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# Conflict in the Caucasus

## **Abstract**

Given the increased use of terrorist tactics in ethnic conflict and separatist movements over the past decade, an understanding of the causes of both ethnic conflict and separatism have become vital to the protection of innocent lives. This study focuses on ten republics in the Caucasus region, since it is a highly conflictual region in a small area, with both a strong Muslim and Orthodox Christian presence. While some literature suggests that a high Muslim population or the presence of a jihadist movement causes extremely violent forms of separatism, other research indicates that in the Caucasus region, past grievances, a high percentage of the titular minority group, and external support contribute much more to both separatist movements and ethnic conflict.

## CONFLICT IN THE CAUCASUS

Connie Margaritis

**Abstract:** *Given the increased use of terrorist tactics in ethnic conflict and separatist movements over the past decade, an understanding of the causes of both ethnic conflict and separatism have become vital to the protection of innocent lives. This study focuses on ten republics in the Caucasus region, since it is a highly conflictual region in a small area, with both a strong Muslim and Orthodox Christian presence. While some literature suggests that a high Muslim population or the presence of a jihadist movement causes extremely violent forms of separatism, other research indicates that in the Caucasus region, past grievances, a high percentage of the titular minority group, and external support contribute much more to both separatist movements and ethnic conflict.*

### INTRODUCTION

For as long as humans have differentiated themselves into groups, conflict has arisen between them. Some conflicts remain small and relatively easy to resolve through peaceful means; others quickly escalate into bloody clashes, both short and long-term. Separatist movements and ethnic conflicts occur throughout the world, even in developed nations, with thirty-nine major genocides or politicides alone from 1955 to 2002.<sup>1</sup> Although instances of genocide and politicide are applicable to the study of ethnic violence, the primary focus here will be ethnic conflict in forms ranging from separatist feelings to outright terrorism. What causes some ethno-national minority groups to engage in ethnic conflict and separatism, while others maintain relatively peaceful relationships with the state?

The Caucasus region provides an excellent framework for the study of ethnic violence and separatism. Of the ten republics studied that were all part of the Soviet Union until 1991, each has very little economic infrastructure and hardly any natural resources, and within each republic there is at least one ethnic group that identifies itself as something other than Russian or Georgian. Some of these ethnic republics have developed full ethnic wars, while others maintain peaceful relationships. In addition, the Caucasus region has recently become a hotbed of Islamic movements, and its proximity to violent Muslim countries makes it a potentially dangerous region. This potentiality will become realized if steps are not taken to identify causes of ethnic conflict and separatism as, well as rectify grievances, before they escalate further.

#### *Defining Ethnicity and Identity*

For the purposes of this paper, ethnicity will be defined as “a group that defines itself or is defined by others as sharing common descent and culture.”<sup>2</sup> More specifically, ethnic groups can

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<sup>1</sup> Barbara Harff, “Risk Assessment Model 2003: Genocide and Politicide.” Arlington: George Mason University.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005): 3.

be defined by color, appearance, language, religion, or some other indicator of common origin<sup>3</sup> Whether a group sees itself as an ethnicity or the state ascribes certain characteristics to a group of people does not matter, as both cause separation between this group of people and the majority population of the state. Hence, an ethnic minority is, “a group divided along either religious or ethnic lines”.<sup>4</sup> Identity is a sense of common fate between groups of people, group judgments, and the capacity to distinguish between people who are like oneself, and those who are not, in group settings.<sup>5 6</sup> Ethnic identity is an important concept for this study because “identity theories stress that shared identity defines and creates the perception of the interests over which ethnic conflicts are fought”.<sup>7</sup>

#### *Causes of Separatism and Ethnic Conflict*

Although causes of separatism and ethnic conflict differ greatly between regions, the literature generally suggests certain staple causes. Barbara Harff and Robert Gurr divide the theoretical approaches for minority mobilization towards ethnic conflict or separatism into three theories. The first, primordialism, seeks to explain ethnic issues at the most basic level. Primordialists argue that “people’s ethnic and religious identities have deep social, historical, and genetic foundations,” and thus, “modernization is a threat to ethnic solidarities that prompts minorities to mobilize in defense of their culture and way of life”.<sup>8</sup> The primordialist approach requires a certain amount of group self-identification in order to create these divisions between ethnic groups. An alternative to this theory is the instrumentalist approach. Instrumentalists see the main goals of a group as political and economic gains, and view the invocation of cultural identity merely as a means to an end.<sup>9</sup> The third basic theoretical approach is that of the constructivists. This approach “emphasizes the ways in which group identities emerge and change over time.” Ethnic identities may not have been originally strong, but can be shaped and strengthened by outsiders, influenced by intellectuals within the group, or reinforced through conflict with other groups<sup>10</sup>

Daniel Chirot and Clark McCauley categorize the psychological impetus for ethnic conflict into four categories: convenience, revenge, simple fear, and fear of pollution.<sup>11</sup> Convenience consists of the government, or stronger group, recognizing that the easiest or cheapest solution to

<sup>3</sup> Nicholas Sambanis, “Do Ethnic and Nonethnic Civil Wars Have the Same Causes?: A Theoretical and Empirical Inquiry (Part I).” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45 (2001): 261.

<sup>4</sup> Harff, 59.

<sup>5</sup> Marc Howard Ross, “Psychocultural Interpretations and Dramas: Identity Dynamics in Ethnic Conflict.” *Political Psychology* 22 (March, 2001): 157-178.

<sup>6</sup> Daniel Chirot and Clark McCauley, *Why Not Kill Them All? The Logic and Prevention of Mass Political Murder*. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2006).

<sup>7</sup> Ross, 159.

<sup>8</sup> Ted Robert Gurr and Barbara Harff, *Ethnic Conflict in World Politics, Second Edition*. (Colorado: Westview Press, 2004): 96.

<sup>9</sup> Gurr and Harff, 96.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

<sup>11</sup> Chirot and McCauley, 20-39.

their problem with another group is ethnic violence or mass murder. Revenge offers an interesting explanation, because it relies heavily upon the idea of identity. In the revenge theory, groups engage in ethnic conflict, and possibly separatism, with one another due to a perception of disgraced group honor or pride. Ted Gurr describes this phenomenon accurately in the "Minorities at Risk" report, explaining, "When governments use repression to maintain ethnic stratification and to deter organized resistance, they sharpen people's desires for redress and revenge".<sup>12</sup> Fear is another psychological trigger for ethnic conflict. This cause relies on the idea, often propagated by elites, that a certain ethnic group could face extinction or severe opposition if they do not fight against the competing ethnic group (.).<sup>13</sup> Finally, fear of "pollution" often causes some of the harshest forms of ethnic conflict, including genocide. Targeted ethnic groups are accused of "actively disrupting or polluting the state's drive to transcend its limitations" (Levene, 2000, 325). This requires the group instigating ethnic conflict to create an ideology so that they can create a perfect regime, and focus on eliminating the targeted group. .<sup>15</sup>

Once a group feels a need to avenge a grievance, it will weigh the costs and benefits of a separatist movement or conflict. Donald Horowitz separates possible secessionist groups into four categories: backwards groups in backwards regions, advanced groups in backwards regions, advanced groups in advanced regions, and backwards groups in advanced regions .<sup>16</sup> The Caucasus Republics certainly fall under Horowitz's category of "backwards," meaning they are behind the rest of the titular state in socio-economic measures. Both "backwards" groups will often follow separatist movements even if there are high economic costs; however, both are much more likely to attempt a separatist movement if they have outside support. Both also use grievances to truly mobilize an ethno-nationalist movement for separatism .<sup>17</sup>

In addition to the psychological forces behind ethnic conflict and separatism, certain economic and political preconditions greatly augment the possibility of such conflict within a region. The five more or less universally agreed-upon characteristics that yield ethnic conflict are active ethnic discrimination, high ethnic diversity, a recent history of violent political upheaval, few memberships in regional organizations, and a high infant mortality rate .<sup>18</sup> Infant mortality itself is not so much the important characteristic, as much as it identifies low economic levels and poor healthcare. In cases of genocide, autocratic rule, low trade openness, and low religious

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<sup>12</sup> Ted Robert Gurr, *Peoples Versus States: Minorities at Risk in the New Century* (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2000), 105.

<sup>13</sup> Ervin Staub, "Genocide and Mass Killing: Origins, Prevention, Healing, and Reconciliation." *Political Psychology* 21 (June, 2000), 370.

<sup>14</sup> Chirot and McCauley, 32.

<sup>15</sup> Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan, *The Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 58.

<sup>16</sup> Donald Horowitz, "Patterns of Ethnic Separatism," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 23, (April, 1981): 192.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 192.

<sup>18</sup> Jack A. Goldstone, *et al.*, "State Failure Task Force: Phase III Findings." (Arlington, George Mason University, 2003): 35.

diversity are often indicators.<sup>19</sup> For predominantly Muslim states, the religious doctrine of *jihad* adds another element to potential ethnic conflict, because, “Some scholars and many Muslims have argued that, because they do not accept the dualistic distinction between sacred and profane modes of social behavior, Islamic societies and politics differ fundamentally from those of non-Muslim cultures. Among Muslims there is intense debate concerning the compatibility of Islam and democracy and the role of *jihad*.”<sup>20</sup> This theory begs the question: what can explain the presence of conflict in some parts of a predominantly Muslim and ethnically fragmented region and not others? The Caucasus region of the former Soviet Union provides a natural experiment for looking at these issues.

### *The Caucasus Region*

The Republics in the Caucasus region are amongst the oldest civilizations, yet currently among the least developed of the post-Soviet bloc. The Caucasus is located at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, tempting empires seeking to conquer it for centuries. To the north lies the Russian steppe, the Persian hill country to the southeast, and the Turkish uplands to the southwest.<sup>21</sup> Although the location provided significant exposure outside cultures, “The numerous Caucasian nations, of indigenous or Turkic origins, often inhabiting small mountainous territories, have historically maintained an inward-looking, xenophobic view of the outside world.”<sup>22</sup> These nations originally specialized in horse breeding or agriculture, but constant invasions forced them to develop a war-like culture and further isolate themselves in the mountains.<sup>23</sup> These tribal origins give way to the customary Caucasian law, mostly a combination of unwritten law and a community control system, infused with occasional Islamic Shari’a law.<sup>24</sup> Such a hybrid institution characterizes the overarching diversity within the Caucasus region, which makes it a fascinating, yet inherently problematic region.

The Caucasus region can be divided into the North Caucasus, located within the Russian state, and the South Caucasus, split between the current post-Soviet States of Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. The North Caucasus republics are: Chechnya, Ingushetia, Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachai-Cherkessia, Adygea, and North Ossetia. The South Caucasus republics are: South Ossetia, Ajaria, and Abkhazia.<sup>25</sup> While each of these republics is home to a titular ethnic group or groups, each also hosts sizable minority populations, including ethnic Russians or

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>20</sup> Ted Robert Gurr, Mark Woodward, and Monty G. Marshall, “Forecasting Instability: Are Ethnic Wars and Muslim Countries Different?” (Arlington: George Mason University, 2005): 7.

<sup>21</sup> Christoph Zurcher. *The Post-Soviet Wars: Rebellion, Ethnic Conflict, and Nationhood in the Caucasus*. (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 13.

<sup>22</sup> James Minahan, *The Former Soviet Union’s Diverse Peoples: A Reference Sourcebook*. (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2009), 11.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>24</sup> Moshe Gammer, *Ethno-Nationalism, Islam, and the State in the Caucasus: Post-Soviet Disorder*. (New York: Routledge), 20.

<sup>25</sup> “Ethno-linguistic Groups in the Caucasus Region.”

<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/commonwealth/ethnocaucasus.jpg>.

Georgians in each, creating deep cleavages between groups. The exception is Dagestan because, “the name *Dagestani* is actually a generic term used to designate any of dozens of Caucasian or Turkic ethnic groups living in the eastern part of the North Caucasus on the Caspian Sea.”<sup>26</sup> On a recent survey about ethnic identity in the region, 75 percent of respondents chose “Dagestani” as their ethnicity, while only 10.5 percent who consider themselves members of traditional Dagestani tribes chose their own original ethnic group.<sup>27</sup> The republics of the Caucasus region do, however, share a common daily life “A largely shared everyday culture unites the groups whose referent loyalty and identity was informed more by religion, locality, and kinship than by the concept of the nation.”<sup>28</sup>

Due to a lack of strong nationhood, religion has become a defining characteristic of many of the Caucasus groups. The Caucasus region historically served as the borderland between the Russian Orthodox to the north and the Islamic nations to the south. Before Ottoman takeover of the Caucasus region and in order to secure frontiers and defeat mountain peoples, the czarist Imperial regime used local Christian peoples in the many battles against Ottoman Turkey and Shamil, whether through battle or attempts at religious conversion.<sup>29</sup> These struggles between Islam and Christianity created an animosity that never quite faded from Caucasus culture. Unfortunately for the czars, “The invasion of the Muslim Arabs ended the historic rivalry for influence in the Caucasus region. The Arabs occupied the region but allowed local nobles to rule so long as they paid the required taxes.”<sup>30</sup> By the beginning of the seventeenth century, what are today the Caucasus Republics had been “Islamized,” with the exceptions of North and South Ossetia. By granting locals authority, however, the Ottoman Turks subdued much of the animosity otherwise directed at an imperialistic power.<sup>31</sup> By the nineteenth century, Russia had regained some of its control over the Caucasus, and Russian attitudes toward their newly reacquired Islamic republics can be exemplified by an 1865 deportation of 40,000 Chechens back to Ottoman territory in retaliation for a violent uprising.<sup>32</sup> After the Bolshevik Revolution, Soviet policy tightened even further on religious life in the Caucasus with widespread execution of Caucasian religious leaders in 1920.<sup>33</sup> Religious presence was largely suppressed until the fall of the Soviet Union.

From the late 1980s to present day, the Caucasus region has undergone a revival of Islam. The number of mosques provides a solid indication, as mosque construction was not permitted under the Soviets. By 1999, 1,670 mosques had been constructed in Dagestan, 400 in Igushetia, 96

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<sup>26</sup> Minahan, 3000.

<sup>27</sup> Zurcher, 194.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>29</sup> Austin Jersild, “Faith, Custom, and Ritual in the Borderlands: Orthodoxy, Islam, and the ‘Small Peoples’ of the Middle Volga and the North Caucasus.” *Russian Review* 59 (October, 2000): 514.

<sup>30</sup> Minahan, 7.

<sup>31</sup> Zurcher, 14.

<sup>32</sup> Minahan, 86.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

in Kabardino-Balkaria, and 150 in Karachaevo-Cherkessia.<sup>34</sup> During the 1990s, “the institutions and values of Islam regained quickly their former influence on the social and political life in the Northern Caucasus.”<sup>35</sup> This manifestation of Islam in political life can be most poignantly seen in “Wahhabi” The quotes are necessary in this instance, Wahhabi is always in quotes in the reading because it is a controversial name resistance movements throughout the Caucasian republics. “Wahhabi” movements originated in Arab states as resistance against secular governments and have been adopted by separatists in the Caucasus, particularly the Chechens. Recent examples of the epic levels of violence inspired by Chechen separatism and “Wahhabism” was the 2002 seizure of a Moscow theater, resulting in the deaths of more than 100 theatergoers, as well as the Beslan Massacre in September 2004, killing 400 people, mainly innocent parents and children.<sup>36</sup> This resistance is no longer contained within Chechnya, but rather, “has spread by now to other republics in the Northern Caucasus and acts of terrorism, including suicide bombing by women, have been committed in Moscow, other Russian cities, and all over the Northern Caucasus.”<sup>37</sup> Guerillas fighters have learned to use the war vocabulary of Islamist fighters from Arab nations, and are spreading Islamic movements throughout the Caucasian region, specifically in predominantly Muslim republics.<sup>38</sup> The Russian and Georgian governments have attempted to curb “Wahhabi” movements, but have met with extremely limited success.

Economically, the Caucasus region has become woefully underdeveloped after the fall of the Soviet Union. Conditions have worsened recently, to the point where “Child mortality is three times higher than in Western Europe, and male life expectancy has dropped from 63.8 years in 1990 to 59 years in 2000, and 55.5 years in 2002.”<sup>39</sup> Unemployment was not originally a major problem after the fall of the Soviet Union, as “it was only with violent escalation of conflict that unemployment really became a mass phenomenon.”<sup>40</sup> In Georgia, the 1995 national GDP was 17 percent of its 1989 value, and almost one million workers had left by 2001, mostly university graduates.<sup>41</sup> To further complicate matters, since the fall of the Soviet Union, Russia and Georgia have not followed similar policies, and have, in fact, often acted in contrast to one another, adding further instability to the region. Gorbachev’s policy of encouraging nationalism created strong feelings among the Georgians for independent statehood. However, it also created problems within Georgia among the Ossetians and Abkhazians.<sup>42</sup> More recently, in 2008, Russia withdrew troops from Georgia after its invasion, however stressed that its decision to recognize Abkhazia

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<sup>34</sup> Vladimir Bobrovnikov, “Al-Azhar and Shari’a Courts in Twentieth-Century Caucasus.” *Middle Eastern Studies* 37 (October, 2001): 5.

<sup>35</sup> Gammer, 23.

<sup>36</sup> Charles King, *The Ghost of Freedom: A History of the Caucasus*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 239.

<sup>37</sup> Gammer, 187.

<sup>38</sup> King, 241.

<sup>39</sup> Leszek Buszunski, “Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States in 2002: Going Separate Ways.” *Asian Survey* 43 (Jan-Feb, 2003): 19.

<sup>40</sup> Zurcher, 47.

<sup>41</sup> Minahan, 266.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 245.

and South Ossetia's independence was "irreversible."<sup>43</sup> Russia, however, firmly maintains that all republics under its control will remain under the control of the Russian state. Conflicts occur across the border as well, when in the early 2000s, "over Ingush protests, North Ossetia has resettled South Ossetian refugees in the disputed district while denying Ingush petitions to return to their homes."<sup>44</sup> These deep-rooted conflicts provide an excellent framework for a study of ethnic and religious conflict in a single region, and a discovery of contributing factors.

## HYPOTHESES

The hypotheses will address ethnic conflict and separatism in conjunction with the theories on ethnic conflict. Although some theories uniformly apply to all the republics within the Caucasus region, and thus do not provide interesting comparisons, several raise potential reasons for ethnic conflict and separatism. The first hypothesis concerns Horowitz's, as well as the Constructivist idea, that outside influence can shape an ethnic conflict or separatist movement:

H1: Minority ethnic groups with financial, resource, or ideological support outside the state are more likely to engage in separatist movements and ethnic conflict than other groups attempting to achieve similar objectives.

The second hypothesis articulates Chirot and McCauley's and Horowitz's views of impetuses for ethnic conflict and separatism:

H2: An ethnic minority group that identifies itself as "historically oppressed" by the past colonial or ruling power is more likely to engage in violent forms of ethnic conflict or separatism

The third hypothesis is based on Harff and Gurr's characteristics that yield ethnic conflict, and the diverse populations within the Caucasus region:

H3: Republics with a majority percentage of one titular ethnic group different from the majority ethnic group within the State are more likely to maintain separatist movements or ethnic violence than more ethnically diverse Republics

The final hypotheses concern Gurr's work on Islamic movements and ethnic violence:

H4: Republics with a majority Muslim population are more likely to engage in ethnic conflict and separatist movements than other Republics

H5: The presence of a strong *jihadist* movement increases the likelihood of violent ethnic conflict or separatism compared to Republics where a *jihadist* movement is not present

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<sup>43</sup> Hooman Peimani, *Conflict and Security in Central Asia and the Caucasus*, (Santa Barbara: ABC\_CLIO, 2009): 69.

<sup>44</sup> Minahan, 300.

## OPERALIZATION AND METHODOLOGY

### *Research Design*

This study follows a most-similar design due to the proximity of the Republics to each other, and similarities in the region. These similarities cannot account for regional variations in the dependent variable and can therefore be controlled for, or eliminated as, causal agents. One important similarity is the level of development, (or underdevelopment) in the region. High fertility rates are generally associated with less modern and less developed societies, and not surprisingly, it is higher in the North Caucasus compared to the other Russian territories, at a relatively high 1.8 births per mother.<sup>45</sup> Georgia's overall birthrates are similarly high at 1.4, which is still higher than the more urbanized portions of Russia.<sup>46</sup> A more common birthrate for Western Europe is indicated by Spain, at 1.3 births per mother.<sup>47</sup> Infant mortality, another important economic indicator, is also high in the North Caucasus, at 26.53 per 1,000 births in Russia and 18.21 deaths per 1,000 births in Georgia.<sup>48</sup> The GDP per capita in the Caucasus is "barely half that of the average for the Federation, and productivity and wages are also low."<sup>49</sup> The GDP per capita in Georgia is also dismally low, at \$4,700 USD.<sup>50</sup> These similarities can rule out economic indicators, often an early suspect, as a reason for separatist movements, and focus the study on potential differences between the Republics.

### *Operationalization of the Dependent Variable*

Separatism is the dependent variable in this study. Ethnic conflict will be combined with separatism on a single scale, because in the Caucasus, the two go hand-in-hand. There are spontaneous outbursts of disagreement between different ethnic groups occupying the same territory, but where ethnic groups have formed a sense of national identity they usually seek greater autonomy for their Republic within the majority state. At the extreme end of this drive we see outright separatism, and violent demands for full independence, as the war in Chechnya so vividly demonstrated. Separatism and ethnic conflict will be measured on a combined scale from 1-4, with (1) meaning localized and sporadic conflict between ethnic groups within or across Republics, (2) meaning regular low-level conflict between groups within or across Republics, (3) meaning ethno-nationalism and demands for greater autonomy, and (4) meaning violent separatist demands, possibly also combined with acts of terrorism. The cases included are the Republics of: Adygea, Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachai-Cherkessia, North Ossetia, Abkhazia, Ajaria, and South Ossetia. This focuses on the North and South Caucasus

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<sup>45</sup> Ward Kingkade, *Population Trends: Russia*, (Washington D.C.: E.S. Department of Commerce, 1997), 2.

<sup>46</sup> The CIA World Factbook, *Middle East: Georgia*, (Washington D.C.: ISSN 1553-8133, 2009).

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Kingkade, CIA World Factbook.

<sup>49</sup> "Centre for the Study of Public Policy: North Caucasus." <http://www.abdn.ac.uk.cspp/North-Caucasus-1.shtml>.

<sup>50</sup> CIA World Factbook.

region within Russia and Georgia, but excludes Armenia and Azerbaijan due to the long-standing interstate conflict over the Nagorno-Karabakh.

### *Operationalization of Independent Variables*

Concurrent with the theories that identity and past grievances create an atmosphere ripe for ethnic conflict, one independent variable will focus on the relationships of the Republics with the Soviet Union in the correlation. However, another is worth mentioning as well. The other independent variable focusing on the relationship with the Soviet Union is the occurrence of deportations. Theorists purporting the “revenge” theory for ethnic violence assume that the deportations conducted by the Soviet Union on several ethnicities within the Caucasus republics provide a strong basis for revenge-based conflict. Even today, for the Chechens, “The ‘deportation’ remains *the* central building block of Chechen national identity.”<sup>51</sup> Once again concurrent with the hypotheses, a code of “0” means that the primary ethnic group within the republic did not experience deportations while a code of “1” signifies a past including deportations.<sup>52</sup> From this point on, citations are correct. Please adjust previous citation to make them also footnotes. The variable not included in the correlation assesses whether, during the rule of the Soviet Union, the republics were ASSRs or AOs. ASSR republics had more autonomy than AO republics, including a greater number of Soviet university places set aside for their citizens, and a second-place hierarchy within the Soviet ethno federalist system, however they had no right of secession from the larger Union state they were a part of, in this case either the Soviet territory or the Georgian Union Republic. AO republics had only a few privileges of cultural self-administration, no universities within their republic and few Soviet university places, no media of their own, and no regional bureaucracy.<sup>53</sup> Since the inclusion of AO/ASSR in coding does not provide enough variation, and thus is not included in the correlations, please see the appendix for more information.

The second focus of independent variables concerns the percentage of the population in each republic that considers itself part of the titular nationality of the republic. These numbers are the only ones not coded from reading, but rather simply express the population percentage.<sup>54</sup> The percentages range from as low as 17 percent in Abkhazia, all the way up to 73 percent in Chechnya, (possibly higher by some estimates). Ethnic identity arises in the Chirot and McCauley theories as a strong impetus for seeking greater autonomy, and thus it is important to determine if the population percentage of the conflictual group creates likelihood for a separatist movement.

The third independent variable focuses on the proximity of the Republic to other Republics that are engaged in either conflict or separatism, in conjunction with Gurr and Harff’s theory that both Muslim and non-Muslim States, (in this case Republics) bordering areas with any type of

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<sup>51</sup> Gammer, 106.

<sup>52</sup> Coding based on Zurcher, Christoph. “The Post-Soviet Wars: Rebellion, Ethnic Conflict, and Nationhood in the Caucasus.” (New York: New York University Press), 2007.

<sup>53</sup> Zurcher, 2007, 26-27.

<sup>54</sup> Zurcher, 2007.

armed conflict are more likely to be engaged in conflict as well.<sup>55</sup> This variable will be on a 3-point scale with (1) not bordering any conflicting Republics, (2) bordering Republics with either moderate ethnic conflict or separatist movements, or both, and (3) bordering a Republic that utilizes terrorist tactics.<sup>56</sup> External Support is also an important variable, and often the key element to a group's ability to even consider separatism. This variable is coded on a 4-point scale with (0) being no external support, (1) is a diaspora offering cultural support, (2) indicating some help or even ideological recognition from outside states or groups, and (3) meaning intense military, monetary and ideological support from outside states or groups.<sup>57</sup>

The final group of independent variables concerns the presence of Islamist movements and the Muslim religion in the Republic. Gurr's Phase III report indicates a theory of higher levels of conflict in Muslim states, so it stands to reason that this same principle could apply to Muslim republics. The first independent variable concerns whether the republic has a majority or minority Muslim population. This is coded as a simple dichotomous variable with 0 indicating that the republic is not majority Muslim, and 1 indicating that it is.<sup>58</sup> Enough variation exists with three republics that are not majority Muslim to make this a potentially meaningful variable. The second variable indicates the strength of political Islam within the Republic. Interestingly, even Republics without a majority Muslim population still have moderately active Islamist movements. This variable is coded on a 1-3 scale, with (1) meaning "little to no Islamist movement," (2) meaning "moderately active Islamist movement, and (3) meaning "very active Islamist movement or Wahhabi movement."<sup>59</sup> Wahhabi movements only occur with exceptionally strong Islamist movements, they are only included at the third level of the scale.

## ANALYSIS

With an N of only 10 cases, multivariate analyses are not possible, but bivariate correlations should offer important measures of association between each independent variable and the dependent variable. The table below shows the variables correlated with the scale for separatism, and provides both the Pearson's Correlation and the Significance. Significant correlations are in bold:

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<sup>55</sup> <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/commonwealth/ethnocaucasus.jpg>

<sup>56</sup> While the code "2" in this case encompasses a broad range, the distinction between terrorism and more traditional armed conflict is the main focus of the variable, and so all forms of tradition armed conflict are grouped together

<sup>57</sup> Thomas, 2006. RadioFreeEurope, 2009. Ware and Kisriev, 2001. Klimenko, Bowers, and Soloyeva, 2009.

<sup>58</sup> Demographic figures vary widely for the percent of a Muslim population in each Republic, so for accuracy, a simple majority as a dichotomous variable is being used.

<sup>59</sup> Coding decisions based on expert analyses found in: Minahan, James. "The Former Soviet Union's Diverse Peoples: A References Sourcebook." (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO), 2004. Gammer, Moshe. "Ethno-Nationalism, Islam, and the State in the Caucasus: Post-Soviet Disorder." (New York: Routledge), 2008.

TABLE 1  
*Separatism*<sup>60</sup>

<i>Independent Variable</i>	<i>Pearson Correlation</i>	<i>Significance</i>
Percent Ethnic (N=9)	.748**	.010
Deportations (N=10)	.612**	.030
Majority Muslim (N=10)	.327	.178
Islamist Movement (N=10)	.200	.289
External Support (N=10)	.872***	.001
Borders Conflict (N=10)	.423	.112

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed)

\*\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed)

These correlations are particularly interesting because they show a relationship in the opposite directions from what would be expected from both hypotheses concerning Republics with majority Muslim populations and the presence of a *jihadist* movement. In the Caucasus region, it appears that predominantly Orthodox republics are just as likely to engage in separatist movements, and that a *jihadist* movement does not necessarily guarantee conflict or separatism. A high percentage of the titular population does, however, provide an impetus for separatism, as does a history of grievances, demonstrated by the deportations variable. Areas that border conflict only have a slightly higher significant chance of having separatist movements, demonstrating further that Republics weigh the costs of a secession movement instead of just reacting to surrounding conflict. Finally, external support provides the greatest correlation, which logically follows as a group with outside support will be more financially, ideologically, and militarily capable of launching a separatist movement.

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<sup>60</sup> Due to extremely disputed population demographics and charges of ethnic cleansing against the Georgian state by the Abkhazian people, Abkhazia's population will not be included in the correlation.

## CONCLUSION

The most interesting part of the study was how firmly the Pearson's Correlations opposed the theories that Muslim Republics would be more prone to violence. This view has become especially common since terrorism became a prevalent world issue after the 9/11 attacks, however a Muslim population, or even a *jihadi* movement do not guarantee conflict and violence. External support for separatism provides much more support, whether that support is from Islamic nations to Chechnya, or the Orthodox Russians to South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Proximity to violence continues to pose a problem, as it does around the world, and Caucasus Republics are just as susceptible to their neighbors' problems as anyone else.

These findings indicate that the cost-benefit analysis of conflict heavily influences a group's decision to follow a separatist movement. Furthermore, these findings slightly change Horowitz's theory that less advanced groups care more about the perceived benefits of secession than the cost of seceding. While past grievances contribute greatly to separatist movements, external support also plays an equally important role. The perceived benefit of secession can push a group toward a separatist movement, but a minimized cost from outside support creates a much stronger foundation for separatism.

This study could be better modified with more exact demographic data, however currently those data are unavailable in English.<sup>61</sup> A closer look at past grievances could help as well, because upon reflection, it would have proved useful to incorporate several potential grievances to gain a better picture. This information, however, was once again unavailable. Another interesting facet would be to include the Armenian and Azeri Republics, however within the constraints of this study, that was not a possibility.

Overall, this study attempted to explain separatist movements and ethnic conflict in one of the most diverse areas of the world. The Caucasus are bordering on political upheaval and potentially becoming a hotbed for terrorism. It would be in the best interest of Russia, Georgia, or even an international body to pacify the region now, and address the grievances of the Republics, before the area becomes an international problem.

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<sup>61</sup> Demographic information is often highly skewed by the State (Russia or Georgia), and thus most demographic information, unless obtained first-hand, is not suitable for a study (Hewitt, 1995).

## APPENDIX A

<b>Cases</b>	<b>ASSR/AO</b>
Adygea	AO
Chechnya	ASSR
Dagestan	ASSR
Ingushetia	ASSR
Kabardino-Balkaria	ASSR
Karachai-Cherkessia	AO
North Ossetia	ASSR
Abkhazia	ASSR
Ajaria	ASSR
South Ossetia	AO

## GENDER AS DIMENSION OF VOTING IN THE U.S. HOUSE

Samantha Kaplan

**Abstract:** *This research examines whether or not electing women to the House of Representatives produces substantive representation for women in Congress. The analysis is based on members' voting records on gender-related legislation. I controlled for the gender, seniority, and ideology of members of the House. Ideology was the only significant predictor in the model. These results imply that gender is not a driving force behind voting for female members. It is possible that ideology drowns out other predictive variables in the model. Further research should include a longitudinal study of the House for multiple sessions of Congress, not just the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress. A study that incorporates more votes and shows a pattern over time will be a better assessment of whether or not gender affects voting.*

### INTRODUCTION

Women are substantially underrepresented in Congress. Females make up only 16 percent of the U.S. House of Representatives in the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress, but about 51 percent of the total population.<sup>1</sup> If members do vote based on their constituency's needs, then it should not matter what characteristics a member of Congress possesses. But, since many of the votes in Congress are not on high salience issues, members can get away with voting based on other factors besides constituency opinion and needs, such as gender or overall personal political ideology. This paper seeks to answer the following question: Do female representatives in the House vote differently than their male colleagues on gender-related issues? Whether or not women vote differently than men is important because it is an indication of whether or not female representatives substantively represent the female constituency.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The question of whether or not electing more female members to the House of Representatives will create a more substantively representative House for women has become more prevalent since the drastic increase in female representatives in Congress over the last seventeen years. Most literature revealed that being female does in fact impact voting in the House, even after variables such as personal traits, constituency characteristics, ideology, party, freshman status, leadership positions, and other factors are taken into account.<sup>2</sup> The few pieces of literature that claim that gender is not an indication of substantive representation for women are mostly generalized from case studies.<sup>3</sup>

Research from the 1980s suggests that females' voting patterns were not significantly different from male members of Congress. Other factors, such as party, constituency characteristics, and ideology, accounted for voting behavior, even on gender-related bills. Even though there was not sufficient evidence from the small sample examined in the 1980s to conclude

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<sup>1</sup> CQ's *Politics in America 2008: The 110th Congress* (District of Columbia: Congressional Quarterly, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> Noelle Norton, "Uncovering the Dimensionality of Gender Voting in Congress," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 24, no. 1 (1999): 65-86.; Michele Swers, "Are Women More Likely to Vote for Women's Issue Bills than Their Male Colleagues," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 23, no. 3 (1998): 435-448.; Michele Swers, *The Difference Women Make* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2002).

<sup>3</sup> Leora Tanenbaum, "Model Minority," *Women's Review of Books*, (1997): 7-10.