalism" Conference, Yale University; Marc Sageman, (2008) *Leaderless Jihad: The Face of Modern Terror.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press; Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko, (2008) "Mechanisms of Political Radicalization: Pathways Toward Terrorism", *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 20:3, pp. 415–433; Petter Nesser, (2012) "Jihad in Europe. Patterns in Islamist Terrorist Cell Formation and Behaviour, 1995–2010." PhD thesis. Oslo: University of Oslo. For general overviews, see for example, Edward Newman (2006) "Exploring the "Root Causes" of Terrorism", *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 29:8, 749–772: 749; Campana and Lapointe (2011), op. cit.

[17] Martha Crenshaw, (1981), op. cit.; Jeffrey Ian Ross, (1993), op. cit.; Edward Newman, (2006), op. cit. As shown by Aurelie Campana and Luc Lapointe, (2011), op. cit., pp. 79–104, authors working in the terrorism subfield have become more and more interested in structural root causes of terrorism.

[18] As noted by Edward Newman (2006), op. cit. p. 751, a range of precipitant factors—such as leadership, funding, state sponsorship, political upheaval—form essential intervening variables between root causes and terrorism.

[19] State repression is given particular emphasis in this article, addressing a void in the literature identified by Aurelie Campana and Luc Lapointe, (2011), op. cit., pp. 90–91.

[20] This author concurs with Rajaee's argument that the roots (of terrorism) 'lie in the politics of exclusion and the emergence of a triad of dispossession, empowerment and an ideology that justifies violence', theorizing the connection between dispossession and an ideology that justifies violence through the social identification perspective. (Farhang Rajaee, (2002) 'The challenges of the rage of empowered dispossessed: the case of the Muslim world'. In *Responding to Terrorism: What Role for the United Nations?*, p. 35.)

[21] Julie Wilhelmsen, (1999) *Conflict in the Russian Federation – two case studies, one Hobbesian explanation.* NUPI Report 249. Oslo: NUPI; Julie Wilhelmsen, (2005) "Between a rock and a hard place – The Islamisation of the Chechen separatist movement," *Europe-Asia Studies,* 57:1, pp. 35–59; James Hughes, (2007) *Chechnya: From Nationalism to Jihad.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

[22] Mark Youngman, (2016) "Between Caucasus and Caliphate: the Splintering of the North Caucasus Insurgency," *Caucasus Survey*, 4:3, pp. 194–217. The above mentioned ideologies are of course not 'clean' ideologies, but more dominant ideological strains within the insurgent movement; there are constant struggles and debates going on within these dominant strains, for example on whether the focus of the fight should be on the local jihad or in faraway places such as Syria and Iraq. There is also a continuous inherent tension between Salafi and Sufi ideas and doctrines, as Chechens and most other Muslim groups in the eastern parts of the North Caucasus are traditionally Sufi. However, within all these ideological strands there are (changing) narratives of Self and Other that can be pinned down by analyzing explicit spoken and written texts.

[23] Mark Youngman, (2016) "Broader, vaguer, weaker: The evolving ideology of the Caucasus Emirate leadership." *Terrorism and Political Violence*. 31:2, pp. 367–389; Mark Youngman, (2016), op. cit.

[24] Domitilla Sagramoso, (2007) "Violence and Conflict in the Russian North Caucasus" *International Affairs* 83:4, pp. 681–705; Sagramoso, Domitilla Sagramoso, (2012) "The radicalization of Islamic Salafi jamaats in the North Caucasus" *Europe-Asia Studies* 64:3, pp. 561–597; Jean-François Ratelle, (2016) "North Caucasian foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq: Assessing the threat of returnees to the Russian Federation," *Caucasus Survey*, 4:3, pp. 218–238; Aurélie Campana and Jean-François Ratelle, (2014) "A Political Sociology Approach to the Diffusion of Conflict from Chechnya to Dagestan and Ingushetia." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 37:2, pp. 115–134; Jean-François Ratelle, and Emil A. Souleimanov, (2015) "Retaliation in Rebellion: The Missing Link to Explaining Insurgent Violence in Dagestan." *Terrorism and Political Violence*; Memorial "Counter-terrorism in the North Caucasus: a human rights perspective. 2014 – first half of 2016", (2016) Report by the Memorial Human Rights Centre 2016:29; URL: http://memohrc.org/sites/all/themes/memo/templates/pdf.php?pdf=/sites/default/files/doklad_severnyy_kavkaz_-_angl.pdf; Emil Aslan Suleimanov and Huseyn Aliyev, (2017) *How Socio-cultural Codes Shaped Violent Mobilization and Pro-insurgent Support in the Chechen Wars.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

[25] Julie Wilhelmsen, (2017), op. cit.

[26] Petter Nesser. (2010) "Joining jihadi terrorist cells in Europe: Exploring motivational aspects of recruitment and radicalization"; in: Magnus Ranstorp (Ed.) *Understanding Violent Radicalization: Terrorist and Jihadist Movements in Europe.* London: Routledge.

[27] Thomas Hegghammer, (2017) *Jihadi Culture: The Art and Social Practices of Militant Islamists.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[28] Domitilla Sagramoso, (2007), op. cit., pp. 699–703; Aurelie Campana and Jean-Francois Ratelle, 2014, op. cit.; Jean-François Ratelle and Emil Souleimanov, (2015), op. cit.; Akhmet Yarlykapov, (2015) "Radical Islam, Islamist networks and insurgency in the North-East Caucasus", paper presented at Landinfo seminar, Oslo, 14 September.

[29] See Edward Newman, (2006), op. cit. p. 753 for a series of examples.

[30] Robin L. Thompson, (2012) "Radicalization and the Use of Social Media", *Journal of Strategic Security* 4:4, pp. 167–190; Olivier Roy, (2015) "What Is the Driving Force Behind Jihadist Terrorism? – A Scientific Perspective on the Causes/Circumstances of Joining the Scene", BKA Autumn Conference, November 18–19; URL: https://life.eui.eu/wpcontent/uploads/2015/11/OLIVIER-ROY-what-is-a-radical-islamist.pdf; Thomas Hegghammer, (2010) "The Rise of Muslim Foreign Fighters: Islam and the Globalization of Jihad," *Quarterly Journal International Security*, 35:3, pp. 53–94; Marc Sageman, 2004, op. cit.

[31] Petter Nesser, (2010), op. cit. See also William O'Neill (2002) "Conference Report", in: *Responding to Terrorism: What Role for the United Nations?,* Report of a conference organized by the International Peace Academy, New York: IPA, p. 22.

[32] Petter Nesser, (2010), op. cit., p. 521. Also Newman notes that terrorists (just like other people) surely do not act only according to their own experience or background (op. cit, p. 755)

[33] Fredrik Barth, (1969), op. cit.; William E. Connolly, (1991) *Identity/Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox.*

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[34] Benedict R. Anderson, (1991) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso.

[35] Julie Wilhelmsen, (2017), op. cit., chapter 2.

[36] Albert Bandura, (1990), op. cit., p. 3.

[37] Julie Wilhelmsen, (2017), op. cit., chapter 6.

[38] Pål Kolstø and Helge Blakkisrud, (Eds.), (2016) *The New Russian Nationalism*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, on how the Russian Federation is far less multicultural that the Tsarist Empire and the Soviet Union and how the turn to ethno-nationalism in official Russian rhetoric came only after the turn of the century.

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[45] Sergey Markedonov, (2013) "The North Caucasus: The Value and Costs for Russia," *Russia in Global Affairs*, 27 December; URL: http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/The-North-Caucasus-The-Value-and-Costs-for-Russia-16287; Nikolai Petrov, (2013) "Russia minus Caucasus. Carnegie Endowment for Peace," July 16; URL: http://carnegie.ru/commentary/?fa=52409; Marlene Laruelle, (2016) "Russia as an Anti-liberal European Civilization," in Pål Kolstø and Helge Blakkisrud, (Eds.), *The New Russian Nationalism.* Edinburgh University Press.

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[47] Emil Pain, (2016) "The imperial syndrome and its influence on Russian nationalism"; in: Pål Kolstø and Helge Blakkisrud, (Eds.), *The New Russian Nationalism*. Edinburgh University Press, p. 72.

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[49] James Forsyth, (2013), op. cit., pp. 533–539; Anatol Lieven, (1998) *Chechnya: Tombstone of Russian Power*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press; John B. Dunlop, (1998) *Russia Confronts Chechnya: Roots of a Separatist Conflict*. Cambridge University Press.

[50] Carlotta Gall & De Waal, Thomas, (1997) *Chechnya: A Small Victorious Wa.,* London: Pan Original; Anatol Lieven, (1998), op. cit.; John B. Dunlop, (1998), op. cit.

[51] Julie Wilhelmsen, (2017), op. cit., chapters 10–12; Gilligan, Emma, (2013) *Terror in Chechnya: Russia and the Tragedy of Civilians in War.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

[52] Julie Wilhelmsen, (2017), op. cit.

[53] John Russell, (2014) "Ramzan Kadyrov's 'Illiberal' Peace in Chechnya"; in: A. Le Huérou, A. Merlin, A. Regamey, and E. Sieca-Kozlowski (Eds.) *Chechnya at War and Beyond*. London: Routledge, pp. 133–151; Julie Wilhelmsen, (2019), op. cit; Emil Souleimanov., (2017) "A Failed Revolt? Assessing the Viability of the North Caucasus Insurgency," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies,* 30:2, pp. 210–231.

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[55] Julie Wilhelmsen, (2018), op. cit.; Shaun Walker, "The Chechen refugees abroad who can never flee Kadyrov, *Guardian Weekly,* 27 September 2019.

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[61] Emil A. Souleimanov and Huseyn Aliyev, (2017) *How Socio-Cultural Codes Shaped Violent Mobilization and Pro-Insurgent Support in the Chechen Wars,* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 18–19; Richard E. Nisbett and Dov Cohen, (1996) *Culture of Honour: the Psychology of Violence in the South,* Boulder, CO: Westview Press. For comprehensive accounts of socio-cultural codes in the North Caucasus, see for example, Yuri Y. Karpov, (1996) *Джигит и волк. Мужские союзы в социокультурной традиции горцев Кавказа* (Dzhigit and Wolf. Male societies in the sociocultural traditions of Caucasus mountaineers). St.Petersburg: Museum of Anthropology and Ethnology, Russian Academy of Sciences; and Yuri M. Bortyakov (2004), *Абреки на Кавказе. Социокультурный аспект явления.* (Abreks in the Caucasus: Sociocultural aspects of appearance*)*. St. Petersburg.

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[63] (YouTube 2011) URL no longer available.

[64] Julie Wilhelmsen (1999) "Konflikt i den russiske føderasjon: To kasusstudier: en hobbesiansk forklaring," *NUPI Report* 249. Oslo: NUPI, pp. 43–66. Note that "Muslim" has been presented as a self-evident part of being "Chechen," also within nationalist separatist discourse.

[65] Anatol Lieven, (1999) *Chechnya: Tombstone of Russian Power.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, p. 204; Valery Tishkov, (2004), op. cit., p. 15.

[66] The global community figured as more distant "sisters and brothers" of the Caucasian Muslim Self. But as Mark Youngman (2016) noted, the concept of Ummah is a well-established historical concept for Caucasus Muslims as well.

[67] Mark Youngman, (2016), op. cit., pp. 9–13; Campana, Aurélie and Benjamin Ducol, (2015), "Voices of the Caucasus Emirate: Mapping and Analyzing North Caucasus Insurgency Websites," *Terrorism and Political Violence,* 27: 4, pp. 679–700.

[68] Mark Youngman, (2016), op. cit., pp. 6–7; Domitilla Sagramoso, (2012), op. cit.

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[70] Anna Zelkina, (2010) *In Quest for God and Freedom: Sufi Responses to the Russian Advance in the North Caucasus.* New York: New York University Press; Moshe Gammer, (2006) *The Lone Wolf and the Bear: Three Centuries of Chechen Defiance of Russian Rule.* London: Hurst & Company.

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[73] Mark Youngman, (2016), op. cit., p. 14.

[74] Akhmet Yarlykapov, (2015), op. cit.

[75] Maryam Sugaipova and Julie Wilhelmsen "The Chechen Post-War Diaspora in Norway and their Visions of Legal Models," *forthcoming*.

[76] Message from Young Fighter in Chechnya, "Now the Fight Comes," December 2016. URL: http://jihadology.net/2016/12/28/new-video-message-from-the-islamic-state-now-now-the-fighting-comes-wilayat-al-qawqaz/; Interview with Abdulhakim Shshani, Amir of Adjad al-Kavkaz, February 17, 2017. URL: http://nohchicho.com/interview/abdul-hakim-interview/; Salakhuddin Shishani in "Salakhuddin Shishani fought tunder Gelayev and in Abkhazia" May 27, 2015. URL: http://www.chechensinsyria.com/?p=23790, Interview with Muslim Shishani, September 14, 2014. URL: http://www.chechensinsyria.com/?p=22563

[77] Interview with Muslim Shishani by an independent Chechen media outlet, February 5, 2017. URL: http://nohchicho.com/interview/muslim-shishani-interview/, on how the Chechens have become "Mankurts," prisoners of war turned into slaves by having their heads wrapped in a camel skin, which tightened when it dried, erasing their memories. The term entered into popular use in the former USSR to refer to people who had become estranged from their own national roots by russification; interview with Muslim

Abu Walid Shishani of Jundu Sham, March 28, 2014. URL: http://www.checheninsyria.com/?p=21346#more.21346

[78] Message from Young Fighter in Chechnya, "Now the Fight Comes," December 2016. URL: http://jihadology.net/2016/12/28/new-video-message-from-the-islamic-state-now-now-the-fighting-comes-wilayat-al-qawqaz/; Interview with AbdulHakim Shishani, the amir of Ajnad al-Kavkaz, July 14, 2017. URL: http://www.chechensinsyria.com/?p=25394; Interview with Muslim Shishani, March 5, 2018. URL: http://www.chechensinsyria.com/?p=25963

[79] Salakhuddin Shishani in: "Salakhuddin Shishani fought under Gelayev and in Abkhazia", May 27, 2015. URL: http://www.chechensinsyria.com/?p=23790

[80] Albdulhakim Shishani in Chechen address to the Syrian people on *fitna* (conflict, infighting) between different jamaat (groups), August 4, 2017. URL: http://www.chechensinsyria.com/?p=25414; Interview with Muslim Shishani, September 14, 2014. URL: http://www.chechensinsyria.com/?p=22563; Muslim Abu Walid Shishani of Jundu Sham, March 28, 2014. URL: http://www.checheninsyria.com/?p=21346#more.21346

[81] Jaish al-Muhajideen wal-Ansar to Caucasus Emirate in Chechnya: We were inspired by Grozny attack in December, April 13, 2015. URL: http://www.chechensinsyria.com/?p=23672#more-23672; Video link (now dead) posted on September 1, 2014. URL: http://www.chechensinsyria.com/?p=22489

[82] "Muslim Shishani raises Chechen flag above that of Allah," July 11, 2014. URL: http://www.chechensinsyria.com/?p=22231#more-22231

[83] Albert Bandura, (1990), op. cit., p. 3

[84] The *hadiths* in question can be found at URL: https://axmadabusaad.livejournal.com/987.html. They all describe the main points of virtue of al-Sham (the Levant), which refers to the lands now known as Jordan, Syria, Palestine and Lebanon; URL: https://ilmfeed.com/10-virtues-of-al-shaam/; Muslim Shishani interview with Turkish-language Al-Jazeera, October 22, 2015. URL: http://www.chechensinsyria.com/?p=24202; see also the new leader of Sayfullah's jamaat Mohammed Khorasani for references to the *hadiths* and the duty of fighting in Sham, February 26, 2014. URL: http://www.chechensinsyria.com/?paged=48

[85] 25-year-old native of Chechnya, Magomed S., who left to fight in the summer of 2014: "I came across a video where women and children were tortured. Their pain and tears could not leave me indifferent […] This war is not worth dying for", January 25, 2015. URL: https://ria.ru/world/20150125/1044211299.html; Video depicting two Chechen foreign fighters, where one is delivering a passionate message to his brothers at home: "…How can it be possible that your soul doesn't tremble from a thought that your sisters may be in prisons, how can you not be seeing that children are slaughtered. What is happening here – it cannot be solved with a prayer, prayers are not enough here. Take action. Allah says "Act! And pray". URL: http://imperiya.by/video/dWEVCvc5MMp/heham.html; See also message from young fighter in Chechnya, "Now the Fight Comes," December 2016. URL: http://jihadology.net/2016/12/28/new-video-message-from-the-islamic-state-now-now-the-fighting-comes-wilayat-al-qawqaz/; Interview with Abdul Hakim Shishani, Amir of Ajnad al-Kavkaz, July 14, 2017. URL: http://www.chechensinsyria.com/?p=25394; Abdul Hakim Shishani in Chechen, address the Syrian people on fitna, August 4, 2017. URL: http://www.chechensinsyria.com/?p=25414; Interview with Muslim Shishani to an independent Chechen media outlet February 5, 2017. URL: http://nohchicho.com/interview/muslim-shishani-interview/; Interview with Abdul Hakim Shishani, Amir of Adjad al-Kavkaz, February 17, 2017. URL: http://nohchicho.com/interview/abdul-hakim-interview/

[86] Muslim Shishani, Amir of Junud al-Sham jamaat in Syria, in interview with Russian-speaking pro-Islamist independent media activist Muhammad Jazira, October 20, 2017. URL: http://www.chechensinsyria.com/?p=25526; AblbdulHakim Shishani in Chechen, address the Syrian people on *fitna*, August 4, 2017. URL: http://www.chechensinsyria.com/?p=25414

[87] Chechen fighter from the Chechen-led militant group Ajnad al-Kavkaz "Why doesn't the world condemn Russia's Syria bombings?" February 12, 2016. URL: http://www.chechensinsyria.com/?p=24671

[88] Message from young fighter in Chechnya, "Now the Fight Comes," December 2016. URL: http://jihadology.net/2016/12/28/new-video-message-from-the-islamic-state-now-now-the-fighting-comes-wilayat-al-qawqaz/; Interview with Muslim Shishani by an independent Chechen media outlet, February 5, 2017. URL: http://nohchicho.com/interview/muslim-shishani-interview/

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What Drove Young Dagestani Muslims to Join ISIS? A Study Based on Social Movement Theory and Collective Framing

by Domitilla Sagramoso and Akhmet Yarlykapov

Abstract

This article analyses the mechanisms and the logic behind the large flow of young Dagestani Muslims to the Middle East, to join ISIS in Syria and Iraq—either to fight jihad or simply to live under Shari'a law. It examines the reasons behind the decision taken by many Dagestanis to fight jihad in Syria and Iraq, rather than at home in the North Caucasus, in support of the Caucasus Emirate insurgency. The article addresses this conundrum through the powerful lenses of Social Movement and Collective Framing Theories. It argues that an aggressive ISIS online propaganda campaign framed around effective messages of Muslim victimhood, the glories of the Islamic State, and the duty to carry out jihad—as well as very effective personal face-to-face recruitment efforts carried out by adherents of the Islamic State in Dagestan—played a key role in mobilising young Dagestani Muslims to emigrate to Syria and Iraq. These elements, together with the territorial successes of the Islamic State on the ground seem to account for the significant flow of North Caucasus Muslims, Dagestanis in particular, to the Middle East. Furthermore, for those willing to fight jihad against Russia's 'infidel' regime, cost-benefit analysis argued in favour of joining the fight in Syria and Iraq over fighting at home in Dagestan.

Keywords: Dagestan, ISIS, Islam, jihad, propaganda, Social Movement Theory, Collective Framing

Introduction

The outbreak of war in Syria and the plight of Sunni Muslims at the hands of Bashir al-Assad's military machine touched a sensitive chord among Muslims worldwide, including in the Russian North Caucasus, many of whom felt the need to travel to the region and fight *jihad* in support of their co-religionaries. According to official statistics between 2,200 and 2,400 Russian Muslims went to the Middle Eastern regions of Syria and Iraq during 2011 and 2015, mostly from the North Caucasus.[1] Estimates collected by independent researchers provide an even higher figure—they suggest that around 10,000 Muslims inhabiting Russia emigrated to Turkey between 2011 and 2014, and from there about 6,000 continued to Syria and Iraq.[2] Within the Russian North Caucasus, the eastern Republic of Dagestan saw one of the highest numbers of its young Muslim citizens moving to the Middle Eastern region—the figure is altogether estimated at about roughly 5,000.[3] While the vast majority of 'Russian' Muslims, including Russian Dagestanis, travelling to Syria and Iraq intended to fight *jihad* against Assad's forces and support ISIS, a significant number of North Caucasus Muslims also emigrated to the Middle Eastern region simply to raise their families in an Islamic state and live under *Shari'a* law.[4] This was especially the case after Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi declared the establishment of the 'Caliphate' in June 2014—a clear indication of the growing popularity of Salafi ideologies among 'Russian' Muslims, especially in the North Caucasus. This phenomenon raises two interesting questions. Firstly, what motivated young Dagestani Muslims in the Caucasus to travel to Syria and Iraq and join the Islamic State—either to fight jihad or simply to live under *Shari'a* law? Secondly, why did those willing to fight *jihad* choose to do so in Syria—engaging against al-Assad's forces—rather than at home in the North Caucasus in support of the Caucasus Emirate, the North Caucasus Insurgency?

This article attempts to find an answer to these two key questions through the lens of Social Movement and Collective Framing Theories. It argues that an aggressive ISIS online propaganda campaign framed around effective messages of Muslim victimhood, the glories of the Islamic State, and the duty to carry out *jihad*—as well as very effective personal face-to-face recruitment efforts carried out by adherents of the Islamic State among North Caucasus *Salafis* and Caucasus Emirate fighters—played a key role in mobilising young Dagestani Muslims to emigrate to Syria and Iraq. These elements, together with the territorial successes of the

Islamic State on the ground seem to account for the significant flow of North Caucasus Muslims, Dagestanis in particular, to the Middle East. In the Islamic State, young Dagestani Muslims saw a Sunni-Muslim controlled territory, run by hardened Salafis intent on enforcing a very strict interpretation of Islamic law. They, therefore, found an opportunity to realise their dream of living in a society regulated by *Shari'a* law.[5] This resonated strongly among many in Dagestan, a republic characterised by a strong Islamic tradition and high levels of religiosity—especially among the young. Furthermore, for those willing to fight *jihad* against Russia's 'infidel' regime and its local or foreign allies, cost-benefit analysis argued in favour of joining the Islamic State, or other jihadists groups—such as *Jaish al-Muhajireen wal-Ansar*, or *Junud al-Sham*—over fighting at home in Dagestan. The difficulties of engaging in *jihad* in Dagestan—together with the repressive measures carried out also against non-violent Salafis—when compared to the easiness with which *jihadists* and non-violent Salafis, at least initially, could travel to the Islamic State, all argued in favour of moving to Syria and Iraq to fight *jihad*, rather than joining—or continue fighting—for the 'crumbling' Caucasus Emirate.

Methodology and Literature Review

This article is part of an almost decade-long research project conducted by the authors on the drivers of violence in the Russian North Caucasus, with a particular focus on the republic of Dagestan. The article adopts a qualitative methodology in its approach, with evidence based on a vast array of primary and secondary sources. The researchers have carried out extensive fieldwork, including several trips to the republic of Dagestan in the period September 2011–September 2019. During these visits, individual informal, non-structured interviews were held with a variety of local individuals who were relevant to the topic under study. Interviewees belonged to four broad categories—firstly, law enforcement and intelligence officials in charge of countering radicalisation and recruitment by ISIS and the Caucasus Emirate in Dagestan. This group also included individuals taking part in the commission set up to help former Caucasus Emirate *jihadist* fighters integrate into civilian life. The second category involved Muslim 'community leaders', such as imams and youth workers, as well as human rights' advocates and Dagestani lawyers responsible for defending individuals accused of participating in an insurgency group. A third group was composed of young businessmen, farmers, students and teachers, some of whom had been approached by ISIS recruiters. A last group involved relatives of those young individuals who had travelled to Syria and Iraq, as well as 'former radicals' who were close to groups which engaged in insurgent activities in the North Caucasus and/or in Syria and Iraq.

Due to immense security concerns for both those interviewed and the interviewers, and the unwillingness of potential interlocutors to share sensitive information, many of those interviewed cannot be identified, even as a category. All interviews were conducted in accordance with the codes on ethical conduct governing research involving human beings, as stipulated by the researchers' respective institutions. Altogether, the authors gathered information from more than 70 individuals in the Dagestani region. This multi-tiered approach allowed the authors to gain first-hand knowledge and insight into the recruitment and mobilisation processes occurring in Dagestan throughout the past decade, from a variety of different sources and perspectives. Yet, the authors are aware of the limitations of their sampling. No direct interviews could be conducted with young Dagestani Muslims who joined ISIS. Their views were conveyed to us through either their friends or family members, and this may have resulted in biased and not entirely accurate answers. This first-hand material was complemented with an analysis by the authors of relevant oral and written primary and secondary sources. The authors examined reports produced by government institutions and independent researchers in Dagestan, as well as articles published in local and national newspapers and magazines. The authors also met with young Dagestani Muslims who emigrated to other parts of Russia, including Moscow and the Tyumen region (Novy Urengoi) in the north of the country, which further enriched the research.

The topic of Muslim 'foreign fighters' has been researched quite thoroughly not only with reference to the Islamic state, but also within the context of the earlier wars in Afghanistan in the 1980s and Iraq in the 2000s. [6] In his analysis of Arab volunteers joining the Afghan/Soviet war, Thomas Hegghammer defined *Foreign fighters* as 'unpaid combatants with no apparent link to the conflict [itself] other than religious affinity with the

Muslim side'.[7] Such an understanding of foreign fighters can also be helpful when describing those North Caucasus Muslim combatants who joined the fight in Syria and Iraq in the 2010s, including those travelling from Dagestan. While these Russian-speaking Muslims shared a religious affinity with Sunni *jihadists* in Syria and Iraq, there were no additional strong links between the North Caucasian fighters and the conflict itself. Jean-Francois Ratelle and Cerwyn Moore have correctly pointed out that a significant Chechen and North Caucasian diaspora did exist in regions of the former Ottoman Empire, namely in Turkey, and to lesser extent in Syria and Jordan, which facilitated the process of recruitment and transfer of North Caucasian fighters to Syria.[8] Yet, religious affinity, which was manifested in a concern over the plight of Sunni Muslims and a readiness to fight *jihad* against the Russian 'infidel' state and its Alawite ally Bashar al-Assad, rather than ethnic affiliation seems to have been the determinant factor pushing North Caucasians and, more specifically, Dagestanis to join the insurgencies in Syria and Iraq. While ethnic ties may have also helped to facilitate the flow of North Caucasus *jihadists*—especially Chechens—to Syria and Iraq, mobilisation and framing occurred primarily, if not exclusively, along religious *jihadist* lines.[9]

The topic of foreign fighters within the North Caucasus context has traditionally been examined from a different angle—from the perspective of Arab or Al-Qaeda-linked foreign fighters travelling to the North Caucasus to combat jihad in Chechnya.[10] More recently, however, in response to a significant increase in the number of former USSR Muslims travelling to Syria and Iraq to fight against Bashar al-Assad, there has been an effort to analyse both the mechanism behind the mobilisation of foreign fighters from the North Caucasus to the Middle East, as well as the dynamics and the allegiances of these Russian-speaking fighters once they arrived in Syria/Iraq, as shown in the works of Moore, Ratelle and Emil A. Souleimanov.[11] Scholars such as Mark Youngman and Moore, as well as Ratelle, have also looked at the potential risks posed by these Russian Muslim fighters to the security and stability of Russia, if they ever decided to return home in great numbers.[12] Mark Youngman, in turn, has utilised the concept of framing as devised by Social Movement Theory to interpret the responses made by leaders of the Caucasus Emirate to the Syrian conflict and the rise of ISIS.[13] While these publications have provided a very useful starting point for our research, this article moves a step further. Building on the existing scholarly work, our analysis tries to explain the drivers and the dynamics behind the phenomenon of Dagestani 'foreign fighters' in Syria and Iraq, and it does so within the framework of Social Movement Theory and Collective Framing.

The Relevance of Social Movement Theory and Collective Framing

When studying the dynamics behind the rise of Muslim foreign fighters, Hegghammer reached the conclusion that a global network of Islamist charities which had been established by marginalised elites from the Hijaz region of Saudi Arabia, had been utilised by Arab activists located in Afghanistan in the 1980s 'to recruit foreign fighters in the name of inter-Muslim solidarity'.[14] In the 1970s, these Hijazi elites had promoted a subcurrent of Islamism—populist pan-Islamism—which stressed the 'external threats to the Muslim nation', and emphasised the notion of Muslims suffering. In order to address the plight of Muslims, these groups had established a global network of charities to provide inter-Muslim aid, which was then utilised to promote the recruitment of Arab fighters to Afghanistan.[15] More importantly, this Hijazi pan-Islamist community was replenished with Muslims Brotherhood exiles from Egypt, Iraq and Syria, who joined many of the new universities established in Saudi Arabia and engaged in 'transnational activism' from their bases in Hijaz.[16] When the Afghan-Soviet war broke out in the late 1970s–early 1980s, their transnational activism and the network of contacts and Saudi charities established throughout the Muslim world became the mechanisms through which the recruitment of Saudi and other Muslim fighters to the Afghan cause occurred. In other words, a powerful Islamist ideology framed around the notion of Muslim victimhood and solidarity, as well as around the individual duty of fighting *jihad*, together with a well-developed network of Saudi Muslim charities, supported by transnational activists, facilitated the flow of fighters to Afghanistan in the 1980s. This seems to fit quite adequately with Social Movement Theory.

The relevance of religious mobilisation frames, within Social Movement Theory, seems also to explain the more recent phenomenon of Muslim foreign fighters in the 2000s. In his later analysis of 'Western' foreign fighters travelling and combating in countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia or Yemen during the decade after 9/11, Hegghammer stressed the relevance of normative aspects—in this case, the need to fulfil the moral duty of *jihad*—when trying to explain the decision by *jihadist* to fight abroad rather than at home in the West. [17] Foreign fighting is viewed as more *legitimate* among young Muslims in the West than waging terrorism at home, especially when a Muslim rebel group is engaged in an insurgency or war against a non-Muslim army. Similarly, Daniel Byman highlights the relevance of the new narrative of the Islamic State, in pushing many foreign fighters to Syria once the Islamic State had declared a Caliphate 'because they wanted to live in a land ruled according to God's law'.[18] He adds the importance of networks, the ease of travel and the expanded technological reach as elements sustaining the flow of foreign fighters to Syria.[19] Aaron Zelin, in turn, shows how *Ansar al-Sharia in Tunisia* transformed from a terrorist group or insurgent force into a social movement engaged primarily in *dawa* (preaching). This *dawa*-first approach, he noted, broadened the pool of foreign fighter recruits who then travelled to Iraq, Libya and Syria, joining ISIS in particular.[20] Finally, Joseph A. Carter, Peter R. Neumann and Shiraz Maher, in their comprehensive study of Syria's foreign fighter network, have emphasised the relevance for foreign fighter mobilisation of social media, disseminators ('unaffiliated, but broadly sympathetic individuals who offer moral and intellectual support to jihadists groups') and new high clerical authorities who influence and inspire the actions on young Muslims in the West.[21]

According to Social Movement Theory, social violent and non-violent movements utilise formal structures and informal social networks, as well as various communication channels to promote their goals, while also adapting and responding to external constraints and limitations.[22] In particular, social movement theorists emphasise the relevance of framing—the mechanisms through which messages are delivered to mobilise potential supporters. Frames help to explain how individuals move from agreeing on issues of concern to *acting on them*. Collective action frames, as explained by Benford and Snow, are 'innovative amplifications and extensions of, antidotes to, existing ideologies or components of them.'[23] They are intended to mobilise potential adherents, including fighters, by providing meaningful—often simplified—explanations and guides to action, in order to introduce change.[24] Benford and Snow describe the existence of three core 'framing' tasks within the framework of contested collective action. Diagnostic framings identify problems and attribute victimhood—generally through 'injustice frames'—while also finding sources of blame.[25] Prognostic framings provide the articulation of solutions and the promotion of strategies to achieve the intended goals, while motivational framing, 'provides a "call for arms" or rationale for engaging in ameliorative collective action, including the construction of appropriate vocabularies of motive.'[26] A particularly relevant aspect of collective framing theory refers to the degree to which the promoted frames 'resonate' with the concerns of those societies whose members mobilising actors are trying to recruit. In this respect, Benford and Snow stress the notion of 'centrality', understood as the extent to which 'the beliefs, values, and ideas' are relevant to the lives of those targeted by mobilisers.[27] Neumann and Rogers similarly refer to 'frame alignment', described as 'the convergence between the movement's narrative and the views of their recruits.'[28] These three collective action frames remain crucial when trying to explain the dynamics behind—and the successes of—ISIS mobilisation in the North Caucasus, and in Dagestan in particular. Social Movement Theory, therefore, provides us with a very valid theoretical paradigm for analysis.

Traditionally, social movement theory had focused on the structural and psychological factors behind mass mobilisation. It argued that there existed a linear causal link between structural strains in society—which produced psychological discomfort—and the development of contested collective action.[29] A series of societal tensions were identified, ranging from rapid industrialisation to processes of modernisation and secularisation, economic crisis, as well as disruptions to social life, which were seen as creating 'social and normative ambiguity' regarding how 'to respond to changing conditions.'[30] Psychological feelings of isolation and impotence were seen as pushing young individuals to join social movements and, if considered necessary, engage in political violent action. In other words, structural and psychological factors were identified as being the key drivers behind violent and non-violent activities of socio-political contestation. However, these theories suffered from several shortcomings, most importantly, they were not able to explain why societies

sharing similar socio-economic, political and cultural realities were not experiencing the same level of societal mobilisation and violent political activity.[31] In response, Resource Mobilisation Theory emerged which viewed social movements as 'rational organised manifestations of collective action' which conducted cost/benefit analysis when deciding to engage in contested action.[32] In other words, these theories emphasised 'the rational and strategic dimensions' of movements engaged in socio-political contestation.[33]

Yet, as rightly pointed out by Carrie Rosefsky Wickham, leaders of insurgent social movements are able to mobilise recruits by tapping on people's *emotions*—what Robert Benford and David Snow have described as 'motivational framing'.[34][35] In other words, psychological factors are also very relevant when explaining socio-political non-violent and violent mobilisation. Individuals may join an insurgency in response to 'a perceived moral duty or obligation whether driven by 'moral shock' or by deeply held values and beliefs, irrespective of the costs and benefits.'[36] The concept of framing, in this respect, becomes particularly relevant as it allows scholars to 'bridge the instrumental-interpretative divide', as rightly noted by Marie-Eve Desrosiers.[37] Instrumentalist approaches to conflict studies, such as Resource Mobilisation Theory, are those which emphasise the centrality of rational choice theory, namely those who see violent political mobilisation occurring as a result of 'conscious choices made by actors pursuing goals' which can range from material resources such as economic gain, security and power, to immaterial resources 'such as group recognition, autonomy and independence'.[38] Interpretative or socio-psychological approaches, instead, stress the social and psychological dynamics of mobilisation and conflict. Within this framework, 'symbolic politics', in particular, places emphasis on the 'emotional connections' and highlights the power and the relevance of social structures such as 'identity, myths and symbols' to political and violent mobilisation.[39] Framing—within Social Movement Theory—thus allows us to bring these two dimensions (the rational and the emotional) together and provides us with a useful explanatory paradigm when trying to understand how violent *jihadist* mobilisation occurs in the Muslim world.

Social Movement Theory and Framing Applied to ISIS in Dagestan

When analysing the drivers behind the significant outflow of fighters to Syria and Iraq, collective action framing provides a very useful analytical framework. As noted above, the Islamic State carried out a very active and persuasive online and face-to-face propaganda effort among Dagestani Muslim youth. It encompassed the three core framing tasks, as developed by Benford and Snow—tasks which strongly resonated with local Dagestanis. ISIS diagnostic frames of 'victimhood' centred around two powerful aspects—on the one hand, the outbreak of the war in Syria and the suffering of Muslims at the hands of the al-Assad regime, and on the other, the repressions carried against Islam and Muslims in Russia and worldwide. For example, ISIS' widely circulated Russian-language online magazine *Istok* claimed that the Muslim *Umma* was living in slavery and humiliation, citing the words of Abu Muhammad al-Adnani, the official spokesman of the Islamic State.[40] The article noted:

> "And those who look at the situation of Muslims today in different countries will see to what extent [Muslim] humiliation has come at the hands of Jews, Christians and their helpers among a number of rulers in the Arab and non-Arab [world]. This [will help them] realize the importance and necessity of the existence of the Islamic States: its strengthening, recognition and expansion."[41]

Both the West and Russia were accused of conducting a 'war of aggression against Muslims,' in their attempts to destroy the Islamic State.[42] An article published in *Istok* in November 2015 noted:

> "On 30th September, Russia—which had already been helping the Nusayri taghuts [Assad's Alawi sect] in their war against the Muslims of Sham [Syria] for several years—showed its readiness to become directly engaged in this war with its own Air Forces…. Russia thought that its war and its aggression against Muslims in the Caucasus [was not] sufficient. As if the evil that it had already caused on Muslims in Chechnya was not enough".[43]

ISIS recruiters in the North Caucasus, in turn, clearly expressed concerns over the persecution of Muslims by

'non-believers' and their efforts to prevent the spread of Islam. Recruiters pointed out that Russian courts were prohibiting the publication of the *hadiths* as well as certain translations of the *Qur'an*. Reference was made to the fact that in many regions of Russia, mosques were being demolished while the building of new ones was becoming increasingly difficult.[44] For example, a father whose son had joined ISIS in 2014 told the authors:

> "My wife and I were distraught when we heard that our son had gone to Syria…. Recruiters 'brain-washed' him and convinced him [to join ISIS], by telling him that in Russia Muslims found themselves in a depressed [and terrible] situation. [They told him that] courts in Russia were prohibiting the translation of the *Qu'ran* and the publication of the hadiths. [They said to him] that the authorities in the Stavropol Territory were even destroying mosques, and that it was generally difficult to obtain permissions to build new mosques. This was all because the authorities in Russia were 'Godless', [they said]. "We must leave Russia and join the real Islamic state," they insisted. And he, naively, believed their words that supposedly a real Islamic state [was being established] in Syria and Iraq. Then, when he went there, he saw that this was not the case, but it was already too late".[45]

The prognosis frameworks promoted by ISIS—the solution to Muslim suffering and humiliation—lay in the establishment of an Islamic state, where Muslims could live their faith to the full extent without 'violence and repressions'. The online propaganda, in this respect, placed emphasis on the purpose and the necessity for Muslims to create an Islamic state, as the latter 'would revive the duty [of Muslims] to establish an authority that would protect Muslims, by uniting them under a single banner, and in this way, fulfil Allah's words, "Hold on to Allah's faith and do not get divided".[46] It was in the Islamic state that Muslims would finally be able to live according to their faith and their *Shari'a*. As expressed in the *Istok* magazine, 'The Islamic State is fighting to ensure the supremacy of the word of Allah. And there is no supremacy of the word of Allah until we establish Sharia [law]'.[47]. Within the Islamic States, Muslims would feel safe and would no longer be persecuted. All other lands were Muslims lived, or even lands ruled at the time by Muslim rulers, were not considered truly Muslim, as no Muslim laws were properly enforced.[48] The existence of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria reinforced this paradigm even further and proved to be a particularly powerful recruitment frame. In the Middle East, young Muslims from the North Caucasus saw a controlled territory and a chance to realize their dreams of living in a society regulated by *Shari'a* law.[49]

These same prognosis frames were also strongly promoted by individual recruiters. As noted by a Dagestani citizen who had met an ISIS recruiter: 'He [the recruiter] praised the Islamic state. He stated that the Islamic State was an authentic state for Muslims, a real Caliphate. If you are a true Muslim, he added, you must travel to the Islamic State and help them build a strong Islamic state. You cannot live and serve in a non-Muslim state'.[50] This promising view of the Islamic caliphate was similarly publicised by those North Caucasians who were already in Syria and Iraq and were trying to recruit their own relatives. For example, the father of a Dagestani Muslim who moved to ISIS-controlled territory in Syria told the authors, 'My son and I were constantly in touch through *WhatsApp*… he wrote to me from there: come here, we have a real Islamic government here, we are our own masters and we ourselves can build a real Islamic state! He regularly wrote about this to us and called us to join him there'.[51]

In addition to these diagnostic and prognostic frameworks, powerful motivational frameworks were also introduced. Calls for *jihad* became the rallying cry. It was made clear that the duty of every Muslim was to join the *jihad* in Syria and the Levant on the side of the Islamic State.[52] Appeals were made by ISIS Russian-language online propaganda on Muslims in the North Caucasus (and elsewhere in Russia) to join the fight or *jihad* against the Crusaders, from 'both the West [France, the United States and other European countries] and the East [i.e. Russia],' who were conducting a 'war of aggression against Muslims,' in their attempts to destroy the Islamic State.[53] Muslims were encouraged to attack Russia and the West through terrorist acts, which would ensure that 'the Crusaders would taste a [kind of] suffering they had not expected'.[54] Those ISIS 'martyrs' who had perished in their attempts to hit at the West (during the Paris 2015 attacks, for example) were to be revered as 'heroes of monotheism and *jihad*,' who 'had given their souls to the noblest of causes'.[55] Relieving the pain of Muslims and struggling against the 'infidels' and the 'takfirs' in Syria was considered an individual duty (*fard 'ayn*) for all Muslims. Violent actions against 'infidels' were justified on the grounds that

they had committed crimes against Islam. 'There is little doubt that these two countries [France and Russia] destroyed their homes with their own hands, having started a war against Islam, against Muslims and against the Caliphate,' the *Istok* magazine noted.[56]

Furthermore, within this specific context, ISIS recruiters regularly mentioned the 'imminent onset of the End of the World,' and this proved particularly significant as it attracted a high number of followers to join ISIS and fight 'on the side of Islam'.[57] In an interview with an individual who had met ISIS recruiters, one of this article's authors was told: 'This recruiter told us that it was imperative to travel to Syria, because that is where 'real *jihad*' is currently taking place. Soon the Day of Judgement will come, and Muslims have to take the right side'.[58] ISIS online propaganda also regularly emphasized that all over the world events were taking place which indicated the approach of the Day of Judgment, especially in view of some defining traits of the West's way of life—tolerance towards homosexuality, the emancipation of women, and the embrace of a secularized society—which did not place Islam at the heart of its essence. These points were also raised by ISIS recruiters, who contacted local young Dagestani Muslims, as noted by one individual interviewed by the authors: 'The recruiter said that we live in a completely sinful society. We responded by saying that we are not behaving badly, we do not sin and [instead] strive to do everything which is required from Muslims: we regularly pray and fast. The recruiter responded by telling us that even if we did not do anything wrong, we nevertheless lived in a sinful society. Look, he added, they are already allowing two men to marry. This is abominable, and you live next to this abomination'. [59]

These Western lifestyles and political arrangements were seen as contradicting the main tenets of Islam, in particular the notion of *tawhid* or monotheism. They presaged the arrival of the end of time and the imminent outbreak of the 'final battle' between good and evil. In order to strengthen the eschatological argument, and make it sound convincing, ISIS recruiters extensively used a specific hadith which refers to the towns of Dabiq and Amak. This hadith stated that the 'last battle', between 'Romans' (Christians) and Muslims, in eschatological terms, would take place exactly in Syria and in the Levant, near the town of Dabiq.[60] Many foreign fighters who travelled to Syria took this hadith very seriously, including Dagestani *jihadists*.[61] Dabiq became to them the most important point on earth, surpassing even the significance of the Kaaba in Mecca.[62] This crucial eschatological element seems to explain, according to many of our informants, why so many Muslims in Russia and elsewhere migrated or fulfilled *hijra* to the sacred land of 'Sham'—Syria and the Levant. Many North Caucasus Muslims went to Syria not only to find social justice, but more importantly to take part in the 'final battle' before the arrival of Isa (Jesus), and the Messiah—the Mahdi—who many saw as embodied in ISIS's new 'caliph', Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Their local difficulties and personal grievances were all placed and shaped by this global 'eschatological' context.[63]

The Resonance of ISIS Collective Frames in Dagestan

These frames resonated strongly within Dagestani society, primarily because the level of religiosity among Muslims in this republic is particularly high when compared to the Muslim republics of the Western North Caucasus. A large-scale sociological survey conducted by the Ministry of Youth Affairs of the Republic of Dagestan is, in this respect, particularly revealing. It brought to light the increased support for religious answers to public issues in Dagestan, especially among the young, thus reflecting the growing Islamisation of the republic, which in turn, partly explains why support for ISIS grew locally among the youth.[64] To the question as to 'how should society address its problems?', 47.6 percent of those interviewed among the Dagestani youth indicated a preference for religious norms and *Shari'a* law, as opposed to 'science and secular laws', a response which was supported by only 30,1 percent of the respondents.[65] The same survey showed that 68,9 percent of those young Dagestanis interviewed considered that Muslim believers should observe the law only if the latter did not contradict their Muslim faith, whereas only 15,4 percent considered that laws had to be observed in all cases, 'because all power comes from God'.[66] Finally, 52 percent of young Dagestanis, considered that Muslims should not, in any way, engage in any activity that contradicted *Shari'a* law in the conduct of their official duties, while only 6,6 percent of those interviewed noted that Dagestanis should fulfil their duties regardless, even if they contradicted *Shari'a* law. Furthermore, 19,8 percent of young Muslims

interviewed said that they could not be patriots of a non-*Shari'a* state.[67] These surveys clearly indicate that firstly, a significant number of Muslims in Dagestan wished to live in an Islamic state (even if they were not entirely familiar with *Shari'a* law) and second, that their first identity and attachment was towards the Muslim *umma*—rather than towards the Russian state or towards their own ethnic nationality.

This perception by Muslim Dagestanis of belonging to a broader Islamic community was reinforced in the period 2000–2010 as a result of the strengthening of Islamist traditions and Islamic education inside Dagestan. For example, in a number of Dagestani localities, in particular in Gymry, Balakhani, Gubden and Gurbuki, children no longer attend secular comprehensive schools and instead join Islamic schools, while in some localities, such as Gubden, it was found that several hundred girls no longer go to school for religious reasons.[68] On Fridays, university students have been allowed to leave class to attend prayers at the Mosque, while institutes of Islamic learning have been able to exist outside the control of the local Spiritual Board of Muslims of Dagestan and the Russian educational system.[69] Furthermore, in several mountainous villages, disputes are increasingly resolved according to *Shari'a* law, indicating a growing Islamisation of the republic. [70] Researchers have also observed the destruction of monuments and burial sites that do not correspond to Islam.[71] Moreover, almost every newspaper in Dagestan contains a section devoted to the discussion of Islamic topics—Islamic theology, jurisprudence and Muslim world affairs. Similarly, regional radio stations and television channels provide ample airtime to programs of an Islamic nature. In other words, Islam and religion have penetrated many dimensions of Dagestani society, increasing the ties between local Muslims and the broader Muslims *umma*.

Considering themselves part of a broader Muslim *umma*, many young individuals in the Dagestan—as well as elsewhere—felt the need to support their Muslims brothers in Syria who were suffering at the hands of Bashir al-Assad. Relieving the pain of Muslims and struggling against the 'infidels' and the 'takfirs' in Syria was considered an individual duty (*fard 'ayn*) for all Muslims. As was noted in 1998 by Abdullah Azzam, the main ideologue of the Arabs fighting against Soviet forces in Afghanistan, *military jihad* was considered *compulsory*, 'until the liberation of the last piece of land which was in the hands of Muslims but has been occupied by Disbelievers'.[72] During his stay in Afghanistan, Azzam had raised the position of *jihad* to make it the most important obligation after belief in Islam itself.[73] Protecting Muslim lands was considered '*the First obligation after īmān, (faith)*', as the title of his book notes.[74] Azzam's understanding of *jihad* was then incorporated by *Al Qaeda*, and by its branches and affiliates, including the Islamic State—originally *Al Qaeda in Iraq*, and then renamed *Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant*.

This explains why ISIS framing resonated with many young Muslims in Dagestan, and why many highly educated Muslims decided to travel to Syria and Iraq to fight *jihad* and live in an Islamic state. The strength of Islamic beliefs among many Dagestanis is perhaps best exemplified in the words of a Dagestani ISIS preacher (and recruiter) Murad Atayev, who was based in a Berlin Mosque, and who noted, 'People who have beliefs are willing to sacrifice their lives for their realisation. Especially if they are convinced that their struggle or their actions will be rewarded with paradise'.[75] As reported by Elena Milashina, who travelled to the village of Novosasitli in the Khasavyurt region of Dagestan—from where 22 villagers left for Syria—'if you ask [the] question [as to why people left], the most common answer [you will receive] is a quote from the *hadith* of the Prophet Muhammad about holy war in Sham (Syria). The *hadith* stated essentially, that if a faithful Muslim does not engage in *jihad*, in order to create the Caliphate, he will not be able to go to heaven'.[76] This *hadith* was widely circulated in the internet after the outbreak of war in Syria.

ISIS Recruitment Network and the Opportunity Costs to Join ISIS

Powerful collective frames are, however, not enough in explaining the mobilisation of Dagestanis to Syria and Iraq. It does not allow us fully to respond to the question as to why some Dagestanis joined the jihad while others did not. A second, very important, element facilitating the flow of North Caucasus jihadists to Syria— as highlighted by Social Movement and Resource Mobilisation Theory—centred around the mechanism of ISIS recruitment and mobilisation. Contrary to the widespread view regarding the Internet's exceptional role

in recruiting ISIS supporters, personal recruiters also played an extremely relevant part in mobilizing young Dagestanis to join ISIS. They became responsible for completing what had initially begun as online agitation. Real individuals supplied youngsters with instructions on how to drive to the territory of the Islamic State, whom to contact and how to cross the border.[77] Networks of support and structures of recruitment based primarily in Turkey also became particularly active, organising and helping with the movement of volunteers from the North Caucasus to Syria and Iraq.[78] These also included high-profile operatives and ideologues belonging to the Caucasus Emirate, who aided in the mobilisation effort through their own personal networks and contacts.[79]

Research conducted by the authors showed that Dagestani recruiters also operated quite actively locally, in Dagestan, in a similar fashion as Chechens did among Muslim migrant communities in Moscow and other Russian cities.[80] Personal ties and social connections—as well as previous membership of the Caucasus Emirate—proved to be particularly relevant in pushing many young Dagestanis to join the Islamic State. Many Caucasus Emirate leaders in Dagestan even swore allegiance to ISIS inside Dagestan without leaving the republic, such as Rustam Asilderov (Abu Muhammad al-Kadari) who had been the head of the Caucasus Emirate Dagestani Wilayah and then became the emir of the Caucasus Province of ISIS or the *Wilayah al-Qawqaz*, and Suleiman Zailanabidov, emir of the Dagestani Aukhov *jamaat*. More importantly, charismatic Muslims preachers from Dagestan such as Nadir Abu Khalid (Nadir Medetov) and Akhmad Medinsky joined ISIS in Syria and called on Muslims to make *hijra* (emigrate) to Syria and Iraq and fight for the Caliphate, claiming that such actions were an individual obligation (*fard 'ayn*) for each Muslim.[81] References were made to the notion of *zulm* (the subjugation and suffering of the oppressed), and to the obligation of Muslims to assist Syrians in their plight.[82]

Analysis of the recruiting efforts of the Islamic State in the territory of Russia, including Dagestan, also suggests that this was not a chaotic enterprise, but instead a well-organized activity that had its own strategy. ISIS recruiters had instructions as to who should be recruited first. Much attention was paid, for example, to information technology specialists, oil workers, doctors and nurses, not just fighters, and this explains also how many non-fighters were recruited. Field studies also showed that all of those who left for the Middle East kept their ties with relatives and friends. The preservation of these ties was encouraged since it was considered one of the channels through which it was possible to carry out further recruitment. Those who were already based in the Islamic State purposefully created a picture of paradisal life under Islamic law, so that the *hijra* would become attractive to ever more people.[83] To summarise, social and personal networks became powerful instruments of recruitment and mobilisation of young Dagestani Muslims to ISIS.

A third element which weighed in favour of joining the Islamic state (or indeed any other *jihadist* group in Syria) related to the opportunity costs involved in travelling to Syria—as opposed to staying in, or returning to, the North Caucasus—for those North Caucasians willing to fight *jihad* against Russia and its allies in the Middle East. In months and year preceding the 2014 Sochi Olympics, the Russian Federal authorities engaged in an extremely active and effective counter-insurgency campaign together with the local North Caucasus authorities which decapitated most of the Caucasus Emirate's leadership and significantly weakened the movement. Caucasus Emirate Dagestanis were particularly hard hit—the leaders of the Caucasus Emirate, Aliaskhab Kebekov (Ali Abu Muhammad) and Magomed Suleymanov (Abu Usman Gimrisnky) were killed and so was Said Kamilov (Said Arakhansky), who had replaced Aseldirov as Dagestani emir, as well as the Dagestani Mountain sector emir Gadzhi Abdulayev (Abu Dudzhana Gimrinsky).[84] In this respect, the strong repressive measures carried out by the Russian Federal and local authorities in the North Caucasus against violent and non-violent Salafi activity, including closure of mosques and prayer houses, *halal* cafes as well as mass arrests of believers at mosques, undoubtedly pushed many North Caucasus, primarily—but not only—in Dagestan, to emigrate to Syria.[85]

In Dagestan, in particular, the security forces launched a heavy-handed counter-insurgency campaign when Ramazan Abdulatipov replaced Magomedsalam Magomedov as President of Dagestan in January 2013. Most Salafi madrasas, children's kindergarten and sports clubs, were closed, while all efforts at reconciliation between Sufis and moderate *Salafis*—which had been initiated by President Magomedov in 2010—were halted. The

commission on the rehabilitation of fighters which had been set up by Magomedov to ease the transition of former Caucasus Emirate fighters into civilian life was shut down, and in its place a much less effective commission on 'Reconciliation and Harmony' was set up. Mass arrests and other acts of repression were carried out against relatives of insurgents, leading to a significant number of deaths and compelling many Salafis to abandon the republic [86]. While Dagestani politicians showed their allegiance to Islam, in order to gain the support of local people, by for example encouraging the opening of prayer rooms in government buildings, constraints on the full development of an Islamic life in Dagestan remained in place. Restrictions were imposed on the publication of certain versions of the *Qu'ran* while the implementation of *Shari'a* law—although sometimes tolerated—was considered illegal by the Federal authorities.[87] Furthermore, many Salafi Mosques were closed, to the chagrin of their followers who considered officially sanctioned Islamic institutions as being compromised by the authorities and as promoting a kind of 'traditional' Islam which clashed with the 'purist' versions of Salafi Islam. Sufi practices, which were embraced by the official authorities, were considered by Salafis as a form of polytheism or *shrik*, and therefore incompatible with the principle of *tawhid* or monotheism—a key tenet of Salafi Islam.[88]

The harassment of North Caucasus Muslims contrasted with the relative easiness with which not only North Caucasus jihadists based in Turkey but also in the North Caucasus were able to move into Syria and Iraq during the first years of the conflict—up until 2015. As noted by Murad Atayev, 'No contacts are needed, everyone knows the way you need to go to reach Turkey, then cross the border, and be in Syria. Transitions there are free. Turkey turns a blind eye to everything, it has no other option, it will not enter into conflict with the Islamic State'.[89] Furthermore, the flow of *jihadists* to Syria and Iraq was facilitated by the unofficial and hidden efforts conducted by the Russian authorities to squeeze *Salafis* beyond the boundaries of the North Caucasus and Russia as a whole on the eve of the Sochi Olympic Games in 2014—a policy which continued for a while even after the Games' completion.[90] According to a *Reuters* report, militant *Salafis* were approached by the Russian authorities and provided with new passports, new names and a one-way ticket to Istanbul in order to entice them to leave the region.[91] Many of these individuals, six of whom were identified by Reuters, ended up in Syria. Returning home and fighting *jihad* in the North Caucasus, instead, became increasingly difficult in view of the robust counter-insurgency efforts launched by Russia in the North Caucasus ahead of the 2014 Sochi Olympics.[92]

Last but not least, the challenging structural socio-economic realities of Dagestan, which were characterised by the absence of opportunities to climb the social ladder and a lack of promising economic prospects, pushed many young individuals into joining ISIS.[93] Evidence shows that several young Dagestanis who outwardly appeared well off nevertheless became radicalized and decided to join ISIS, despite having good jobs and rather good prospects for individual professional advancement. These individuals felt the injustices of the existing rules in their local communities, which prevented them from achieving positions of relevance in society. Joining the Islamic State became an appealing alternative, both rationally and emotionally. ISIS' Salafi Islamist ideologies, with their spiritual egalitarianism, proved particularly appealing also to those young individuals in Dagestan who were particularly frustrated with their existing socio-economic conditions. The condemnation by Salafis of traditional forms of social organisation and local customs struck a chord with those young individuals in search of a remedy for their socio-economic distress.[94] These same structural factors and socio-economic deficiencies which had pushed many to join the Caucasus Emirate in the 2000s again influenced many young Muslims in Dagestan to abandon the region and travel to the Middle East to live an Islamic life once ISIS established itself in 2014, as was reported in many of the interviews conducted with relatives of ISIS fighters. [95]

Conclusion

As this article has shown, a combination of powerful ISIS collective frames and effective recruitment methods, together with the challenges of conducting *jihad* in the North Caucasus explain why such a large number of Dagestanis travelled to Syria and Iraq to join the Islamic State, as well as other jihadist groups. As postulated by Social Movement and Resource Mobilisation Theories, ISIS utilised informal networks and a variety of

effective communication channels to promote their messages and achieve their goal of recruiting Muslims from Dagestan to their cause. Online propaganda outlets and social networks became powerful instruments of ISIS recruitment and mobilisation among young Dagestani Muslims. They allowed ISIS apologists to propagate effectively their strong and appealing messages and attract many followers to their call in Dagestan. ISIS' convincing frames centred around the plight of Muslims both in Syria/Iraq and in Russia (diagnostic frame), the righteousness of the Islamic State (prognosis frame) and the duty of all Muslims to engage in *jihad* in order to establish, protect and strengthen the Islamic State (motivational frame).

The call for *jihad* 'resonated' particularly strongly in Dagestan, a region with a long Islamic tradition not only in the field of education and scholarship, but also in terms of social habits and the local administration of justice. It clearly tapped on young Muslims' sensibilities, and their perceptions of belonging to the broader Muslim *umma*, motivating them to act. In this respect, the social and psychological dynamics of mobilisation—Dagestanis' feelings of distress and rage in the face of Syrian Muslims' suffering—combined with more rational cost-benefit analysis—the better chances of fighting *jihad* in Syria—helped to push Dagestanis to leave the republic.

The materialisation of an Islamic State—albeit with clear inherent weaknesses—in the territory of Syria and the Levant appealed to many Dagestanis eager to live in a state where *Shari'a* law was fully implemented and where *Salafi* Muslims would feel safe. This contrasted sharply with the challenges of fulfilling an Islamic *Salafi* life in Dagestan, especially after Abdulatipov came to power in 2013, when an aggressive campaign against any expression of 'non-traditional' Islamic manifestations was forcefully carried out. Furthermore, for those more committed Dagestani Muslims ready to fight *jihad* in order to establish an Islamic state ruled by *Shari'a* law, staying in the North Caucasus no longer became a viable option. The very effective counter-terrorism operations of the Russian government and the Dagestani authorities during 2013 and 2015 eliminated almost the entire Caucasus leadership, as well as many lower rank emirs. Fighting against Russia and its allies in Syria emerged as a much more attractive—and potentially successful—alternative. In other words, a rational cost/benefit analysis and an emotional sense of duty motivated young and committed Dagestani Muslims to join the Islamic State.

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Jihad at Home or Leaving for Syria and Iraq: Understanding the Motivations of Dagestani Salafists

by Jean-François Ratelle

Abstract

Drawing on a case study of the Dagestan contingent of foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq, and based on a series of interviews with local jihadists, Salafists, and foreign fighters, this article investigates why law-abiding Salafists have mobilized only minimally to support the local Salafi-jihadi insurgency in Russia, but have massively joined the Syrian jihad and the Islamic State. This article shows that religiosity and socio-cultural codes help explain why the Islamic State's message has resonated amongst law-abiding Salafists in Dagestan. Socio-cultural codes and highland traditions in the Caucasus have acted as powerful reinforcing factors for the foreign fighter contingent. Challenging the homogeneous depiction of Salafists in Dagestan, it is shown that calls for jihad and hijra issued by the Islamic State have resonated differently with urban and rural Salafists. The former have focused on showing solidarity with Sunni Muslims under attack in Syria, whereas the latter have seen the jihad in Syria as an opportunity to enhance their devotion to Islam in line with local socio-cultural codes. Fighting in Syria has offered an acceptable alternative to the socio-cultural limitations otherwise imposed on jihad in the North Caucasus.

Keywords: Islamic State, Syria, Dagestan, Russia, religiosity, socio-cultural codes.

Introduction

The massive outflow of foreign fighters travelling to Syria and Iraq has transformed the landscape of violent extremism in Europe, with many long-term non-violent religious extremists deciding to leave European countries to join the Syrian jihad. For years, those individuals were perceived by the security services as potential security risks for homegrown terrorism and other extremist activities. However, their engagement in jihadist activities has brought them mainly into foreign fighting, not terrorism in their home countries.[1] European extremist communities have supplied thousands of fighters and other extremist actors to the Islamic State (IS) and other jihadist groups in Syria and Iraq. Police reports and academic research have often amalgamated these individuals into one grouping: the 'European foreign fighter contingent'. However, their pathways toward extremism differ significantly. Some have held radical religious views for years without engaging in terrorist activities in Western Europe or in jihadist activities in conflict-ridden societies such as Russia's North Caucasus. Even if the literature on foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq has blossomed in recent years—focusing on regional trends, individual motivations, characteristics and roles, the logistical support required for mobilization, as well the dangers posed by returnees—relatively few studies have asked why these non-violent extremists should suddenly decide to join a foreign jihad after years of non-violent activism in their home countries.[2]

Some authors have investigated the strategic dilemma facing violent extremists in general, seeking to understand the conditions under which one would choose to fight at home or to wage jihad abroad.[3] Focusing on extremist activities in the West, Hegghammer has shown that Western jihadists often choose foreign fighting over domestic terrorism mainly because of the legitimacy of the former amongst religious clerics and the level of security constraints in Western countries. Combining this with the scholarship focusing on IS propaganda and its appeal for *hijra* (emigration) can provide a plausible explanation for the outflow of Western European religious extremists to Syria and Iraq.

At the same time, why would individuals who could fight a legitimate jihad sanctioned by religious rulings in their own country choose to travel abroad to do so?[4] After all, local insurgencies can offer significant strategic advantages: potential support from the local population, knowledge of the language and the local culture,

the possibility of gradually engaging in jihadist activities by focusing on propaganda or logistical activities, and drawing on familiarity with the conflict and its main actors.[5] It is posited here that a more complex understanding of the concept of religiosity is needed to better understand jihadist decision-making in the context of the Islamic State and the war in Syria. In traditional societies like the North Caucasus, the focus on religiosity as a pull factor to violent extremism requires an understanding of the influence of socio-cultural norms on jihadist activities. Not only did the Islamic State provide foreign fighters with an attractive jihadist ideological model based on a unique propaganda approach, but, more importantly, it did so by creating a way for wannabe jihadists to fight for Islam without the social and cultural restrictions found in their home countries. In other words, it created a space where jihadists could fulfill a religious commitment in a legitimate jihad without transgressing local, ethnic, and kinship traditional norms that prevented them from joining the local jihad.

In order to test this assumption, Russia's North Caucasus, and particularly Dagestan, offer a relevant empirical setting providing several analytical advantages. Firstly, along with other important jihadist fronts such as those in Afghanistan, Yemen and Nigeria, the North Caucasus represent an existing, long-lasting Salafi-jihadi insurgency. At the same time, the local jihadist insurgency *(Imarat Kavkaz)* struggled to fully mobilize the large Salafi population in the region even if they faced a high level of religious repression coupled with the lawlessness of Russian security forces. Rather than fighting at home, Salafists have joined the Islamic State in large numbers. One key example of this trend can be witnessed with young Salafist preachers in the North Caucasus, many of whom left for Syria between 2013 and 2015, after actively recruiting followers and building religious communities in the North Caucasus, particularly in Dagestan.[6] Despite providing and disseminating what can be considered as extremist material to potential recruits, none of those preachers joined the local insurgency or sought to create their own jihadist factions.

Syria was the first foreign jihadist front that massively attracted young North Caucasians and members of the Salafi communities. Over 1.800 persons from the region left to join the Islamic State and other jihadist groups, including 1.200 from Dagestan.[7] According to official Russian sources, roughly 85% of those foreign fighters left Russia after mid-2013 to join the Islamic State.[8] Finally, the North Caucasus offers a case study for which socio-economic and structural factors, as well as root causes associated with extremist activities (lack of rule of law, religious repression and socio-economic factors), remained stable for a long period which allows focusing on other analytical factors such as ideology and religiosity.

In order to explain this counter-intuitive research puzzle where North Caucasian and Dagestani Salafists have refused to join a local jihad that shares their ideology as well as long-term objectives, yet have massively agreed to travel to a foreign jihad to join the Islamic State, the article begins by detailing its research methodology and how the primary data were obtained. This is followed by a brief review of the literature about foreign fighters in Russia, asking how religiosity and social-cultural norms have impacted mobilization to violent extremism. Finally, based on interviews with law-abiding Salafists and fighters in Dagestan, the article looks at the concept of religiosity as a hybrid process intertwining religious and ethno-traditional factors, mainly focusing on the theological foundations of jihadist activities and the relationship between ethno-cultural markers and religiosity.

Methods, Data, and Concepts

This article is based on extensive fieldwork conducted in the North Caucasus and in North Caucasian diasporas in Europe between 2009 and 2019: altogether roughly nine months of ethnographic fieldwork in Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria, and Chechnya in four different journeys, as well as five research field trips in Europe. The author has conducted over 200 extensive qualitative semi-structured interviews with jihadists, Salafists, Sufists, human-rights workers, journalists, imams, government officials, *siloviki* (FSB, GRU and MVD), friends and relatives of fighters as well as individuals who travelled to Syria. For security reasons, the interviews, which lasted between twenty minutes and two hours, were never audio-recorded but documented as field notes.

Interviews were obtained through snowball sampling based on various independent networks throughout the North Caucasus, during several rounds of fieldwork starting in 2009. Due to the clandestine nature of extremist activities as well as the stigma associated with Salafists in the North Caucasus, all interviews have been anonymized and the names of informants have been replaced with pseudonyms in this article.

Given the limited number of interviews with foreign fighters (two), former jihadists (six) as well as their relatives and friends (twenty), the author has drawn also on the perceptions of ordinary Muslims, local Salafists, imams, government elites, and security officials, in order to provide a general assessment of the foreign fighters from the North Caucasus. Furthermore, over 30 interviews with North Caucasus Salafists were conducted between 2010 and 2016. Following Bartlett and Miller's methodological approach, I compare and contrast three types of actors: ordinary Muslims (pious and non-pious), law-abiding Salafists, and Salafi-jihadists.[9] 'Law-abiding Salafists' include individuals who seek to emulate the practices of the first companions of the Prophet and reject other non-puritanical forms of Islam. They can be politically active or not, but they remain opposed to the use of political violence and focus on their own religious practices, often challenging concepts associated with democracy or late modernity.[10] 'Salafi-jihadists' follow a similar theological approach; however, they also advocate the overthrow of governments that do not rule by using Sharia law. 'Ordinary Muslims' are religiously inclined individuals without a strict orthodox understanding of Islam, or non-pious Muslims who choose to define themselves as Muslims. They often adopt certain religious practices connected to Sufism, as well as various political stances regarding political Islam, and they disapprove of the use of violence. Many advocate tolerance and peaceful methods for political change, and hold mixed views with regard to democracy, late modernity, and liberal values.

Such categories are not mutually exclusive and are permeable, but they help to narrow down individual preferences and offer a better understanding of the situation within Islam. This approach seeks to provide a better analysis of the strategic dilemma facing Salafists and a better grasp of their socio-psychological state of mind.

Religiosity and Violent Jihadist Mobilization in the North Caucasus

Several studies focusing on violent mobilization in the North Caucasus have indicated that factors such as personal well-being, lack of socio-political opportunities, the absence of the rule of law, religious repression, and retaliation against security forces may help to explain jihadist mobilization and the foreign fighter phenomenon more broadly.[11] However, most of those factors remained stable in the North Caucasus throughout the period under study here (2009–2015). Variation in mobilization amongst Salafists occurred only after the rise of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (the Levant) [ISIS] in 2013 and the proclamation of the Caliphate in June 2014 by the Islamic State, ordering all Muslims to pledge allegiance to the Caliph and making *hijra* to Syria and Iraq. Previously, only a handful of people from the North Caucasus had travelled to Afghanistan to train and fight alongside the Taliban or al-Qaeda, or had gone to Iraq after the US invasion.[12] Local fighters and their supporters have always privileged local jihad over transnational jihad.

This led some scholars to postulate a possible causal link between foreign fighting mobilization in Russia and IS ideology and propaganda.[13] Similarly, scholars have underlined that violent repression just prior to the Sochi Olympics could have contributed to the increasing wave of departures. The success of the Islamic State in recruiting in the law-abiding North Caucasian Salafi population was in part the result of its propaganda, shaped to resonate with local struggles and grievances. However, this article seeks to take this analysis a step further by using the concept of *religiosity* to explain how the IS message resonated amongst law-abiding Salafists in the North Caucasus. Rather than focusing strictly on the role of religious ideology and propaganda, the article investigates what religious commitment means for North Caucasus Salafists and how it has affected their decisions with regards to the Syrian jihad.

In the scholarship on violent extremism, research seeking to understand the link between religious views or

religiosity and engagement in violence has remained rather limited. For fear of stigmatising an entire faith-based community, researchers have avoided linking radical religious views with terrorist or insurgent activities. After all, the majority of religious extremists never engage in terrorism or other extremist activities. As underlined in the literature on violent extremism, extremist ideas are poor predictors of extremist behaviour.[14]

In examining the role of religious ideology, it is essential to differentiate between religiosity, religious ideology, and religious knowledge. Dawson and Amarasingam define religiosity as the sincere "religious commitment to religion, no matter how ill-informed or unorthodox".[15] Religiosity may be reinforced through propaganda but is not connected to knowledge of the scriptures themselves. Rather than using religious knowledge as a proxy for religiosity, we need to understand what 'religion' means in terms of commitments and duties for individuals.

In order to better theorize religiosity within violent extremism, researchers need to take seriously what religious extremists say about their own decisional process and their state of mind. As Emil Souleimanov has pointed out, religiosity varies according to ethnicity and kinship: the Salafi brotherhood should not be viewed as a homogeneous community.[16] Ethnic allegiances and local traditions inform how Salafi and Salafi-jihadist ideologies are lived and understood, in turn impacting on the link between religiosity and violent extremism.

Jihad and its Legitimacy amongst Dagestani Salafists: 'Something Greater is Waiting for Us Abroad'

The first factor explaining the departure of Dagestani Salafists to Syria and Iraq focuses on the legitimacy of the Islamic State jihad in opposition to the unfulfilled promises made by the local insurgency with regards to the establishment of Sharia law in the North Caucasus. For example, recent research has held that North Caucasus Salafists have been attracted by the religious narrative put forward by the Islamic State, with its insistence on religious duties (such as *hijra*), the importance of the Sham in the Koran, and IS's apocalyptic and eschatological message.[17] In other words, Salafists assess *hijra* and jihad in Syria as being more legitimate than local jihad or other jihadist fronts. At the same time, it is important to better understand what made Syria more attractive for them.

Although jihadists and clerics in the North Caucasus have prioritized jihad in their homeland, the appeal from the Islamic State is to place *hijra* above any local jihads. Unlike the message put forward by the *Imarat Kavkaz*, the Islamic State's message focuses on a hierarchical approach to jihad and the tangible opportunity to live under Sharia law.[18] Many Caucasian Salafists had lost faith that the *Imarat Kavkaz* would be able to impose a religious caliphate in the future. Such an approach parallels Hegghammer's argument that Western jihadists choose to fight abroad rather than engaging in homegrown terrorist activities because the former is perceived as more legitimate according to Islamic tradition.[19] Nevertheless, it is extremely uncommon for Russian jihadists and Salafists to travel to a foreign jihad theatre. For more than ten years, North Caucasian Salafists have mostly avoided foreign jihadist fronts in the Middle East. Some reports have noted the presence of North Caucasus foreign fighters in Afghanistan, but very few actual cases have been documented.[20]

In the author's interviews in 2010 and 2011, when IK militants and Salafists in Dagestan, Chechnya and Kabardino-Balkaria were asked about foreign jihadist fronts, they would argue that the real enemy of Islam in the North Caucasus was Russia, not Israel or the West. For example, Akhmed explained in 2010 'Why would Dagestani brothers fight other people's jihad when we struggle with our own problems? FSB agents and Putin's other pigs are all over. You want to fight—just grab a weapon. Why would Iraq or Afghanistan matter? Our duty is to our people'.[21] In many discussions in 2010 and 2011, young people told me that the struggle of a good Caucasian Muslim is mainly at home to protect his family—not abroad, fighting foreign non-believers. '*Haram* behaviours are all around us, why would you need to go abroad for Islam? Dagestan is an Islamic land. We will take care of our brothers'.[22]

In 2010 and 2011, interviewees depicted jihad in Iraq and Afghanistan as foreign struggles. Even at the beginning of the Syrian civil war or after the death of Osama bin Laden, foreign jihad rarely featured markedly in discussions with local Salafists. 'Yes, bin Laden was killed last week and it is tragic, but my duty is to transform Dagestan, not to hunt Americans or other infidels across the world. (...) What about Syria? You think our brothers are not oppressed here. You saw yourself what is happening with the prophylactic list'.[23] As shown by Mark Youngman, the concept of the 'far enemy' has remained murky at best for North Caucasus jihadists.

The situation had changed radically by the time my most recent fieldwork in Dagestan commenced in the summer of 2016. The narrative surrounding ISIS, and subsequently IS as well as the Syrian civil war, had now evolved toward an internationalist agenda. It was more common to meet people who would openly discuss the importance of the struggle against the Syrian regime, of protecting fellow Muslims against Assad rather than Russian forces, people openly advocating *hijra* to Syria, as well as some Salafists praising the Islamic state in opposition to Russian law.[24]

In one informal discussion, a long-term Salafist in Dagestan started by comparing the situation in Syria with the jihad in Chechnya, linking how foreign fighters defended the Chechen people. 'Now it's our turn to fight. That is the duty of a good Muslim.' When asked about other jihads, like Afghanistan and post-invasion Iraq, he replied: 'Syria is different, IGIL [ISIS] is different, and it is not about fighting with locals, it is about fighting for Islam, for something bigger!'.[25] Another Salafi adds 'Our duty goes beyond our border. Islam is calling us for a broader duty'.[26] In the mind of Dagestani Salafists, Syria was perceived as a unique life opportunity, but the decision to travel abroad was also made easier by the failure of the *Imarat Kavkaz* to provide an alternative jihadist plan.

An Islamic Theocracy in the Caucasus: 'Not Now, Not Here'

The second factor explaining this massive mobilization turns toward the lack of existing alternatives to the Syrian jihad in the North Caucasus. The legitimacy of a foreign jihad would generally not be enough to attract locals abroad, as is evidenced by Afghanistan and Iraq. Dagestanis are North Caucasian people who tend to have a particular attachment to their homeland. However, in this specific situation, local jihadist organizations in the North Caucasus were not perceived as a valid means of achieving the establishment of an Islamic theocracy in the Caucasus or living under Sharia.

Many young Salafists have refused to join the insurgency, without ever opposing it openly. In informal discussions with Salafists, those with deeper religious knowledge and schooling were often critical of their fellow 'forest brothers', even during the peak of insurgent violence in the North Caucasus. As underlined by Islam Abdullaev in Chernovik, young Salafists often feel disdain for the government and its religious repression, but they are also generally opposed to the insurgency.[27] Although they understood why some might join the jihad against the Russian forces, they rarely join themselves. As Rasul explained in a lengthy interview:

> "The Dagestan government is un-Islamic, driven by corruption and money. What they do to our brothers (fellow Salafi Muslims in Dagestan) is despicable and should be punished. I understand all those brothers who go to the forest ('лесные'боевики). They insult them, they arrest them, they beat them, and they torture them. As real men, real Dagestanis, real Muslims, our brothers should retaliate (...) But fighting for an Islamic State—that is not now and not here. If they come and fight us in the village, I will retaliate and join my brothers, but nothing will change here. The people in Makhachkala, they drink, gamble, and are real prostitutes. Look how they dress! I am disgusted by them, they are not real Dagestanis. Certainly not Muslims(...) Do you think we can build an Islamic state on that? (...) In the villages, it is different. There we know each other and we can keep an eye on those apostates (*murtadd),* but in the cities what can you do? Bomb and burn Makhachkala?"[28]

During conversations about Islamic values and living under Sharia, it was not uncommon to hear interviewees refer to the Islamic *jamaat* of Kadar, Karamakhi, and Chabamakhi. They describe this period of Dagestan's recent history using concepts like 'an independent Islamic territory' and a region of 'pure Islam'. From this narrative and informal discussions, local villagers and Salafists seem more prone to defend Islam, rather than fighting to impose strictures on apostates even in Dagestan. Dagestani Salafists explained that IS represents a functioning Islamic state rather than the unachievable and crumbling IK.[29] Of course, such a view has shifted with time, as the abuses perpetrated by the Islamic State as well as its territorial collapse have challenged its propaganda. Furthermore, many potential recruits among the law-abiding Salafists support the ideology behind the insurgency in the North Caucasus, but complain of ethnic favouritism and non-Islamic behaviours in jihadist groups.[30] Syria and Iraq represent better options, a fresh start towards Salafi-jihadism compared to what is available in Dagestan and the North Caucasus.

Because of perceived feelings of treason associated with *haram* behaviours in urban areas in the North Caucasus, including actions deemed to be against Dagestani ethical codes, establishing an Islamic State in the Caucasus is seen as a utopian dream to be achieved in the future. 'Local villagers explain how a Salafi-type of Islam is possible only in small villages where neighbours police themselves and enforce unwritten and informal rules, mixing a strict understanding of Islam with Dagestani highland traditions like courage, honour and self-respect. Don't be naive! You will never have an Islamic State in Dagestan or in the Caucasus. The Soviet Union has corrupted people's minds. Your Islamic State—you will have it at home with your family. Pure Islam is a personal struggle, not something you will see here'.[31]

This narrative was repeated in very similar ways throughout my fieldwork in Dagestan and in Kabardino-Balkaria between 2009 and 2011. 'Apostasy' is often loosely defined in general conversations with North Caucasian Salafists. For example, in Dagestan, many interviewees saw unethical and non-traditional social behaviours as a form of apostasy, and as a result of the conflation between traditional kinship values and Islam. One cannot be a good Muslim in Dagestan without being a 'real' Dagestani. 'Being a good Muslim and living by Pure Islam also means following Dagestani values including honesty, courage, and respecting your elders. A good Dagestani is a good Muslim, and vice versa'.[32]

This underscores the importance of studying socio-cultural codes and traditional values in order to understand how religiosity can explain the mobilization of Dagestani Salafists into the Syrian jihad. It is as much about the Syrian jihad being a lifetime opportunity, but also how the message resonated with powerful ethnic and traditional incentives that favoured foreign jihad rather than fighting at home.

Socio-cultural Codes, Ethnicity, and Traditions in Dagestan: The Missing Link

The previous section underlined the necessary role played by the Islamic State's jihadist propaganda and the collapse of the *Imarat Kavkaz* in order to explain this massive mobilization. At the same time, in order to understand how the Islamic State's message has resonated with Salafists in Dagestan, one has to better understand the complex intertwined relationship between what it means to be a Dagestani and what being a Muslim means for Dagestanis. Those two identities are often conflated by Dagestanis forging a unique identity where socio-cultural codes, traditions, and ethnic factors inform religious behaviours. Being a 'real' Dagestani, and by association a proper Muslim by Dagestani standards, entails following a code of conduct based on honour, traditions, and social duty. Such a code is understood differently by urban and rural Salafists in Dagestan, leading to different patterns of support for jihadist activities in the North Caucasus. However, in the case of the Islamic State and its call for jihad and hijra, the message resonated with both urban and rural Salafists, explaining why the Islamic State appeared to have held a greater appeal than the *Imarat Kavkaz*. Although ideology always matters, socio-cultural codes and kinship factors are the social mechanisms that can better explain the foreign fighting phenomenon in Dagestan.

Urban Salafists in Dagestan: A Duty to the Ummah

In interviews conducted with urban law-abiding Salafists, this sense of duty was increasingly expressed in relation to the *Ummah* in Syria and the duty to defend fellow Muslims against the Assad regime. Such a sense of duty had remained almost non-existent among local Salafists until the Syrian jihad, and was never really extended to the North Caucasus. Before the Islamic State, Zapir would explain 'My duty is to my family, my brothers, and my relatives. Not fighting Russians or killing fellow Dagestanis'.[33] Many Salafists were not really willing to fight along the insurgency and did not perceive that it was their ethno-religious duty to do so. However, after 2013, the sense of duty has rapidly become integrated in the discourse, with Syria becoming a common goal uniting Salafists. Some scholars hold that Salafists across the world became mobilized by feelings of solidarity with Sunni Muslims under attack in Syria, particularly in the context of the rise of established jihadist groups like the Islamic State.[34] As noted by Dawson and Amarasingam, it is 'not so much that they had any life prospects, but rather that they were needed elsewhere, in the face of the injustices happening to Sunni Muslims in Syria'.[35]

Research has also underlined that people in communities that witnessed civil wars or counter-insurgencies in recent years seem more eager to travel to defend fellow Muslims abroad.[36] Starting around the end of 2012, defending Sunni Syrians was deemed more important than defending local Salafists in the North Caucasus: religious identity (the Ummah) was beginning to trump ethno-religious identity, such as that of Dagestani Sunni Muslims. It would appear that urban Salafists have assessed the value of jihad based on the level of suffering within the Ummah, without considering territorial factors (see Wilhelmsen in this special issue). In 2016, the same Zapir would explain to the author in another interview 'how can the world sit and watch Syria burning like that. We saw what the Russian army have done in Chechnya, what are we waiting for to protect Syrians. I support my neighbours that left for Syria. I am not healthy and I cannot travel, but it is the duty of every Dagestani to protect Islam across the world'.[37] These two interviews with one Salafist show how the sense of duty associated with Dagestani identity evolved from a local duty to an Ummah-based one with Syria—but it was not directly connected with the Islamic State's propaganda.

Rural Salafists in Dagestan: A Different Sense of Duty, Masculinity, and Heroism

Other Salafists, especially in rural areas of Dagestan, expressed this religious duty in terms of a code of conduct originating in Caucasian ethnic and traditional factors. In discussions with rural Salafists, the conflation between Caucasian identity (e.g. Avars, Chechens, Dargins) and Islamic identity produce a hybrid social identity where Islamic values are intertwined with ethnic markers. As Souleimanov pointed out, '…many former rural jihadists self-identified as proud members of their ethnic communities while simultaneously considering themselves to be adherents of Salafism'.[38] With this hybrid social identity and its effect on religiosity, many law-abiding Salafists have seen the jihad in Syria as an opportunity to enhance their devotion to Salafism while remaining in line with their own local socio-cultural norms.

Fighting in Syria was described by rural Salafists as a pious and religiously binding engagement requiring a unique sense of courage and devotion—for which fearless highlanders like themselves were ideally suited. Moreover, people often seek to increase their own social status within their community, through courageous deeds or religious devotion. Syria offered a unique opportunity to combine both, while challenging what was seen as limited social mobility in rural Dagestan and an artificial 'glass ceiling'. As youth in rural Dagestan cannot find proper employment, social mobility is often achieved through criminal activities, migration or religious devotion. Syria was depicted as a unique opportunity for religious devotion, new opportunities, and escaping Russia and its limitations.

> "Fighting in Syria is not only about IGIL [ISIS], the Caliphate, and the Sharia, it's about the duty of being a courageous Muslim. Dagestanis fight, we are not cowards! Real Muslims are dying in Syria! I support my fellow brothers in going to help. They are not

brainwashed and uneducated; they have made a courageous choice!"[39]

Similarly to what Dawson and Amarasingam observed in their foreign fighter research sample, families of foreign fighters and Salafists rarely speak of their choice to travel to Syria in terms of their previous lives being meaningless, but rather as an act of selfless devotion.[40] It was a question of choosing something more important, in religious as well as cultural terms. Unlike the impression given by much of the literature, not all foreign fighters are seeking to compensate for something missing in their life or to look for adventure in travelling to Syria.[41] Rural Salafists saw *hijra* and jihad as courageous deeds connecting both with the duty of being a good Muslim and the values of the courageous highlanders of the Caucasus. Moreover, Syria was not chosen because it was perceived as a 'safer' jihad or a 'five-star' jihad with opportunities for training and networking with international jihad, but mainly because the humiliation and suffering experienced by Syrians appeared intertwined with traditional and religious values.

Socio-cultural Codes and Local Traditions in Jihadist Ideology: Social Status, Reputation, and Honour

The concept of a 'five-star jihad' was far more prevalent among local jihadists and exiled combatants than with ordinary Salafists in Dagestan. In many discussions with friends and families of foreign fighters as well as in interviews with two returnees (rural Salafists) in Dagestan, what was stressed was the religious importance of the Syrian jihad, not its geographical proximity or it being safer. Although family members often saw the radicalization process as the result of brainwashing and online recruitment, they regularly pointed out how young people show courage and determination in travelling to Syria. Their families may have perceived their actions negatively, but their overall behaviour was seen through the lens of Caucasian traditional values and fearlessness when confronted by the enemy. 'I am sad for my neighbour. He was brainwashed by IGIL [ISIS] and their propaganda. He did not know better, but I will tell you he fought like a real Dagestani over there. I talked to him on Whatsapp and I was proud of him'.[42] Such a narrative differs from what this author had observed back in 2010 when families and friends talked about youth who had left to participate in the local insurgency. "My relative left to fight with the insurgency and died last year. I tell you, it is senseless. What did he want to achieve? What did it bring to his family? More problems! You should never put your family in that situation".[43]

In discussing traditional values, Syria, and religiosity with Salafists, a common argument was observable in interviews conducted in 2010 and 2011 as well as in 2016. The permissibility of jihad in the North Caucasus is strictly limited by socio-cultural norms and religious rulings. The religious arguments connected to jihad in the North Caucasus and later in Syria extend to the negative perceptions associated with targeting other Sunni Muslims in the North Caucasus, particularly co-ethnics, kinship members, and members of one's clan.

As Souleimanov and Aliyev explained, "in honor cultures [such as in Dagestan], individuals conceive themselves and are conceived by outsiders not as atomized individuals per se, but primarily as members of a patrilineally delineated in-group".[44] Those norms may act as an enabler of violence in the case of revenge killings when responding to an insult or when one's clan is harmed, but they can also act as a deterrent to violent mobilization.

Honorific socio-cultural codes and values include honour, reputation, revenge killing, code of hospitality, and silence. Members of an honour-based society will often reconsider engaging in violent activities if that might inadvertently harm fellow members of their given in-group, be it clan, tribe or ethnic group. Souleimanov explained how target selection has created tensions inside jihadist groups in Dagestan and weakened cohesion inside jihadist factions.[45] In multi-ethnic urban centres like Makhachkala or Derbent, fellow clan-members are often members of police forces or government structures and run the risk of being injured by jihadists. Therefore, many law-abiding Salafists saw a foreign jihad, blessed by a religious ruling as in the case of Syria, as a better alternative to running the risk of targeting fellow kinship members at home. As one Salafist explained:

> "I wanted to fight against the Russians and their puppets, but I would not jeopardize my entire family for that. But in Syria, you can fight your jihad, you can behave like a real man (a Dagestani), and you can even kill Russian soldiers".[46]

As shown by Ratelle and Souleimanov, the insurgency in Dagestan 2008–2013 mainly attracted revenge-seeking individuals willing to retaliate against police forces who had committed atrocities against them.[47] Ideological commitment came much later in the radicalization process, as many could not return to ordinary life after killing policemen. During this time, Salafists remained uninterested in the local insurgency and its activities. They understood why fellow Muslims and Caucasians would want to avenge what was done to them, but this did not represent a powerful incentive to join the insurgency. While doubting the viability of an Islamic State in Dagestan, a common narrative about their non-engagement remained centred on socio-cultural codes.

> "I know many 'forest brothers' and I help them when I can. After all, we're related and it is the right thing to do. I understand how they want to avenge themselves and retaliate against policemen, but that's not for me. I live in a small village; everybody is the brother or the father of someone. And to what purpose in the end? I believe in Pure Islam and I am a devoted Muslim, as you can see, but I am also part of this community".[48]

The same day that this conversation took place; another villager in the same Salafi-village was caught drinking vodka after a long day of work. Moreover, he offered me, the village guest, a glass as a sign of hospitality and friendship. This faux-pas would have usually led to a violent confrontation, but Salafists around the table remained quiet even if an obvious sign of disdain and potential anger appeared on their faces. Later on, one of them came over to me and explained:

> "Listen carefully, we deeply disapprove [of] his behaviour and cannot tolerate vodka in our homes. It is a Russian drink and only for Russians and unbelievers, but he is one of us and you must understand our customs. God will punish him, but we will not. Life here is complex, but that does not mean we are not Pure Muslim. Do you understand that?"[49]

Salafists in Dagestan often prefer non-violent methods of dealing with local sinners rather than transgressing socio-cultural codes. Even pious individuals adapt their religion-driven behaviours to accommodate these codes. This affects individual violent mobilization as well as insurgent tactics such as civilian victimization, terrorism, and violence in punishing offenders. Salafists often told me that such methods were seen as un-Islamic and against the highlander (Dagestani) code.

For all the reasons above, fighting in Syria provided an acceptable alternative to the socio-cultural limitations imposed on jihad in the North Caucasus. It was not only that the foreign jihad in Syria was seen as holier than the one in the North Caucasus and filled with heroism: choosing Syria also helped to mitigate the dilemma between religious and ethno-traditional identities in the North Caucasus. Thus, reducing the wave of mobilization to religious ideology and propaganda obscures the complexity of identity and greatly oversimplifies the meaning of religiosity among Salafists in the North Caucasus, particularly in Dagestan.

In a way, the choice made by Dagestani Salafists to engage in *hijra* to the Islamic State represents a perfect solution for combining the right message (the Islamic State's propaganda), in the right context (the collapse of the *Imarat Kavkaz*) driven by powerful socio-cultural incentives (sense of duty and masculinity), but without the social and cultural restrictions imposed by traditional norms.

Conclusion

This article examined the reasons why Dagestani Salafists have mobilized only minimally to support the local Salafi-jihadi insurgency in Russia, but have joined the Syrian jihad and the Islamic State in large numbers. The author's interviews with Salafists and their families have shown that Salafists value the religious rulings behind

jihad and rank jihad on the basis of a pragmatic perspective involving religious duty as well as socio-cultural codes. The decision to fight abroad was often chosen to limit the backlash on one's family and clan while fulfilling religious duties. This also shows how religious duty and religiosity are often understood differently by rural and urban Salafists, which, in turn, calls for greater attention to social identities in the study of violent mobilization.

At the same time, this does not deny the key role played by such facilitating factors as IS propaganda and its recruitment approach, Russian policies that facilitated the emigration of Salafists prior to the Sochi Winter Olympics, as well as logistical support from inside Turkey, including, but not limited to, existing ethnic networks and ease of travel. It rather makes the case for a local and ethnographic understanding of root causes and facilitating factors associated with violent mobilization. The study of violent extremism requires further work that takes seriously what combatants have to say about their own participation in jihadist activities.

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Notes

[1] Not all extremist travellers have *fought* in Syria. Many came in order to take part in life in the Caliphate.

[2] Elena Pokalova, (2019) "Driving Factors Behind Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 42:9, pp. 798–818; Jean-François Ratelle, (2016) «North Caucasian Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq: Assessing the Threat of Returnees to the Russian Federation,» *Caucasus Survey* 4:3, pp. 218–38; Lorne L. Dawson and Amarnath Amarasingam, (2017) "Talking to Foreign Fighters: Insights into the Motivations for *Hijrah* to Syria and Iraq, "*Studies in Conflict & Terrorism,*40:3, pp. 191–210; Edwin Bakker and Peter Grol,(2015) "Motives and Considerations of Potential Foreign Fighters from the Netherlands," *ICCT Policy Brief*. URL: http://icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/ICCT-Bakker-Grol-Motives-and-Considerations-of-Potential-ForeignFighters-from-the-Netherlands-July2015.pdf; Rik Coolsaet, (2016) "Facing the Fourth Foreign Fighters Wave. What Drives Europeans to Syria, and to Islamic State?: Insights from the Belgian Case," *Egmont Paper* 81. URL: http://www.egmontinstitute.be/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/egmont.papers.81_onlineversie.pdf; Olivier Roy, (2017) "*Jihad and Death: the Global Appeal of Islamic State*", New York: Oxford University Press; Timothy Holman, (2016) "'Gonna Get Myself Connected': The Role of Facilitation in Foreign Fighter Mobilizations." *Perspectives on Terrorism* 10:2, pp. 2–23; Daniel Byman, (2015) "The Homecomings: What Happens when Arab Foreign Fighters in Iraq and Syria Return?" *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 38:8, pp. 581–602; Thomas Hegghammer and Petter Nesser, (2015) "Assessing the Islamic State's Commitment to Attacking the West," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 9; Thomas Hegghammer (2013) "Should I Stay or Should I Go? Explaining Variation in Western Jihadist's Choice between Domestic and Foreign Fighting," *American Political Science Review* 107:1, pp. 1–15.

[3] Thomas Hegghammer, (2013), op.cit.

[4] For religious rulings and jihadist discourses supporting insurgent mobilization, see: Mark Youngman, (2019) "Broader, Vaguer, Weaker: The Evolving Ideology of the Caucasus Emirate Leadership." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 31:2 (March 4), 367–89. Youngman describes in detail the ideological evolution of the Caucasus Emirate.

[5] Jean-Francois Ratelle, (2016), op.cit; Emil Aslan Souleimanov and Huseyn Aliyev, (2017) *How Socio-Cultural Codes Shaped Violent Mobilization and Pro-Insurgent Support in the Chechen Wars.* New York Palgrave Macmillan.

[6] For example, see the case studies of Nadir Abu Khalid (Nadir Medetov), Akhmed Medinsky and Kamil Abu Sultan al-Daghestan (Europol, 2015), North Caucasian fighters in Syria and Iraq & IS propaganda in Russian language, 041 Counter Terrorism & 047 EU Internet Referral Unit, The Hague. URL: https://www.europol.europa.eu/publications-documents/redacted-north-caucasian-fighters-in-syria-and-iraq-and-russian-language-propaganda-edoc-801733, accessed 02/11/2016.

[7] Jean-Francois Ratelle (2016), op.cit.

[8] Figures collected by the author from online sources and interviews in Dagestan and Moscow, Summer 2016.

[9] Jamie Bartlett and Carl Miller, (2012) 'The Edge of Violence: Towards Telling the Difference between Violent and Non-Violent

Radicalization.' *Terrorism and Political Violence* 24.1, pp. 1–21.

[10] Hizbut-Tahrir and Tabligh Jamaat are other groups that can be identified as non-violent extremists in the North Caucasus.

[11] Jean-François Ratelle and Emil Aslan Souleimanov, (2017) "Retaliation in Rebellion: The Missing Link to Explaining Insurgent Violence in Dagestan," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 29:4, pp. 573–92; Adrián Tarín-Sanzandand Marta Ter-Ferrer, (2018) «Lack of Rule of Law as a Push Factor Leading to Violent Radicalization in the North Caucasus (2002–2015),» *Caucasus Survey* 6:3, pp. 203–23; Domitilla Sagramoso and Akhmet Yarlykapov, (2013) "Caucasian Crescent: Russia's Islamic Policies and Its Responses to Radicalization"; in: *The Fire Below: How the Caucasus Shaped Russia*, edited by Robert B. Ware. New York: Bloomsbury, pp. 51–94; Marat Shterin and Akhmet Yarlykapov, (2011) "Reconsidering Radicalisation and Terrorism: The New Muslims Movement in Kabardino-Balkaria and Its Path to Violence," *Religion, State and Society* 39:2–3, pp. 303–32.

[12] Brian Glyn Williams, (2004) "From 'Secessionist Rebels' to 'Al-Qaeda Shock Brigades': Assessing Russia's Efforts to Extend the Post-September 11th War on Terror to Chechnya," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 24:1, pp. 197–209.

[13] Jean-Francois Ratelle (2016), op.cit; International Crisis Group (2016), The North Caucasus Insurgency and Syria: An Exported Jihad? Europe Report N°238, 16 March. Brussels; Jean-François Ratelle & Ekaterina Sokirianskaia, (2018) "Online militant jihadist propaganda targeting Russian-speaking audiences and Russia's response"; in: Olga Oliker, (Ed). *Religion and Violence in Russia: Context, Manifestations, and Policy*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield; International Crisis Group op.cit; see also Sagramoso and Yarlykapov in this special issue of *Perspectives on Terrorism*.

[14] Bartlett and Miller. op.cit; Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko, (2014) "Toward a Profile of Lone Wolf Terrorists: What Moves an Individual from Radical Opinion to Radical Action," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 26:1, pp. 69–85.

[15] Lorne L. Dawson and Amarnath Amarasingam, (2017), op.cit, p. 192.

[16] Emil A. Souleimanov, (2018) "A Perfect Umma? How Ethnicity Shapes the Organization and Operation of Dagestan's Jihadist Groups," *Ethnicities* 18:3, pp. 434–53.

[17] Jean-Francois Ratelle (2016), op.cit.; International Crisis Group op.cit.

[18] Mark Youngman, (2019) *Interpreting the ideological evolution of an insurgency: lessons from the North Caucasus, 2007-2015*. Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Birmingham.

[19] Thomas Hegghammer, (2013), op.cit.

[20] Lorenzo Vidino, (2005) "How Chechnya Became a Breeding Ground for Terror," *The Middle East Quarterly* 12:3, pp. 57–66; Brian Glyn Williams (2004), op.cit.

[21] Interview with Akhmed, Dagestan, November 2010.

[22] Interview with Musa, Dagestan, October 2010.

[23] Interview with Abdul, Dagestan, May 2011.

[24] This remains a small portion of the population and should not be seen as a general trend. However, the change should be noted in connection with the resonance of IS ideology in the North Caucasus in the near future.

[25] Interview with Akhmed, June 2016

[26] Interview with Abu, Dagestan, June 2016.

[27] Jamestown Foundation, (2016) "Experts Warn Dagestani Authorities' Crackdown on Salafists Could Backfire," (20 April). *North Caucasus Analysis* 17:8.

[28] Interview with Rasul, Dagestan, 2010.

[29] Interview with Magomed, Dagestan, 2016.

[30] Emil A Souleimanov (2018), op.cit.

[31] Interview with Akhmed, Dagestan, November 2010.

[32] Interview with Hadji Murat, Dagestan, October 2010 and June 2011.

[33] Interview with Zapir, Dagestan, November 2010.

[34] Randy Borum and Robert Fein, (2017) "The Psychology of Foreign Fighters," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism,* 40:3, pp. 251.

[35] Lorne L. Dawson and Amarnath Amarasingam, (2017), op.cit, p. 199.

[36] Adrian Shtuni, (2015) "Breaking Down the Ethnic Albanian Foreign Fighters Phenomenon." *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 98:4, pp. 460–77.

[37] Interview with Zapir, Dagestan, June 2016.

[38] Emil A Souleimanov, (2018), op.cit., p. 446.

[39] Interview with Rasul, 2016.

[40] Lorne L. Dawson and Amarnath Amarasingam, (2017), op.cit.

[41] Randy Borum and Robert Fein (2017), op.cit.

[42] Interview with Enver, July 2016.

[43] Interview with Shapi, October 2010.

[44] Emil A. Souleimanov and Huseyn Aliev, (2017) *How Socio-Cultural Codes Shaped Violent Mobilization and Pro-Insurgent Support in the Chechen Wars,* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 18.

[45] Emil A Souleimanov (2018), op.cit.

[46] Interview with Zabit, July 2016.

[47] Jean-François Ratelle and Emil Aslan Souleimanov (2017), op.cit.

[48] Interview with Ramazan, Dagestan, October 2010.

[49] Ibid.

Gender and Jihad: Women from the Caucasus in the Syrian Conflict

by Aleksandre Kvakhadze

Abstract

According to media reports, hundreds of women from the North Caucasian republics, Georgia and Azerbaijan have migrated to jihadi-controlled territories. This article has a threefold aim: to discuss the motivational features of female volunteers from the Caucasus region, to describe their functional role, and to explain their limited involvement in the hostilities. The findings indicate that the motivation for most women volunteers from the Caucasus has involved family relationships; further, rather than participating in combat, they have served in various supportive positions.

Keywords: Women, Syria, jihad, foreign fighters

Introduction

In 2013, Seda Dudurkaeva, the daughter of Asu Dudurkaev, the director of the Federal Migration Services of the Chechen Republic, left her family and went to Syria, along with her fiancé, a Georgian-born ethnic Chechen militant. This was shocking news in Chechnya and led to her father's resignation after a fiery speech by Ramzan Kadyrov. Nor is Dudurkaeva the sole example of a Caucasian female participant in the Syria–Iraq conflict. Hundreds of women from the Caucasus region were reported to have joined the insurgency in the Middle East.[1]

Although the Syrian conflict has led to a considerable migration wave of women volunteers from other countries, Caucasian female volunteering to Syria is a relatively new and understudied phenomenon. Uncertainty surrounds the causal mechanisms of such mobilization and the functional role of these women in the conflict.

This article is intended as a first endeavour in the academic examination of the role of female members of the Caucasian foreign fighter groups. The first section of this article reviews the literature and presents the conceptual parameters related to women's involvement in Jihad as foreign fighters. The second section explains the methodology used in data collection and the third offers a historical overview of women's involvement in North Caucasian militant groups. The next section draws together key findings of the author's field research on the living conditions of insurgent families in the conflict zone, also discussing the activities of female volunteers, the root causes of their mobilization and the degree of their involvement in jihad. In the final section, the author analyses the material and describes gender-specific constraints among Russian-speaking militant groups fighting in Syria and Iraq. Although compared to Western female militants, the overall share of Caucasian women was higher, the degree of their involvement in jihadi activities was lower.

Perspectives on Jihad and Women

Jihad (from the Arabic verb *jahada* 'struggle', 'labour', 'exert effort') is a multi-faceted, abstract concept with military as well as non-military components. The military component draws on what is seen as a legitimate form of waging warfare in accordance with four main schools of Islamic Sharia law.[2] According to some ideologists, jihad as a tool of 'repulsion of the enemy aggressor' is the personal obligation of every individual Muslim (Arab. *fardh al-ayn*).[3] Contemporary jihad is a multidimensional and complex social movement, involving a huge variety of actors, ranging from combatants to ideologists, recruiters, propagandists and support personnel. All these actors are referred to collectively as *mujahedeen*—a term also covering female jihad participants. Although women have been an integral component of all jihadi movements, they have

been either almost entirely ignored by jihadi authors or noted only in passing. For instance, the ideologists of global jihad such as Abdullah Azzam, Dr. Fadl, Yusuf al-Uyayri and Anwar al Awlaqi permitted women to participate in supportive positions.[4] Further, despite a lack of consensus on female combat activities among Islamic scholars, some jihadi-oriented authors have attempted to find a Sharia justification for female suicide bombing operations.[5]

Similar to Jihadi authors, the conceptual framework of women in jihad has not been widely discussed in academia. From a sociological perspective jihad is understood both as collective action and a classic example of transnational activism, where individuals join the war theatre regardless of its geographic location or their own ethnic and national origin. Transnational actors, according to Sidney Tarrow, are defined as 'corporate bodies other than a state with which people across national bodies identify themselves'.[6] The theory of transnational activism has been successfully applied to the study of foreign fighters.[7] Female participants of jihad have been named "female foreign fighters" in Western academic literature as well as in the media. The definitional parameters of the term "foreign fighter" have been widely debated in academic publications. [8] One widely accepted definition is 'non-indigenous, non-territorialized combatants, who, motivated by religion, kinship, and/or ideology rather than pecuniary reward, enter a conflict zone to participate in hostilities'.[9] Nevertheless, as noted above, entering the theatre of war does not necessarily involve actual combat participation, as volunteers may serve in non-combatant positions. Women in jihad insurgency can be understood as part of the broader jihadi phenomenon, which is a form of transnational activism.[10]

Despite various academic publications and media reports on Russian-speaking male jihadi militants, there has been little examination of the gender aspects related to transnational insurgents from the Caucasus region. Case studies of Western and Middle Eastern female volunteers in Syria and Iraq provide some statistics and insights regarding the motivational features of female jihadis.[11][12] The vast majority of these authors agree that despite some regional-specific differences, Western women in Syria and Iraq have been involved in non-combatant activities and have had a complex set of motivational drivers whereby religious conviction played a central role. However, there has been almost no discussion of the role of women in the Russian context, except in connection with suicide attacks. Some policy-oriented reports describe certain aspects of female jihadi volunteerism from Georgia and the North Caucasus.[13]

Methodology and Data Collection

This article draws on intensive and highly focused qualitative case-study research. The case-study approach was chosen to obtain in-depth information on female voluntarism from the Caucasus region, studying female foreign fighters from the Caucasus region (Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Southern Russia) as a single unit.

Throughout the research process, the author encountered three major obstacles. Firstly, there is a scarcity of available reliable textual sources on female voluntarism from the region. Very few women with some degree of involvement in the insurgency have been approached by either media or researchers. However, the author has been able to analyse the existing media outputs and policy-oriented reports concerning Russian-speaking women in Syria. Secondly, the author was constrained by space and security considerations and was unable to conduct fieldwork in the North Caucasus, Syria, and Azerbaijan. The disadvantage here is the absence of narratives from the female volunteers themselves. Thirdly—perhaps the most striking limitation—was the unwillingness of female foreign fighters to be interviewed or contacted by outsiders.

In all, the author managed to conduct 10 qualitative semi-structured interviews. Respondents were selected on the basis of their relation to female foreign fighters (as family members, relatives, neighbours, friends) and/or their involvement in jihadi groups (as former foreign fighters, members or supporters of jihadi groups, or local Salafi activists). Further, two female respondents who had visited Syria (Aleppo and Raqqa, respectively) provided invaluable information regarding the living conditions and functional role of women in Syrian militant groups. The interviews were recorded during the author's fieldwork in the Pankisi Gorge and in the Gardabani municipality in Georgia. Respondents were asked for details about female foreign fight-

ers (age, previous occupation, marital status, religiousness, education, role in Syria), and for their own narrative on the female jihadi volunteerism (Why did they go to Syria? What was the key motivating feature?). Some female respondents were unwilling to communicate with a male researcher, so the author employed as research assistant Luiza Mutoshvili, a secondary school teacher and activist from the Pankisi Gorge. She recorded two interviews alone, and one together with the author.

Female Militancy in the Caucasus

The civil war in Syria and Iraq was the first case of massive volunteerism of Caucasian insurgents beyond the Caucasus region since the fall of the Soviet Union. Despite establishing linkages with Middle Eastern jihadi foreign fighters during the First and Second Chechen Wars, militants from North Caucasus were few in the jihadi insurgencies in Afghanistan and Iraq in the early 2000s. The Syrian conflict led to a decline in the local insurgency in the North Caucasus, linked to the mass migration of jihadi militants and their supporters to the Middle East. According to official estimates, thousands of residents of the Caucasus region volunteered to join the Syrian conflict and some of them held leadership positions within larger transnational jihadi groups. [14] This volunteerism has been accompanied by an increasing mobilization of women.

The migration of women from the Caucasus to Syria was preceded by two periods of activism among female militants. The first period was related to the First Chechen War (1994–1996). According to the former leader of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, at that time local women served as nurses, surgeons, or other medical and supportive personnel. He mentioned tens of female combatants, including Aset from village Yandi, who had taken part defeating Russian special forces.[15][16] Chechen women also have been reported as snipers, sappers, and radio operators.[17]

The second phase begun with the Second Chechen War, as the character of Chechen armed resistance gradually drifted from the ethnic-nationalistic towards the jihadi agenda.[18] Women became more actively involved in the conflict. Instead of serving as active combatants, some women were employed as suicide bombers, and were labelled by Russian media as *cherniye vdovy* ("black widows"). In the early 2000s, the suicide attacks perpetrated by Chechen women targeted the Russian federal forces inside Chechnya, gradually assuming a strategic character and mostly launched outside Chechnya.[19] Inside Chechnya the suicide attacks were usually perpetrated by military lorries loaded with explosives targeting Russian military personnel, while outside Chechnya civilians were equally targeted, mostly by carrying explosive material.[20] On the individual level these operations represent the combination of religious conviction with acts of revenge and responses to the atrocities perpetrated by the federal authorities; on the strategic level, the function of suicide bombing operations was twofold: psychological operations against the enemy, and boosting the morale of Chechen fighters.[21] For example, the prominent Chechen war-song performer of the late 1990s, Timur Mutsurayev, dedicated one of his compositions to the suicide bomber Hava Barayeva, portraying her as a martyr and hero:

> "*The lorry is headed towards the commandant office*
> *It is loaded by the plastic explosive and [her] destiny,*
> *And the lovely face is seen from its cabin*
> *The face of Hava, who decided to sacrifice herself.*"[22]

Nevertheless, contrary to the cases of Sri Lanka, Lebanon, and Palestine, there was not strong societal support for the practice of female suicide bombing. Even the videos of martyrdom were primarily designed for external audiences and potential sponsors.[23]

Since the declaration of Imarat Kavkaz (the Caucasus Emirate) by Dokku Umarov in 2007, no cases of women combatants in the North Caucasus have been reported in open sources.[24] However, several suicide

attacks perpetrated by women took place in the North Caucasus and other regions of the Russian Federation. In its communiqué, the Imarat Kavkaz leadership ignored the issue of women as the participants of jihad. Dokku Umarov's successor Aliaskhab Kebekov challenged the legitimacy of female suicide attacks and even forbade the use of female suicide bombers.[25]

Caucasian Women in Syria: Why Did They Go?

The principal limitation of the current research is the lack of reliable statistics on women who have moved to Syria and Iraq. According to data gathered by Joana Cook and Gina Vale, 23% of Eastern European (Caucasus and Balkans) Islamic State (hereafter: IS) affiliates were mature women, which is the second largest share figure next only to Eastern Asia.[26] Given the fact that the overall percentage of female IS-associates is 13%, the data indicates an unprecedented mobilization of women from the Caucasus.[27] In the fall of 2017, the International Committee of the Red Cross received a list of 231 Russian citizens, predominantly family members of militants, captured by Iraqi forces.[28] According to official estimates, approximately 300 Azerbaijani women and children had been arrested by the Iraqi forces.[29] The representative of the Chechen human rights Ombudsman Kheda Saratova noted that 338 women and 643 children from Russia were captured in Syria and Iraq.[30] Milton and Dodwell, on the other hand, provided data on the ethnicity and numbers of residents of IS-controlled female guesthouses in Raqqa: Dagestan: 200, Azerbaijan: 61, Chechnya: 50, Kabardino-Balkaria: 10, Ingushetia: 7, Georgia: 6 (including one woman from breakaway Abkhazia), and Karachayevo-Cherkesia: 4.[31] These figures suggest a low degree of mobilisation from North West Caucasus, compared to other regions.

Through interviews and monitoring of media reports, a set of root causes contributing to recruitment emerged. The overwhelming majority of those interviewed by this author felt that the main motivations for migrating to the conflict zone were marriage and family relationships, with women moving to the Middle East along with their husbands. The examination of the marital status of women from Syrian IS female guesthouse suggests that only 10% of women were single, whereas 77% were married, 5% widowed, and 8% divorced.[32] According to Mia Bloom, community relations and respect are major motivational features for women to join the clandestine armed group.[33] As the mother-in-law of one woman who had visited her son in Syria explained:

> "They [women] were alongside their husbands. The traditions of the Kists [34] strictly forbade sending women to the front line. Women were restricted as regards communicating with other men except their husbands. Women and children stayed in private houses in Raqqa, but they would shift their place of residence in accordance to the battle plan. They even did not have contact with their neighbours. Their primary function was housekeeping, for example, doing the cooking."[35]

Some informants emphasized cases where husbands had coerced their wives into going. One of them mentioned a Georgian militant who had forced his mother, who had visited him in the conflict zone, to remain in Syria.[36] On the other hand, there were also cases where love led women to leave for Syria. One well-known case is Seda Dudurkaeva, who met her future husband, Khamzat al-Shishani, via the internet. She eventually left her family and arrived in Syria in 2013 to marry Khamzat.[37]

A second motivating factor was the prestige jihad enjoyed in local communities. Marrying an active mujahedeen or being a *shaheed* widow was prestigious among the female supporters of jihad. According to one interviewee, key motivations included the large rebel-controlled territories, the possibility of pursuing a Sharia lifestyle, the perspective of financial support, and the opportunity of maintaining family life.[38] The story of 18-year-old Dagestani Victoria Budaikhanova, previously a waitress at McDonald's, who fled to Syria along with two female friends, might have been an example of the prestige of jihad. According to Budaikhanova's family and testimonies in the court, none of the girls had held radical views prior to leaving for Syria.[39] In

an interview, a secondary school teacher from the Pankisi Gorge disclosed one notable detail:

> "I had girl pupils at higher grades. In our community, it's common to marry early. When the matchmakers were sent to some of my girl pupils, the majority of girls told them 'If this man doesn't intend to travel to Syria I'm not interested in marrying him'."[40]

Similar views featured in Sokirianskaia's report: "It's better to be the widow of a *shaheed* [martyr] than the wife of a coward."[41]

The third motivating factor seems to have been religious conviction. Women left for the conflict zone owing to a sense of religious duty to participate in jihad. A sizable number of volunteers to Syria, both male and female, initially viewed the Islamic project in the Syrian war as a realization of an ideal Islamic society governed by Sharia law.[42] One well-known case involved two Azerbaijani women, Irada Garibova and Ana Suleimanova, from the village of Karajala in Eastern Georgia, who escaped from their husbands and travelled to Syria. Reportedly, their motivation was the non-religiousness of the husbands, who were more interested in their business than caring about jihad.[43]

Family problems and domestic violence are the fourth motivating factor. This author came across a case where domestic violence was the main driver. According to an informant from Azerbaijani-populated Gardabani municipality:

> "One woman from our village married an Azerbaijani man and they moved to Petrozavodsk, Russia together. The husband had alcohol problems. He would systematically assault his wife and humiliate her. Meanwhile, the woman met the local Wahhabis and they introduced her to their doctrine. She realized that leaving for Syria was the only way to get away from her abusive husband. Eventually, she managed to escape and married in Syria."[44]

These four motivational features should not be understood as mutually exclusive. Women travelling to Syria and Iraq along with their husbands could potentially have been simultaneously driven by religious conviction. This author found some key differences between the mobilization of Caucasian and Western female recruits in the Syrian conflict. Compared to women from the Caucasus, the majority of the Western female recruits were young, aged between 16 and 24 and most of them left for Syria and Iraq from their childhood homes.[45] The motivational patterns identified for the Western female recruits were, as previously noted, willingness to participate in the state-building process of the Caliphate, escape from the "decadent and morally corrupt Western society", desire to become the wife of an active *mujahedeen*, and growing Islamophobia in the West.[46] The prospect of marrying a jihadi fighter was also a common motivation for the Middle Eastern female recruits.[47] In contrast, the majority of women from the Caucasus had already been married prior to their departure to Syria and Iraq and a desire to marry active male foreign fighters did not play a major role in their mobilisation. Additionally, as long as the majority of recruits from the Caucasus came from Muslim-majority and highly conservative regions, escaping from Westernised society and Islamophobia was unlikely to be a push factor for migration. However, the urge to pursue Sharia lifestyle can be considered as a similarity between the Western and Caucasian female recruits.

Studies of female foreign fighters from other countries have indicated that mobilization was driven by the urge to support the Muslim population of Syria which was suffering from the brutalities of an unjust regime. Thomas Hegghammer, in his case study of jihad in Saudi Arabia, noted that the volunteerism of young Saudis was determined by the love for fellow Muslims and the willingness to support Afghans, rather than hatred of the enemy.[48] However, none of our respondents mentioned this as a motivational feature—perhaps because the interviews were not obtained from women who volunteered themselves. This indicates that establishing motivation is a complex and multilayered process.

The Functional Role of Caucasian Women

Available media material, as well as this author's fieldwork, indicate four main areas where Caucasian women have been employed by jihadi militants.

First, in supportive roles. According to Margaret Gonzalez-Perez, female members of terrorist groups are usually employed in supportive positions.[49] This author's interviewees mentioned work such as cooking, cleaning, laundry, and taking care of the children. All respondents noted that women spent most of their time with the children. Due to the armed conflict, there was no opportunity to give children elementary school education, which in turn meant an important role for the women. One respondent, however, did mention female doctors and nurses among Caucasian women in Syria.[50]

The second sphere where women from the Caucasus participated involved propaganda and information warfare. In spring 2016, IS online resources issued a video with the well-known Chechen pop-singer Azza Bataeva. Wearing a niqab, Bataeva tears up her Russian passport and her official awards, including the People's Artist award. According to the subtitles, 'Awards should be taken only on the path of Allah'. The video aimed to demonstrate the metamorphosis of Bataeva, from a provocatively dressed singer to a religious Muslim woman.[51] Although this video is a unique case, it demonstrates the possibility of involving women in jihadi propaganda.

A third function was suicide bombing, where there is only one such instance from the Caucasus. Dagestani Diana Ramazanova, the widow of Chechen IS militant Abu Edelbijev, detonated an explosive in Istanbul, near the Sultan Ahmet mosque.[52] There are no other reported cases of Caucasian female suicide bombers, nor did this author's respondents mention other cases. However, one informant who had visited Syria said that in some cases wives of Caucasian field commanders would always wear suicide belts in order to avoid the humiliation of capture.[53]

A fourth possible occupation was recruitment. After the Second Chechen War, occasional reports have been released regarding the arrests of Chechen or other North Caucasian women who were recruiting future female suicide bombers. Aside from media reports about a woman from the Caucasus who was apprehended on allegations of recruiting militants, transporting and accompanying them on their way to Syria, other information about female recruiters from the Caucasus is unavailable.[54]

The fifth potential function of female jihadis was involvement in combat or security issues. However, no cases of female combatants from the Caucasus region have been reported, or emerged from this author's field research. Overall, female jihadis, regardless of their ethnic origin, were not allowed to be soldiers of IS.[55] According to Jessica Davis, one example of women's security activity was the Al-Khansaa brigade which was responsible for patrolling the streets and regulating women's dress code in IS-captured areas.[56] In one of the interviews this author conducted it was suggested that the Al-Khansaa brigade used to be made up of local women; none of them were from the Caucasus.[57] Women in the Russian-speaking jihadi groups have never had an impact on the decision-making process but have been under the absolute control of the militant leadership. Female movement, behaviour, and the dress code were all restricted by the husbands. In this regard, there is a lack of significant difference between Caucasian and Western recruits.

In contrast to women from Caucasus, many IS-associated Western and the Middle Eastern women were publicly active in the blogosphere. Some of them were involved in jihadi propaganda through their Twitter profiles and wrote jihadi poems.[58] In the interviews, this author did not find any significant differences between the daily life and functions of Russian-speaking women in IS- and non-IS-controlled territories. As mentioned, two respondents had visited territories controlled by IS and *Jeish al-Muhajireen wal-Ansar* (hereafter: JMA) respectively; their descriptions of women's functional roles in these territories were quite similar. Another important issue concerns the widows in Syria. Reportedly, widows or unmarried women were placed in widows' houses called *makkar*.[59][60] Two respondents had visited the widows' houses, in Raqqa and Aleppo, respectively. One respondent described the widows' house:

"My daughter-in-law was staying in the widows' house in Raqqa. Women and children were living there. The conditions were basic. But the main discomfort was the crying of the children and it was difficult to sleep. Soon after the deaths of their husbands, women would marry other militants, who could provide for them materially, but there were no pressures in terms of marriage".[61]

Widows were encouraged to marry other militants. However, ethnic Caucasians, especially Chechen militants, usually tried to avoid marriages between Caucasian women and non-Russian speaking militants, especially local Arabs. For instance, one respondent mentioned the case of a pro forma Sharia marriage of a Georgian Chechen militant to a Chechen widow, in order to prevent her marriage with another militant. [62] That indicates the strong influence of ethnic kinship among Russian-speaking militants, regardless of the trans-ethnic nature of jihadi movements.

Explaining the Limited Role of Caucasian Female Foreign Fighters

Historically, women have been less likely to take part in combat or be appointed to policy-making and leadership positions in terrorist groups.[63] Instead, women in rebel groups have been used for managing a safe house, storing weapons, and counterfeiting documents.[64] Compared to Western and Middle Eastern women, some of whom were involved in writing social media contributions, Caucasian women were more restricted.[65] Interviews and analysis of sources have shown that Russian-speaking female foreign fighters were constrained by several factors.

Firstly, a noticeable feature is gender control and dependency on the spouses, diminishing the participation of female members of the groups. This extreme dependence on male rebels became evident when women were deprived of decent living conditions in the captured cities of Syria and Iraq. Following the loss of control over large settlements and the subsequent withdrawal of jihadi groups, hundreds of women from the Caucasus, along with other non-indigenous female volunteers, were unable to protect themselves or act independently from their husbands. This led to captivity by Kurdish militia, Iraqi or Syrian armed forces.[66]

Secondly, the low level of engagement in hostilities by the female volunteers was determined by the jihadis' interpretation of Sharia law. Key ideologists of contemporary jihad do not encourage the active involvement of women in jihad.[67] One male respondent, who participated in the Syrian conflict, explained the non-combat role of women as follows: 'the real Mujahideen would never allow women to participate in warfare'.[68] IS-owned web resources describe female members of the group as *munasirat* (supporters), not as *jundiyyat* (female combatants).[69] Regarding Caucasian jihadis, the single available text on female activities in jihad is a letter by Abdul-Halim al-Shishani, member the Sharia committee of JMA, released in 2014 on Kavkazcenter. Abdul-Halim first noted his concerns about the influx of many Russian-speaking women to Syria without a *mahram* (suitable male escort) or permission from their relatives. He added: 'Syria is not the right place for a pilgrimage, therefore we cannot encourage or force all Muslims, especially our sisters, to make it'. Furthermore, if 'our sister is subject to religious oppression and cannot freely follow the norms of Islam, instead of deciding to *safar* (travel) somewhere, she should marry a brother-follower of the Quran and Sunnah from her region, who has the intention to participate in jihad and make a Hijrah'.[70]

Thirdly, the patriarchal social norms widespread in the Caucasus region have significantly contributed to the limited role of female foreign fighters. According to Saida Sirazhudinova, the combination of Islamic practices and cultural-traditional norms determines gender roles in North Caucasian republics, which in some regions remain unchanged even after the arrival of modern technologies.[71] Two respondents from the Pankisi Gorge explained the restricted role of female volunteers in terms of the local tradition of obedience to one's husband.[72] These patriarchal norms are also evident in the repatriation of volunteer women to Chechnya, where the authorities have a more tolerant policy towards female members of the jihadi groups than towards males, as well as in the existence of so-called *legal pluralism*—the coexistence of Russian state law, Sharia, and customary law in North Caucasus, especially in Chechnya.[73][74]

Finally, as the conflicts in Syria and Iraq have unfolded in foreign territories, women in the Caucasus have been less motivated to participate in hostilities. By contrast, the wave of female suicide-bomber attacks during the Second Chechen War was a response to the harsh counter-insurgency measures of the Russian troops, the practices of *zachistka* (cleansing operations) collective punishment, often accompanied by rape and physical or psychological torture.[75] In many cases, suicide bombers were driven by an urge for direct revenge.[76] The high-scale violence and atrocities in Chechnya substantially contributed to violent mobilization in the region.[77] Even the sole case of suicide bombing in the Syrian conflict, Diana Ramazanova, was probably motivated by the death of her husband. Unlike during the wars in Chechnya, the Syrian conflict has—at least for women from the North Caucasus travelling to Syria and Iraq—not produced the same deep psychological trauma that the atrocities committed against civilians in the Caucasus; therefore there was less need for revenge among women.

Conclusion

Female jihadi activism in foreign lands is a new phenomenon in the Caucasus region. Yet, existing data suggest that Dagestan, Azerbaijan and Chechnya had the highest mobilisation of the female volunteers. This article has sought to contribute to the debate on the phenomenon of female foreign fighters by investigating the motivation and role of Caucasian female foreign fighters. It has identified the key phases in female participation in the North Caucasian insurgency since the 1994 Russo–Chechen war and analysed the practical functions of female foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq. Similar to their counterparts from Europe and the Middle East, the vast majority of Caucasian female foreign fighters have served in supportive functions: only a few were reported to have been involved in propaganda, recruitment and suicide bombing. Unlike women from other regions, they have not been involved in writing jihadi poetry or producing propaganda in social media. It was found that key motivating factors were relationships, religious conviction, problems in the family, and domestic violence. The overwhelming majority of Caucasian women were married and followed their husbands, while women from Europe were mostly unmarried when they departed. However, these Caucasian women could well have been driven also by religious conviction, a sense of religious duty, or the social prestige attached to jihad. In this regard, they did not differ much from their European sisters.

In explaining the limited role of women within Caucasian jihadi groups in the Middle East, four key factors emerged: strong gender control, the jihadi Sharia narrative, the patriarchal culture in the Caucasus, and the absence of a strong local root cause. Indeed, the role of women in Russian-speaking foreign militant groups cannot be solely explained by the doctrine of jihad. The role of social dynamics and cultural practices widespread among Caucasian peoples needs to be taken into account.

Many unanswered questions remain regarding female jihadi activism in the Caucasus. Further studies should focus on the women repatriated to Chechnya and Dagestan, on female Caucasian prisoners in Syria and Iraq, on Caucasian children growing up in the conflict zone, and on region-specific trends in female volunteerism.

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Islamic Conflict and Violence in Local Communities: Lessons from the North Caucasus

by Irina V. Starodubrovskaya

Abstract

The internal dynamics of religiously motivated confrontations based on local community divides can trigger radicalization and violence, also outside the local community. However, theories on radicalization and conflict rarely take into account the significance of such local confrontations. In this article a three-stage model of such local Islamic conflict - conflict disagreement, conflict divide, *and* conflict violence *- is elaborated, based on rich ethnographic material from the North Caucasus. The causes of conflict intensification and/or conflict moderation are discussed, as is the correlation between local conflicts and violent mobilizations. Ways of incorporating outcomes from local conflict research into conflict and radicalization theories are presented at the end.*

Keywords: Local Conflict, Deeply Divided Communities, radicalization, Islam, violence, North Caucasus, Russia

Introduction

In many Muslim communities of the North Caucasus, disagreements relating to interpretations of Islam have long been evident. However, from the 1990s, a new type of conflict appeared: a group of Muslims challenged the entire way of life, norms and traditions of a community. These dissidents were initially called "Wahhabis," later "Salafis." The conflicts emerged against the backdrop of the radical social transformations after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, characterized by the market transformation of the economy, intensified migration, and the growing influence of globalization.

This article explores the preconditions and dynamics of such religiously inspired conflicts in local communities in the North Caucasus. It also offers some reflections on how the empirical analysis of such conflicts can inform both conflict and radicalization theories.

Special attention is paid to the conditions allowing a conflict to reach the violent stage. Escalation to violence appears most probable in socially closed, traditional communities where little value is attributed to secular education, where Islamic youth had previously participated in violent conflicts and where either security forces or insurgents (or both) were involved. Conversely, violence was least likely in communities where differences in values were accepted, people were relatively well-educated and enjoyed channels of horizontal and vertical mobility, where young people had no experience of armed conflict, and where conflict management mechanisms were established in time. Ideology played a supporting role, but was not central in any of the cases examined here.

This article opens with a discussion of some theoretical models offered for the analysis of religiously inspired conflicts on the local level, and its author concludes that there are no ready-made models in the academic literature that adequately explain the case under investigation here. Next follows a description of the methodology applied in this study and an explanation of how the fieldwork was organized. In the second section, building on fieldwork materials, the author concentrates on the dynamics of conflict in the local communities studied. Three possible stages of conflict are identified: *conflict disagreement, conflict divide,* and *conflict violence*. In the third section, the differences in conflict dynamics in various localities are examined. Characteristics of local communities, the background of the religious dissidents, the involvement of external forces with violent potential, conflict management mechanisms are among the explanatory factors. Section four presents case studies of two communities with differing conflict dynamics, to show how the factors identified earlier work in practice. The final section offers some conclusions.

Theory and Methodology

The situation in the Northern Caucasus has invited two approaches to the study of communal conflict. On the one hand, various strands of conflict theory have analyzed the emergence of conflicts based on communal divides: these include models of deeply divided societies and sectarian conflict.[1][2] Various theoretical approaches have been applied in analyzing such conflicts: some scholars have considered conflicting social identities as durable if not primordial; others have seen identities as made and politically manipulated, not begotten.[3] There is widespread consensus on the need to progress beyond the pure versions of both approaches, but a unified view of what a more consolidated position would look like has not yet been developed.[4]

However, conflicts studied within both of these models are usually of a different type than those under consideration here. First, scholars have tended to concentrate on the national level: "cases" continue to be identified generally with "countries".[5] Political mobilization and the struggle for power are central to these analyses. Already in 2004 Charles King called for a micropolitical turn, but in vain.[6] Analysis developed in a different direction: "the method of in-depth country case studies was abandoned in favor of a large N approach."[7] Second, even where the local level has been the object of study, researchers have dealt mainly with historically formed identities that preceded a conflict and became politicized just before or during the conflict.[8] For Islamic communities, Sunni–Shia confrontations have attracted most attention.

The analytical focus pursued here is on quite small communities, where issues of power, authority, and politics in general look different than in big political entities, and alternative mobilization methods are used. It also deals with the emerging identities that are shaped *during* a conflict, not prior to it. Conflict theories have provided tools for analyzing each of these two aspects, but not both. For instance, Brubaker's "grouping, not groups" approach can help with the issue of evolving identities, but it concentrates on the purely political aspects of a conflict relevant for large territorial entities. It remains to be seen how such a model can be adjusted for analysis on the local level.[9]

On the other hand, there are various theories explaining religiously motivated violence, terrorism, and radicalization. These deal with the emerging identities related to interpretations of Islam and, from this perspective, are relevant for the present study. In the past, many scholars have used contextual factors such as structural transformations (urbanization, globalization, etc.), government policies, cultural peculiarities as their explanatory basis. These contexts were seen as provoking negative feelings - deprivation, frustration, and motives for revenge. Alternatively, as stressed by proponents of rational choice theory, contexts may form an opportunity structure where violent conflict is the preferred option. [10]

After major devastating terrorist acts in the United States and Europe, radicalization theory emerged in the early 2000s. Initially, radical Islamic ideology was seen as the main explanatory variable underlying religiously motivated violence.[11] However, many researchers did not agree, pointing out that not all radical Islamic ideologies call for violent solutions, and that not all those who share jihadist views are prepared to apply violence in practice.[12] The differences and links between ideological justification for violence and violent behavior have become one of the central issues in current discussions on radicalization.[13] Various causes, manifestations and trajectories of radicalization (from above and from below) are now recognized.[14] However, the impact of initial simple models has remained significant, both for counterterrorism policy and for academic debate.[15] As yet there is no unified understanding and approach to analyzing the phenomenon of radicalization.

Different approaches to explain radicalization have been developed. Along with ideology, such motives as material incentives, adventure, status, etc. have been considered as pull factors.[16] Some scholars stress the role of social networks, personal relations, and small-group dynamics in the mobilization for violence, whereby social bonds are considered to "come before any ideological commitment."[17] Others claim it is necessary to pay greater attention to political processes per se.[18] State violence is also recognized as a factor that may promote violent extremism.[19]

This rich and controversial literature on radicalization has informed the present study, providing a list of possible factors to be checked in the analysis. Moreover, many of these contributions offer tools for capturing dynamic aspects of the process. "Radicalization" as a concept stresses the evolving character of identity formation, and has contributed to the use of dynamic models in the forms of "conveyor belts", "staircases" or "pyramids".[20] However, this type of framework usually does not include *conflict* as such, and communal conflict in particular, nor is it constructed for the study of conflict dynamics. Instead, the focus is on radicalized individuals and groups, and often does not take their opponents into account. Even when it does, what is studied is usually conflict with the state, not within a community.

Thus, the theoretical approach in this research is mixed. Perspectives that identities are not given, but evolving (stressed, for instance, by Brubaker), are taken into account, but with the reservation that they should be adjusted to the specifics of conflicts on the local level. Factors discussed in the debate on the causes of religiously motivated violence (structural peculiarities, ideology, social networks, spiral of violence, etc.) will be examined for the specific cluster of cases studied in this article. However, my analysis is not restricted to this list: additional variables have been included, based on the results of the author's fieldwork. The detailed analysis of religion-inspired local conflict has been an underexplored terrain, with few ready-made models or tools available.

The article is based on fieldwork undertaken between 2011 and 2017 in the four Northern Caucasus republics of Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria (KBR), Karachay-Cherkessia (KChR), and Ingushetia. The length of this fieldwork is explained by the fact that studying divided communities is no simple matter. Such communities are often socially closed, avoiding interaction with researchers. This author's situation was aggravated by the research necessity of communicating with all sides of the conflict, which severely restricted the possibilities of using the "snowball" method. Often, several types of entry into a community had to be secured. Localities were selected primarily on the basis of the possibilities for ensuring the necessary entry to the community and access to as many relevant actors as possible. Members of migrant communities originally from the villages studied but now living in cities or abroad were also contacted.

As not all communities could be studied in the same detail, a "main" and an "additional" sample of communities was formed. The former consisted of fifteen divided communities where it was possible to collect most of the required information. In total, some 140 informants were interviewed there, mostly in the form of group interviews. (See Table 1 for details of the main sample.)

An additional sample consisted of communities where a limited number of interviews were conducted, but these provided valuable information which complemented the data from the main sample. Seven communities were included on this list: Stalskoye, Komsomolskoye, and Khushtada in Dagestan; Kurkuzhin and Belaya Rechka in KBR; Khabez and Inzhich-Chukun in KChR.

Table 1: Communities Studied: Main Sample

	Local Community	Region*	District	Location	Population 1/1/2018	Ethnic composition	Model of conflict
1	*Kvanada*	Dagestan	Tsumadinski	highlands	1555	Avars (Bagvalins)	conflict violence
2	*Gubden*	Dagestan	Karabudakhenski	foothills	12518	Dargins (Gubdens)	conflict violence
3	*Gimri*	Dagestan	Untsukulski	highlands	5081	Avars	conflict violence
4	*Khadzhalmakhi*	Dagestan	Levashinski	foothills	9053	Dargins	conflict violence
5	*Leninkent*	Dagestan	Makhachkala	plains	16507	Avars / Kumiks	conflict violence
6	*Dugulubgey*	KBR	Baksanski	plains	20553	Kabardins	conflict violence
7	*Elbrus*	KBR	Elbrusski	highlands	5192	Balkars	conflict violence
8	*Novosasitli*	Dagestan	Khasavyurtovski	plains	2267	Avars	conflict violence
9	*Sovetskoye*	Dagestan	Magarabkentski	plains	4350	Lezgins / Laks	conflict divide
10	*Sogratl'*	Dagestan	Gunibski	highlands	2666	Avars	conflict divide
11	*Tpig*	Dagestan	Agulski	highlands	2847	Aguls	conflict divide
12	*Karata*	Dagestan	Akhvakhski	highlands	4786	Karata	conflict divide
13	*Ali-Yurt*	Ingusheta	Nazranovski	plains	6393	Ingush	conflict divide
14	*Tindi*	Dagestan	Tsumadinski	highlands	3644	Avars (Bagvalins)	conflict disagreement
15	*Psyzh*	KChR	Abazinski	plains	8655	Abazin	conflict disagreement

Dynamics of Conflict

Except for the few cases where the "patriarchs" of the Salafi movement in Dagestan (those who had begun disseminating Salafi ideas as early as the 1970s) were involved, the beginnings of conflict in these various locations were surprisingly similar. A group of young Muslims challenged an established religious community, arguing that the latter's way of believing as well as the way of living were not correct according to Islamic norms. We can call this initial stage "*conflict disagreement.*"

On the surface, this conflict concerned strictly religious issues. Sometimes minor details of rituals became a point of serious controversy. However, it is not correct to conclude that this was simply a case of religious fanatics unwilling to compromise even on minutiae. To understand the real nature of the conflict it is necessary

to analyze the arguments of both sides.

The advocates of traditional practices defended their position by referring to how their ancestors had always acted. The legacy of the ancestors was almost sacred for them -the basis for the right way of doing things. Moreover, that the religious dissidents were young people and were in the minority was considered as an important argument in defending their position. "It's just a fashion. It's because of idleness, people just don't want to work. The eggs have started teaching the hens." (elderly male, 2013, Dagestan). The authority of traditions and the elders was their stronghold.

By contrast, their opponents based their authority on a quite different foundation: knowledge of Islam. "Knowledge confronts tradition" (young male, 2014, Dagestan)—this is how an informant summed up the essence of the conflict. For these religious dissidents, neither traditions nor elders were the real authority - only the Islamic scriptures. Not only elders, but also young people could be knowledgeable. This conflict appeared to be one of values and authority, although it was framed as one of religion.

At times, the conflict had certain financial dimensions as well. It was often mentioned that the religious dissidents attracted people by paying them or providing other forms of assistance, but this author found few confirmed stories of this type. However, also the established clergy had financial interests to defend. They had been paid, in money and in kind, for their services at weddings and funerals. By challenging the existing rituals and proposing to conduct the necessary Islamic procedures free of charge, the religious dissidents undermined the sources of earnings for elderly mullahs. That became a factor behind the severity of the conflict in some cases.

Though the initial act of this drama was quite similar in various locations, the stage and the actors differed greatly. Religious conflicts could erupt in at least three different types of communities:

- Deeply religious, socially closed communities that had not been seriously affected by Soviet modernization. Generational and gender hierarchies in those communities were kept almost intact. People there had continued to pray and fast during Ramadan even in Soviet times; religious teachers were working underground; and disputes were solved mainly according to Sharia law. The understanding of Islam was usually quite conservative, and Muslims were urged to have minimal contact with the "infidel" state. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, many young men from such localities were sent abroad by their parents to study Islam; it was a shock for the community when they returned with radically different understandings of Islamic norms.
- Secularized communities, where traditional norms and hierarchies had nevertheless not been undermined. In such communities, the mosque was seen as a place for the elders, and the mere fact that young people started to go to the mosque was often felt almost as an offense. The activity of the younger generation, perceived as a challenge to the established order, evoked fierce responses. In some cases, the parental generation did not interfere even when their offspring were beaten and humiliated by security officers. "Our people didn't stand up for them, because our elders rejected their activity, their doings. They don't agree. It's necessary to stand up for those who are doing the right things" (elderly male, 2014, Dagestan).
- Fragmented communities, where part of the population had become secularized and modernized in Soviet times whereas others followed the old ways. There were not many universal rules and values in such communities, and people had become accustomed to this situation.

The type of community determined at least some characteristics of the one side in the initial conflict - the traditionalists. These could be deeply religious people with a specific Islamic tradition backing up their views, or they might simply be elders, for whom visiting the mosque was prescribed by community norms. Sometimes, earlier religious groupings like various Sufi orders could influence the attitudes of the traditionalists in this new divide, and their positions might not be uniform.

However, it was the specificities of the other side, the dissidents, which played a particularly important role in the conflict dynamics. The main differences lay in how they had acquired their new Islamic ideas:

1. on the spot, without leaving their native community - either through preaching of Salafi scholars or through videotapes and later the Internet;

2. from diasporas living in cities, whose members often visited their native villages;

3. mainly through religious learning abroad - at least one leading group consisted of dozens of people who acquired knowledge of Islam this way, and who then mobilized others;

4. in combination with violent experience - participation in violent conflicts or in training camps where religious lessons were provided together with combat training.

Various groups of dissidents could be present in the same community, and disagreements among them could contribute to the shaping of a conflict. As was the case with traditionalists, dissidents also could become even more divided in the course of the controversy, mainly on the issue of the legitimacy of violence.

If the conflict had not been stopped in this initial stage, a real community divide ensued. If only a small fraction of a community was mobilized, the danger was not very serious. However, if most of the people in the local community found themselves on one or the other side of a conflict, the new stage, which can be called "*conflict divide*", was reached. The following features characterized this stage (though not all of them might appear in all cases):

- The religious community (*jamaat*) was split: two mosques often started to function for Friday prayer, where different imams were preaching (sometimes two groups of Muslims prayed in sequence in the same mosque); or religious dissidents preferred to pray at the homes of their members.

- Members of a community from the opposite sides, even within one family or clan, stopped communicating: they did not attend weddings or funerals, except for close relatives, did not visit each other, and even refrained from exchanging greetings when encountering each other outdoors.

- Intermarriage between families / members of different sides of the divide stopped.

- Activities aimed at improving local living conditions through mutual support declined. Community members appeared to be unable to self-organize.

- Local mechanisms for dispute resolution ceased to function. In some cases, deeply religious people were forced to appeal to the Russian courts, as there was no authority in their divided community to solve day-to-day problems. Some disputes were not resolved at all.

- In the worst cases, people stopped seeing the other side of a conflict as relatives or neighbors: they began to dehumanize them and see them as enemies.

Stopping conflict is more difficult at this stage than at the previous one. However, in some communities, the conflict had become frozen, and people gradually got accustomed to this: the divide became a feature of daily life, thereby losing its severity. This was the case in some villages in the Khasavurtovski and Kizilurtovski districts of Dagestan (Kirovaul, Oktyabrskoye, Pervomayskoye). In other communities, however, conflict gained momentum, and its potential for violence increased.

Various factors may push a conflict to a violent stage, and different forms of violence can be observed in the process. Sometimes youth started to fight among themselves, leaving people injured and property damaged. However, this form of conflict is fairly traditional in North Caucasus villages. "*Conflict-violence*" was more severe when the sides tried to involve a "third party" with a potential for violence. This could be the security forces or underground Islamic militants, or both. In several cases, traditionalists were accused of appealing to Russian law enforcement agencies, triggering repressions against religious dissidents. Such moves contributed to the radicalization of religious dissidents, who in some cases sought revenge, starting the spiral of violence.

Contrary to the mainstream view of radicalization, it was not only dissidents who could be radicalized in the course of a conflict. In some cases, the traditionalists initiated violent struggle, as in Khadzhalmakhi and

Leninkent in Dagestan. In the first case, moderate religious dissidents were blamed by traditionalists, who constituted the bulk of the village population, for the activity of insurgents. Quite a few people were killed; others fled in panic. All this happened against the background of the huge financial turmoil related to the fall of the local "financial pyramid." In the second case, the traditionalists used violence to stop the functioning of the local Salafi mosque. The population of Leninkent is mixed, with both Avars and Kumiks living there. Two mosques were separated mainly on the basis of a religious divide (Sufi vs Salafi) - but the first one was mainly considered as Avar and the second one as Kumik. Thus, both religious and ethnic confrontations played a role in this conflict, but the religious factor was critical.

It is not always easy to trace the direct connection between local conflict escalation and the violent mobilization of its members for an insurgency emerging from the underground. Repression of co-villagers living elsewhere or even of distant members of religious communities might play a role in radicalizing previously moderate dissidents. Regardless, local divides served as an important push-factor. Attempts by the local establishment to marginalize religious dissidents, restrictions on employment, humiliation by security forces, the general atmosphere of conflict and isolation - all these factors were often present in divided communities, fueling the shift to violence. When violent mobilization started, networks of friends and relatives played a key role. In some localities, everybody knew who would be the next to go underground.

Members of communities where youth had started to join underground fighters found themselves in a squeeze. Threats of violence came from both sides - from the security forces, who saw them as terrorist supporters, and from members of paramilitary groups, who blamed them for not being properly Islamic and for interacting with the "infidel" state. "It was impossible to foresee the actions of the security agencies or underground fighters. You're out walking at night, and can't know if it's an officer or a militant approaching" (middle-aged male, 2015, KBR). The atmosphere of terror was universal. Militants even threatened their families; in many cases generational hierarchies and kinship ties were ultimately broken.

Two reactions to this extreme situation within communities could be observed. In some localities it stimulated further divisions. Neighbors saw the relatives of those going underground as guilty; feelings of anger and hate intensified. In other cases, however, the community united and tried to stop their young people from becoming militants. Purely religious divisions were put aside in response to this challenge.

However, eventually the communities became exhausted. The most radical and determined youth had been arrested or killed; people were weary of continued instability and pressure, as well as humiliations and damages to property during anti-terrorist operations. Those who still supported violent struggle became totally marginalized. People really wanted a return to normal life. "Frankly speaking, I'm totally fed up with the religious disagreements here. I want the electricity to work well. I want my drinking water to be clean. Those are my priorities" (middle-aged male, 2015, Dagestan).

Factors Affecting Conflict Dynamics

Every conflict has a unique combination of characteristics and features. However, case studies can indicate which trends might push conflict either to moderation or to intensification.

A comparison of the three different types of localities identified above shows that the most favorable conditions for a conflict intensifying and becoming violent are in the first type - in socially closed, non-modernized religious communities. These communities had maintained traditional gender and generational structures, trying to preserve community coherence and isolation from an "infidel" state as well as from external influences. Poorly educated and with few opportunities for vertical mobility outside their own localities, members of such communities were anxious to uphold the established norms and hierarches. Religious issues were important for most of the population, so the divide usually involved many local residents.

In the two other types of communities, the potential for negative dynamics was generally weaker. In the traditional secularized type, conflict was on the agenda for only a fraction of the local residents. In such

communities, the divide rarely became total. However, in the absence of deep religiosity, material factors could play a role - local mullahs wanted to defend their earnings.

In fragmented communities, residents had become accustomed to internal differences in values and beliefs. So, when yet another group (religious dissidents) with distinct and divergent values appeared, it was not so shocking as in the other types of communities. This might have contributed to moderation of conflict.

Moreover, in these last two types of communities, people usually had greater opportunities for organizing their life independently outside the locality. For example, religious dissidents might opt for outmigration. Religious conflict sometimes reappeared in the cities, among migrant communities from certain villages (in the words of my informants, "travelled to the cities"), where there was more space for individual views, ideologies and subcultures.

The background of the religious dissidents strongly affected the dynamics of conflict. Where dissidents received knowledge locally, the source of Islamic education was important. They could choose among competing views expressed by various preachers, the most prominent of whom were from Dagestan: Akhmadkadi Akhtaev propagated peaceful political Islam; Bagaudin Kebedov expressed Salafi views and eventually moved to the jihadist position; Ayub was a head of the "takfir" group, which treated most Muslims as infidels. In certain localities different preachers took the lead: for example, Akhmadkadi was popular in Sogratl,' as was Ayub in Kvanada.

However, most of those who had obtained Islamic knowledge locally did not leave their accustomed social environment for long periods. That distinguished them from those who had studied abroad, who had participated in the Chechen wars or who had prolonged experience of urban life outside their community. These "stay-at-home" persons had no chance to free themselves from traditional social hierarchies, from community regulations, and it was more difficult for them to persist in challenging the existing order.

The common view is that Islamic studies abroad resulted in the most dangerous ideas, and were largely responsible for conflict intensification. However, that is not always the case. Islamic students with foreign education might take various stands, sometimes pushing conflict for aggravation, but in other cases trying to mediate conflicts and prevent violence. Some prominent figures from the Islamic underground became radicalized not in the course of their religious education abroad, but later. For example, according to this author's informants, Magomed-Ali Vagabov from Gubden, one of the most brutal leaders of the Caucasus Emirate, returned from Pakistan with quite traditional religious views and turned to the jihadist worldview later.

What definitely fueled local conflicts was the participation of community members in violent conflicts outside the local community, especially in the Chechen wars. Fighters brought home experiences of violence and humiliation, and the desire for revenge. They were highly aggressive in their attitudes to those who disagreed with them, and were ready to use violence to achieve their goals.

The dynamics of conflict depend also on conflict management mechanisms. The most important factor is the availability of mediators with the desire and authority to interfere. For example, in those communities where the local imam did not associate himself with one side of a controversy, but tried to mediate, conflict moderation was more likely. Also other actors could serve as mediators: the head of a local administration, an influential member of the diaspora, a knowledgeable Islamic student with a prestigious education - all of them were involved in mediation processes in various locations. In Karachaevo-Cherkessia, where the local *muftiat* (regional religious authority) was deeply involved in the mediation of such conflicts, radicalization among youth was less widespread than in the other regions under consideration.

The major factor pushing for conflict aggravation turned out to be the involvement of external actors with a potential for violence, enabling the spiral of violence to escalate. Violence on the one side provoked violence on the other side, with the scope of violence expanding. In such a situation, all initiatives aimed at halting the conflict could be blocked as long as both sides had resources to continue fighting.

Escalation or Moderation: Kvanada versus Tindi

Both Kvanada and Tindi are mountainous villages located in Tsumada district of Dagestan. Although no more than a dozen kilometers apart, in Kvanada the conflict escalated to a violent stage whereas in Tindi it remained in the "conflict disagreement" form.

The community of *Kvanada* had always been conservative and deeply religious. Even in the Soviet period, controversies were regulated on the basis of Sharia, not Russian law. No alcohol or cigarettes were sold in the local shops. In post-Soviet times, many youth left their home village, and the number of residents diminished. The main destination was Astrakhan, where migrants preferred to settle in one district, with many continuing to live according to the old norms. Those who stayed in the village were generally poorly educated; education was not seen as a channel for vertical mobility. There were no representatives from Kvanada in the municipal district or in republic-level power structures at the time of this author's fieldwork.

A religious divide in the community emerged in mid-1990s with the diaspora in Astrakhan playing the leading role. All three types of religious dissidents could be observed in this conflict. Ayub, one of the most influential and radical Dagestani preachers of Kvanada origin, lived in Astrakhan. Students from Kvanada were among the first to go abroad for Islamic education, and most of them subsequently settled in Astrakhan. Young people from the village had been trained in military camps on Chechen territory; some of them may have taken part in armed confrontations.

The Islamic dissidents came regularly from Astrakhan to Kvanada, where several religious debates had been arranged, further fueling disagreements. The imam unequivocally associated himself with the traditionalists, and expressed a very aggressive position against the new ideas and their bearers. Logically, the conflict moved to the next stage: the local community became divided. The divide was deep - according to this author's informants, only about one fourth of the residents tried to remain neutral. All the main features of the divide could be observed: *jamaat* was separated between two mosques, adherents of different Islamic views, even if relatives, stopped communicating and even greeting each other, intermarriage ceased, community coherence was weakened. Both elders and youth were divided. Traditional clan affiliations affected the new divide - for instance, members of the Ayub clan were the first to support new Islamic views. However, not all aspects of the divide can be explained on the basis of traditional community structures.

For some time the two mosques coexisted peacefully, but then the religious dissidents began aggressively offending those co-villagers who did not share their views, calling them infidels. Tensions rose, with gossip, rumors, inadequate information spreading and affecting both sides of the controversy. There were outbreaks of violence, ending in a large-scale fight with several participants injured and a car smashed. Violence continued in Astrakhan as well: one person was killed. The alternative mosque in Kvanada was destroyed. Religious dissidents from Astrakhan stopped visiting their home village; some even migrated abroad. Local dissidents continued to pray separately. With all these events the hot stage of the conflict had come to an end, but the divide had not been overcome.

In the course of the conflict there were several attempts to end the confrontation. Mainly well-educated members of the local community, including Islamic students educated abroad, initiated these attempts. However, these efforts were fruitless until 2009, when a reconciliation process was started by the head of the local municipality and by some influential members of the Astrakhan diaspora. The local imam remained opposed to this to the very end.

The specificity of the early Kvanada conflict was related to its timing - it was before the start of an intensive anti-Wahhabi campaign, while the interference of security forces had been limited. Pressure on religious dissidents was less brutal than in conflicts which occurred later.

However, there is a further aspect to this conflict. From the early 2000s, a group of underground militants had their base in a forest near the village. According to this author's informants, several locals (mainly from Astrakhan) as well as fighters of other origin were active in this group in 2013. Kvanada residents spoke of them

with more regret than anger. The pressure from security forces was seen as the main factor that caused people to go underground.

Tindi can be classified as a fragmented community. Some residents still considered themselves as secularists and communists; others adhered more to traditional and religious norms and values. According to this author's informants, the style and the way of life of the diaspora in the Daghestani capital, Mahachkala, differed significantly from those in the local community.

Islamic revival could be observed in Tindi, but not all the villagers took religious norms seriously. For example, it was prohibited to sell alcohol, and a special fine was established for those who appeared drunk in public. However, locals mostly joked about it. Everybody knew that many drank alcohol brought from the district center. While in Kvanada community life was based on Sharia, in Tindi both sides in a dispute sought to find laws and regulations advantageous to them. Because of the more pragmatic attitude to religion, only few young people from Tindi went abroad to study Islam and not all of them completed their religious education.

Secular education in Tindi was considered more important than in Kvanada, though young informants complained about the low level of instruction in the local school. Of those who completed school, about half went on to universities, and never returned to live permanently in the village. Local people were well represented in the district-level power structures. For instance, at the time of this author's fieldwork, the head of the municipal district administration was from Tindi, as were several of its members.

In Tindi, generational hierarchies had been maintained in a very traditional form. This increased the risk of generational conflict and protest, possibly expressed through radical Islamic ideology. Young respondents from the local Islamic milieu complained about their parents. "Those adults, I think they should be blamed. They are responsible for our bad schools; they are responsible for corruption. All the mess is because of them" (young male, 2013, Dagestan). However, this risk was partly mitigated by the preservation of the clan character of local businesses and the possibilities of moving to Makhachkala or elsewhere where generational hierarchies were less pronounced.

Religious conflict in Tindi started in the second half of 1990s. According to informants consulted by the author, in 1997 about one-fifth of the local residents supported the religious dissidents, and their numbers were growing. The dissidents had prayed separately and grouped around the cousin of the prominent Dagestani radical preacher Bagaudin Kebedov. However, unlike Bagaudin, the cousin opposed the violent struggle.

In this situation of a growing divide, the local community asked a co-villager, who had been working as an imam in a locality on the plains, to return to his home village and take the lead in managing the conflict. The imam did not associate himself with either side of the confrontation, but started a dialog expressing respect and brotherly feelings towards both sides instead. As he explained in an interview, he had understood his key role and had felt responsibility for not allowing the conflict to escalate and radicalization to progress.

The sides in the conflict did not become aggressive, but expressed respect for each other. The community had already become accustomed to the differences in perspectives, and agreed to accept adherents of the new ideology as the price for community coherence. Indeed, religious dissidents in Tindi were characterized in quite surprising words. "Those Wahhabis, they are very mild, kind, loyal people. They are not fanatics" (middle-aged male, 2013, Dagestan). This meant that the community was *not* divided: the conflict remained frozen in the first stage, the one of "conflict disagreement." Later, in 1999, an end to the controversy was achieved, when the whole community found itself united in repelling the invaders from Chechnya.

The security forces appeared to play almost no role in the conflict in Tindi. This author's informants made no mentioning of any serious incidents related to their interference.

Conclusion

This analysis of Islamic conflicts in several North Caucasus villages can help researchers to adjust and utilize theoretical conflict models for investigations on the local level. Several outcomes of this study merit attention.

First, issues of power and authority are relevant for the evolution of local conflicts. However, while in deeply divided societies and in sectarian conflict theories the struggle for political power is the central point, in small communities this is more a problem of social control. The initial stage of conflict about different understandings of Islam often expressed the desire of the younger generation for emancipation from the control and authority of the elders. Struggles around local elections played almost no role in this type of local conflict. Central figures were local elders, imams, heads of influential families, much more than the heads of local municipalities.

Second, there were no unified mechanisms of mobilization for conflict and violence in the communities studied here. In some cases, mobilization was quite spontaneous and chaotic; in others, political entrepreneurs played a distinct role. Mobilization could be inspired by local actors (local imams, whose financial well-being became an issue), by members of diasporas outside a locality (religious leader living in a large Russian city) or even by the state bodies, or at least with their support. Mobilization for local conflict might differ from mobilization for violent actions, though the first at the very least creates preconditions for the second. As Scott Atran, Marc Sageman and several other scholars rightly assumed, social networks were central for mobilization here as well. [21] However, traditional networks were modified, transformed and complemented by new networks formed in the course of a conflict.

Third, in deeply divided societies and in sectarian conflict theories, conflict is usually seen as the clash of two opposing sides. However, in the conflicts studied here, old and new divides often overlapped, resulting in a more complicated conflict structure. Traditionalists could be divided because they belonged to different families or Sufi orders. Also, dissidents could be split, mainly because of diverging attitudes about the use of violence. In some cases, moderate dissidents tried hard to stop young people from becoming militants.

The analysis presented here may also serve to inform discussions on the causes and pathways to religiously motivated violence. The following factors emerged as contributing to the probability of a conflict turning violent:

1. *Local community characteristics.* In six out of eight communities with "conflict violence" in this sample, education was not important for the residents and was not considered as a path to upward mobility. Attitudes to secular education in communities with "conflict divide" and "conflict disagreement" varied greatly. However, this author's ethnographic observations do provide indications in support of the assumption that the quality of human capital may affect the character of conflict in a local community and the attitude of its residents toward the use of violence.

2. *Context*: the social closedness of a community, rigidity of generational hierarchies, divisions existing in a community before conflict emerged, and community members' experience of violent practices all matter. Six out of eight communities with "conflict violence" were characterized by strict generational hierarchies. In one additional case, ethnic divide contributed to the conflict evolving to a violent stage. At least for six local communities with "conflict violence," local residents were known to have participated in violent conflicts outside the community.

3. *Mediation.* Local political entrepreneurs may act not only to aggravate, but also to moderate a conflict. That a person was available who could influence both sides and was ready to perform conflict mediation turned out to be critical for the course of conflict (including its violent potential). The position of the local imam was especially important: in seven out of eight communities with "conflict violence," local imams either acted to promote one side of a conflict (usually traditionalists) or at least did not try to mediate or reconcile.

To conclude, in local conflicts it is often impossible to pinpoint one general cause of radicalization or of mobilization to violence. These are complicated processes that can be influenced by a range of variables. Structural and contextual factors are important, but so is agency.

Ideology, so central to debates on radicalization, remains a confusing issue. On the one hand, the Islamic views of those involved should not be ignored. Some moderate leaders of religious dissidents openly referred to their ideological preferences and the Islamic teachers they had chosen as a reason for the relatively mild state of conflict in their communities. On the other hand, ideological positions were not fixed: they could change in the course of a conflict, toward radicalization or toward moderation.

However, in none of the cases studied here could ideology provide a comprehensive explanation for the evolution of local conflict and its transformation into the violent stage. The correlation between internal violence and local residents' participation in violent conflicts outside the community proved to be far more pronounced than that between violence and "irregular" Islamic education.

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Notes

[1] The theory of deeply divided societies was proposed by Eric Nordlinger in the early 1970s (Eric A. Nordlinger, 1972, *Conflict Regulation in Deeply Divided Societies*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press). Deeply divided societies are defined as societies "driven by ethnic, national, religious, linguistic or other divisions severe enough to threaten the very existence or nature of the state, often accompanied by civil violence". (Cit. Robert C. Luskin, Ian O'Flynn, James S. Fishkin, and David Russell (2014), "Deliberation across Deep Divides," *Political Studies*, 62, p. 116.)

[2] Sectarianism is more about religious than ethnic divides, but is not identical with religious position: it is defined as "the use of religion in articulating political identities, threatening national unity and rendering conflicts more intractable as result." Teije Hidde Donker (2018), "Beyond the Spectre of Sectarianism: The Case of Tunisia," presented at the workshop "The Comparative Politics of Sub-state Identity in the Middle East," LSE Middle East Centre, June 29,2018. URL: https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/mec/2018/09/15/beyond-the-spectre-of-sectarianism-the-case-of-tunisia/ .

[3] Charles King (2004), "The Micropolitics of Social Violence," *World Politics*, 56:3, pp. 431–455; Raymond Hinnebusch (2016), "The Sectarian Revolution in the Middle East," *Revolutions: Global Trends & Regional Issues*, 4:1, pp. 120–152.

[4] Morten Valbjørn (2018), "Studying Sectarianism While Beating Dead Horses and Searching for Third Ways," presented at the workshop "The Comparative Politics of Sub-state Identity in the Middle East," LSE Middle East Centre, June 29, 2018. URL: https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/mec/2018/09/17/studying-sectarianism-while-beating-dead-horses-and-searching-for-third-ways/ .

[5] Rogers Brubaker (2004), *Ethnicity without Groups.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, p. 102. For recent publications based on country case studies see, for example: Fletcher D. Cox and Timothy D. Sisk (Eds.) (2017), *Peacebuilding in Deeply Divided Societies: Toward Social Cohesion?* Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

[6] Charles King (2004), op. cit.

[7] Jürg Steiner, Maria Clara Jaramillo, Rousiley S. M. Maia and Simona Mameli (2017), *Deliberation across Deeply Divided Societies: Transformative Moments*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 9.

[8] Tone Bringa (1995), *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way*: *Identity and Community in a Central Bosnian Village*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press; Ashutosh Varshney (2002), *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India*. 2nd ed. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press; Feargal Cochrane, Neophytos Loizides and Thibaud Bodson (2018), *Mediating Power-sharing: Devolution and Consociationalism in Deeply Divided Societies*. London: Routledge, pp. 47–79.

[9] Rogers Brubaker (2004), op.cit.

[10] For an overview and classification of early theoretical models see, for example: Jeffrey Ian Ross (1993), "Structural Causes of Oppositional Political Terrorism: Towards a Causal Model," *Journal of Peace Research*, 30:3, pp. 317–329; Brynjar Lia with Katja Skjølberg (2004), *Causes of Terrorism: An Expanded and Updated Review of the Literature*. Report prepared for Norwegian Defence Research Institute; Teun Van de Voorde (2016), "Terrorism Studies: A Critical Appraisal," in Rik Coolsaet (Ed.), *Jihadi Terrorism and the Radicalization Challenge: European and American Experiences*, 2nd edn., London: Routledge.

[11] The NYPD model is perhaps the best-known within this type of approach. See: Mitchell D. Silber and Arvin Bhatt (2007), *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat*. New York: New York City Police Department.

[12] Arun Kundnani (2015), "Radicalization: The Journey of a Concept," in Christopher Baker-Beall, Charlotte Heath-Kelly and Lee Jarvis (Eds.), *Counter-Radicalization. Critical Perspectives*. London: Routledge; Marc Sageman (2016), "The Turn to Political Violence in the West", and Hugh Roberts (2016), "Logics of Jihadi Violence in North Africa," both in Rik Coolsaet (Ed.), *Jihadi Terrorism and the Radicalization Challenge: European and American Experiences*, 2nd edn., London: Routledge; Daniel Koehler (2017), *Understanding Deradicalization. Methods, Tools and Programs for Countering Violent Extremism*, New York: Routledge.

[13] Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko (2017). "Understanding Political Radicalization: The Two-Pyramids Model," *American Psychologist*, 72:3, pp. 205–216; Bart Willem Schuurman and Max Taylor (2018), "Reconsidering Radicalization: Fanaticism and the Link between Ideas and Violence," *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 12:1, pp. 3–22; James Khalil, John Horgan and Martine Zeuthen (2019), "The Attitudes–Behaviors Corrective (ABC) Model of Violent Extremism," *Terrorism and Political Violence*. URL: https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2019.1699793 .

[14] James Khalil, John Horgan and Martine Zeuthen (2019), op.cit.

[15] Bart Schuurman and Max Taylor (2018), op.cit.

[16] James Khalil, John Horgan and Martine Zeuthen (2019), op.cit.

[17] Marc Sageman (2008), *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-first Century*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, p. 70; Diane Singerman (2004), "The Networked World of Islamist Social Movements," in Quintan Wiktorowicz (Ed.), *Islamic Activism. A Social Movement Theory Approach,* Bloomington: Indiana University Press; Scott Atran (2011), *Talking to the Enemy: Violent Extremism, Sacred Value and What It Means To Be Human*, Penguin; Marc Sageman (2016), op.cit.; Zoey Reeve (2020), Islamist Terrorism as Parochial Altruism, *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 32:1, pp. 38-56.

[18] Omar Ashour (2009), *The De-Radicalization of Jihadists: Transforming Armed Islamist Movements*, New York: Routledge.

[19] James Hughes, for instance, demonstrated the link between radicalization and disproportional and indiscriminate use of violence by Russian troops during the first Chechen war. James Hughes (2007). *Chechnya: from Nationalism to Jihad*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

[20] Mitchell D. Silber and Arvin Bhatt (2007), op.cit.*;* Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko (2008), "Mechanisms of Political Radicalization: Pathways Toward Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 20:3, pp. 415–433; Fathali M. Moghaddam (2005), "The Staircase to Terrorism: A Psychological Exploration," *American Psychologist*, 60:2, pp.161–169; Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko (2017), op.cit.

[21] Diane Singerman (2004), op.cit.; Marc Sageman (2008), op.cit.; Scott Atran (2011), op.cit.; Marc Sageman (2016), op.cit.

Violence and the Dynamics of Political Settlements in Post-Soviet Kabardino-Balkaria

by Jan Koehler, Alexey Gunya, Murat Shogenov and Asker Tumov

Abstract

With the breakup of the Soviet Union, the North Caucasus became, from the perspective of the Russian federal centre, a politically unstable and at times rather violent borderland. This article examines the political settlements emerging under the broader conditions of state formation in limited-access social orders, i.e. social orders negotiated between the central state and local elites with some violent potential. Analysing the developments in Kabardino-Balkaria (KBR) since the early 1990s, the authors find three types of political settlements that vary in terms of elite figuration, key resources used for rent distribution and the role of violence as a political resource. These political settlements have differing implications for the sustainability of local social order and shed light on the variations in state rule exercised by the federal centre in its political peripheries. Against the backdrop of changing violent challenges, the centre successfully tightened vertical elite control but at the cost of reducing the inclusiveness of political settlements within Kabardino-Balkaria.

Keywords: political violence, insurgency, political settlement, limited-access social order, subnational governance, Kabardino-Balkaria, North Caucasus.

Introduction

The North Caucasus has been marked by outbreaks of violence since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Different studies elucidate time-varying reasons for this volatility: in the 1990s the upsurge in violence resulted from ethnically charged tensions, an upturn of political separatist and self-determination agendas, and grievances related to historic injustices committed by the state—repression and deportations of peoples. [1][2][3][4] After the turn of the millennium, academic scrutiny and public interest focused increasingly on violence along religious lines, caused by Islamist radicalization and the state's response.[5][6][7][8] Observers drew attention to policies of violence by terrorist groups and the state's counter-terrorist operations.[9] Other studies have explained the patterns and intensity of violence by focusing on incentive structures emerging from a specific political economy of violence.[10][11][12] Similarly, an important segment of literature has studied the violent political situation in the region with a focus on the transformation of government and state institutions.[13][14] Less attention has been paid to latent forms of violent rule as part of strategies employed by political elites for maintaining their political and economic power.[15][16] That is the perspective taken in the present article.

Since the breakup of the Soviet Union, great changes have taken place in how violence is used as a means of directly projecting state power, as well as showing resistance against the state. Drawing on the example of the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic (KBR) in the North Caucasus, this article analyzes the changing political role that violence has played in forging, keeping and transforming the local political order. Specifically, we describe the re-emergence of vertical power after the sudden disintegration of the centralised Soviet system, its transformation and the changing role violence played in sustaining as well as challenging local political settlements.

The analysis focuses on the transition from the nomenklatura-style regime of V.M. Kokov via the decade-long rule of the businessman A.B. Kanokov, followed by Yu.A. Kokov, a representative of the security establishment (*siloviki*), to K. Kokov, the incumbent head of the republic. The aim of this article is explorative rather than deductive. As explained in the next section, the article investigates political processes in a North-Caucasian republic from a specific, theory-informed perspective on the relationship between violence and political settlements in limited-access social orders.

Analytical Approach

Generally speaking, the article deals with the nexus of violence and changing socio-political order. It opens by briefly introducing the theoretical perspective taken in this article and how this has informed this explorative study of how violence and political settlements influenced each other in Kabardino-Balkaria.

Resorting to organised physical violence in socio-political conflicts entails more than a change of means or an 'escalation'; the use of violence to further one's interests or express one's position is always embedded in a broader historical and cultural setting. That framing of violence as part of the wider social order needs to be explored. Violence—the arbitrary use of physical force in particular—may impair the effectiveness and legitimacy of institutions that provide social order by means of distributional rules. Violent challenges to such institutions affect their ability to set and enforce rules (as in the case of insurgencies); the arbitrary use of force in the name of such institutions (e.g. law enforcement) may have delegitimizing effects for those institutions or even the wider political system. However, violence may be socially productive in shaping bonds and relationships, especially if specific manifestations are widely accepted or even applauded.[17][18]

Norbert Elias was the first sociologist to note that all societies, in order to sustain themselves as societies over time, need to find solutions to the problem of (physical) violence.[19] For Elias, stable social orders emerged from what he called 'nettings of interdependency' resulting in specific 'figurations' of social actors. [20] Similarly, North, Wallis and Weingast placed the universal challenge of violence at the heart of their ambitious conceptual layout of generalised social orders.[21] The authors of this article take this analytical perspective on the nexus between violence and social orders and apply it to the post-Soviet political economy of Kabardino-Balkaria as part of the Russian North Caucasus. This concept sees violence as a defining capacity or resource in elite formation and elite competition for economic rents in limited-access social orders (LASOs). Social orders are ways of organizing societies that are self-sustaining and internally consistent—but in order to have a stable order, a society must deal with the potential for organized violence. Groups with this potential may join in a (possibly fragile) coalition to rule. This coalition excludes others from key economic activities, reserving rents only for its members.[22] Satisfied by these rents, coalition members may then decide against engaging in violent competition.

To explain the consolidation of a limited-access social order that tames potentially violent elites, North returned to his earlier subject: the emergence of institutions, and how they regulate elite interaction around the control of access to rents, supporting organisational outcomes of varying complexity.[23] Institutions do not determine the choices and strategies of actors (such as preferring cooperation or non-violent competition to violent conflict), but they do inform and constrain actor choices by setting rules and norms for social interaction. These can be broken—but only at a cost. For the everyday citizens in limited-access orders these costs may be punishment, or bribes to avoid sanctions. In case of institutions regulating the relationship between equally resourceful elites, rule breaking increases the transaction costs by damaging trust, harming the reputation and limiting the ability to form coalitions to protect one's own interests.

According to North et al. the Russian Federation as a whole belongs to the majority of countries that are characterised as limited-access social orders.[24] Violence is used by elites as a means of controlling access to social structures, rents and resources. The potential for organized violence secures access to power. In LASOs, the potential to resort to violent self-help by elites limits 'the power of rules', i.e. the reliability and autonomy of institutions. However, within Russia, different federal subjects developed very different patterns and dynamics with regard to this nexus of political elites, violence and the emerging local social order.

The problem with this concept of 'social order' is that it relates to large-scale, long-term patterns of social exchange that are conceptually not well suited to account for subnational or even local dynamics of social order that change at a quicker pace.

This is where a recent analytical approach—*political settlements, brokerage and elite bargains*—comes in. This concept is related to institutional theory but combines it with political economy analysis—with questions

of who benefits from specific institutional settings and who has the organisational power to set, ignore or challenge those settings.[25][26] Political settlement analysis focuses on the interplay between the institutional constraints on, and the organisational power of, social actors to explain emerging and changing patterns of social orders.

The *concept* of LASOs, combined with political settlement analysis, helps to structure the research into patterns and dynamics of governance in subnational settings such as the Russian North Caucasus. Basically, one needs to investigate (a) the relevant resources that (b) political elites have privileged access to, distribute as club-goods and sometimes compete for, and (c) to what extent limiting access and competing for those rents involves the application of violence or reference to the potential of resorting to violence. Finally, this article seeks to explain the organizational implications that this dynamic nexus involving rents, elites and violence has in terms of shaping political settlements within and beyond the state at the subnational level.

This article is based on three different *sources of information*. First, the authors use primary as well as secondary published sources to identify and describe the dominant political settlements that emerged under the successive heads of the republic. Second, we add to this narrative views and perspectives from original interviews conducted by the authors. Two of the interviews are expert interviews while three sets of interviews were conducted with people that were part and party to the political processes analysed here. The interviews were broad, some continuing over several days, but had a special focus on issues relating to local elite dynamics, violence as a political resource and the role of rent distribution among elites. Lastly, the article draws on the authors' own research on conflict case studies focussing on issues of sub-national governance, as well as on reports on violent incidents collected and published elsewhere.

Kabardino-Balkaria: Geographical Position, Key Resources, Administrative Framework

The Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria is a federal subject of the Russian Federation located in the North Caucasus, with a population of approximately 850.000 and an area of 12.500km^2. There are three major ethnic communities: Kabardins (57%), Russians (22%) and Balkars (13%). Kabardins and Balkars belong to different language families and populate different geographical zones, although they intersect in several municipalities, where discord over land is frequent.

Kabardino-Balkaria (KBR) is of considerable importance for the Russian authorities due to its geopolitical position in the North Caucasus. That is the main reason for the high attention the federal centre pays to the republic, even though KBR lacks strategic resources like oil or other minerals. The main resource for distribution between elites are subsidies from the federal budget. The republic's reliance on such federal transfers (*dotations* in the Russian terminology) does not exceed 50%—lower than in Chechnya, but still higher than in Western Caucasian regions.

There are three important further resources for privileged distribution among local elites. First, the KBR as a transit location: its roads lead to East Caucasian regions and South Caucasian countries. Checkpoints monitor the situation on the federal highway and control traffic. Rampant corruption has resulted in high charges for passing a checkpoint, especially for cargo vans. Access to this resource remains a point of contention between federal and regional law enforcement agencies.

Figure 1. Main Insurgencies in the Caucasus and Region of the Present Case Study

Second, agricultural lands in the plains and in the foothills are of high value; this has led to the current situation of vetoed privatization of lands in the KBR.[27] Local elites control the fertile territory and administer access to this resource. KBR law authorizes only leasing procedures, and there are frequent complaints of illicit and corrupted auctions.[28]

A third important resource are recreational territories in mountain areas with a partly developed tourism industry (such as Prielbrusie, in the Elbrus foothills). Land tenure here is linked with the sensitive issue of inter-ethnic relations, as Balkars, who live in the highlands, consider this territory to be their historic homeland. The federal authorities had paid scant consideration to Prielbrusie in the 1990s, but this health and recreational resort, with its potential for development, has since come to attract greater attention, becoming a valued commodity.[29]

Before turning to the KBR in greater detail, we will briefly introduce the administrative framework in which federal republics are embedded and how this framework has evolved.

Today, Russia's administrative structure comprises five main levels (Figure 2): federal, federal okrugs/ districts, regions or 'federal subjects' (such as republics, oblasts, krays); sub-regional districts (rayons), and local communities. Most heads of districts are appointed. The federal state relies on a mixed strategy of co-opting local leaders, fostering state presence at the district and regional levels, and monopolizing access to key resources, such as agricultural land or construction grounds.

Figure 2. Vertical State Power in the North Caucasus
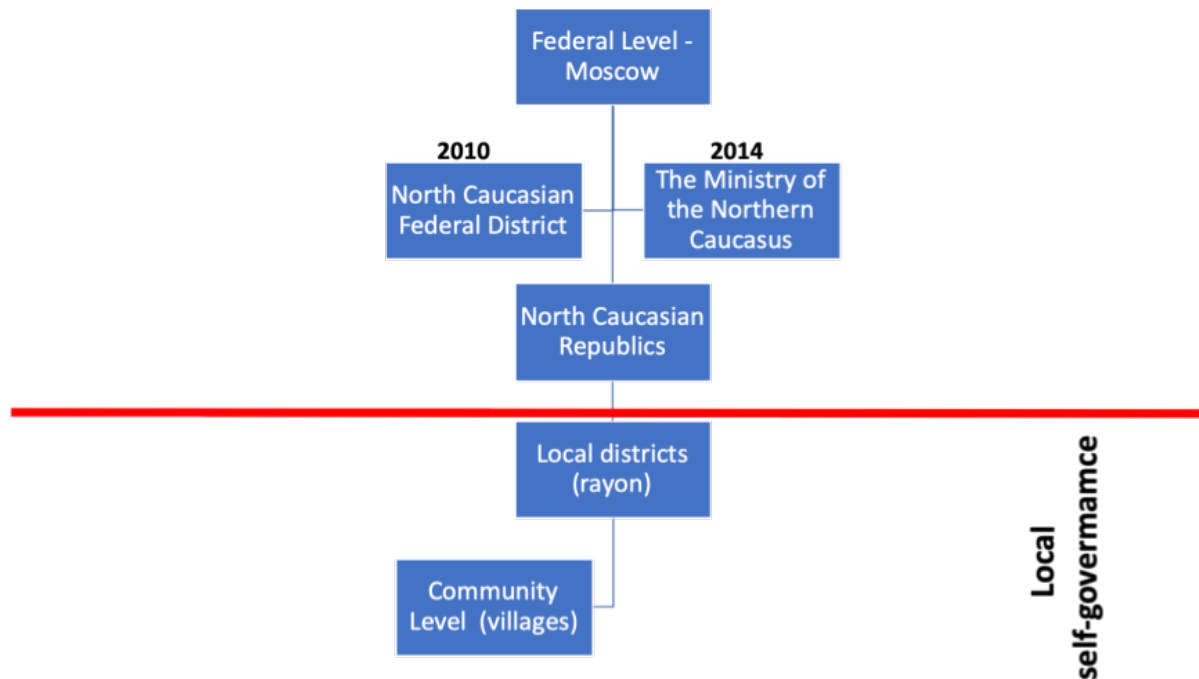
The federal districts have been mediating between the federal state in Moscow and the federal subjects since 2000. The President of Russia appoints his plenipotentiary envoy—*polpred*—to govern the district and conduct presidential policies. Previously, the North Caucasus belonged to the Southern Federal District (SFD) with its centre in Rostov-on-Don. Since 2010, all Caucasian republics except Adygea and Stavropol Krai have been part of the newly established North Caucasian Federal District (NCFD). The position of envoy in the SFD (i.e. before 2010) usually passed to former representatives of law enforcement agencies. However, the first *polpred* in the NCFD became an exception. Aleksandr Khloponin (2010–2014), appointed during Dmitry Medvedevs' presidency, was a representative of Russian business elites who prioritised economic development.

Evolution of Subnational Statecraft in Post-Soviet Kabardino-Balkaria

The senior position in Kabardino-Balkar's administrative system is the Head of the Republic. Throughout the period under consideration here (1992–2018), there were four Heads of the KBR: Valery Kokov (1992–2005), Arsen Kanokov (2005–2013), Yury Kokov (2013–2018), and Kazbek Kokov (2018 to present). Each leader stood for a distinct approach. This relates to different challenges to state rule evolving over time; it also relates to the way politically relevant local elites were integrated or excluded and how the KBR's relationship to the regional and, crucially, to the federal centre, was shaped.

They all had to deal with what Derlugyan et al. identified as the specific shape of anti-systemic challenges in the North Caucasus: "Social power is contested by three distinct kinds of political elite: the late Soviet era officialdom; rent-seeking political capitalists (a local variety of 'oligarchs') originating in the 1990s; and the Islamist underground, which emerged in the 2000s, putatively as an alternative state and society".[30]

1992–2005: Valery Kokov—Avoiding Civil War, Ethnopolitical Balancing and Consolidation of Basic Statehood

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Supreme Soviet of the Kabardino-Balkarian ASSR declared its sovereignty and announced the first-ever presidential elections. The elected president Valery Kokov signed the 1992 Treaty of Federation with Moscow, and Kabardino-Balkaria became a federal subject of the Russian Federation with the status of national republic. Valery Kokov was a member of Soviet nomenklatura and ex-

secretary of the republican *obkom* (regional branch of the Communist Party that was the de-facto decisionmaking centre in the republics). Kokov managed to preserve his power due mostly to the vast clientelistic network in Kabardino-Balkaria that he managed to maintain, owing not least to the support of Boris Yeltsin. Kokov's authority among other Caucasian leaders and his efforts in supporting Yeltsin resulted in his being appointed as deputy chairman in the Federation Council, the upper house of the Russian parliament.[31]

The early 1990s saw a rise in ethno-political tensions in the North Caucasus, and violent confrontations increased. However, large-scale conflicts, like the first Chechen war for independence, or the violent confrontation between Ingush and Ossetian communities in the disputed Prigorodny Rayon, were avoided.

> "He [Kokov] tried, first of all, to take into account the interests of the main ethnic groups— Kabardians, Balkars and Russians. This was a priority, because the main task was to ensure peace, reduce the degree of confrontation […]. He always tried to maintain this balance so as not to offend one or another ethnic elite group in parliament or government".[32]

However, the post-Soviet weakening of the state resulted in rising crime rates, growing corruption and the black market replacing the licit economy as the dominant form of exchange.[33] The authorities failed to manage the increasing influence of criminal groups, a situation which led some communities to form local vigilante groups or militias to ensure security.

> "Criminality was predominant, and I concentrated on guarding my village against mobsters. They had a developed business model of cattle rustling, and there was a gang in every village—in Upper Balkaria, Bezenghi etc. They stole stock in Bezenghi, brought it to Bulungu overnight and exchanged it for cows from Chechnya".[34]

Still, Kabardino-Balkaria was considered a safe haven in comparison to other, more violent, Caucasian republics.[35]

Nevertheless, the absence of open, violent group conflicts was accompanied by rising social tensions: unemployment (youth especially), corruption and clientelism in the social and political sphere (job recruitment, university admission, medical healthcare), and widening economic inequality. The exodus of ethnic Russians here was a consequence not of political instability and insecurity (as in Chechnya), but of the economic crisis and threatened livelihoods.[36] Discontent spread among socially and economically deprived youth. Rising inequality and rampant corruption, as well as numerous violations of religious rights, further intensified the anger.[37] Extremist Islamist propaganda from the Eastern Caucasus (Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia) became an ideological platform for radically oriented adolescents. Starting in the second half of the 1990s, many of them joined *jamaats*—small Muslim communities in opposition to traditional Islamic institutions, which had been co-opted by, or integrated into, the state.[38]

Jamaat headmen (*amirs*) had close connections with radical Muslim commanders in Chechnya and Dagestan. The second Chechen insurgency (1999–2002) was met by Russia's own war on terror that swept across the North Caucasus. Young Muslims in Kabardino-Balkaria, not only radicals, but also practising believers who attended mosques and wore beards, came under intense scrutiny and pressure. Law-enforcement officers compiled 'Wahhabi lists'—and those on the lists were subjected to obstacles to mosque attendance, arrest, illegal searches, even torture. Police shut down several houses of worship and impeded the spread of religious materials.[39]

On 13 October 2005, a large group of militants raided Nalchik, the capital of the KBR. These events marked a systemic change in local politics. Part of the economically deprived and marginalized population, represented by organized Muslim radicals, mounted the violent attack on a state they perceived as unjust and corrupt. 217 militants attacked law-enforcement agencies in Nalchik. According to official figures, 92 insurgents, 35 police officers and 14 bystanders were killed. The raid was completely unexpected by the authorities—fighting in the streets lasted for two days.

The militants were members of the Kabardino-Balkaria Jamaat—a hitherto non-violent local Muslim

community that was opposed to the government-controlled Spiritual Board of Muslims. 'Young believers', or 'Wahhabis', as they were called, initially created the Jamaat to 'purify' Islam and make it inclusive across ethnic/tribal identities. After the 2005 raid, the authorities outlawed the Jamaat, and terrorist and counter-terrorist operations became a dominant feature in Kabardino-Balkaria from that moment onwards.[40]

It has been argued that Khachim Shogenov, political ally and Minister of Interior under V. Kokov (1992–2006), bears some responsibility for the radicalization of Muslim communities.[41] Shogenov strengthened his ministry by expanding the number of policemen from 3,000 to 6,000 over 10 years. When the police force increased pressure on 'young believers' Islamic activists were pushed underground. The eventual attack on Nalchik in 2005 raised a wide social debate against the Ministry's policy towards Muslims; human rights activists across Russia and abroad demanded the investigation of police actions.[42][43]

After the 2005 raid, the ban on the official Jamaat served to increase the importance of underground communities, changing relations between the *siloviki* and the movement of 'young believers' in particular. Islamist networks started to challenge traditional criminal organisations and moved into racketeering and extortion. Specifically, informal taxation of shops selling or dealing in alcohol became a primary source of income, due to the development of liquor businesses in KBR.[44]

One can divide Valerij Kokov's reign into three periods with different roles played by the use of violence. First, there was the disorder of the 1990s. Numerous criminal groups became the main social carriers of physical violence and put state structures on the defensive. Ethnic discourse and interethnic tensions ranked as a major factor of instability. The government emphasised ethnic conflict resolution but failed to oppose the criminal groups and develop the economy.

Second, regime consolidation in the late 1990s coincided with the exhaustion of the nationalist opposition. At the same time the local authorities attempted to restore order in the socio-economic sphere by combating crime, applying a mixed strategy of violently confronting lower-level criminals while co-opting influential leaders as informal brokers between the state and the people they controlled or represented.

> "The second period (after the chaos of the early and mid-nineties) concerned the shooting of criminals; first, several lower-level criminal executives, while the criminal leaders from the 'upper floors', for example, the Balkar informal leader Kuuanch (Babaev), were left alive. The physical violence [here: common violence, criminal violence] had dropped significantly in the end".[45]

This Kuuanch Babaev became known in the 1990s as an informal leader of the Balkar people. His standing within the Balkar community group and his prestige within the highly organised criminal world helped him to form his own group and affiliate it with some state authorities: former prime minister Georgy Cherkesov once admitted that he had used Kuuanch's group to ensure order during protests.[46] As a traditional strongman, Kuuanch was locally considered to be able to solve any problem; he became some kind of a popular hero. Brokers like him were apparently used by the republic-level state authorities to control ethno-nationalist mobilisation and prevent possible violent expressions of discontent or more subtle forms of resistance to the Kabardinian-dominated state.

Valery Kokov himself was an experienced Soviet-educated broker who balanced the interests and priorities of local elites and represented them upwards within a centralised formal system of political power.

> "He was such a heavyweight politician that he could defend his decisions in Moscow, which proves his appointment as deputy chairman of the Federation Council. He knew better what is better for the republic. He always reconciled all decisions that, according to [federal] law, had to be coordinated with Moscow. He believed that the minister of internal affairs should be a native of the republic, a person who was born and raised here, a person who will be vitally worried about security in the republic".[47]

Kokov is said to have understood the special position that the KBR—and the North Caucasus as a whole—held in with the breakup of the Soviet Union and the departure of the three South Caucasian republics of Armenia,

Azerbaijan and Georgia. The KBR had become a borderland for Moscow—and the price to pay for relative local autonomy was to keep problems away from Moscow.

> "[For Moscow, Kabardino-Balkaria is] a borderland. […] The first president of the republic paid great attention to this. Because at the time of the collapse of the USSR there was no state border with Georgia. There were no frontier posts. This was all initiated by the president [Valery Kokov]. […] He, as a statesman, understood [the] threats, given the geography and history … [This] certainly gave [Kokov] dividends. The first thing he stressed to the federal centre was KBR's contribution to the security of Russia".[48]

For most of the late 1990s, this brokerage worked. The KBR political leadership established and maintained a fairly high level of control over the politics and economic resources of the republic. In the third phase, with the rise of Putin, things began to change.

> "However, since 2000 local elites have lost control over a substantial pillar of their power – the Ministry of Internal Affairs. According to a presidential decree, republican Ministries were integrated into the federal body and changed their subordination from republican presidents to Presidential Envoy".[49]

At this time, religious ideas and religious organizations gained wide popularity. Several studies have shown how religious leaders marginalized criminal organizations and brought financial flows under their own control. [50][51] Racketeering changed from 'shaved heads' to 'bearded men' [i.e. from criminal racketeers to Muslim believers]. Even traditional crime-related spaces such as prisons underwent 'Islamization'.

> "Around 2003 and 2004, religious bosses penetrated prisons, removed kingpins from profitable businesses such as debt dealing, car accidents and the like. To become immune to assaults in prison you had 'to sit on the mat' [i.e. start doing Salah – religious prayer]".[52]

By the end of Kokov's rule, the government had failed to establish an accord with Muslim communities, and relied on occasional acts of arbitrary force – which lacked success and even contributed to the consolidation, then radicalization, of 'young believers'. The brutal treatment of arrested Wahhabis spread beyond Chechnya and reached Kabardino-Balkaria. The 'files of extremists' became an issue in local and national media, as those on the lists experienced violations of their rights.[53][54]

Subsequent developments, most importantly the 2005 raid on Nalchik, coincided with the change of government after the death of President Kokov, who had resigned one month earlier for health reasons. Kokov's era of Soviet nomenklatura-dominated elite bargains and ethno-political balancing had come to an end.

2005–2013: A. Kanokov – Narrowing Clientelism and Increasing Venality

The subsequent period was marked by the change from a peripheral Soviet nomenklatura-based political balance to a new model. Arsen Kanokov served as Head of Kabardino-Balkaria from 2005 to 2013. A representative of the commercial world, he had built his business empire outside KBR, successfully combining his activity as an oligarch-entrepreneur with that of a banker and politician – in 1998 he became the permanent representative of the KBR to the Russian President. In 2003 Arsen Kanokov was elected as a deputy of the State Duma and became a vice-chairman in the Russian Duma's committee dealing with budget formulation and tax regulation. He was considered politically close to Dmitry Medvedev, the future Russian Prime Minister, and to Plenipotentiary Alexander Khloponin.

Arsen Kanokov's term as KBR President started amidst difficult conditions related to the rise of Islamic extremism and the emergence of a new Balkar opposition. Kanokov styled himself a Kabardian nationalist. [55] In 2006, Yury Tomchak replaced Shogenov as Minister of the Interior. Tomchak had built his career in Adygea. After his arrival in the KBR, Tomchak declared the war on terror as his priority, and pursued a policy of transparency. Under his chairmanship, human rights activists and official religious leaders formed a Public Council of the Ministry to monitor police activities on addressing terrorism. He also created a Coordinating

Council for small businesses and protecting them from criminal groups and arbitrary acts of officials.

However, these measures were undercut by the political settlement sought by Kanokov, who used his power to monopolize control over the economy in the republic: he marginalized competitors by at times illegal and even violent means. The high level of violence inherited from the confrontation with the Jaamat was utilised to enforce this selective 'order' in the economy and to intimidate political rivals.[56]

One local political opponent claimed in an interview:

> "Many people believe that the strengthening of the Wahhabi underground is due to the sponsorship of Kanokov, some even recall the case when some detained members of the underground proved to be employees of the Sindika-Shield organization (a private security company owned by Kanokov)."[57]

The high oil prices favoured budget subsidies, implementation of major economic projects and overall socio-economic development.[58] Kanokov had promised to reduce the republic's dependency on central budget subsidies and to increase direct investment as well as federal development programmes. This changed the kind of rents the republican leadership could distribute amongst its clients and affected the distributional regime – from providing access to public (budget-funded) positions to managing access to private as well as public investments.

Kanokov's appointment was probably connected to his entrepreneurship. The federal authorities hoped that his business acumen would facilitate stabilisation via economic development. However, Kanokov was more engaged with Moscow business and power elites there, than in regional and local business. His core business successes were achieved not in the republic but in Moscow – markets, shopping centres, real estate, as well as hotels and banking.[59]

> "He survived the 1990s in Moscow, where he settled all issues with money. […] He bought his position [as head of the republic] and arrived here as if [he was going] to a factory he owned. He did not understand that there are different ethnic groups here with their [traditional] rights, that there is some division of powers between them. [His attitude was] 'I bought this position, so I am entitled to use it the way I want'".[60]

Kanokov's rule became notorious for inner-circle takeovers of profitable positions and properties.[61] The land issue escalated under Kanokov, due largely to his aggressive politics on changing the institutional status of the commons. In 2005, the KBR parliament adopted a law on inter-settlement territories – mostly pastures – whereby local municipalities were granted ownership of areas lying within the communities, whereas the commons between municipalities belonged to the republic. With this, the authorities alienated mountain pastures from the local communities, which led to protests among highlanders, who were mainly Balkars. [62] To strengthen his grip on power, Kanokov distributed senior positions in KBR's management among his relatives and associates. His strategy also aimed at fostering informal leaders. Thus, he deliberately attempted to exert pressure on local self-government.[63]

Two cases are indicative of Kanokov's re-distributive approach—one relating to the land and development issue, the other relating to petrol monopolies and political competitions.[64] Eventually, Kanokov's narrow clientelistic and increasingly socially dis-embedded approach failed to satisfy the Kremlin's expectations of local stability. Armed attacks, attributed to the Islamist insurgency, increased dramatically after 2008 (see Figure 3).

Already in 2010, in the wake of a deteriorating security situation, Sergey Vasiliev was appointed by Moscow to head the KBR Ministry of Internal Affairs. He was considered an experienced expert in the fight against organised crime, and used this experience to deal with the spike in violence, aimed mostly at rank-and-file police officers, that started towards the end of Tomchak's term.[65] As a newcomer to the region, Vasiliev needed some time to implement measures that could be effective in curbing the attacks, but he eventually succeeded.

Vasiliev was among the few ministers who retained their post in the new composition of the KBR government after Arsen Kanokov's replacement in 2013. Kanokov himself had failed as broker to deliver for the federal

authorities, the *siloviki* and the local elites when he was replaced with the police general Yury Kokov.[66]

2013–2018: Yury Kokov – Security First

On 6 December 2013, Yury Kokov became the third Head of the Kabardino-Balkaria Republic. He made his career in law enforcement agencies – working in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and heading the Russian Anti-Terror Department in 2011–2012. His appointment signified a new approach to the federal government's security promotion policy in KBR, especially in the run-up to the Winter Olympics in Sochi and with regard to the civil war in Syria.[67] During preparations for the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics, public security bodies took unprecedented measures to improve security. The risks of terrorist attacks increased after Russia deployed military forces in Syria and became involved in the war against the Syrian opposition; at that time several jihadi groups in the North Caucasus swore allegiance to the Islamic State.[68] This counter-terrorist agenda was initiated still under interior minister Vasiliev and continued under his successor Igor Romashkin in 2015. However, Romashkin's background was in active counter-terrorist operations rather than in countering organised crime.

Yury Kokov's time in office was characterized by a change of emphasis from civilian rule and economic development to a state security prerogative. This "securitization" of local politics changed the political settlement again. First, Yury Kokov initiated the second major change in the ruling coalition of elite representatives at the level of the republic (the first had occurred when A. Kanokov took over from V. Kokov – see above). His approach was characterised by concentrating political power in the hands of loyal representatives of the security services.[69]

> "He [Yuri Kokov] made changes, removing all those connected to Kanokov. He proclaimed loudly that the republic was in a deplorable state [after Kanokov]. He invited federal officials, who stated that the socio-economic indicators were very low. […] The [government] system became more police-state ... Former police employees were appointed even to civilian posts…. In my opinion, there was more usurpation of power by a narrow circle of elites".[70]

Yuri Kokov used the administration to bring the previous businessmen-oligarch elite, who had dominated the economy as well as the parliament under Konokov, in line, creating his own resource base to satisfy the *siloviki*, on which he relied.

> "Perhaps it was a cunning police strategy – to intimidate all business-minded people to kowtow, to get control over those who have something to lose... I think that it [law enforcement pressure] affected all the big businessmen".[71]

However, here Yuri Kokov failed where the businessmen-oligarch reign of Kanokov had been somewhat more successful: in contributing to at least some economic progress and investments in the republic. Particularly hard-hit was the alcohol industry, a main source of the KBR budget.[72]

Second, according to various reports, the state security structures supported a mass exodus of extremists before the Olympic Games and helped them to get to Syria, in order to increase security in the North Caucasus.[73] Some of our informants from law enforcement agencies anonymously claimed that around 200 citizens of Kabardino-Balkaria left to join ISIS; some of them had been supplied with new identity documents, implying a degree of cooperation from official state structures.[74] At the same time, the intelligence agencies intensified their counter-terrorism operations against the various remaining insurgency networks and their leaders. Further, the Russian authorities controlled the borders and obstructed radicals seeking to return. Participation in foreign armed units was criminalised and made punishable. At the same time, a re-integration programme was introduced for those Islamists who were not accused of serious crimes and who were willing to break off their ties with illegal organisations.[75]

> The armed religious underground – it must have disappeared [during the period of Yuri Kokov]. They […] went to other fields, began to engage in legal business. […] They penetrated into many areas of business – so, if they do business, they increase the number of employees, supporters,

business partners... As long as they don't violate the laws, they are respectable citizens. […] They tried to [get power] through weapons, and that didn't work. Now they have changed their strategy – they are building up their capital, they want to get into politics, they want to become respected and important people in society who will have to be reckoned with. And in order to avoid confrontation and splits in society, it will be necessary to try to negotiate with them".[76]

Although Yuri Kokov's approach to the violent Islamist opposition was successful (see Figure 3 below) – insurgency and counter-insurgency related violence remained low since 2015 – internal ethnic tensions and conflicts increased. This eventually contributed to his unexpected resignation in late September 2018.[77]

Figure 3. *Dynamics of the Number of Victims of Violence, Including Members of the Armed Underground, Law Enforcement Officials and Civilians, from 2008 to the Present.*
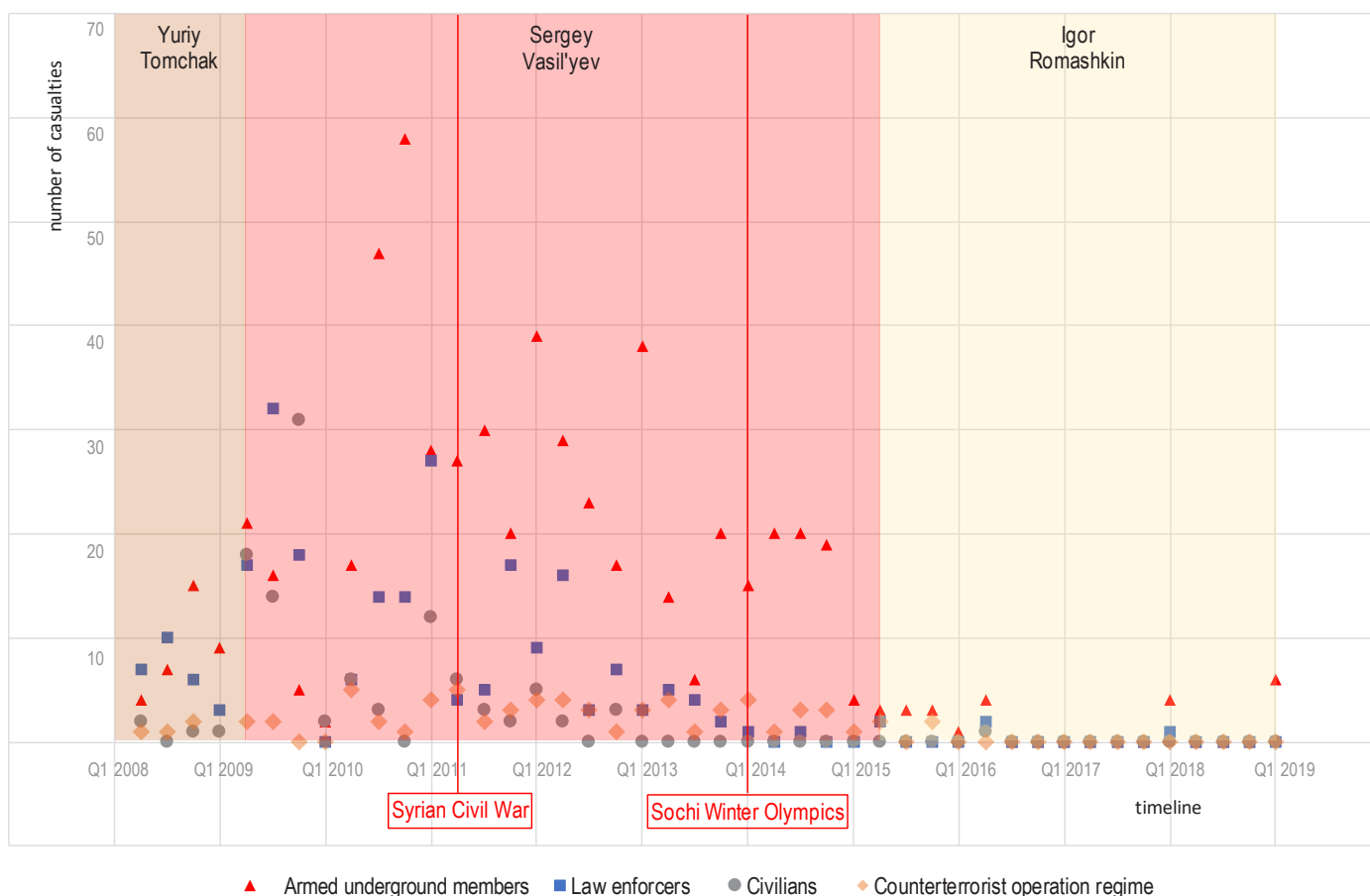
Note: Periods of changes in the priorities of the work of the ministers of internal affairs of the republic are highlighted in colour (Data provided by www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/ and Ministry of Internal Affairs of KBR). The data available capture the period of escalating violence against law enforcement representatives in 2008 and 2009, until the two-pronged counter-measures started under Interior Minister Sergey Vasilyev (i.e. increasingly violent oppression) and refined with the appointment of Yuri Kokov as head of state in 2013 (of the administration and facilitating the departure of radical jihadists to Syria).

In 2018, Kazbek Kokov (a son of the first RKB President Valery Kokov; not related to Yury Kokov) was appointed as interim head of the republic. Kazbek Kokov had built a civil career in the Presidential Administration of Russia. After his KBR nomination, Kazbek Kokov declared his priorities as supporting business, promoting an enhanced investment climate, improving upward mobility among youth and upgrading the republic's human resources policy.

The unexpected resignation of the 'silovik' Yuri Kokov, and the designation of the civilian Kazbek Kokov generated various expectations as to the future of the republic, including a return of more civilian rule to the KBR. Most experts are inclined to believe that this will go hand in hand with a re-organisation of spheres of

influence in the security services.[78] However, the authors of this article do not yet have sufficient information about the effects this latest appointment will have on the ruling coalitions in KBR – a task for future research.

In the concluding section, an explanation of the different governing arrangements and their handling of violent challenges will be offered based on political settlements between local elites and the centre.

Political Settlement Formation in the KBR against the Backdrop of Violent Challenges to Political Stability

In the introduction it was explained how the concept of *political settlements* is helpful for analysing how ruling coalitions operate in limited-access social orders (LASOs) of varying institutional maturity and proneness to violent confrontation. At the heart of this analytical approach are certain assumptions: that in LASOs elites compete for rents; political power is used to organise the distribution of rents; and access to political power requires the potential to resort to violent self-help—at least as a fallback option. Further, the political settlements emerging from elite competition and coalition building appear to be shaped by the direct power of elites to mobilise their constituents and organise (potentially violent) actions on the one hand, but also by long-standing social and short-term strategic interdependencies as well as formal and informal institutional arrangements regulating elite interaction under 'normal' conditions – i.e. conditions when the distributive rules themselves are not challenged by acts of power. Crucially, those political settlements are also shaped by the quality and size of rents available for distribution.

The analytical narrative presented above has indicated significant changes in political settlements that have emerged in Kabardino-Balkaria. It is a story of a political centre ("Moscow") reacting to changing and at times violent challenges to local political stability by attempting to tighten direct central control over a succession of political leaders in the Republic and how this affected the composition and reach of the ruling coalitions within the republic.

Table 1 provides an overview over periods of rule of the main political actors at central and subnational levels since the breakup of the Soviet Union.

Table 1: Political Leaders in Post-Soviet Russia

President	Boris Yeltsin	Vladimir Putin	Dmitry Medvedev	Vladimir Putin		
Years	1991-1999	2000-2004, 2004-2008	2008-2012	2012-2018, 2018-present		
Federal PRs	–	Siloviki (SFD)	Alexander Khloponin	Sergey Melikov	Oleg Belaventsev	Alexander Matovnikov
Years	–	2000-2010	2010-2014	2014-2016	2016-2018	2018-present
Priorities	STATE FORMATION, BASIC SERVICES, ETHNIC EXTREMISM & SEPERATISM	SECURITY, RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM, TERRORISM	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, BUSINESS	RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM, TERRORISM	RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM, TERRORISM CORRUPTION	GOVERNANCE, STATE PERSONNEL POLICIES, CORRUPTION, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, SECURITY
Head	Valery Kokov		Arsen Kanokov	Yury Kokov		Kazbek Kokov
Years	1992-2005		2005-2013	2013-2018		2018-present
Priorities	STATE BUILDING, GOVERNANCE, ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM		ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, BUSINESS, ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM, TERRORISM	OLYMPICS AND SYRIA RELATED SECURITY ISSUES, ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM, TERRORISM		ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, BUSINESS, CORRUPTION, STATE PERSONNEL POLICIES, GOVERNANCE
Minister	Khachim Shogenov		Yury Tomchak	Sergey Vasiliev	Igor Romashkin	
Years	1992-2006		2006-2010	2010- 2015	2015-present	
Priorities	ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM, CRIME		RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM, TERRORISM, BUSINESS	RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM, TERRORISM	RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM, POLICE CORRUPTION, CRIME	

One can differentiate between three distinct political settlements after the Soviet breakup, when the KBR became a border area of the emerging Russian nation-state.

The *first* political settlement, negotiated by the first president of the KBR, Valery Kokov, was based on redistributing the political rents received from the centre between local (here: republic-level) elite representatives. Those elites can be defined in part by the status they inherited from the system of Soviet ethnic federalism and in another part by their newly acquired potential to enforce their interests by violent means.

Soviet ethnic federalism shaped elite formation by attributing official status to titular nations (here: Karbadins and Balkars), the politically significant Russian minority and by organising socio-political institutions defining elite status within each group. In addition, informal practices, notably the ethnic quota-based balancing system in government positions as well as other public institutions (e.g. education, division of market space), played a crucial role in defining elite status, organising access to political positions and, subsequently, the distributive power over rents and other resources. The latter point – whereby violent entrepreneurs might lay claim to a seat at the 'distributional table' – refers to the emerging post-Soviet criminal and business elites that evolved into the oligarchy of the late 1990s.

This political settlement had a head of the republic operating as a political broker between centre and local elites, with access to substantial autonomous domestic power. During the 1990s, the relationship between Moscow and Nalchik was more similar to indirect rule than to the dependent clientelism or principle-agent relations that followed. *Dotations* (transfers from the central budget to the budget of the republic) were used as 'proper' rents: they were demanded, and not requested, in return for containing and controlling violence, risk and local disorder for the weak central state. V. Kokov, as an able broker, managed to fend off attempts by the centre to establish institutional oversight over the republic (most importantly via the introduction of a plenipotentiary presidential envoy). He protected his direct line to the political centre that provided rents and status, as well as the interests of the local elites that were part of the balanced and inclusive political settlement which he negotiated.

This arrangement eventually disintegrated, for various reasons. Crucially, the central state under a new proactive government (Putin's first term) started to take increasing central state power more seriously, and chipped away vital domains of local elite autonomy. The most important point here was taking central control of the forces of the Ministry of Interior, thereby cutting off vital access to the direct enforcement capacities of the republic-level elites. At the same time, there emerged new forces with access to violence, but with no seat at the 'table', i.e. not integrated into the established 'ruling coalition' – in the form of autonomous Islamist groups, organisations and movements. The political settlement under V. Kokov was effective in negotiating the interests of ethno-national elites as well as more or less criminal entrepreneurs, but failed to adapt to challenges posed by the new religious groups and movements. There were simply no established procedures for providing them with seats at the table. The shortcomings in meeting the changing challenges to political stability of V. Kokov's re-distributional settlement culminated in the massive multi-day armed attack on Nalchik in 2005 by local Islamists from the ranks of a formerly non-violent Jamaat.

It had taken almost five years (in fact, the first five years of Putin's rule) for the initial political settlement to fall apart and be replaced by a *second* type of settlement in the KBR. This new arrangement, associated with the rule of Arsen Kanokov over the KBR, appeared similar on the formal institutional outside but operated within very different parameters. Balancing the interests of a broad coalition of elites was replaced by a narrower approach to nepotism within the republic, and by dependent political clientelism in relations to Moscow. What had been a diverse elite coalition was effectively reduced to internal clan control over resources with the extended kin-group of the Moscow-appointed head in charge of the republic. For status and influence, this new business oligarchy depended more on Moscow than on domestic support and legitimacy. Key material resources to sustain the system kept coming from the centre, but rents were increasingly drawn from corruption-prone resources in the form of large-scale infrastructure development programmes.

While the Kanokov political settlement facilitated certain lasting economic innovations – in particular, technical improvements in large-scale commercial horticulture – it never really stabilised to become a sustainable

arrangement. The narrow approach of staffing key distributive political positions with relatives and clients, and the unidimensional dependence on political protection and support from Moscow, alienated the old (ethno-political) elites and was even less suited to accommodate the new leaders of highly mobilised religion-defined groups and movements into the political order. The lack of legitimacy among local elites frustrated Moscow's hopes that a loyal and dependent businessman-patriot would be able to stabilise the KBR, keeping active and mobilised parts of the population engaged. The opposite occurred: ethnic divisions re-opened and new divisions along an Islamist-secular divide violently escalated, as the state was increasingly associated with an amoral, corrupt and venal exercise of power. In the end, this settlement ceased to be a working solution for anyone. Moscow decided to pull the plug and try something different.

The *third* political settlement, roughly coinciding with the time the law enforcement officer Yuri Kokov was put in charge of the KBR, was marked by the central state penetrating much more directly the affairs of the KBR, taking over political control of the means of violence and distribution of key resources, as indicated earlier. Y. Kokov was an outsider in the KBR, and local elites were further marginalised. Access to state security forces became the decisive resource for accessing political positions of distributional consequence. Pressured by an administration dominated by federally controlled security structures, the former local business elite now had to provide for the new elite, becoming an additional resource for rent-provision.

Regarding the armed Islamist opposition, this security-focussed and more centralised political arrangement provided a new and more complex approach than the previous arrangements. It combined often lethal and extra-judiciary violent oppression with the option of leaving for jihad elsewhere, while offering pathways back into peaceful ways of life for those willing to re-integrate and cooperate with the security structures. At the same time, the strategy of the new Islamist establishment changed from violent confrontation to investment in economic entrepreneurship, seizing on opportunities that opened up while the old business elites were politically targeted, hit by sanctions and counter-sanctions in the wake of the Russian involvement in Ukraine, and hence, declining.[79] Islamic business networks could offer alternative structures of trust, information and sanctions, vital for local and international trade, while the security-focussed state became increasingly distant and detached from the needs of the local business community.

It was this absence of the state as a service provider (aside from improving the security situation for the state-affiliated part of the population) and the escalating dissatisfaction of the traditional elites that weakened this specific, Moscow-induced political settlement to the point where the head of the KBR, Yuri Kokov, found himself unceremoniously forced to resign. He was replaced by the civilian leader Kazbek Kokov, the son of the first post-Soviet president of the KBR with strong local ties.

Conclusion and Outlook

From Moscow's perspective, governing the North Caucasus has been a complex and dynamic challenge in the thirty years since the breakup of the Soviet Union. Both latent and overt violent challenges to the political status quo have been frequent and of varying intensity. From the perspective of local political elites, Moscow is both a vital source for the protection of the status quo as well as a provider of key material resources. At the same time Moscow may intervene locally in ways that threaten or change the established political settlements, causing discontent among elite factions that are losing out due to such interferences. Hence, the federal centre is a force whose needs must be satisfied and who must be contained at the same time. One key aspect in this relationship between centre and republics in the North Caucasus is convincing Moscow that the local leaders are able to provide political stability and contain violent challenges in the form of separatist claims, religious insurgencies or simply unrest.

The situation in the Kabardino-Balkar Republic never deteriorated into a full-scale internal war – as was the case in Chechnya – and the periods of protracted insurgency and counter-insurgency violence were less intense there than in Dagestan. The KBR did, however, face similar challenges as did the eastern neighbours – ethno-national separatism, violent organised crime, an Islamist insurgency, and (at times extra-constitutional) brutal

countermeasures by the security forces that damaged the legitimacy and trust in the state.

In this article, we have tried to show the various political settlements that emerged between the federal centre and the local political elites in KBR. We found three types of settlements that vary in terms of elite figuration and key resources used for rent distribution. All of them responded to potentially or manifestly violent challenges to the status quo—post-Soviet ethno-separatism and organised crime in the 1990s, a growing Islamist insurgency in the following decade and the risk of terrorist attacks in the wake of the 2014 Sochi Olympic Games. The centre successfully tightened vertical elite control but at the cost of reducing the inclusiveness of political settlements within the republic, and hence alienating established as well as some newly emerging elites.

Elite alienation caused new problems, adding to the challenge of legitimacy of state rule in the republic. The latest change of leadership in the KBR can be seen as an attempt to mitigate the problems arising from this growing disconnection between the detached political elites and the local population. However, recent developments regarding planned constitutional changes, apparently weakening local self-government even further, would seem to counteract this trend. Once again, only time will tell.

Note: All figures and tables in this article are originals produced by the authors.

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Bibliography: Terrorism in, or Originating from, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and Russia (Part 2)

Compiled and selected by Judith Tinnes

Abstract

This bibliography contains journal articles, book chapters, books, edited volumes, theses, grey literature, bibliographies and other resources on terrorism in the Caucasus region, Central Asia, and Russia as well as terrorist activity originating from these regions abroad. It focuses on recent (non-Russian language) publications (up to March 2020) and should not be considered as exhaustive. The literature has been retrieved by manually browsing more than 200 core and periphery sources in the field of Terrorism Studies. Additionally, full-text and reference retrieval systems have been employed to broaden the search.

Keywords: bibliography, resources, literature, Caucasus; Central Asia; Russia, terrorism

NB: All websites were last visited on 21.03.2020. This subject bibliography is the second part of a two-part bibliography (Part 1 was published in Issue 9[1]) of Perspectives on Terrorism). To avoid duplication, this compilation only includes literature not contained in Part 1. However, meta-resources, such as bibliographies, were included in both parts. - See also Note for the Reader at the end of this literature list.

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Note for the Reader

Whenever retrievable, URLs for freely available versions of subscription-based publications have been provided. Thanks to the Open Access movement, self-archiving of publications in institutional repositories, on professional networking sites, or author homepages for free public use (so-called Green Open Access) has become more common. Please note, that the content of Green Open Access documents is not necessarily identical to the officially published versions (e.g., in case of preprints); it might therefore not have passed through all editorial stages publishers employ to ensure quality control (peer review, copy and layout editing etc.). In some cases, articles may only be cited after obtaining permission by the author(s).

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Counterterrorism Bookshelf: 51 Books on Terrorism & Counter-Terrorism-Related Subjects

Reviewed by Joshua Sinai

So many books are published on terrorism- and counterterrorism-related subjects that it is difficult to catch up on a large backlog of monographs and edited volumes received for review. In order to deal with this backlog, this column consists of mostly capsule Tables of Contents of 51 books, including also several books published less recently but still meriting attention. Some of the new books will be reviewed in future issues of 'Perspectives on Terrorism' as stand-alone reviews. The books are listed topically.

General

Paul Ashley, *The Complete Encyclopedia of Terrorist Organisations* (Havertown, PA: Casemate, 2011), 300 pp., US $ 16.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-6120-0118-0.

A comprehensive guide to current and past terrorist organizations and their activities, with the groups arranged in numerical and alphabetical order. The appendices list organizations banned by the United Kingdom and those banned by the United States.

Erica Chenoweth and Pauline Moore, *The Politics of Terror* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2018), 528 pp., US $ 62.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-1997-9566-6.

Table of Contents: Preface; Part I: Analyzing Terrorism; Introducing Terrorism; The Strategic Approach; The Organizational Approach; The Psychological Approach; The Ideological Approach; Structural Approaches; Critical Approaches; Part II: Explaining Terrorist Behavior; Terrorist Target Selection; Suicide Terrorism; Terrorism and Social Services; State Sponsorship of Terror; Gender and Terrorism; Part III: Countering Terrorism; Counterterrorism Instruments; The Politics of Counterterrorism; How Terror Groups End; Glossary.

Colin P. Clarke (Ed.), *Terrorism: The Essential Reference Guide* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2018), 347 pp., US $ 94.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-4408-5628-0.

Following the editor's introductory overview, the reference handbook comprises A–Z entries on terrorist organizations, major terrorist attacks, and significant terrorist leaders. It concludes with a selection of primary source documents, a chronology of significant terrorist incidents, and a bibliography.

D. Darell Dones, *Terrorist Recruitment of U.S. Gangs: Global Criminal Alliances and Biological Weapons* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2020), 166 pp., US $ 90.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-4985-9441-7.

Table of Contents: Introduction; Study Issues; History of Gangs, Terrorism, and WMD; Methods and Data; Results; Future Developments; Conclusion; Appendix A: Modified Delphi Methods Definition; Appendix B: Modified Delphi Survey Questions; Appendix C: Modified Delphi 105 Questionnaire; Appendix D: Face-to-Face Interview Questions; Appendix E: Hypotheses used to Develop Modified Delphi Survey and Face-to-Face Interview Questions; Appendix F: Modified Delphi Mapping Chart; Bibliography.

Florian Hartleb, *Lone Wolves: The New Terrorism of Right-Wing Single Actors* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2020), 186 pp., US $ 29.99 [Softcover], ISBN 978-3-0303-6152-5.

Table of Contents: Right-Wing Terrorism. Still an Underestimated Threat (The Current Threat of Terrorist Attacks by Single Actors; Emotionally Charged - The Question of "Why"; Right-Wing Terrorism Is Neglected in Public Perception; The National Socialist Underground (NSU) as an Early Warning; Why We Must Stand up to Lone Wolves; The Current Situation: Errors of Judgement by Politicians and Officials; Hypotheses; What Is a "Lone

Wolf "? (A Phantom?; Forms of Terror; A Look Back in History; Assassination Attempts on Representatives of Democratic States; Theory and Origins of Lone Wolf Terrorism; Profile and Nature of the Lone Wolf; Political Motives and Personal Ideology of Grievances; Killing Sprees, Running Amok and Terror—The Difference Is Important; Lone Wolves and Islamic Terrorists; "Battle Mode" as a Principle); Offenders and Terrorism. Ideology, Motives, Objectives (Isolated and Disappointed: Frank Steffen, Thomas Mair, Luca Traini; Failures, Megalomaniacs and Dangerous: Franz Fuchs, John Ausonius, Anders Breivik, Brenton Tarrant; Uprooted and Radical: Peter Mangs, Pavlo Lapshyn, David Sonboly; Young and Fascist: David Copeland, Pekko Auvinen and Anton Petterson; Significance of Observing Individuals for the Overall
Picture); Radicalisation in Our Midst and in Virtual Rooms and Spaces (Terror as a Portrayal of Developments in Society; Internationalisation of the Radical Right; Virtual Worlds; Boom Time for Conspiracy Theories; Reich Citizens [Reichsbürger]—Merely "Paper Terrorists?"; Identitarians and the Christchurch Terrorist; Consequences); Counter-Strategies and Prevention (Rethinking Required by Security Officials; Virtual Platform as a Source of Danger; Searching for a Trail in the Social Environment); Conclusions.

Darren Hudson, Arie Perliger, Riley Post, and Zachary Hohman, *The Irrational Terrorist & Other Persistent Terrorism Myths* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2020), 165 pp., US $ 75.00 [Hardcover], US $ 25.00 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-6263-7850-6.

Table of Contents: What We Think We Know About Terrorism; Myth: I Know Terrorism When I See It; Myth: Religious Fundamentalism Is the Only Source of Terrorism; Myth: Terrorists Are Poor and Uneducated; Myth: Terrorists Are Crazy; Myth: Terrorist Organizations Are Unsophisticated; The Influence of the Media and Governments; Four Critical Myths of Counterterrorism; Putting It All in Perspective.

Hanna Samir Kassab, *Terrorist Recruitment and the International System* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2020), 174 pp., US $ 90.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-7936-1514-5.

Table of Contents: Introduction; Section I: Levels of Analysis; Terrorism and the Individual; Weak/Fragile States and Terrorism; International Systems and Terrorism; Section II: Recommendations; The Status Quo: The War on Terror; Homeland Security: Immediate Responses and Recommendations; Long-Term Analysis; Conclusions; Works Cited.

Isaac Kfir and John Coyne (Eds.), *Counterterrorism Yearbook 2020* (Canberra ACT, Australia: Counter-Terrorism Policy Centre, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, March 2020), 116 pp., (No cost information) [E-Book and Softcover]. URL: https://s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/ad-aspi/2020-03/ASPI%20 Counterterrorism%20YB2020.pdf?XVWQRHtHM0Yjs4OTfES3sLpkmCl36X4e.

Table of Contents: Preface; Introduction; Counterterrorism, Countering Violent Extremism; Social Cohesion: Federal Policies Across the Spectrum; Contemporary Right-Wing Extremism in Australia; Manifestos, Memetic Mobilisation and the Chan Boards in the Christchurch Shooting; Prison Radicalisation and Deradicalisation in Australia; Youth and Violent Extremism; Australia's Pyrrhic Policing Victories Over Terrorism; Prospects and Challenges of Prosecuting Foreign Fighters in Australia; Salafist-Jihadism in Southeast Asia; After Marawi: Lessons, Root Causes, The Future; Syria; Yemen and Salafi-Jihadism; Mental Health and Terrorism; Not the Cyberterrorism You Thought; Terrorism as Communicative and Miscommunicative Violence; Understanding Women and Islamic State Terrorism: Where Are We Now?; Terrorism and Innovation; Forecasting Active Threat Attacks: A New Category of Risk to Anticipate; Acronyms and Abbreviations.

Vera Mironova, *From Freedom Fighters to Jihadists: Human Resources of Non-State Armed Groups* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2019), 344 pp., US $ 110.00 [Hardcover], US $ 39.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-1909-3976-2.

Table of Contents: Preface; Introduction; Armed Groups HR Manual; Leaving, Staying, Fighting; Finding a Group That Fits; Making a Rebel Group Work; Help From Abroad; How to Handle Foreign Fighters; Handling

Ultra-Radicals; Managing Ideology; Funding the Fight; Rebel CEOs and Managers; Policy Implications; Other Conflicts and Ideologies.

Thomas R. Mockaitis, *Violent Extremists: Understanding the Domestic and International Terrorist Threat* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger/An Imprint of ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2019), 180 pp., US $ 75.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-4408-5948-9.

Table of Contents: Preface; Introduction; Understanding Extremism; Radical Islamism and the Rise of Al-Qaeda; ISIS; Domestic Extremism; Lone Wolves on the Prowl; Nightmare Scenarios; Conclusions and Responses.

Risk Advisory, *Strategic Outlook 2020: A Global Security Forecast* (London: England, UK: The Security Advisory Group Ltd., 2020), 126 pp., (No cost information) [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-9996-3042-3. URL: https://www.riskadvisory.com/campaigns/strategic-outlook-2020/.

"Strategic Outlook 2020" is London-based Risk Advisory's sixth annual forecast for security and intelligence. The joint assessments by the firm's regional and thematic intelligence analysts provide more than 300 forecasts on the degree of threats relevant to security, crisis and geopolitical risk across global regions. Following an introductory overview, the chapter on methodology explains the forecasting ranges utilized in the approach, including probabilistic scale, threat and risk levels, trend indicators, regional keynote, infographics, forecasts, outliers, and monitoring points. This methodology is applied to the chapters that cover global regions. It also includes chapters on environmental terrorism and civil aviation. Also included is a colorful 2020 security and safety risks map, with countries rated along risk levels (ranging from negligible, low, moderate, substantial, to severe).

Gary M. Shiffman, *The Economics of Violence: How Behavioral Science Can Transform Our View of Crime, Insurgency, and Terrorism* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 242 pp., US $ 89.99 [Hardcover], US $ 24.99 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-1074-6575-6.

Table of Contents: Introduction; Violence; The Human Condition (Human Behavior; Modeling Human Behavior; Where Violence Comes From; Kinship and Radicalization; Firms; Bandits and Governors); Organized Crime (Pablo Escobar; The Cosa Nostra; Escobar's Competitive Market; Escobar and his Medellin Firm; The Logic of Criminal Violence); Insurgency (Joseph Kony; Crime = Insurgency; Kony's Lord's Resistance Army and Child Soldiers; Crime = Insurgency = Terrorism; Thought Experiment: Revisiting the Cosa Nostra Narrative); Terrorism (The Damage of Definition; Osama bin Laden; Religion, Terrorism, and Economics; Thought Experiment: Voodoo Donuts; Bin Laden's Bonds and the Firm within the Firm: Al Qaeda; Bin Laden's Safe Haven and the Market for Loyalty); The Rise of the Islamic State in Al Qaeda's Market (The Emergence of ISIS in the Market; How We Perceive ISIS; Abu Bakr al Baghdadi; Camp Bucca and Radicalization; Al Baghdadi's Rise and the Emergence of ISIS; The Religious Narrative, Focalit, and Recruitment; IS Implications for Policy); Conclusions and Prescriptions (Where Violence Comes From; How to Improve Security); Final Thoughts.

Kimberly L. Thachuk and Rollie Lal (Eds.), *Terrorist Criminal Enterprises: Financing Terrorism Through Organized Crime* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger/An Imprint of ABC-CLIO, 2018), 212 pp., US $ 75.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-4408-6067-6.

Table of Contents: Foreword; Terminology and Abbreviations; An Introduction to Terrorist Criminal Enterprises; The Gangsterization of Terrorism; Da'esh in Iraq and Syria: Terrorist Criminal Enterprises; Da'esh and Al-Qaida in Europe; The Industry of Terror: Criminal Financing of the North Caucasus Insurgency; The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC): A Transnational Criminal-Insurgent-Terror Phenomenon; Boko Haram and al-Shabaab: Adaptable Criminal Financing Amid Expanded Terror; The Haqqani Network: Gangster Jihadists; The Evolution of the PKK into a Criminal Enterprise; Hezbollah: The Continuing Expansion of a Robust Criminal Enterprise; Cashing in on Fragility: Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb and Crime in the

Sahelo-Saharan Region; The Abu Sayyaf Group: A Destructive Duality; Policy Options: Combating Terrorist Criminal Enterprises.

Counterterrorism

Blackstone's Counter-Terrorism Handbook [Fourth Edition] (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2019), 544 pp., US $ 47.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-1988-0448-2.

Table of Contents: Part 1: An Introduction to Terrorism; Terrorist Threat to the UK; Counter-Terrorism Strategy; Counter-Terrorism Practice; Part 2: Counter-Terrorism Legislation; Terrorism – Definition and Introduction; Terrorism Offences; General Offences; International Issues; Stop and Search and Other Powers; Arrest and Detention; Terrorist Investigations; Cordons; Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures and Other Orders; Counter-Terrorism Border Control; Hostile State Activity Ports Powers; Offences at Ports; Proscribed Organisations; Terrorist Financing; Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear; Notification Requirements; Appendix 1: Senior Officers' Powers and Duties.

Will Irwin, ***Support to Resistance: Strategic Purpose and Effectiveness*** [JSOU Report 19-2] (MacDill Air Force Base, FL: Joint Special Operations University Press, April 2019), 245 pp., (No cost information) [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-9417-1537-6.

Table of Contents: From the Dean; Foreword; Introduction; Support to Resistance as a Tool of Disruption; Support to Resistance as a Tool of Coercion; Support to Resistance to Enable Regime Change; Conclusion; Appendix; Acronyms.

Will Irwin, ***How Civil Resistance Works (And Why It Matters to SOF)*** [JSOU Report 19-4] (MacDill Air Force Base, FL: Joint Special Operations University Press, September 2019), 105 pp., (No cost information) [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-9417-1542-0.

Table of Contents: Foreword; Introduction; Causes and Inception; Approaches and Methods; The State: Prevention and Oppression; External Support to Civil Resistance; Current Conditions and Prospects; What it Means for SOF; Conclusion; Acronyms.

Joint Special Operations University, ***Special Operations Research Topics 2020*** (MacDill Air Force Base, FL: Joint Special Operations University Press, June 2019), 45 pp., (No cost information) [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-9417-1539-0.

Table of Contents: Foreword; Introduction; Five Special Operations Priorities; Priority Topics; Compete and Win for the Nation; Preserve and Grow Readiness; Innovate for Future Threats; Advance Partnerships; Strengthen Our Force and Family; Appendix: Acronym List.

Ned B. Marsh, ***Tickling the Dragon's Tail: The Destabilizing Effects of an Irregular Warfare Critical Mass*** [JSOU Report 19-3] (MacDill Air Force Base, FL: Joint Special Operations University Press, September 2019), 69 pp., (No cost information) [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-9417-1541-3.

Table of Contents: Foreword; Introduction; Development of an IW Core Mass; IW Critical Mass; Recommendations; Conclusion; Acronyms.

Carole A. O'Leary and Nicholas A. Heras, ***Political Strategy in Unconventional Warfare: Opportunities Lost in Eastern Syria and Preparing for the Future*** [JSOU Report 19-1] (MacDill Air Force Base, FL: Joint Special Operations University Press, March 2019), 141 pp., (No cost information) [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-9417-1538-3.

Table of Contents: From the Dean; Introduction; Part I: A Sociocultural Appreciation of Eastern Syria; Part II: Arab Politics and External Influences; Kurdish Politics and External Influences; Part 3: Looking Ahead – The New Pressure Cooker; Possible Futures; Conclusion; Acronyms.

Psychology of Terrorism

Susan C. Cloninger and Steven A. Leibo (Eds.), with the assistance of Mohammad Amjad, *Understanding Angry Groups: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Their Motivations and Effects on Society* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger/An Imprint of ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2017), 434 pp., US $ 73.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-4408-3350-2.

Table of Contents: Introduction; Section I: From the Social Sciences and the Humanities; The Role of Individual Differences in Inciting Anger and Social Action; Attributions to Prejudice: Collective Anger and Action; Moving Toward Extremism: Group Polarization in the Laboratory and the World; The Anger of Women Warriors; Warrior Rage: The Many Dimensions of Anger in Our Military and Veterans; "A Bad Counselor": Anger in the Bible; Anger and Conflict in Cinema; Anger, Connection, and Activism: Coming of Age in *Harry Potter*; Section II: From a Historical to Geopolitical Context; Revolution, Emigration, and Anger: Angry Exile Groups in the Aftermath of the French and Russian Revolutions; The Extreme Right and Neo-Nazism in the Post-War United States; Fighting "The System": *The Turner Diaries*; The Institutionalization of Political Anger: The Case of the Affordable Care Act; Anger …by Cubans in Florida since 1959; Nixon, Latin America, and the Politics of Anger; The Greeks Know Anger: The Causes and Consequences of the Continuing Crisis of Capitalism in the Eurozone South; Environmental Conflict, Collective Anger, and Resolution Strategies in the Niger Delta Conflict; Anger and Politics in Iran; Burning for Independence: Anger, Violence, and the Evolution of the Tibetan Independence Movement; The Role of Anger in the Radicalization of Terrorists; Conclusion.

Alice LoCicero, *Why "Good Kids" Turn Into Deadly Terrorists: Deconstructing the Accused Boston Marathon Bombers and Others Like Them* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger/An Imprint of ABC-CLIO LLC, 2014), 178 pp., US $ 41.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-4408-3188-1.

Table of Contents: Foreword by Michael Lamport Commons; Introduction; Shock and Disbelief: Friends and Neighbors React to the News About the Accused Bombers; Timeline; Nice Young Men and Women Can Create Carnage and Chaos Around the World; Many Factors Contribute to the Decision to Resort to Violence; Who Benefits When Kids Are Recruited to Violence?; Prevention of Future Terrorism; Reviewing the Seville Statement: Humans Are Not Naturally Violent; Some Helpful Books and Articles.

Tiffany R. Masson (Ed.), *Inside Forensic Psychology* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger/An Imprint of ABC-CLIO, 2016), 380 pp., US $ 73.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-4408-0303-1.

Table of Contents: Preface; Part I: Cases, Approaches, and Practices; Ethical Considerations in Cross-Cultural Assessment; Competency to Stand Trial; Conducting Criminal Responsibility Evaluations; Capital Case Sentencing Evaluations; Conducting Mental Health Diversion Evaluations; Sex Offender Risk Assessment; Civil Commitment: Examining Mental Illness, Differential Diagnosis, Attributes of Risk, and Application to Case Law; The Psychological Assessment of Personal Injury Claims; Part II: Cases, Approaches, and Practices with Specialized Populations; Psychological Evaluations to Determine Competency to Parent; Termination of Parental Rights; Child Custody and Parenting Plan Evaluations; Overview of the Juvenile Justice System and Best Practices; Sentencing Evaluations in Juvenile Court; Juvenile Competence to Stand Trial; Juvenile Miranda Waiver: A naïve Teenager, Neurodevelopmental Disorder, and the "Interested Adult"; Transfer Evaluations in Juvenile Justice; Introduction to School-Based Risk Assessments; Appendix.

Mark A. Staal and Sally C. Harvey (Eds.), *Operational Psychology: A New Field to Support National Security and Public Safety* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger/An Imprint of ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2019), 380 pp., US $ 73.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-4408-6620-3.

Table of Contents: Foreword; Part 1: Foundations of Operational Psychology; History, Goals, and Applications of Operational Psychology; Cross-Cultural Issues in Operational Psychology; the Ethics of Operational Psychology; Part II: Human Performance Optimization and Consultation; Personnel Suitability Screening; Operational Psychology Consultation within Special Operations Units; Consultation to Leadership and Organizational Development; Operational Psychology Consultation to Aviation; Part III: Consultation to Operations; Operational Psychology in Insider Threat; Investigative Psychology: Applying Psychological Science to Military Criminal Investigations; Foundations of Indirect Assessment; Behavioral Science Consultation to Military Interrogations; Part IV: Operations Research; The High-Value Detainee Interrogation Group (HIG): Inception, Evolution, and Outcomes; A Scientific Perspective on the 2006 U.S. Army Field Manual 2-23.3; Psychology of Terrorism and Self-Radicalization; Part V: Future Directions in Operational Psychological Applications; Operational Psychology: A Bridge from the Post to Future Applications.

Kees van den Bos, *Why People Radicalize: How Unfairness Judgments are used to fuel Radical Beliefs, Extremist Behaviors, and Terrorism* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2018), 392 pp., US $ 75.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0-1906-5734-5.

Table of Contents: Preface; Part One: Introducing Radicalization; A Framework to Understand Radicalization; Instances of Radicalization, Extremism, and Terrorism; A Review of Radicalization Theories; Part Two: Key Antecedents of Radicalization; Perceiving Unfairness; Uncertainty and Other Threats; Self-Interest and Insufficient Corrections; Part Three: Core Components of Radicalization; Rigidity of Thoughts; Hot-Cognitive Defense of Worldviews; Violent Rejection of Law and Democratic Principles; Part Four: Conclusions and Reflections; Conclusions and Limitations: What Do We Learn?; Practical Implications: We Can We Do?; Discussion: What is Next?

Global Jihad, Al Qaida, ISIS

Stephane J. Baele, Katharine A. Boyd, and Travis G. Coan (Eds.), *ISIS Propaganda: A Full Spectrum Extremist Message* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2020), 304 pp., US $ 110.00 [Hardcover], US $ 45.00 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-1909-3246-6.

Table of Contents: Introduction – Full-spectrum Propaganda: Appraising the "IS Moment" in Propaganda History; The Strategic Logic of Islamic State's Full-Spectrum Propaganda: Coherence, Comprehensiveness, and Multidimensionality; Situating Islamic State's Message: A Social and Theological Genealogy; The Matrix of Islamic State's Propaganda: Magazines; Shock and Inspire: Islamic State's Propaganda Videos; Islamic State's Propaganda and Social Media: Dissemination, Support, and Resilience; From Music to Books, from Pictures to Numbers: The Forgotten yet Crucial Components of Islamic State's Propaganda; Countering Islamic State's Propaganda: Challenges and Opportunities; Terrorist Propaganda after the Islamic State: Learning, Emulation, and Imitation; Afterword: The Uniqueness of Islamic State. Appendix 1: List of Anashid produced by the Islamic State; Appendix 2: Example of a Provincial News Report from Al-Bayan Radio.

Daniel Byman, *Road Warriors: Foreign Fighters in the Armies of Jihad* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2019), 392 pp., US $ 29.95 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0-1906-4651-6.

Table of Contents: I. Why Do Foreign Fighters Matter?; II. The Prophet: Abdullah Azzam and the Anti-Soviet Jihad in Afghanistan; III. Barbaros: The Red Beard; IV. The Trainer: Ali Mohammad and Afghanistan in the 1990s; V. Chechnya and the Sword of Islam; VI. Hubris and Nemesis: The Chechen Foreign Fighters Overreach; VII. The Slaughterer: Abu-Musab al-Zarqawi and Ascendant Iraqi Jihad (2003-2006); VIII. The Dreamer: Abu

Ayyub al-Masri and the Self-Destruction of the Iraqi Jihad; IX. The Gadfly: Omar Hammami; X. John the Beatle and the Syrian Civil War; XI. The Facilitator: Amer Azizi and the Rise of Jihadist Terrorism in Europe; XII. America Squares Off against the Legion; XIII. How to Stop Foreign Fighters.

Peter Jan Honigsberg, *A Place Outside the Law: Forgotten Voices from Guantanamo* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2019), 296 pp., US $ 28.95 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0-8070-2698-4.

Table of Contents: Author's Note; Introduction: When the Planes Hit; PART I: A Place Outside the Law; Coming to America; Right Side of Things; China's Shadow; Lawlessness; Undermining Heroes; Faux Law; Warrior Journalist; Part II: Expected and Unexpected Consequences: Changes and Transformations; Facebook Friends; Convert; Flight (1); Flight (2); From Pride to Shame; Paying Respect; For His Son; Guantanamo Saved My Life; Timmy; Half-Full; Being Up Close to Torture; The Empty Chair; Part III: Human Rights Forsaken; Blindsided; The Pain Inside; Alone; We Tortured Him; Castaways; Drones; Part IV: Looking Forward and Looking Back; Rising Above; Kuwaiti Escorts; Afterword; Appendices: Timeline: US Naval Base; Guantanamo Bay, Cuba; Reflections and Evolution of Witness of Guantanamo.

Haroro J. Ingram, Craig Whiteside, and Charlie Winter, *The ISIS Reader: Milestone Texts of the Islamic State Movement* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2020), 288 pp., US $ 44.95 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0-1975-0143-6.

Table of Contents: Introduction; Section I - Join the Caravan; The First Speeches (1994); Zarqawi's Strategy (2004); Section II - Baqiya!; The Islamic State of Iraq's Formative Documents (2007); Advice to the Leaders of the Islamic State (2007); The Fallujah Memorandum (2009); Section III - The Caliphate; The Declaration of the Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham (2013); The Caliphate Rises (2014); Global War (2014); Women in the Islamic State (2015); Propaganda Doctrine (2016); Section IV – Purification; The Structure of the Caliphate (2016); Defining Success & Failure (2016); Patience (2018); A Global Insurgency (2019); The Guerrilla Caliph (2019); Conclusion.

Benedict Wilkinson, *Scripts of Terror: The Stories Terrorists Tell Themselves* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press/Hurst, 2020), 320 pp., US $ 45.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0-1975-2189-2.

Table of Contents: Preface: The Dilemma of Terror; The Seduction of Terror; Egypt: Terror and Repression; Saudi Arabia: Terror and Legitimacy; Yemen: Coalitions of Terror; Conclusion: Scripts of Terror; A Note on Definitions.

Africa

Peter Baxter, *Mau Mau: The Kenyan Emergency 1952-60* [Revised Edition] (Havertown, PA: Helion and Company, 2019), 56 pp. US $ 29.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-9128-6687-8.

Table of Contents: Glossary and Abbreviations; Introduction; In Support of the Civil Authority; The Land Freedom Armies; Paradise Lost; The Blunt Instrument; The Long Goodbye; Special Forces; the Hunt for Dedan Kimathi; Rehabilitation; Legacy of Mau Mau; Appendix: British Units Involved in the Kenyan Emergency. Lavishly illustrated with 56 photographs, color profiles of military equipment, and maps.

Tom Cooper, Albert Grandolini, and Adrien Fontanellaz, *Showdown in Western Sahara, Volume 2 – Air Warfare Over the Last African Colony, 1975 – 1991* (Havertown, PA: Helion and Company, 2020), 88 pp. US $ 29.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-9128-6629-8.

Table of Contents: Abbreviations; Introduction and Acknowledgments; The Spanish Sahara; Moroccan Armed

Forces of the mid-1970s; All Against All; A Brutal School; the Polisario's Pyrrhic Victory; Stalemate. Lavishly illustrated with more than 100 photographs, a dozen maps and 18 color profiles of military equipment.

Rahmane Idrissa, *Historical Dictionary of Niger* [Fifth Edition] (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2020), 642 pp., US $ 140.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-5381-2014-9.

This reference volume begins with a preface, a listing of acronyms and abbreviations, a map, a chronology, and an introductory overview. The A-Z dictionary section contains a more than 700 cross-referenced entries on significant personalities from Niger, politics, economy, foreign relations, religion, and culture. The volume includes an extensive bibliography.

William A. Taylor, *Contemporary Security Issues in Africa* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger/An Imprint of ABC-CLIO, 2019), 241 pp., US $ 75.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-4408-5190-2.

Table of Contents: Contemporary Security Issues in Africa; Weak and Fragile States; Ethno-Religious Conflict and Civil Wars; Natural Resources and Environmental Security; Violent Extremism and Terrorism; Piracy and Maritime Security; Food Security and Extreme Poverty; International Responses; Linkages and Future Prospects; Chronology.

The Middle East

Tom Cooper and Sergio Santana, *Lebanese Civil War – Volume 1: Palestinian Diaspora, Syrian and Israeli Interventions, 1970-1978* (Havertown, PA: Helion and Company, 2019), 88 pp. US $ 29.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-9116-2820-0.

Table of Contents: Introduction and Acknowledgments; The Sham; Build-Up of the PLO; Military Build-Up; Disintegration of Lebanon; Syria, Nothing but Trouble; A New Set of Cards; Interviews. Lavishly illustrated with more than 120 photographs, color profiles of military equipment, and maps.

Israel

Martin Blecher, *Israeli Settlements: Land Politics Beyond the Geneva Convention* (Lanham, MD: Hamilton Books, 2018), 220 pp., US $ 36.99 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-7618-7064-7.

Table of Contents: Introduction; Method; Historical Background to Israeli Land Policy (The Zionist Dimension; From Market Transactions to State Expropriation; The Israeli Supreme Court; Different Laws; The Difference in Legal Status Over the Land; Failure to Protect Arab Peasantry and the Entering of Zionist Settlers; The Categorization of Present Land Ownership in the West Bank); The Land Laws: Different Takings and Approaches (Israel Accused of Reinterpreted Article 43 of The Hague Regulations of 1907; Private and Public Disputes Intertwine?; The Stance of B'Tselem; The Stance of Peace Now; The Stance of the Edmund Levy Report); Article 43 of The Hague Regulations (Prolonged Occupation Creates Unbridgeable Conflicts; Respect the Laws in Force versus Flexibility When Conditions Change; More Politics, Less Law); Israel, the Fourth Geneva Convention, and The Hague (Regulations: Different Takings and Approaches; The Most Common Arguments for and against the Illegality of Settlements; The Geneva Convention Applies, but not Justiciable in Israeli Court System?); A Review of US Presidents' Policy vis-à-vis Israeli Settlements (Lyndon B. Johnson; Richard Nixon; Gerald Ford; Jimmy Carter; Ronald Reagan; George H. W. Bush; Bill Clinton; George W. Bush; Barack Obama; Donald Trump); A Paradigm Shift?; Two Different Destinies, Two Separate Paths (The Unlikely Peace Activist; The Former Settler that Suddenly started Working against Everything he was taught to believe in; Conclusions; Glossary.

John Ehrenberg and Yoav Peled (Eds.), *Israel and Palestine: Alternative Perspectives on Statehood* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2016), 396 pp., US $ 94.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-4422-4507-5.

Table of Contents: Introduction: The Picture; Part 1: Overviews; Facing the Music: Israel, Palestine, and the Politics of Partisan Delusions; Making Sense of the Nakba: Ari Shavit, Baruch and Zionist Claims to Territory; Israel and the Closing of the American Jewish Mind; The Root Causes of Enduring Conflict: Can Israel and Palestine Co-Exist?; Reclaiming Human Rights: An Alternative Approach to the Israeli/Palestinian Conflict; Part II: Two States; Not Exactly Apartheid: The Dynamics of Settler Colonialism and Military Occupation; The One-State Delusion; To What Extent Reconciliation? An Analysis of the Geneva Accord between Israelis and Palestinians; One Country, Two States: Planning the Alternative Spatial Relations between Palestine and Israel from Back to Back to Face to Face; Part III: The One-State Alternative; The Way Forward in the Middle East; The One-State Solution and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Palestinian Challenges and Prospects; A One-State Solution? From a "Struggle Unto Death" to "Master-Slave" Dialectics; Past and Present Perfect of Israel's One-State Solution; Toward a Shared Vision of Israel and Israel/Palestine; Between One and Two: Apartheid or Confederation for Israel/Palestine? Transcript of Address to the Conference "One State between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River – A Dream or Reality?"; Beyond Traditional Sovereignty Theory in Conflict Resolution: Lessons from Israel/Palestine; Conclusion: Out of the Darkness.

Lev Luis Grinberg, *Mo(ve)ments of Resistance: Politics, Economy and Society in Israel/Palestine 1931-2013* (Brighton, MA: Academic Studies Press, 2014), 345 pp., US $ 109.00 [Hardcover], US $ 34.00 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-6181-1378-8.

Table of Contents: Abbreviations; Hebrew Terms; Prologue. A Personal Account: Reflections on the Design of a Progressive Research Program; Introduction: Political Spaces and Mo(ve)ments of Resistance; 1931 - An Arab-Jewish Civil Society Struggle against the British Colonial Government; 1959 -Wadi Salib Riots: Culminating a Decade of Ethnic Discrimination; 1960-1965 - The Action Committees' Revolt: Full Employment Crisis, Failed Democratization and State Expansion; 1971 - The Black Panthers Movement: Ethnic Tensions and "Left-Right" Tribal Polarization; 1980 - Forum/13 Powerful Workers: Hyperinflation and the Challenge to State Autonomy; 1987-1993 - The Intifada: The Palestinian Resistance Mo(ve)ment; 2011 - The J14 Mo(ve)ment: The Emergence of the Occupy Repertoire of Resistance; Conclusion: On the Dynamics of Political Spaces - Time, Movement, Actors and Masses; List of Sources.

Lis Harris, *In Jerusalem: Three Generations of an Israeli Family and a Palestinian Family* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2019), 272 pp., US $ 27.95 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0-8070-2968-8.

Table of Contents: The Families; Prologue; Introduction; The Greek Colony; French Hill; Part I**:** Travels with Fuad; Shelter; Chapter 4; In and Out of War; Part II: Travels with Fuad; A New Country; Occupied; Part III: Travels with Fuad; Perspectives; The 1001 Nights of Wasif Jawhariyyeh and the Mingling of Christians, Jews, and Muslims; Part IV: Travels with Fuad; The Ezrahis; Aunt Rasmea; Yotam's Vision; Soldiers; Varieties of Religious Experience; Part V: Travels with Fuad.

Gadi Hitman, *Israel and Its Arab Minority, 1948-2008: Dialogue, Protest, Violence* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2016), 268 pp., US $ 95.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-4985-3972-2.

Table of Contents: Introduction; Part I: The Theoretical Framework; Historical Theories of State-Minority Relationships; Characteristics of the Arab Minority in Israel and the Political Frameworks; Part II: From the Establishment of the State (1948) until Land Day (1976); 1948-1956: The Imposition of a Military Government and the Kfar Kassem Massacre; The Nazareth Events (1958), the End of the Military Government, and the June 1967 War; The 1970s: The Yom Kippur War and "Land Day"; "Land Day" in 1982 and the First Lebanese War: The Sabra and Shatilla Massacre; Part III: From the First Intifada to the "Cast Lead" Campaign (2008); 1987-2000: Worsening Relations between the Establishment and the Arab Minority; The "Defensive Shield"

Campaign (2002) and the "Cast Lead" Operation (2008); Conclusion.

Doron Matza, *Israeli Policy Toward Its Arab-Palestinian Citizens: Conceptual Roots, Formative Perspectives, and Methods of Implementation* [In Hebrew] (New Rochelle, NY: Israel Academic Press, 2019), 463 pp., US $ 25.00 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-8858-8153-3.

This is a comprehensive examination of Israel's policy since its establishment in 1948 towards its Arab minority, which, the author points out, comprise 16 percent of the country's population if the Arab Palestinians in East Jerusalem are not included. The book consists of three parts: Part I: The roots of Israel's policies in terms of strategy and operational arrangements; Part II: Israeli policies in action in terms of tools and programs; and Part III: Israeli policies within the background of the crises of the March 1976 Land Day, the start of the Palestinian intifada in October 2000, and the controversy over the "Vision Documents" of 2006-2007 in which prominent Arab leaders outlined their aspirations and plans as citizens of Israel. In the concluding chapter, the author synthesizes the book's findings. These include the observation that despite the tensions inherent in relations between the country's Jewish majority and Arab minority, Israeli policy has succeeded in safeguarding socio-political stability, although certain conflicts persist, such as over land, housing, and socio-economic advancement. There is also the continuing need to resolve the Israeli – Palestinian conflict, which affects the fate of Israel's Arab minority, as well. Published in Hebrew, this important study deserves to be published in English so that a wider readership can benefit from the author's insights. The author is lecturer at the program on Middle East studies at Achva Academic College, Israel.

Meirav Mishali-Ram, *Conflict Change and Persistence: The India-Pakistan and Arab-Israeli Conflicts Compared* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2019), 246 pp., US $ 95.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-4985-4950-9.

Table of Contents: Two Intractable Conflicts; Enduring Rivalries Revisited; Setting the Stage; Warness; Actors and Agendas; Conflict Change and Prospects of Peace.

Ilan Peleg (Ed.), *Victimhood Discourse in Contemporary Israel* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2019), 222 pp., US $ 90.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-4985-5350-6.

Table of Contents: Hegemonic Victimhood Discourse in Contemporary Israel and Beyond: A Conceptual Introduction and an Analytical Framework; Zionism and Victimization: From Rejection to Acceptance; Israeli Prime Ministers: Transforming the Victimhood Discourse; Embracing Victimhood: How 1967 Transformed Holocaust Memory and Jewish Identity in Israel and the United States; Historical Victimhood and the Israeli Collective Consciousness: Incongruous Legacies; The Politics of Victimhood in the Palestinian National Identity; Transforming Victimhood: From Competitive Victimhood to Sharing Superordinate Identity; Moving Beyond the Victim-Victimizer Dichotomy: Reflecting on Palestinian-Israeli Dialogue.

Maoz Rosenthal, *Israel's Governability Crisis: Quandaries, Unstructured Institutions, and Adaptation* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2017), 162 pp., US $ 84.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-4985-1341-8.

Table of Contents: List of Figures; List of Tables; Preface: An Alternative Model of Governability: The Heresthetic of Preferences and Veto Points; Israel's Political Institutions and Policy Dimensions - a Prelude for a Crisis; Israel's Governability Crisis: Sources and Consequences; Cabinet Compositions and Duration: Israeli Governments 1949-2015; Agenda Gate-Keeping and the Power of the Chair: Policy Making in Israeli Knesset Committees; Bureaucratic Agenda Control and Political Leadership in Policy Design; Policy Implementation: The Reprisal of Political Agenda Control; So where is the Problem? The Drorian High-Order Tasks.

Rami Zeedan, *Arab-Palestinian Society in the Israeli Political System: Integration versus Segregation in the Twenty-First Century* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2019), 166 pp., US $ 90.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-4985-5314-8.

Table of Contents: List of Tables; List of Figures; Abbreviations; Introduction; Arabs in the Three Israeli Branches of Power; Arab Identity and Political Trends in Israel; Crisis in Arab-Palestinian Municipalities in Israel; Conclusions; Bibliography; Appendixes.

United States

Barry J. Balleck, *Modern American Extremism and Domestic Terrorism: An Encyclopedia of Extremists and Extremist Groups* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2018), 435 pp., US $ 94.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-4408-5274-9.

Table of Contents: An A-Z encyclopedic overview of the individuals, groups, organizations, and events that illustrate extremist activities in post-World War II America.

Sam Faddis, *The CIA in Kurdistan: The Untold Story of the Northern Front in the Iraq War* (Havertown, PA: Casemate, 2020), 240 pp., US $ 34.95 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-6120-0834-9.

Table of Contents: Introduction; 9/11; The Plan; The Team; Getting In; Why Are You Here?; Khurmal; Missing the Shot; The Return; Base Life, Drills, and Plans for Escape; Recruiting Sources – Getting Tough; Hunting WMD; The Boneyard – Chem and Radiation; Management/Leadership and Base Life; The Turns and Tension – Border Closed – Supply Runs; Fishing for Assassins; One Team, One Fight; Propaganda, Transmitters, and Country Music; Chalabi and the Pentagon – Badr Corps, Marines, Supply from Space; Mutiny and Training Kurdish Teams; 10th Group, Deploying Kurdish Teams, Air War and Hunting Fedayeen; The 173rd Takes Harir, Losing the Surrender; Kirkuk and Mosul; Coming Home; Lessons.

Michael C. LeMay, *Homeland Security: A Reference Handbook* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2018), 376 pp., US $ 60.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-4408-5409-5.

Table of Contents: Preface; Part I: Background and History; Introduction; Conclusion; References; Part II: Problems, Controversies, and Solutions; Introduction; Conclusion; References; Part III: Perspectives; Part IV: Profiles; Introduction; Organizations; People; Part V: Data and Documents; Introduction; Structure of the Department of Homeland Security; Disasters; Hate Crimes; Terrorism; Immigration; Border Control; Part VI: Resources; Part VII: Chronology; Glossary.

Andrew Milburn, *When the Tempest Gathers: From Mogadishu to the Fight Against ISIS, A Marine Special Operations Commander at War* (Havertown, PA: Pen & Sword Military, 2020), 336 pp., US $ 32.95 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-5267-5055-6.

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1984-1985; This Will Blow a Hole in You; Put Out the Fucking Cigarette; *Realit*ätsverlust; Nonconsensual Entry; Put Your Goddam Hands Up Where We Can See Them; Aftermath.

James Stejskal, *Special Forces Berlin: Clandestine Cold War Operations of the US Army's Elite, 1956-1990* (Havertown, PA: Casemate, 2020), 336 pp., US $ 22.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-6120-0843-1.

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Darren A. Wheeler, *Congress and the War on Terror: Making Policy for the Long War* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger/An Imprint of ABC-CLIO, 2018), 218 pp., US $ 60.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-4408-5708-9.

Table of Contents: Preface; Introduction; Electronic Surveillance and National Security; Interrogation and Torture; Military Tribunals; Drones and Targeted Killing; Making Policy for the Long War.

About the Reviewer: **Dr. Joshua Sinai** *is the Book Reviews Editor of 'Perspectives on Terrorism'. He can be reached at:* Joshua.sinai@comcast.net.

Antje Gansewig & Maria Walsh. *Biographiebasierte Maßnahmen in der schulischen Präventions- und Bildungsarbeit. Eine empirische Betrachtung des Einsatzes von Aussteigern aus extremistischen Szenen unter besonderer Berücksichtigung ehemaliger Rechtsextremer* [*Biography-based measures within preventive and educational work in schools. An empirical observation of the utilization of 'formers' from extremist milieus, with a special focus on former right-wing extremists*]. Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlag, 2020 (1st ed.; 473 pp.) EUR 98,00. ISBN: 978-3-8487-6317-7. DOI: 10.5771/9783748904175

Reviewed by Nina Käsehage

Autobiographical narratives by former practitioners have for a long time been used in schools as a teaching device in various fields, e.g. to prevent young people from becoming addicted to illicit drugs. This German study examines the involvement of former right-wing extremists to prevent radicalization among school-going teenagers. It is widely assumed that the credibility of biographical narratives underpinned by real life experiences offers an effective method of knowledge transfer to young minds. However, this assumption has rarely been tested. This book offers to fill this gap.

The general objective of the study was to gain, on the one hand, an overview of all German (school) prevention activities with, or from, 'formers' and, on the other hand, a critical assessment of those activities. It is based on a broad range of postal surveys, media analyses and interviews with de-radicalisation workers from NGO's as well as teachers and pupils to evaluate the impact of interventions by 'formers'. It includes an in-depth examination and evaluation of a primary prevention school measure by a former right-wing extremist and its effects on the audience in the classroom.

Based on a survey of the existing literature on the subject, the authors deplore the absence of critical analyses regarding the use of formers. Following their own evaluation, they became rather skeptical about the wisdom of involving former right-wing extremists in high school prevention work. They found that some of the 'formers' had not left extremist groups voluntarily but were kicked out while others offered their services for classroom interventions mainly for financial reasons and came to regard it as a new career path (the length of time many 'formers' engaged in such 'prevention work' could last up to twelve years!) .

The authors identified a variety of both intended and unintended effects on the pupils, ranging from individual sympathy for 'formers' due to their authenticity to the danger of a trivialization of violence. One of the commendable aspects of this study is the focus on the needs of the pupils themselves. Less commendable is the absence of references for articles and reports in the sections based on media analyses. The subtitle of the book is slightly misleading as other extremists than those on the political right are hardly discussed. Given the almost exclusive focus on right-wing 'formers', it is not clear whether and to which extent the study's findings can also be applied to the role of former Islamist extremists in school-based prevention work. Yet despite such minor shortcomings, this is a solid analysis.

Antje Gansewig is a sociologist and Maria Walsh a psychologist by training. Both were, at the time of writing this book, associated with the German National Center for Crime Prevention in Bonn.

About the Reviewer: **Dr. Nina Käsehage** *is a researcher and lecturer at the University of Rostock's department for religion and intercultural theology.*

Bibliography: Women and Terrorism

Compiled and selected by Judith Tinnes

[Bibliographic Series of Perspectives on Terrorism – BSPT-JT-2020-4]

Abstract

This bibliography contains journal articles, book chapters, books, edited volumes, theses, grey literature, bibliographies and other resources on women and terrorism. It covers women's involvement in terrorism (as perpetrators / supporters) and counter-terrorism, as well as their victimization. The bibliography focuses on recent publications (up to March 2020) and should not be considered as exhaustive. The literature has been retrieved by manually browsing more than 200 core and periphery sources in the field of Terrorism Studies. Additionally, full-text and reference retrieval systems have been employed to broaden the search.

Keywords: bibliography, resources, literature, women, females, gender, role, terrorism

NB: All websites were last visited on 02.04.2020. - See also Note for the Reader at the end of this literature list.

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Note

Whenever retrievable, URLs for freely available versions of subscription-based publications have been provided. Thanks to the Open Access movement, self-archiving of publications in institutional repositories, on professional networking sites, or author homepages for free public use (so-called Green Open Access) has become more common. Please note, that the content of Green Open Access documents is not necessarily identical to the officially published versions (e.g., in case of preprints); it might therefore not have passed through all editorial stages publishers employ to ensure quality control (peer review, copy and layout editing etc.). In some cases, articles may only be cited after obtaining permission by the author(s).

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Recent Online Resources for the Analysis of Terrorism and Related Subjects

Compiled and selected by Berto Jongman

Most of the clickable items below became available online between February and April 2020. They are categorised under the following headings (excluding sub-headings here):

1. Non-Religious Terrorism

2. Religious Terrorism

3. Terrorist Strategies and Tactics

4. Conflict, Crime and Political Violence other than Terrorism

5. Counter-Terrorism - General

6. Counter-Terrorism Strategies, Tactics and Operations

7. State Repression, Civil War and Clandestine and Open Warfare Abroad

8. Prevention, Preparedness, and Resilience Studies

9. Intelligence Operations

10. Cyber Operations

11. Risk and Threat Assessments, Forecasts and Analytical Studies

12. Also Worth Reading/Listening/Watching

N.B.: 'Recent Online Resources for the Analysis of Terrorism and Related Subjects' is a regular feature in 'Perspectives on Terrorism'. For past listings, see 'Archive' at www.terrorismanalysts.com and at https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/perspectives-on-terrorism

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Conference Monitor/Calendar of Events (April – Nov. 2020)

Compiled by Reinier Bergema

As COVID-19 has been spreading rapidly across the world, both national governments and international organizations have been urging people to remain at home and avoid public places wherever. As a consequence, a significant number of events that were initially scheduled in the upcoming months have been cancelled. Conversely, there has been a significant rise in online events. As such, this month's conference calendar has given special (yet not exclusive) attention to events taking place online. For listed events taking place offline, it is recommended to check their current status, as this calendar was prepared in early April. The scope of this month's calendar remains unchanged, as it includes academic and (inter-) governmental conferences, professional expert meetings, civil society events, and educational programs. The listed events are organized by a wide variety of governmental and non-governmental institutions, including several key (counter) terrorism research centres and institutes.

We encourage readers to contact the journal's Assistant Editor for Conference Monitoring, Reinier Bergema, and provide him with relevant information – both on- and offline – preferably in the same format as the items listed below. Reinier can be reached at <r.bergema@icct.nl> or via Twitter: @reinierbergema.

April 2020

Foreign Fighters and the Conflict in Ukraine
Counter-Extremism Project & the Brandenburg Institute for Society and Security
1 April, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @FightExtremism

Presidential Leadership in Times of Crisis: Foreign Policy, National Security, and Domestic Challenges
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
7 April, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @CarnegieEndow

Bellingcat Online Investigation Training Workshop
Bellingcat
8 April, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @Bellingcat

Mapping the Pandemic: How Coronavirus is Affecting the Middle East
Royal United Services Institute (RUSI)
9 April, *onine*
Website: visit | Twitter: @RUSI_org

Book Talk: "Your Sons Are at Your Service: Tunisia's Missionaries of Jihad"
The Washington Institute for Near East Policy
22 April, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: *@WashInstitute*

Unpacking the Covid-19 Crisis in Africa
Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS)
13 April, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @csis

The Closed Circle: Joining and Leaving the Muslim Brotherhood in the West
Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI)
14 April, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @fpri

CARR Far Right De-Radicalisation Webinars: Christian Piccolini (Free Radicals Project)
Centre for Analysis of the Radical Right (CARR)
14 April, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @C4ARR

Federalism in a Fragmented State: Rethinking Decentralization in Yemen
Chatham House
15 April, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @ChathamHouse

Bellingcat Online Investigation Training Workshop
Bellingcat
16 April, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @Bellingcat

Opposition Media in Authoritarian Arab Countries
Belfer Center
16 April, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @BelferCenter

Right Wing Extremism in Europe: The Case of Germany
International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague
20 April, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @ICCT_TheHague

The Changing Nature of Cyber Attacks
Royal United Services Institute (RUSI)
20 April, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @RUSI_org

CVE in Practice: An Ecosystemic Approach to Countering Violent Extremism in the United States
National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START)
20 April, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @START_UMD

CTF Online Symposium No. 1: The Lebanese Hezbollah Financing Threat in Europe
Royal United Services Institute (RUSI)
21 April, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @RUSI_org

How do Modern Militant Groups Form, Survive, and Thrive?
Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies
23 April, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @FSIStanford

Counter Terrorism in Crowded Spaces: What Are We Doing Now and for the Future?
Cranfield Defence and Security
23 April, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @CranfieldUni

ADS Security Briefing (Webinar): Shaun Hipgrave, Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism (OSCT)
ADS Group
27 April, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @adsgroupuk

Russia's "Private" Military Companies: The Example of the Wagner Group
Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS)
28 April, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @csis

CSIS Debate Series: Do Human Right Protections Advance Counter-Terrorism Objectives?
Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS)
28 April, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @csis

Trends in Global Arms Transfers and Military Spending
Stimson Center & the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)
28 April, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @StimsonCenter; @SIPRIorg

Breakfast Briefing: UK Security Policy After Brexit
Royal United Services Institute (RUSI)
29 April, London, United Kingdom
Website: visit | Twitter: @RUSI_org

What's Next for US-Iraq Relations?
Atlantic Council
29 April, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @AtlanticCoucil

Roots of Elite Cooperation: Coalition Building under Authoritarianism and Democratic Transitions in the MENA
Belfer Center
30 April, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @BelferCenter

May 2020

Tech Sector & Law Enforcement Engagement in Countering TUI
Tech Against Terrorism, Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism
6 May, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @techvsterrorism

The Caravan: Abdallah Azzam and the Rise of Global Jihad
Center on National Security
6 May, New York City (NY), United States
Website: visit | Twitter: @CNSFordhamLaw

Dr. Joanna Cook, Women and Violent Extremism: Considering Contemporary Challenges
Policing Institute for the Eastern Region
6 May, Chelmsford, United Kingdom
Website: visit | Twitter: *@AngliaRuskin*

IV. International In-Person and Virtual Conference on Terrorism and Political Violence: Terrorism Studies '20
Eastern Mediterranean Academic Research Center (DAKAM)
8 May, Istanbul, Turkey/*Online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @DAKAMTR

Breakfast Briefing – The Future of UK-EU Intelligence Sharing in a Post-Brexit World
Royal United Services Institute (RUSI)
11 May, London, United Kingdom
Website: visit | Twitter: @RUSI_org

2020 Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development
Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)
11-13 May, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @sipriorg

Glen Grant's Annual Lecture on the Current Situation and Latest Developments in Ukraine
Henry Jackson Society
12 May, London, United Kingdom
Website: visit | Twitter: @HJS_org

CARR Far Right De-Radicalisation Webinars: Pete Simi (Chapman University)
Centre for Analysis of the Radical Right (CARR)
12 May, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @C4ARR

Gathering and Admissibility of Evidence in Counter-Terrorism: Challenges and Best Practices
European Judicial Training Network (EJTN)
18-19 May, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: *n/a*

The Wagner Group: Untangling the Purpose behind a Russian Power Tool
Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies
26 May, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @FSIStanford

Lebanon's October Revolution: Roots and Trends of a Nationwide Protest
Belfer Center
28 May, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @BelferCenter

5th Postgraduate Conference: Current Themes in the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence
Society for Terrorism Research
29 May, Leicester, United Kingdom
Website: visit | Twitter: @SocTerRes

June 2020

Book Talk: "Weaponized Words: The Strategic Role of Persuasion in Violent Radicalization and Counter-Radicalization"
National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START)
8 June, College Park (MD), United States
Website: visit | Twitter: @START_UMD

Middle East 2020: Driving Factors and Their Impact
Henry Jackson Society
9 June, London, United Kingdom
Website: visit | Twitter: @HJS_org

RUSI Land Warfare Conference 2020: Imposing Thresholds in a Global Digitized Contest
Royal United Services Institute (RUSI)
11 June, London, United Kingdom
Website: visit | Twitter: @RUSI_org

CARR Far Right De-Radicalisation Webinars: Nigel Bromage (EXIT UK)
Centre for Analysis of the Radical Right (CARR)
16 June, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @C4ARR

Breakfast Briefing: The New British Army Operating Concept
Royal United Services Institute (RUSI)
17 June, London, United Kingdom
Website: visit | Twitter: @RUSI_org

HaGirush – The Nazi-Arab Expulsion
Henry Jackson Society
29 June, London, United Kingdom
Website: visit | Twitter: @HJS_org

July 2020

The Executive Certificate Program in Counter-Terrorism Studies
International Institute for Counter-Terrorism
12-31 July, Herzliya, Israel
Website: visit | Twitter: @ICT_org

CARR Far Right De-Radicalisation Webinars: Ryan Scrivens (Michigan State University)
Centre for Analysis of the Radical Right (CARR)
16 July, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @C4ARR

Terror From the Right: Forms, Function and Future
Handa Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence
21 July, London, United Kingdom
Website: visit | Twitter: @CSTPV

August – November 2020

Advanced Summer Programme: Preventing, Detecting, and Responding to Violent Extremism
Leiden University Centre for Professional Learning & International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague
17-21 August, The Hague, The Netherlands
Website: visit | Twitter: @UniLeidenCPL; @ICCT_TheHague

Advanced Summer Program: Terrorism, Countering Terrorism, and the Rule of Law
International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague & Asser Institute
24-28 August, The Hague, The Netherlands
Website: visit | Twitter: @ICCT_TheHague; @TMCAsser

GLOBSEC 2020 Bratislava Forum
GLOBSEC
28-30 August, Bratislava, Slovakia
Website: visit | Twitter: @GLOBSEC

ICT's 20th Annual Summit: International Conference on Counter-Terrorism
International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT)
7-10 September, Herzliya, Israel
Website: visit | Twitter: @ICT_org

The World Counter Terror Congress 2020
Counter Terror Expo
8-10 September, London, United Kingdom
Website: visit | Twitter: @CTX_Event

IVth 'Silent Leges Inter Arma?' Conference
International Society for Military Law and the Law of War
15-18 September, Bruges, Belgium
Website: visit | Twitter: @ISMLLW

Counter Terrorism / Attack the Network [Course]
NATO Centre of Expertise Defence Against Terrorism (COEDAT)
21-25 September, Ankara Turkey
Website: visit | Twitter: *n/a*

Countering CBRN At Home and Beyond
Royal United Services Institute (RUSI)
23 September, London, United Kingdom
Website: visit | Twitter: @RUSI_org

Disarmament and Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction
Asser Institute
28 September-2 October, The Hague, The Netherlands
Website: visit | Twitter: @TMCAsser

German Prevention Congress
Deutscher Praeventionstag
28-29 September, Kassel, Germany
Website: visit | Twitter: @praeventionstag

Women in Terrorism and Counterterrorism
NATO Centre of Expertise Defence Against Terrorism (COEDAT)
September, Ankara Turkey
Website: visit | Twitter: *n/a*

14th Annual International Conference: Unanswered Questions and Under-Researched Topics in Terrorism Research
Society for Terrorism Research
September, London, United Kingdom
Website: visit | Twitter: @SocTerRes

Annual CT Discipline Conference
NATO Centre of Expertise Defence Against Terrorism (COEDAT)
12 October, Ankara Turkey
Website: visit | Twitter: *n/a*

Terrorism Experts Conference (TEC)
NATO Centre of Expertise Defence Against Terrorism (COEDAT)
13-14 October, Ankara Turkey
Website: visit | Twitter: *n/a*

COE-DAT CT Lessons Learned (Critical Infrastructure Protection)
NATO Centre of Expertise Defence Against Terrorism (COEDAT)
15-16 October, Ankara Turkey
Website: visit | Twitter: *n/a*

Terrorism and Media [Course]
NATO Centre of Expertise Defence Against Terrorism (COEDAT)
19-23 October, Ankara Turkey
Website: visit | Twitter: *n/a*

Defence Against Terrorism Seminar
NATO Centre of Expertise Defence Against Terrorism (COEDAT)
3-4 November, Ankara Turkey
Website: visit | Twitter: *n/a*

Border Security, Refugees, and CT
NATO Centre of Expertise Defence Against Terrorism (COEDAT)
16-20 November, Ankara Turkey
Website: visit | Twitter: *n/a*

2020 Stockholm Security Conference
Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)
18 November, Stockholm, Sweden
Website: visit | Twitter: @sipriorg

About the Compiler: **Reinier Bergema** *is a Research Fellow and Project Manager at the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague (ICCT) and an Assistant Editor at Perspectives on Terrorism. His research interests include, inter alia, Dutch (jihadist) foreign fighters and terrorist threat levels across the EU.*

Message from the Chairman of the Jury for the TRI Thesis Award

Contrary to previous years, the number of Ph.D. thesis submissions for the annual TRI Award for "Best Thesis on Terrorism and/or Counter-Terrorism submitted and/or defended in 2019" has been disappointingly low. The jury of the award - consisting of Prof. Clark McCauley, Prof. Edwin Bakker, Prof. James Forest and the undersigned - therefore decided not to select three finalists, and from among these, a winner, for the 2019 competition round. However, those who submitted their thesis before the 31 March 2020 deadline will automatically be considered in the competition for the 2021 thesis award.

Against the background of a low number of submissions, the jury also decided to turn the annual award into a bi-annual award. It will therefore review all thesis submissions received before 31 March 2021 for the "Bi-Annual Award for Best Thesis on Terrorism and/or Counter-Terrorism submitted and/or defended during the calendar years 2019-2020."

Submissions can be made by thesis supervisors as well as by thesis authors. For details, see Announcement in the February 2020 issue of Perspectives on Terrorism at URL:

https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/binaries/content/assets/customsites/perspectives-on-terrorism/2020/issue-1/thesis-award.pdf

Prof. em. Alex P. Schmid
Chairman TRI Thesis Awards

Announcement from the Editors of *Perspectives on Terrorism*

Due to the growing volume of submissions the Editors of *Perspectives on Terrorism* decided to enlarge the **Editorial Team** with three additional Associate Editors. We are pleased to welcome the following:

Leah Farrall who has worked in government, academia and private enterprise in a range of analytical and management roles across intelligence, counterterrorism and security sectors. Dr Farrall has held academic roles at the Australian National University, the University of Sydney, the University of Queensland, and Massey University. She was a pioneer in researching terrorist use of the internet and is a specialist in militant salafist insurgencies and terrorism. She is the author of *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan* and her work has been published in *Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign Policy*, *The Atlantic* and *Perspectives on Terrorism*. Dr Farrall formerly served as a Senior Counterterrorism Intelligence Analyst with the Australian Federal Police (AFP). More recently she served as Manager, Financial Crime Intelligence Unit at Australia's largest bank.

Jeffrey Kaplan who is a Professor of Liberal Studies at Habib University in Karachi, Pakistan. He has published 20 monographs and anthologies, including *Apocalypse, Revolution and Terrorism: From the Sicari to the American Revolt against the Modern World* (2019) and the first volume in the Routledge Distinguished Scholar series *Radical Religion and Violence: Theory and Case Studies* (2015). In addition, he has published more than 70 refereed articles and anthology chapters on religion and violence, terrorism and the Cold War. He is Book Review Editor for *Terrorism & Political Violence.*

Craig Whiteside who is an Associate Professor for the US Naval War College resident professional military education program at the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey California. He teaches national security affairs and US security decision making, and counterterrorism for the Middlebury Institute for International Studies. His PhD dissertation at Washington State investigated the political worldview of the Islamic State of Iraq, and he is a co-author of The ISIS Reader: Milestone Texts of the Islamic State Movement (Hurst/Oxford, 2020). A West Point graduate, he has practiced counterterrorism and counterinsurgency as the deputy of a paratroop battalion fighting against the Islamic State of Iraq and many others in the belts south of Baghdad during the pivotal period of 2006-7. He is a fellow at the ICCT-The Hague and George Washington Program on Extremism looking primarily at the evolution of terror and propaganda tactics in militant group doctrine and strategy.

We have also increased the number of members on our **Editor Board** (who form our regular pool of peer reviewers), and welcome as new members the following:

Max Abrahms: Associate Professor of political science and public policy at Northeastern University. Abrahms has published on terrorism and counterterrorism in *Perspectives on Terrorism, International Security, International Organization, International Studies Quarterly, Comparative Political Studies, Journal of International Business Policy, Foreign Affairs, Foreign Policy, the New York Times, Washington Post, The Atlantic,* and other scholarly, policy, and popular outlets. His book with Oxford University Press, *Rules for Rebels: The Science of Victory in Militant History*, enables readers to predict the behavior of militant groups from their target selection to their social media strategy, even their odds of political success. Abrahms has held fellowships and other affiliations with the Center for International Security and Cooperation at Stanford, the Empirical Studies of Conflict project at Princeton, the Dickey Center at Dartmouth, the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Center for Cyber and Homeland Security at George Washington, the Dayan Center at Tel Aviv University, the political science department at Johns Hopkins, the Observer Research Foundation in New Delhi, and the Belfer Center at Harvard. Abrahms frequently consults U.S. government agencies on the contemporary terrorism landscape.

Colin P. Clarke: Senior Research Fellow at The Soufan Center where his research focuses on terrorism, political violence, and disinformation. Clarke is also an Assistant Professor teaching in the Institute for Politics and Strategy (IPS) at Carnegie Mellon University. Previously, Clarke spent nearly a decade at the RAND Corporation

where he was a senior political scientist focusing on terrorism, insurgency and criminal networks. He is the author of *Terrorism, Inc.: The Financing of Terrorism, Insurgency, and Irregular Warfare* (2015) and *Terrorism: The Essential Reference Guide* (2018), both published by ABC-CLIO/Praeger Security International. His most recent book, *After the Caliphate: The Islamic State and the Terrorist Diaspora* was published by Polity Press in the summer of 2019. He earned his Ph.D. in international security policy from the University of Pittsburgh. Clarke holds several fellowships, including as an Associate Fellow at the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT)- The Hague, as a non-resident Senior Fellow in the National Security Program at the Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI), and as a Fellow at the Global Network on Extremism and Technology (GNET). He also serves on the Editorial Board of *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*.

Aaron M. Hoffman: Associate Professor Political Science at Simon Fraser University. He is an expert on international security issues, focusing on the scientific study of emotions and mass media in terrorism, counter-terrorism, and foreign policy. He is the author of *Building Trust: Overcoming Suspicion in International Conflict* as well as articles in journals such as *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* (2020; 2013), *Media, War, and Conflict* (2020), *International Interactions* (2018; 2012; 2009), *Political Research Quarterly* (2017; 2013), *Conflict Management and Peace Science* (2016), *Terrorism and Political Violence* (2010), and *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* (2007). He has been invited to present his work in the United States and Europe, served as part of a scholarly advisory group to the U.S. Air Force, and participated in a workshop on Middle East politics run by the Israeli government.

Brian Nussbaum: Assistant Professor in the College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security and Cybersecurity (CEHC) at the University at Albany, where he focuses on cybersecurity, terrorism, homeland security, risk and intelligence analysis, and critical infrastructure protection. Dr. Nussbaum formerly served as senior intelligence analyst with the New York State Office of Counter-Terrorism (OCT), a part of the New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (DHSES). He oversaw both terrorism and cyber threat analysis efforts at New York's designated state fusion center, the New York State Intelligence Center (NYSIC). Dr. Nussbaum served as a subject matter expert on international terrorism and helped to create NYSIC's Cyber Analysis Unit (CAU). Nussbaum received his Ph.D. and MA in Political Science from the University at Albany and BA in Political Science from Binghamton University. His work has appeared in numerous books and journals including Studies in Conflict and Terrorism, Global Crime, the Journal of Cyber Policy, and the International Journal of Intelligence and Counter-Intelligence.

Brian J. Phillips: Senior Lecturer in the Department of Government at the University of Essex. Previously he worked at the Center for Research and Teaching in Economics (CIDE) in Mexico City. He received his PhD in political science in 2012 from the University of Pittsburgh. His research on terrorism, organized crime, and related topics has been published in journals such as the *Journal of Politics, International Studies Quarterly, Journal of Peace Research, Journal of Conflict Resolution, Terrorism and Political Violence, Studies in Conflict and Terrorism, and Perspectives on Terrorism*. He is currently also an Associate Editor at *International Studies Quarterly*.

Ahmet S Yayla: Director of the Center for Homeland Security at DeSales University and an Assistant Professor of Homeland Security. Dr. Yayla is also a member of the faculty at Georgetown University's School of Continuing Studies Program in Master's in Applied Intelligence. Additionally, Dr. Yayla is a Research Fellow at the George Washington University Program on Extremism. A.S. Yayla is a 20-year veteran of the counterterrorism and operations department in the Turkish National Police and served as the chief of counterterrorism in Sanliurfa, Turkey, between 2010 and 2013. He earned his Master's Degree and Ph.D. in the United States. Dr. Yayla's unique position in counterterrorism rests upon his demonstrated mastery of policy, field operations, and academic theory. He is an experienced practitioner in law enforcement and has advised senior government officials around the world during his career in counterterrorism and academia. Dr. Yayla has published both scholarly works and written or co-written numerous articles related to counterterrorism and homeland security.

Since *Perspectives of Terrorism* is an independent scholarly online journal run entirely by volunteers, we salute these newcomers who are willing to give their time, energy and expertise to serve the research community by keeping this free and non-partisan journal alive and well.

Alex P. Schmid & James J.F. Forest, Editors

About *Perspectives on Terrorism*

Perspectives on Terrorism (PoT) is a joint publication of the Terrorism Research Initiative (TRI), headquartered in Vienna, Austria, and the Institute of Security and Global Affairs (ISGA) of Leiden University, Campus The Hague. PoT is published six times per year as a free, independent, scholarly peer-reviewed online journal available at the following URL: **https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/perspectives-on-terrorism**.

PoT has over 8,900 subscribers and seeks to provide a platform for established scholars as well as academics and professionals entering the interdisciplinary fields of Terrorism, Political Violence and Conflict Studies. The editors invite researchers and readers to:

- present their perspectives on the prevention of, and response to, terrorism and related forms of violent conflict;

- submit to the journal accounts of evidence-based, empirical scientific research and analyses on terrorism;

- use the journal as a forum for debate and commentary on issues related to the above.

Perspectives on Terrorism has sometimes been characterised as 'non-traditional' in that it dispenses with some of the rigidities associated with commercial print journals. Topical articles can be published at short notice and reach, through the Internet, a much larger audience than subscription-fee based paper journals. Our online journal also offers contributors a higher degree of flexibility in terms of content, style and length of articles – but without compromising professional scholarly standards. The journal's Research Notes, Special Correspondence, Op-Eds and other content are reviewed by members of the Editorial Team, while its Articles are peer-reviewed by outside academic experts and professionals.

While aiming to be policy-relevant, PoT does not support any partisan policies regarding (counter-) terrorism and waging conflicts. Impartiality, objectivity and accuracy are guiding principles that we require contributors to adhere to. They are responsible for the content of their contributions and retain the copyright of their publication.

The Editorial Team of *Perspectives on Terrorism* consists of:

Prof. em. Alex P. Schmid, Editor-in-Chief	**Dr. Aaron Y. Zelin**, Associate Editor
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Dr. Craig Whiteside, Associate Editor	

Supplemental File

for "**Violence and the Dynamics of Political Settlements in Post-Soviet Kabardino-Balkaria**," by Jan Koehler, Alexey Gunya, Murat Shogenov and Asker Tumov. *Perspectives on Terrorism*, Vol. 14, no. 2 (April 2020).]

Case Studies

Case One: Pushing into Prielbruz

The valley leading up to Mt. Elbrus is an attractive territory for the tourism industry (skiing in particular). It was the subject of numerous federal state development programmes, mainly regarding infrastructure investments.[1] Access to local resources, land in particular, is regulated by local actors, i.e. private organisations and local self-governments.[2] As president, Kanokov attempted to acquire access to local land using the administrative resources of the KBR government as well as informal channels of pressure and influence. Official and informal pressures on the municipality of Elbrus has intensified since 2009, when the outsider Albert Nazranov, a Kabardian underworld authority, was appointed as deputy head of the Elbrus district, which is populated mainly by Balkars.

> Kanokov surrounded himself with loyal people, including those with criminal connections. A clear example is Nazranov […]. Kanokov made him deputy head of the Elbrus district in order to take control of the land in this region. However, Nazranov was soon killed in Moscow.[3]

The problems the Elbrus district has been facing is linked to land-tenure issues on the one hand, and general mistrust of the KBR government by Balkar community representatives. Many perceived Kanokov as a Kabardian nationalist who intended to capture 'native Balkarian land' in order to establish and promote his own personal businesses there. Numerous peaceful protests organized by Balkar social movements were held, mostly in the region but some even reaching Moscow.[4] Nevertheless, the government kept up its pressure on local communities in Elbrus. In February 2011, a lethal attack on a minibus carrying domestic tourists from Moscow to Prielbrusie was used as the pretext for declaring a state of emergency in the whole district.[5] As a result of the counter-terrorist operation, access to the Elbrus region was blocked for almost a year, disrupting the local tourism industry. The official reason for the counter-terrorist operation was the fight against radical Islamists, who had allegedly found shelter in the Elbrus region.[6] Locally, the anti-terrorism operations in mountain resorts were seen as a means for the RBK government to increase economic pressure in order to acquire control over land and re-distribute real estate in this highly profitable region.

> The regional authorities have introduced a counter-insurgency regime, in order to provoke the fall of land prices and force the population of the region to sell the land. But the population did not give in, although it was hard, especially for those who took out loans.[7]

The municipality of Elbrus appears to be a rare case where there has been relatively successful consistent and strategic protection of legal control over local resources from attempts by various official as well as informal external stakeholders to access and control these resources (land, tourism and infrastructure). During the Kanokov era, this was successful because it relied on a well-secured and independent local government, able to work both the legal side and the informal network side of this long-term conflict [8]

The case, however, also shows the limits of the re-distributive narrow clientelism that replaced Kokov's broader, more inclusive elite-balancing approach. Insecurity escalated – because of the rise in authentic and autonomous anti-state radicalisation but, possibly, also because of murky attempts by local state security organisations to benefit from having security incidents under their control.

> When they [the insurgents] began to kill policemen every day, everyone thought about self-defence, because the state could not cope with it, KBR law enforcers could not cope, they were shot. Entrepreneurs turned to self-defence as a necessary measure... The security that Kokov used to provide was

gone, and everyone was thinking about how to protect their business, their families. […] They began to attack tourists in order to discredit the state, maybe even Kanokov himself as an incapable head of the republic. [9]

At the same time, those elite representatives who lost their places at the metaphorical table where political rents were mobilised and distributed turned against the government at republican level. This loss of elite support trickled down to the broader public and resulted in a decrease of trust in the government and, eventually, the legitimacy of the state itself.

Case Two: Pushing a political competitor out (replacing local Rosneft with federal Lukoil)

After Valery Kokov's departure in 2005 several candidates were rumoured to aspire for the position of President, including Valery Kardanov – partisan of the late Kokov, deputy of the KBR Parliament and chief executive of the regional branch of Rosneft, Russia's largest oil producer.[10] Although Kanokov took the position, Kardanov remained a strong player among KBR elites and wielded considerable influence within the republic. The political rivalry between the two politicians intensified in 2008 when Kanokov introduced a new model for elections to the Parliament, following amendments in the national law. Kardanov strongly opposed the President's attempts to replace single-mandate constituencies with party lists.[11]

Shortly thereafter Kardanov allegedly became involved in a political conflict between the public authorities and the Council of Elders of the Balkarian people (SSBN). The SSBN is an ethno-nationalist organisation that focusses its activity on the rehabilitation of the Balkars after the 1944 deportations and on land-tenure issues in Balkar-dominated areas of the KBR.[12] SSBN organized numerous protest rallies across Kabardino-Balkaria, held a hunger strike in Moscow, and secured some backing in the Duma, i.e. the lower house of parliament of the Russian Federation (deputy M. Zalikhanov initiated a petition to Putin, warning about the growing emergency situation in KBR that resulted from the harassment of Balkars by Kabardinians).[13] Kardanov was accused of providing financial support to SSBN in seeking to delegitimise the Kanokov regime.[14]

> [During the Kokov period] there was the Kabardino-Balkarian company Rosneft. It was a branch of the federal company but a tax resident of the republic and a budget-forming company for the republic. [The head of the company, Kardanov] had ambitions to become head of the republic after Kokov. From the very first days, a personal hostility to Kanokov developed.[15]

Kanokov's government responded with determination: in 2008 the KBR authorities signed an agreement with another national-scale oil company, Lukoil, attempting a to oust Rosneft from the local market. In 2009 Kardanov failed to win in the parliamentary elections and lost his mandate as deputy.[16] In 2010, he suffered another defeat when Rosneft suspended its previous plans for building a refinery in Kabardino-Balkaria and constructed the plant in Chechnya instead.[17] After revenues to Rosneft dropped, Kardanov lost his position as chief executive. In 2013, Rosneft claimed to have discovered large-scale embezzlement. Police opened a criminal case into Kardanov's alleged fraud and later accused him of the illegal privatization of the recreational compound in Prielbrusie.[18] Judicial proceedings are ongoing at the time of writing.[19]

> There was a story about the illegal privatization of a company hotel in the Elbrus area, a criminal case was brought and he [Kardanov] went on the run. The company had gone. Rosneft was replaced by a network of petrol stations run by Lukoil, which is not a tax resident of the republic. Rosneft's petrol stations received a powerful competitor that they could not match... Or maybe he [Kanokov] even sacrificed the company in order to deprive Kardanov of that source of income. Until then, Rosneft petrol stations had had a monopoly in this field.[20]

This case shows some of the costs of changing from a (mostly informal) regime of inclusive and balanced rent-distribution to a new, less inclusive regime of inner-circle nepotism and wider clan-based clientelism, relying more on the distribution of rents drawn from federally provided business opportunities than from central

transfer budgets (*dotation*s). Elite representatives from the previous regime tend to be more socially embedded and may have a broad support base among various kinds of politically relevant elites (in this example: both main ethnic groups). Hence, political competition between these representatives may be fierce and prone to escalation, which in turn may hurt the local economy and prove politically disruptive.

Notes

[1] On the Tour Cluster Development Programme, see Kazenin, Konstantin and Irina Starodubrovskaya. 2014: Severnyj Kavkaz: Quo Vadis? (14 June 2014), available at: http://polit.ru/article/2014/01/14/caucasus/#ultr006; 01.01.2019.

[2] For a more detailed account, see Koehler, Jan, Gunya, Alexey and Tenov, Timur, 2017: Governing the Local in the North Caucasus, *Eurasian Geography and Economics,* 58: 5, 502–532.

[3] Timur Tenov (Interviewee). The interview took place in Nalchik on 1 August 2019. Tenov is a prominent political expert in Kabardino-Balkaria who works in local university and is able to provide fascinationg information on political processes in KBR.

[4] V Moskve provodyat golodovku balkartsy [Balkarians go on hunger strike in Moscow] (10 July 2010), *Caucasus Knot,* at: https://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/171420; 21 December 2019.

[5] Жаркий курорт. В Приэльбрусье застрелили туристов из Москвы и взорвали канатную дорогу [Tourists from Moscow shot dead and cableway blown up in Prielbrusie] (21.02.2011), *Lenta.ru*, available at: https://lenta.ru/articles/2011/02/21/elbrus/; 12.02.2020.

[6] ПЦ 'Мемориал': КТО в Приэльбрусье довело жителей до грани выживания [Human rights organization 'Memorial': CTO in Prielbrusie drove locals to the verge of mere subsistence] (21.02.2012), *Caucasus Knot*, available at: https://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/201569/; 12.02.2020.

[7] Interview with representative of the local self-administration of the village of Elbrus, Summer 2013.

[8] See Jan Koehler et al., 2017.

[9] S.M. (Interviewee). The interview took place in Nalchik from 6 to 8 November 2019. The expert wished to remain anonymous; he is a 48-year-old businessman, Kabardian, familiar with business elites and republican top officials, and has chaired or participated in precinct election commissions work during the republican president and parliament campaigns.

[10] Muradin Rakhaev (Interviewee). The interview took place in Nalchik on 12 September 2017. Rakhaev had been a head of village Bezenghi until he was displaced by order of President Kanokov. Rakhaev thereafter led numerous Balkar protests against republican authorities.

[11] Альберт Кажаров: Иные времена, иные речи, – комментарии к выступлению депутата В. Карданова на заседании парламента КБР [Albert Kazharov: Other times, other words – comments to the speech by deputy V. Kardanov] (24.06.2008), sk-news.ru, available at: https://sk-news.ru/news/analitic/7292/; 12.02.2020.

[12] Как борьба за власть превратила славное будущее Кабардино-Балкарии в бесславное настоящее [How a power struggle turned glorious future of Kabardino-Balkaria into inglorious present] (04.01.2019), sk-news, available at: https://sk-news.ru/news/authority/57666/#; 10.02.2020.

[13] Общественные организации Кабардино-Балкарии обвиняют депутата-'единоросса' в провокации [Public organizations in Kabardino-Balkaria shame a 'United Russa' deputy for a provocation] (16.10.2008), *Caucasus knot*, available at: https://www.ka-vkaz-uzel.eu/articles/142928; 12.02.2020.

[14] Как борьба за власть превратила славное будущее Кабардино-Балкарии в бесславное настоящее [How a power struggle turned glorious future of Kabardino-Balkaria into inglorious present] (04.01.2019), sk-news, available at: https://sk-news.ru/news/authority/57666/#; 10.02.2020.

[15] S.M. (Interviewee), Nalchik, 6–8 November 2019.

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