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Attitudes in Transition:

Chechen Refugees and the Politics of Violence

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Attitudes in Transition:

Chechen Refugees and the Politics of Violence

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Dedication

To: Kim-Anh Nguyen

Acknowledgements

Anyone who has never written a dissertation may be forgiven for believing that writing one is a solitary enterprise, done in isolation over countless hours hunched above a book or laptop. Nothing could be farther from the truth, however. This dissertation was anything but an individual exercise. In this endeavor, I owe many debts, especially to those who offered support and guidance throughout this exceptionally trying ordeal. Thankfully, I have been fortunate to have a superior dissertation committee. They took a leap of faith and trusted me to conduct one of the most challenging and dangerous dissertation projects ever conducted at The University of Texas at Austin. At my prospectus defense, my committee somberly joked about signing my death warrant, and at times it appeared such fears were entirely warranted. As such, I am grateful for their support and their confidence. My dissertation committee has been active and helpful throughout this process. Zoltan Barany provided needed perspective when navigating both the world of rebels and refugees and academia and government service. His high standards helped make this a better project than it would have been without his guidance. Tom Garza, as a fellow Caucasus scholar and traveler to Chechnya, understood better than most the inherent challenges of conducting a systematic research study in a region as perilous as the North Caucasus. His endless enthusiasm and good cheer were welcome respites from the rigors of writing. As a fellow researcher on terrorism and political violence, Ami Pedahzur recognized the inherent difficulties

of this work and lent his expertise to the transformation of data collection into data analysis. It is rare that dissertators have one of the leading experts in their chosen field serve on their committee, and I was extremely fortunate to have Ami on the project. In the same light, R. Harrison Wagner has been a constant inspiration and source of knowledge on issues of organized political violence. I have enjoyed our many hours together in the classroom since my undergraduate days. The only negative aspect of our relationship was the surplus of new research ideas that inevitably filled my head after our conversations. As Harrison correctly observed, the paradox is that although there are a number of interesting research puzzles, there is simply not enough time to read everything necessary to answer them. This is especially true when writing a dissertation. Finally, my chair and longtime mentor, Rob Moser, offered constant support and advice throughout my undergraduate and graduate career. It is hard to put into words the appreciation I have for Rob's efforts over the years. It is no exaggeration to state that without him, this dissertation would probably never be written. I am forever grateful for his help. I know how truly fortunate I am to have such an amazing mentor and committee. All contributed to the completion of this dissertation. Any mistakes and deficiencies that remain are the results of my own limitations and errors, and not theirs.

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Our surprisingly erudite and philosophical conversations started me on the trail of higher education in both academia and life. Thanks as well to my fellow grapplers on the All-Marine Wrestling Team, William Tesdahl, Phil Eiberger, Preston Barrett, and Butch Hindman who showed that hard work can overcome any obstacle.

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Attitudes in Transition:

Chechen Refugees and the Politics of Violence

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What drives refugees displaced by war to hold attitudes supporting violence to achieve political ends?   The conventional wisdom suggests that refugee communities are breeding grounds for the emergence of political violence, terrorism, and radicalism. Yet, the literature on refugees and political violence offers little empirical evidence of such a connection or systematic investigation of the root causes of attitudes toward political violence among refugees. My research addresses the following questions: 1) What are the sources of politically violent attitudes?   2) Can these sources be traced to specific aspects of the refugee communities themselves? 3) Can they be traced to certain experiential events or demographic factors? 4) Are attitudes towards political violence related to actors' political goals? This analysis is based on nearly three years of fieldwork in Chechen refugee communities in The Republic of Georgia, Azerbaijan, Poland, and Belgium. Methodologically, this inductive study employed a mixed-methods approach, utilizing qualitative and ethnographic methods, such as direct participant-observer,

to conduct 310 structured-interviews with a range of Chechen refugees. For independent variables I asked a battery of questions related to demographic profiles, grievances, political goals and preferences, and preferences for regime type. The dependent variable, attitudes towards political violence, was gleaned from structured-interviews which called on subjects to offer general assessments of their position on the acceptability of political violence as well as express their views on the legitimacy of four concrete events related to the conflict in Chechnya: the 2002 attack on Moscow's Dubrovka Theater; the 2004 attack on School #1 in Beslan, North Ossetia; the 2004 attack on military and police personnel in Nazran, Ingushetia; and the 2005 attack on military and police personnel in Nalchik, Kabardino-Balkaria.

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A Note on Transliteration

The majority of Russian and Chechen words were transliterated using the Library of Congress system; however, some words and names retain their common English spellings.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The richest source of power to wage war lies in the masses of the people.
Mao Tse-tung

What drives refugees displaced by war to hold attitudes supporting violence to achieve political ends? Despite the recent attention given to the root causes of political violence there remain significant theoretical and empirical gaps. The conventional wisdom suggests that refugees are vulnerable to militarization and that refugee communities are breeding grounds for the emergence of political violence, terrorism and radicalism. Yet, given the inherent difficulties of conducting primary research, the literature on refugees and political violence offers little empirical evidence of such a connection or systematic investigation of the root causes of attitudes toward political violence among refugees. This dissertation contributes to this literature and furthers our understanding of why political violence emerges. This work also has implications for state policy regarding militarized refugee communities.

It is well recognized that states prepare, and presumably prefer, to wage conventional wars against other states. Accordingly, scholars' traditional focus was on inter-state war, particularly among great powers (see, for example, Mearsheimir, 2003; Wagner, 2007; Waltz, 2001). The most common form of warfare is not between states, however, but rather within them (Fearon and Laiten, 2003; Licklider, 1995). Civil wars and insurgencies are the most common kind of warfare in the modern world. Often classified as irregular warfare, insurgent methods are

the preferred choice of non-state actors incapable of directly challenging disproportionate state resources. As recent history reveals, insurgencies pose a vexing problem for international security (Fearon and Laiten, 2003; Heiberg, O'Leary, and Tirman, 2007; Killcullin, 2005). Most insurgent movements are promptly defeated, yet protracted insurgencies, although comparatively rare, are a significant contributing factor to regional instability causing, among other things, mass displacements. Forced migrations, in turn, often generate further conflict, creating vicious spirals of violence (Betts, 2009; Lischer, 2006; Lischer, 2009; Stedman and Turner, 2003; Weiner, 2003; Zolberg, Suhrke and Aguayo, 1992).

As American forces draw down in Iraq and Afghanistan, ending a decade-long counter-insurgency campaign, her erstwhile ally in the so-called "War on Terror", Russia, remains bogged down in the quagmire of a protracted and growing insurgency in the North Caucasus (Cornell, 2006; King and Menon, 2010; Sagramoso, 2007; Toft, 2010). To operate successfully, insurgents require significant support from non-participants, both locally and from those abroad (Byman, Chalk, Hoffman, Rosenau, and Brannan, 2001; Galula, 1964/2006; Kasfir, 2002; Kushner; Collier and Hoeffler, 2001; Ross, 1993; Shafiq and Sinno, 2008; Shapiro and Fair, 2009; Tessler and Robbins, 2007; Weinstein, 2005). Displaced peoples have been shown to be integral in supporting insurgent movements and just as Russia must grapple with an effective balance of coercive and "hearts and minds" strategies to quell the mounting violence in the Caucasus, it is equally important for American policy-makers to not lose sight of the inherent security challenges posed

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around the world by displaced peoples, especially those driven from ethno-nationalist conflicts over territorial disputes.[1] In particular, America must remain attentive to insurgent movements that invoke militant Islamic slogans to mobilize recruits, funding, and supporters. As recent history reveals, transnational terrorist organizations are often opportunistic in utilizing local conflicts to pursue their own political objectives against Western interests (Kilcullen, 2005).

There are myriad assumptions about the relationship between people displaced by war and political violence. Refugees and diaspora communities are both, respectively, purportedly vital components of protracted insurgent movements, providing material resources, like funds and recruits, and ideational ones like legitimacy (Salehyan and Gleditch, 2006; Salehyan, 2007). Another major supposition is that forced displacement has a homogenizing effect on communities, especially in regard to political attitudes and views towards the legitimacy of employing violent means (Lischer, 2006; Tishkov, 2004). This is thought to be the result of either the physically and psychologically traumatizing process of war and displacement, or from the frequently deplorable conditions forced migrants confront in host-states. As conditions perceivably worsen, grievances emerge and multiply, inevitably creating climates which resemble the proverbial "swamps" of mass discontent, itself a purportedly significant factor in driving individuals to either engage in political violence or, at the very least, support or tolerate its perpetuation in the name of the group (Zolberg, , Suhrke, and Aguayo, 1989). This

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[1] Disputes over territory are considered especially difficult to resolve. See Topf, 2003.

dissertation problematizes these assumptions, arguing that displaced peoples often display significant variation in their attitudes towards political violence. It studies the sources of variance among displaced peoples, specifically Chechens, in their attitudes towards political violence and their motivations for supporting or rejecting violent means to effect political change back home in Chechnya.

Displaced Chechens in the Caucasus and Europe are arguably a hard case given that they, of any contemporary displaced group, should expectedly hold pro-violent attitudes towards Russia. Displaced Chechens display significant variation in their support for political violence, however. In particular, major cleavages exist along gender lines and between those desiring divergent political goals and regime type preferences. Chechen men are presumed to be disproportionately pro-violent as too are a now sizeable number of Chechen women as part of the so-called Black Widow suicide bombers. As such, one would expect only slight attitudinal variation between the genders.[2] Further cleavages exist between select political goals and regime type preferences. Those who desire moderate political goals, like Autonomy within Russia, are less likely to support political violence, while those espousing maximal goals, like the establishment of an Islamic Caucasus Emirate, are more likely to accept political violence. Moreover, those who reject religious authority as

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[2] Males, especially young males, are presumed to be attracted to risk-taking and violence, particularly in small bands. It is presumed that human genetics and evolutionary pressures have privileged these traits (Hayden and Potts, 2008; Hudson and Thayler, 2009). In the contemporary world, it is claimed that such genetic facts suggest empowering women will have a significant effect on dampening conflict. See Hudson, Caprioli, Ballif-Spanvilli, McDermott, and Emmett, 2008; Nachtwey and Tessler, 2002: 261.

political authority correspondingly reject the idea that violent means are legitimate, while those supporting theocracy hold overwhelmingly pro-violent attitudes. Here too, gender has an interactive effect in that displaced Chechen women are more likely to reject both maximal goals and religious authority. Finally, it is assumed that Chechen refugees supporting political violence do so out of cultural or emotive considerations, particularly revenge. Yet, it is strategic considerations which determine non-participant support for militant activity. These findings should help better inform state policy formation.

My dissertation research addresses the following questions: 1) What are the sources of politically violent attitudes? 2) Are attitudes towards political violence related to actors' political goals? 3) Can they be traced to certain experiential events or demographic factors? 4) Can these sources be traced to specific aspects of the refugee communities themselves?

I examined these questions through a close ethnographic examination of Chechen refugees. Chechnya is a noteworthy case in its own right since it involves a long-standing secessionist conflict in Russia, unquestionably one of the most strategically and politically important countries in the world, but it is important to note the broader theoretical and empirical implications of my work. My findings are potentially applicable to a diverse range of refugee communities around the world that have engaged in some form of political violence. Moreover, my work can contribute to the literature on political violence by elucidating the sources and theoretical significance of attitudinal determinants of violent behavior and the

globalization literature which views refugee flows and transnational migration increasingly as security threats. As such, this study will be one small empirical part of the larger puzzle on the potential causes of political violence, particularly among refugees.

This analysis is based on nearly three years of fieldwork conducted between 2006 and 2009 and in the summer of 2011 in Chechen refugee communities located in The Republic of Georgia, Azerbaijan, Poland, and Belgium. Methodologically, this inductive study employed a mixed-methods approach, utilizing qualitative and ethnographic methods, such as direct participant-observer, to conduct 301 structured-interviews (in the Chechen and Russian language) with a range of Chechen refugees: political elites, average civilians, former fighters, and Chechens still active in the separatist movement.

For independent variables I asked a battery of questions related to demographic profiles, grievances, political goals and preferences, and preferences for regime type. The dependent variable, attitudes towards political violence, was gleaned from structured-interviews which called on subjects to offer general assessments of their position on the acceptability of political violence as well as express their views on the legitimacy of four concrete events related to the conflict in Chechnya: the 2002 attack on Moscow's Dubrovka Theater during a performance of *Nord-Ost* (hereafter referred to as *Nord-Ost)*; the 2004 attack on School #1 in Beslan, North Ossetia (hereafter referred to as Beslan); the 2004 attack on military and police personnel in Nazran, Ingushetia (hereafter referred to as Nalchik); and

the attack on military and police personnel in Nalchik, Kabardino-Balkaria (hereafter referred to as Nalchik). These latter two attacks primarily targeted representatives of the state, while *Nord-Ost* and Beslan exclusively targeted civilians.

I make three principle arguments: 1) Refugees who desire maximal political goals, such as the establishment of a Caucasus Islamic Emirate, are more likely to support political violence; 2) There is a correlation between refugees who embrace religious authority (sharia) as political authority and support for political violence; 3) Male Chechen refugees will be more likely to support political violence than female Chechen refugees.

My results suggest the following three main findings: First, political goals do determine support for political violence. Second, regime type preferences drive attitudes supporting political violence. Third, gender has discernable patterns. Males are more likely to desire maximal political goals. They are more likely to accept religious authority as political authority in the form of a sharia regime, and they are more likely to accept all forms of political violence. I argue that these gender effects are driven by differential political goals between males and females based on social status. Female Chechen refugees desire different political goals and regime types because, unlike males, they will likely suffer in terms of social status in a Caucasus Islamic Emirate and/or under sharia. Consequently, women's material interests drive them to less extreme political goals, such as Autonomy in Russia, and

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less tolerance for political violence as a means. This suggests an instrumental theory of political violence.

The implications of this study should help inform state foreign policy. In recent years, governments around the world have grappled with implementing effective anti-terrorism policies. However, what are the unintended consequences? Do certain counter-terrorist policies actually radicalize individuals and/or their communities? Does detention – in either prison camps (e.g., Guantanamo Bay) or the informal incarceration that refugees experience in camps – radicalize detainees? If so, what are the causal mechanisms? There are many assumptions about the causes of political violence and terrorism, but these assumptions are not easily tested. I contend this study provides a potential template for future research on these vital security phenomena.

In Chapter 2, I first survey the literature on political violence, exploring the theoretical relationship between forced migration and conflict, and the role of displacement (and displaced peoples like refugees or diaspora communities), in fueling protracted insurgent movements. Some scholars and policy-makers see political violence as rational and strategic (Abrahms, 2006; Bloom, 2005; Crenshaw, 1988; Kalyvas, 2006; Kydd and Walter, 2006; McCormick, 2003; Pape, 2005); others argue it is the manifestation of certain cultural norms or religious orientation or emotive determinants (Crawford, 2000; Huntington, 2007; Petersen, 2002; Post, 1997; Tishkov, 2004). Recent scholarship has claimed intra-state violence is primarily caused by either "greed or grievance," (Collier and Hoeffler, 2001; Collier

and Sambilis, 2009), while challengers argue that such an approach over-simplifies the phenomena (Heiberg, O'Leary, and Tirman, 2007). Students of terrorism have also weighed in, advancing a range of explanations from aggression and frustration to abnormal psychosis (see Bonger, Brown, Beutler, and Brekenridge, 2006; Horgan, 2005; Victorrof and Kruglanski, 2009; Reich and Laqueur, 1998; Silke, 2003). This dissertation is attuned with the belief that political violence, and the support for political violence, is driven primarily by strategic and material considerations rather than emotive factors like fear or revenge. It is certainly not irrational nor the result of psychopathology. Emotive factors can certainly play a role, especially in ethnic conflicts like the wars between Russia and Chechnya, yet these are not as significant as strategic considerations (see Fearon, 1995).

The debate over how best to study political violence extends to arguments over which level of analysis is best for exploring these issues (King, 2010:69-73). On the one hand, some favor macro-studies, utilizing large-n quantitative datasets to flesh out causal relationships. On the other hand, new work at the micro-level, incorporating deep ethnography and fieldwork, shows particular promise. According to Laitin (2002), the future of the comparative study of political violence is found in an integration of each approach, wedding large-n studies with the insights gleaned from micro-level fieldwork, all of which is then subject to formal theoretical analysis. I concur that approaches like the latter seems to hold the most promise in bettering our understanding of the causes of political violence. My critique remains, however that the preponderance of literature focuses on groups

and organizations or individuals, usually elites, and thus ignores the vital role of communities.

The literature on refugees as security threats is a growing field. This focus has come from Globalization and Migration studies to explore more fully the causes and consequence of refugee flows. This has implications for more than just humanitarian aid groups. It has been shown that refugee communities in one state increase the likelihood of new inter-state wars and increased regional insecurity Salehyan and Gleditch, 2006; Salehyan, 2007). In particular, states and organizations are confronted by the twin-problems of manipulation and militarization, both of which can lead to the creation of "refugee warrior" communities (Adelman, 1998). As more and more refugees are created, understanding the underlying mechanisms of radicalization is an increasingly vital task for policy-makers and scholars alike. So too is better understanding the role of displaced peoples in protracted insurgency movements. In Chapter 2, I make the claim that the displaced Chechen community is beginning to look less like refugees and more like a nascent diaspora community. This evolution, I contend, gives scholars a unique opportunity to explore how politics matter and which politics matter, particularly those involving the use of violence, in the early stages of an emergent community. We know that diasporas are a significant contributing factor to home-state politics and affairs, including continued military actions against the ruling regime (Byman, Chalk, Hoffman, Rosenau, and Brannan, 2001). Observing

these developments as they happen will hopefully increase our understanding of these vital dynamics and relationships.

I will also discuss the methodological approach utilized in the dissertation, paying particular attention to ethnographic research instruments and the particular challenges inherent in conducting dangerous fieldwork with hidden and vulnerable populations. I refer to these specific challenges as the "Three T's": Time, Trust and Trauma. Finally, I discuss the specifics of my structured interview and provide an overview of the displaced Chechen community in The Republic of Georgia, Azerbaijan, Poland, and Belgium.

In Chapter 3, I present a brief case history of Chechnya and her relations with Russia. Russia has fought a number of Islamic guerrilla campaigns in the North Caucasus over the centuries and this turbulent history has clearly affected modern relations. As such, it is important to contextualize the current violence in light of these historical precedents. For many Chechens, this past is viewed as being an integral part of contemporary relations and future outcomes.

In Chapter 4, I explore the general attitudes displaced Chechens express when speaking about political violence. Contrary to the prevailing assumptions (Bodansky, 2009; Hahn, 2011; Murphy, 2010; Tishkov, 2004; Zaurbekova and Yandarov, 2001), displaced Chechens are more likely to either support or reject the legitimacy of select politically violent acts due to strategic considerations instead of emotive factors like revenge or fear. Next, I reveal how individual political goal choices and preferences for certain regime types influence attitudes supporting

political violence among Chechen refugees. My findings suggest that refugees who hold maximal goals, like the establishment of an Islamic Caucasus Emirate, are more likely to support political violence than those who desire more moderate goals such as Autonomy. One controversial finding is that there is a relationship between those who desire religious authority (sharia) as political authority and higher levels of support for political violence. My data reveals that such views are driven less by religious piety, but rather, as is the case with support for an Islamic Caucasus Emirate, by strategic and material considerations. This insight has important policy implications for states grappling with effective anti-terrorism policies. If, as these findings suggest, purportedly transnational jihadist groups are more concerned with local politics and grievances, more appropriate foreign policy approaches can be crafted and critical mistakes avoided. I make this case with evidence from both the displaced Chechen community and from the actions of the insurgent leadership. Finally, I address the potential role that level of education and living location (urban versus rural) have on both attitudes towards political violence and choice of political goals and regime type.

The expectation, as stated above, is of a uniformly, pro-violent community. There is considerable variation, however. In addition to the differences discussed in Chapter 4, there is also significant variation between displaced Chechen men and women in both their attitudes towards violence and in their political views. Chapter 5 explores the role of gender in influencing attitudes towards political violence and in generating political goals choices and regime type preferences. Women are less

likely to support political violence and they are less likely to desire either an Islamic Caucasus Emirate or sharia as a regime type. As I reveal in this chapter, women make these decisions based on the perception that they have no material interest in an Islamic world. This chapter further explores how gender roles have evolved during the war and in exile, empowering women and challenging traditional Chechen patriarchal norms, and discusses the role of women in the conflict, exploring in particular the so-called "Black Widow" phenomenon.

Chapter 6 explores the so-called "country effects". Country effects are the general term used for the expected state of displaced peoples. However, most Chechen refugees do not reside in what we typically assume to be camps. In this chapter, I provide a description of the Chechen refugee populations in The Republic of Georgia, Azerbaijan, Poland, and Belgium, discussing their living conditions, central concerns, views on political violence, political goals, and regime type preferences, respectively. The theoretical expectation is that refugees who live in the most squalid of refugee communities, those which have the least hope, will be more likely to produce more extreme views on political violence (Lischer, 2006:38-40). I will discuss daily life and living conditions and illuminate the challenges and problems refugees face, discuss their views and perceptions about life in exile, their hopes, youth life, etc. In doing so, I will explain why in Georgia, so few wished to discuss any political questions related to violence, while in Azerbaijan the Chechen refugees were disproportionately pro-violence. Proximity is also expected to influence attitudes. Refugee communities both closest to the conflict and farthest

away are purportedly more likely to support political violence (Salehyan and Gleditch, 2006:335-344; Salehyan, 2007:791). Proximity seems to also play a role in generating political views, turning certain refugee communities into more "moderate" communities. However, in Belgium we see a surprising trend towards increased acceptance of religious authority as political authority in the preference for sharia.

Chapter 7 concludes the dissertation by analyzing the meaning of the central findings. I will discuss the policy implications of my study and the potential avenues for future research, addressing the broader theoretical and policy questions this dissertation has raised.

Chapter 2: Literature and Methods

Dispossessed, aggrieved, and rootless populations are a potential breeding ground for radical terrorism inside and across borders... permanent refugee camps give rise to enmity among the displaced and provide a source of insurgency and instability elsewhere... [and these peoples] are preyed upon by people with evil intent and the means to sway followers and carry out destructive plans.
Edward Newman and Joanne van Selm

There are a number of purported causes of political violence and terrorism. Some claim that political violence is strategic and instrumental, employed by actors or groups to achieve some known and desired goal (Abrahms, 2006; Bloom, 2005; Crenshaw, 1988; Kalyvas, 2006.; Kydd, 2006; Kydd and Walter, 2006; McCormick, 2003; Pape, 2005) Others, however, claim that political violence is driven primarily by culture or emotive factors (Boehm, 1984; Huntington, 2007; Petersen, 2002; Post, 1997; Tishkov, 2004; Volkan, 1997; Zaurbekova and Yandarov, 2001). Still others claim that political violence is the consequence of abnormal psychology (Bonger, Brown, Beutler, and Brekenridge, 2006; Horgan, 2005; Kellen, 1990; Post, 1997; Reich and Laqueur, 1998; Victorrof and Kruglanski, 2009). Violence is complex and it may be impossible to disentangle the myriad overlapping casual mechanisms. Yet, the competing literature give us a framework in which to better understand, and ideally, predict the situations in which political violence is more likely to occur.

DEBATES ON POLITICAL VIOLENCE

The study of social and political violence has long interested academics and policy-makers alike. Today, terrorism and counter-insurgency join ethnic conflict

and nation building as major research themes in the field. In this endeavor, International Relations scholars and Comparative Political theorists have begun to work together in exploring the vast complexities of intra-state war. As Charles King notes, they have "...found common ground in trying to understand why people kill each other in large groups outside of a declared interstate war" (2010:56).

Beginning in the late 1990s, scholars sought to bring back the study of violence to its origins, exploring problems of social order, mobilizations and state-society relations (see for example, McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly, 1997; Rapoport, 1995). At its core, the enterprise seeks to develop elegant models of violence and problematize the core assumptions about political violence. Despite the renewed attention, the competing claims and literature on the root causes of political violence[3] remains underdeveloped principally because of two main deficiencies. First, much of the literature seeking to explain political violence, especially in recent years with an eye towards suicide terrorism and unconventional warfare like insurgencies, approaches it at the macro level, conceptualizing it in the domain of states and/or organizations which employ political violence as a purposeful action meant to achieve a desired political objective. Political violence is conceived of as strategic and rational behavior and the unit of analysis is the organization or network organizing attacks. Although these studies attempt to explain why individuals join such groups, discussing humiliation, isolation, "brainwashing",

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[3] Given the normative implications and subjective nature of the term "terrorism", I define all violent actions, including those which deliberately or exclusively target non-combatants, as political violence. Political violence is any non-peaceful action which seeks at a minimum to implement political change.

religion, and/or narcissism, the focus remains on how the organization or network, as a strategic actor behaves – not on the formation of the individual attitudes that precede either the decision to join a terrorist group or subsequently commit an act of terrorism.[4]

Conversely, at the micro-level, studies focus on either contextual or ideational factors, but rarely on both factors combined. These explanations posit cognitive, ideational and/or emotive determinants of behavior and range from cultural arguments to studies in deviant psychology (Bonger, Brown, Beutler, and Brekenridge, 2006; Crenshaw, 1992; Horgan, 2005; Kellen, 1990; Post, 1997; Reich and Laqueur, 1998; Victorrof and Kruglanski, 2009). Some suggest that politically motivated violence is driven by either "greed or grievance," (see Collier and Hoeffler, 2001;, Collier and Sambalis, 2003) while additional studies have attempted to look at the root causes of existing political violence by focusing exclusively on individuals who have already chosen to operate outside accepted institutional frameworks and engage in political violence (Post, 2008; Sageman, 2004). These studies trace the contextual or grievance-based factors to which a person has been exposed and highlight patterns across and within subject populations. Some claim this line of inquiry especially problematic because for every individual identified as a supporter of or participant in of political violence, there are a number of people similarly exposed to the same ideational and contextual forces who do not behave

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[4] For examples, see Bloom, 2005; Pape, 2005; Pedahzur, 2005; and Sageman, 2004.

violently (Wiktorowicz, 2005). I disagree with this assessment, however. As I discuss below, the micro-comparative study of political violence, although in its nascent stages, has proven to be a necessary corrective to the usual large-n studies which dominated the study of violence. King (2010:160) offers his own "micro-political turn in the study of social violence: a concern with uncovering the precise mechanism via which individuals and groups go about trading in the benefits of stability for the inherently risky behavior associated with violence – and how, as Thucydides knew, they often do it at the expense of people whom they previously called friends and neighbors."

Given that war and political violence is costly and that outcomes are rarely certain, under what conditions do organized groups and/or individuals engage in such behavior? Frequently, material considerations are cited as key determinants, even in conflicts which are purportedly driven by emotive factors (Fearon, 1995; Kalyvas, 2006; Mueller, 2000). Material factors alone do not always help explain all aspects of political violence. Petersen (2002) explores the role of key emotions in driving and escalating ethnic conflicts, especially when such violence targets minorities, arguing that emotional mechanisms explain target variation and timing of attacks. Yet, although emotions can play a role in political violence, many conflicts are driven by strategic or material interests. Indeed, even in genocides and ethnic wars, conflicts presumed to be driven by emotions like ancient hatreds, are often times driven more by material considerations.

In an examination of ethnic war in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, Muller (2000) notes that such violence had little to do with ideational factors like emotion. Ethnicity itself was little more than an ordering device. These conflicts in actuality resembled other non-ethnic wars. These wars were not "Hobbesian" wars of all against all, neighbor on neighbor, nor were they spurred by primordial hatreds. Rather, violence was implemented by small bands of thugs and marauders who were recruited by opportunistic political elites. Once such criminal groups began to target a different ethnic group or nationality, the broader kin-group population feared a subsequent backlash from the targeted groups, and as such, sought protection from the very same ones who instigated the violence. Muller's work encourages us to problematize exactly who is committing violent acts and to better understand the strategic and material basis for violence.

Kalyvas (2006) too discusses the instrumental use of political violence. He posits that violence functions as an instrumental way to obtain allegiance, cooperation, and/or information from the civilian populace. Violence is a necessary tool in garnering select resources and, depending on the circumstance; such violence will be employed selectively or indiscriminately. Deliberate violence is reserved for enemies, including collaborators. Yet knowing who is and who is not an enemy depends on the amount of available information. When such information is readily available, the likelihood of using violence diminishes. On the other hand, where information is scarce there is less control. As a result indiscriminate violence increases.

The main insight of Kalyvas' work is to demonstrate the instrumental and rational function of violence. He reveals that even ostensibly random acts of violence are little more than just another tool in the repository of potential instruments necessary to achieve some known and desired goal. In conflicts each side may employ a number of different tools, including harsh violence. The point is to remember that all of these are rational.

In the study of terrorism, a range of cognitive factors are explored. Horgan (1981) noted in an early literature review of terrorism studies that psychopathology was the dominant feature. Psychopaths, narcissists, paranoids and other deviants were considered to be the backbone of violent organizations. Subsequent research has shown, however, little evidence of this claim. McCauley (2001:1) notes that perpetrators of terrorism and political violence,

> …did not differ from the comparison group…in any substantial way…indeed, terrorism would be a trivial problem if only those with some kind of psychopathology could be terrorists. Rather we have to face the fact that normal people can be terrorists, that we are ourselves capable of terrorist acts under some circumstance. This fact is already implied in recognizing that military and police forces involved in state terrorism are all too capable of killing non-combatants. Few would suggest that the broad range of soldiers and policemen involved in such killings must all be suffering some kind of psychopathology.

Silke (2003) too argues that perpetrators of political violence do exhibit normal psychology and that "their involvement in political violence is a result of a series of understandable factors which combined result in a process of deepening involvement in violent extremism." According to Silke, perpetrators of violence represent only a marginal element within the broader social group, sharing many if

not all of the same values and views on violence. When such social support is removed or eroded, the perpetrating individuals or groups do not often survive (see Gurr 1998). The role of public support for political violence and militant activity will be discussed in greater detail below.

The support for political violence is claimed by some to be the result of social learning. A social learning theory of aggression claims that violence follows observation and imitation (Bandura, 1978). This is a different model than ones in which innate aggression leads to violent behaviors. In this model, for example, teenagers may witness certain forms of violence, as well as the potential public glorification of such events, and then feel that violence is socially permissible, thus making them arguably more likely to engage in violence. This work has been used to explain certain dynamics in the Palestinian community (Crenshaw 1992; Taylor and Quayle 1994; Kelly and Rieber 1995).

Social learning of the acceptability of political violence can come from a variety of other sources. In Islamic cultures, particularly those associated with political violence, Madrasas (Kepel, 2002; Atran, 2003) and Internet communications are claimed significant. However, this cognitive restructuring model fails to account for the large numbers of people who are similarly exposed and/or indoctrinated yet do not go on to perpetrate an act of political violence.

As social learning relates to Chechnya, war has ravaged Chechnya essentially since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. There were periods of relative peace from 1991 to 1994 and from 1997 to 1999, but the vast majority of Chechen youth

have grown up knowing little more than war, death, violence, hate, and rage. In Chechnya and throughout the scattered refugee communities these children and young adults have become socialized into a world where violence is often a legitimate means to achieve some desired good. To say that they are de-sensitized to violence is an understatement, but this is all part of a complex psychological process, actually the result of several inter-related processes, the dynamics of which are beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Theorists and scholars of terrorism offer still more explanations (Victoroff and Kruglanski, 2009): Frustration-aggression; Relative Deprivation and Oppression Theory; psychoanalytical theories such as Identity theory, Narcissism theory, Paranoia theory, Absolute/Apocalyptic theory; and non-psychoanalytic psychological theories such as Cognitive theories, Novelty-seeking theory, and Humiliation-Revenge theory (Bonger, Brown, Beutler, and Brekenridge, 2006; Horgan, 2005; Victorrof and Kruglanski, 2009; Reich and Laqueur, 1998; Silke, 2003).

What do we make of these approaches? I acknowledge that each approach offers insights on political violence; yet, I contend that each fails to adequately address or properly emphasize the essential role that attitudes and beliefs play in political violence. Scholars like Pape (2005) use a macro approach to give us valuable insights into how violence can be employed strategically and instrumentally. In this case, Pape showed how suicide terrorism had little do to with religion, but was rather a deliberate strategy employed by territory-seeking

militants against democratic governments. However, this level of analysis fails to satisfactorily explain how attitudes and ideas influence individual incentives to engage in or actively support political violence, preferring instead to construct predictive models which downplay the significance of cognitive factors.[5]

Recent scholars like Lyall (2009), Kalyvas (2006), King (2010), Sinno (2010), and Wood (2003), respectively, have used micro-level explanations to illustrate how individual-level processes influence political violence. This line of inquiry shows particular promise in contributing to our understanding of political violence, especially when mixed with on-the-ground ethnographic research. The short-comings of micro-level studies is that they fail to consider the role of elites and/or networks or account for how these actors can influence and manipulate the emotive reasons for adopting certain attitudes or behaviors. Micro-level studies also might not be able to generalize findings beyond their particular research focus. In general, I contend that it is critical to recognize the causal role of attitudes and beliefs in influencing political violence and to examine the multiple causes of such attitudes. In this dissertation I contribute to this broader goal by focusing on the causal variables, which lead to the emergence of attitudes that view political violence as an acceptable form of political behavior.

More troubling, the preponderance of literature dealing with political violence deals with a specific subset of actors and a specific step in the process and

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[5] It should be noted that macro studies which view political violence as a strategic behavior do acknowledge the central role that elites and networks play in influencing individual behavior, but do so in such as way as to subsume cognitive processes to the causal power of the elites or networks themselves; See Sageman, 2004.

evolution of violence (Post, 2005; Sageman, 2004). This extant literature deals primarily with groups, organizations, or leaders, all of whom may act and interact in a variety of ways and employ, for any number of causal reasons, violent means towards some desired goal. In this, communities are seen as being vital only insofar as they serve as repositories for recruitment, physical support, and/or psychological support by the aforementioned actors; the community can help replenish active membership ranks, can help finance operations, can provide vital information, and can offer sanctuary to avoid government detection; at worst, communities are simple arenas in which various actors operate.

SOCIAL SUPPORT FOR POLITICAL VIOLENCE

Non-participant support has both ideational and material consideration. Militants need to constantly mobilize support and maintain their support bases (constituents). If they lose support then they are likely to be found, arrested, or killed by the opposing government. To move freely among their people, they must sustain their support base and the peoples' goodwill (Bloom, 2006:26-27).

Policy-makers too have tended to underestimate the significance of better understanding how communities develop certain norms of behavior, especially those which prescribe and proscribe the limits and legitimacy of political violence as a means to achieve some select objective. To most policy-makers, refugee communities are viewed pejoratively as "swamps" in which the main agitators, the "mosquitoes", align with one of the above sub-set groups and then move on to infect

the surrounding areas (Rumsfeld, September 19, 2001). The policy prescriptions here are clear: drain the swamp and thus deny the "mosquitoes" a necessary area to breed and feed. This view tacitly acknowledges the significance of communities, yet the policy prescription is seldom achievable. I argue that communities are more essential than commonly acknowledged and my contribution helps us better understand this critically understudied social actor. By moving the unit of analysis to the community, I contend that we can glean a better insight into the nature of community dynamics driving violent means and also glean a greater understanding of the subset groups which emerge from the community to go on and actually perpetuate the violent acts. In this sense, engaging in political violence may indeed "take a village" and as such, we should not ignore critical players and settings.

Studying non-participant support for insurgencies and militant activity has both theoretical and policy implications. It has been noted that social support is integral for maintaining protracted insurgent movements, yet "one notable lacuna in the literature on the duration of conflict is the role of social forces in duration or resolution...Current scholarship has examined these matters in bits and pieces..." (O'Leary and Tirman, 2007:13). The policy world contends dampening popular support for militant activity dampens actual militant activity. Yet, as Shapiro and Fair state,

> ...how much of a concern reducing support should be... is unclear given the state of knowledge. There are no rigorous studies that demonstrate a linkage between expressed support for militancy and the supply of militants, much less studies that show a linkage between expressed support and realized levels of militant violence. Identifying such relationships requires research

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designs that move beyond examining public attitudes towards militancy. That said, the fact that militant organizations cannot engage in meaningful levels of violence without some measure of popular support remains a first-order concern (Shapiro and Fair, 2009:84).

Although Shapiro and Fair claim that there is no evidence that decreasing non-participant support for militant activities reduces militant violence, I demonstrate how non-participant rejection can decreased subsequent levels of militant activity, particularly in regard to target selection. As we will see, the overwhelming rejection of the attack on schoolchildren in Belsan spurred a re-evaluation about targets and methods among Chechen militants that led to a three-year gap in terrorist attacks against civilians. This clearly illustrates the potential power of non-participants have on militant behavior.

Despite these assertions, little work has been done on the actual relationship between non-participant support and militant activity and even less exploring the sources of variation among vulnerable peoples. Exploring the sources of variation in attitudinal support for political violence complements previous work on the particular characteristics of genuine militants. Overwhelmingly, research on terrorism and insurgent violence privileges the accounts of elites and militants. However, like Shapiro and Fair's work on understanding support for Islamic militancy among Pakistanis, this dissertation focuses exclusively on non-participants to explore insurgent movements at the "grass roots" level of average individuals. It is clear that academics and policy-makers alike need to better understand the relationship between non-participant support and militant activity.

Accordingly, like Shapiro and Fair's work, this study too breaks new ground in identifying the correlates of support for specific acts of political violence among displaced Chechens by exploring the conditions under which displaced individuals find political violence an acceptable form of behavior.

DEFINING DISPLACED CHECHENS: THE NEW DIASPORA

Displaced Chechens in the Caucasus and Europe do not resemble stereotypical refugees. They do not occupy crowed tent camps bound by fences. The vast majority of displaced Chechens, especially those in Western Europe, live in middle to low class flats. Some live proximate to one another, but there are no "Little Grozny's" as most are scattered throughout various towns and cities. Status-wise, they are refugees and/or asylum-seekers, but I contend the current situation more closely resembles that of an embryonic diaspora community. Indeed, most displaced Chechens express little desire to return home, contently quiescent to remain in place. The reasons for this vary, but the fact remains that there is, and for some time will be, a sizable community of displaced Chechens, especially if they mimic their kin back home and retain high birth rates.

Accordingly, I contend the displaced Chechen community gives scholars a unique opportunity to explore the transformation and evolution of a community from refugees to diaspora. Significant insights can be gleaned by relaxing the rigid categories of refugee or diaspora. Extant literature treats these as dichotomous, yet does not have an adequate conceptual framework for identifying when a refugee

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community becomes a diaspora. By relaxing boundaries, I assert that we can observe which politics matter and how politics matter, particularly those related to political goals, regime type preferences, and attitudes towards the use of militant violence in achieving those objectives. Civilian support is paramount for successful counter-insurgency operations (Byman, Chalk, Hoffman, Rosenau, and Brannan, 2001; Galula, 1964/2006; Kilcullen, 2005; Petraeus and Amos, 2007). As such, we need to better understand what motivates non-participant support, especially among communities not proximate to the conflict.

DISPLACEMENT, VIOLENCE, AND PROTRACTED INSURGENCIES

As noted, more research needs to be conducted to understand and account for variance among non-participants in support a range of politically violent behaviors, like terrorism, suicide bombings, and guerilla and insurgent tactics. Indeed, if rebel groups, guerillas, insurgents, and terrorists alike all need at least some degree of non-participant support, foreign policies should be directed towards dampening the attractiveness of such behaviors (Tessler and Robbins, 2007:305). This reality is reflected in the numerous writings of both classical and contemporary counter-insurgency (COIN) theorists and practitioners (Petraeus and Amos, 2007).

All protracted insurgencies have constituents from whom they seek approval and legitimacy. Modern day insurgent movements like the Irish Republican Army, the Basque ETA, Algerian GAM, and Columbian FARC all necessitate popular support. Yet, the social base of support is rarely homogenous. It is full of individuals

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who support the cause highly along with any means necessary, and with individuals who reject certain means, such as violence, and, indeed, even political objectives (Heidberg, O'Leary, and Tirman, 2007). "Policy makers eventually realize that winning the battle of ideas may be as important as the use of weapons in keeping insurgencies from monopolizing the representation of the constituents" (O'Leary and Tirman, 2007:397). Identifying who supports certain militant behaviors and the reasons for such support is the first step in formulating sound foreign policy responses.

Despite the purported agreement on the necessity of popular support for militants, there is comparatively little agreement on the causes for such support. More troubling, there is comparatively little systematic research conducted on explaining why some individuals support political violence, while others do not. Indeed, much of our limited knowledge about the social support of insurgent movements and militant activity comes from the inherent difficulty in doing fieldwork with political violent groups. It is a rarity for social scientists to operate in conflict and conflict adjacent regions (O'Leary and Tirman, 2007:14). Indeed, as O'Leary and Silke note in a review of the literature that scholars tend to rely on "easily accessible sources of data" (O'Leary and Silke, 2007:390-391).[6] And unfortunately, what studies that do exist rely almost exclusively on survey

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[6] For O'Leary, and Silke, our best knowledge comes from individuals who spend significant time devoted to a given conflict, live for extensive periods in the area, learn local languages and access both militants and non-participants (2007:394). In doing so, they acknowledge that many researchers who immerse themselves as such projects are frequently threatened and even targeted, situations which happened repeatedly to this researcher in the course of this study.

questionnaires (Tessler and Robbins, 2007; Nachtwey and Tessler, 2002; Shafiq and Sinno, 2010; Shapiro and Fair, 2010).   Survey questionnaires can help shed light on various aspects of non-participant support, yet I contend that scholars must also incorporate thick, ethnographic work to create a fuller picture and better understanding of the various social dynamics among vulnerable populations. This type of research is inherently dangerous and the results can be "messy" yet such work is absolutely vital to bettering our understandings of both non-participant support and the causes of variance. This study is one attempt to conduct such a research project.

Of course, it is important to note a less obvious reason for the dearth of studies on social support for insurgencies is the relative scarcity of protracted insurgent movements. Insurgencies, especially those that employ terrorist methods against a regime, are usually defeated rather quickly (O'Leary and Tirman, 2007:390). This makes understanding protracted insurgencies a critical issue for foreign policy decision makers and should encourage more "boots on the ground" among social scientists. It is vital to better understand the nature of insurgent political goals and how they evolve over time. We also need to be better attuned to the nature of non-participant social support. The assumption, as in Mao's famous dictum about insurgent fish swimming in an acquiescing sea, is that insurgencies with little social support will be short-lived. But what determines support or rejection? This dissertation attempts to answer these questions.

POLITICAL DISSATISFACTION – GREED, GRIEVANCE, OR POLITICS

Until recently, the extant literature on intra-state conflicts posits that violence is driven by either greed or grievances (Collier and Sambalis, 2009). Although many proponents of this framework now recognize the need for a more nuanced approach, much of the debate remains centered on the purported role of environmental factors. The grievance approach suggests that socio-economic deprivation leads to frustration, which leads to both support for political violence and actual political violence. Such an explanation might seem particularly appropriate when discussing displaced peoples, but much recent work has cast significant doubt on the purported relationship between poverty and violence (Berrebi, 2007; Kreuger, 2002; Kreuger and Maleckova, 2003). Of course, some do add a caveat that such mechanisms may work is such deprivations can be attributed to some exogenous group, thus provoking "collective distress" and feelings of hopelessness which produce pro-violent attitudes by making such actions appear legitimate and justified (Tessler and Robbins, 2007:310).

I believe that Shafiq and Sinno's work (2010) exploring the relationship between wealth and higher education and the support or political violence provide a more useful analytical framework for understanding non-participant support for militant activity. A key part of their model is the role of political dissatisfaction in generating attitudes supporting political violence. They argue that the more political dissatisfaction there is the more likely an individual is to support political violence. Basing their conceptual model on Lerner (1958), "...educated individuals

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have more at stake in political outcomes and thus adopt extremist political attitudes…" (Shafiq and Sinno, 2010:150). Wealthier individuals are less likely to support political violence because they are purportedly more satisfied (Shafiq and Sinno, 2010:152). Thus, by the same mechanism, in this study I contend that maximal political goals, like the desire to establish an Islamic Caucasus Emirate in the Caucasus and the desire to establish sharia as a regime type, are in fact a signal of extreme political dissatisfaction with the contemporary regime and status quo. Consequently, the higher the levels of political dissatisfaction, the more likely individuals support for political violence. For these Chechens the stakes could not be higher; indeed, these individuals feel that they are facing an existential threat by co-existing within the Russian Federation. Just like the past, the Russians will soon enough turn their aims once again on annihilating the Chechen people. In short, establishing such an alien form of political organization signals the utter rejection of the past and of the idea that there are any commonalities with the Russian system.

There are alternative explanations regarding the determinants of non-participant support for militant activities. Revenge (Boehm, 1984; Chagnon, 1988; Chirot and McCauley, 2006; Volkan, 1997), nationalism (Lake and Rothchild, 1996; Posen, 1993; Snyder and Ballentine, 1996; Snyder, 2000; Van Evera, 1994, and desire for group cohesion (Crenshaw, 1987; O'Rourke, 2009) are all purported casual variables. It is believed there is also a correlation between religiosity and support for militancy. Purportedly, this relationship is particularly true in relation to Islamic militancy (Shapiro and Fair, 2010). Support for certain political goals is

purportedly correlated with non-participant attitudes towards militant activity. Those who support democracy, for example, are thought to be less supportive of both violent means and militants than those espousing theocracies (Shapiro and Fair, 2009). This latter proposition is now the basis for certain American and Western foreign policies in the Muslim world. Many foreign policy leaders argue that democracy is diametrically opposed to Islamism and militancy (Shapiro and Fair, 2009:105). Yet, as Shapiro and Fair note, "...none of these conventional wisdoms rest on a firm evidentiary basis, yet they dominate in varying degrees popular media accounts...debates in US Congress and polices adopted by Western states..."(Shapiro and Fair, 2009:80). This dissertation explores these wisdoms through an underutilized research method in the study of insurgencies and militant activity, namely systematic, micro-level, ethnographic fieldwork.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY THREAT AND DISPLACEMENT: REFUGEES AND DIASPORAS

Protracted insurgencies are one of the more troublesome problems of international relations; yet, our understanding of the social and political dynamics driving such conflicts, as well as the relationship between war and displacement in general, remains surprisingly incomplete. Human displacement is a major factor in international and regional instability. Since the end of the Cold War, many politicians have viewed refugees and asylum seekers in negative terms as threats. Consequently, the shift has been from protecting refugees to seeking protection from them. The attacks on September 11, 2001 accelerated the move towards more

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restrictive asylum policies. Over time these restrictions may lead to widespread frustration and radicalization of refugees, especially for those trapped in squalid camps that are unable to return home. There is a fear, borne out by the increase in radicalism and political violence in Europe, that terrorists will use the refugee channels to gain access to new markets for potential recruits.[7] For host countries understanding the mechanisms and conditions that produce political violence is essential, especially since the existence of refugee communities has been shown to increase the likelihood of war and instability (Salehyan and Gleditch, 2006; Salehyan, 2007). In particular, the most serious security threats are posed by militarization of refugee communities and the emergence of "refugee warrior" communities (Adelman, 1998).

Due to the increasing number of refugees worldwide, understanding how communities adapt to these new environments and why they seem to be especially prone to political violence demands further attention. Why do refugees matter? Forced movement of peoples has profound effects on individuals, communities, host countries, and regional politics alike (Helton, 2003; Newman and van Selm, 2003). With the exception of casualties and war dead, refugees are the most visible victims of a political conflict. Protracted exile is expected to produce radicalization and political instability, yet, although the majority of the world's refugees never engage in political violence it does not mean that they are passive. Refugees in various

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[7] It has been noted that although not all refugees or immigrants are terrorists, individuals who were immigrants have perpetrated all terrorist acts committed against the West in recent years; See Gunara, 2009; Wiktorowicz, 2005; Roy, 2004; and Sageman, 2004.

contexts can be the product of violence and its cause and can be a factor in the continuation of a conflict and/or the obstruction of peace processes.[8]   Refugees can be weapons or threats and they are a manifestation of instability in world politics. Indeed, many refugees do continue to engage in politics which affect their homeland. We are now just beginning to recognize that refugee communities are far more politicized and militarized than originally thought. Violent entrepreneurs and militants find the refugee communities ideal places to recruit and use them as an operational base or sanctuary as well as a source of food and medicine.

Human displacement is a major factor in international and regional instability. Since the end of the Cold War, many politicians have viewed refugees and asylum seekers in negative terms as threats. Consequently, the shift has been from protecting refugees to seeking protection from them.   In the public and political discourse, the predominant sentiment towards refugees is captured by the December 2000 Human Rights Watch report claiming,

> Increasingly refugees are equated with threats to national and regional security…Many refugee hosting countries have legitimate security concerns, including cross-border incursions, militarization of refugee camps, and the fear of conflicts spilling over from neighboring refugee-producing countries.

The terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 accelerated the move towards more restrictive asylum and refugee policies. Over time these restrictions may lead to widespread frustration and radicalization of refugees, especially for those

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[8] Refugee camps may be especially vulnerable to violence because, as Volkan (1997) argues, violence is frequently driven by fear, stress, and anxiety, all conditions endemic to refugee communities. Moreover, Crenshaw (2002) notes that engaging in violence can provide "psychic rewards" that satisfy revenge and give perpetrators a degree of control, something refugees rarely possess.

trapped in squalid camps that are unable to return home. There is a fear, borne out by the increase in radicalism and political violence in Europe, that terrorists will use the refugee channels to gain access to new markets for potential recruits.[9] For host countries understanding the mechanisms and conditions that produce political violence is essential, especially since the existence of refugee communities has been shown to increase the likelihood of war and instability (Salehyan and Gleditch, 2006; Salehyan, 2007). In particular, the most serious security threats are posed by militarization of refugee communities and the emergence of "refugee warrior" communities.

Militarization is not new. However, the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) recently noted that militarized refugee communities currently present "the single biggest threat to refuge security"(Adamson, 2006). Nearly 15% of all contemporary refugee crises, in places like Afghanistan, Bosnia, Burundi, East Timor, Gaza and the West Bank, Liberia, Rwanda, and Sudan, are experiencing some degree of refugee militarization. Militarization can significantly undermine and threaten host state and regional security, increasing the likelihood of both intra-state and inter-state war. The existence of refugee communities in neighboring states has been shown to be a positive and statistically significant predictor of conflict continuation and civil wars (Salehyan and Gleditch, 2006; Salehyan, 2007).

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[9] It has been noted that although not all refugees or immigrants are terrorists, all terrorist acts committed against the West in recent years have been perpetrated by individuals who were immigrants; See Gunara, 2009; Wiktorowicz, 2005; Roy, 2004; and Sageman, 2004.

This an especially serious security threat in the contemporary era when states, with the help of IGOs and NGOs, can now support large numbers of displaced peoples for extended periods of time (Zolberg, Suhrke and Aguayo, 1992). It is clear that policy-makers ignore refugee crises at their peril.

Manipulation of refugees effects international and regional security by making refugees resources. These resources become vital in prolonging civil wars. They can also serve to threaten broader regional stability. If an armed group loses on its native soil, the existence of a large refugee or diaspora community in a neighboring state gives the defeated groups a sanctuary to rest, heal, and re-group. International aid is diverted from needy refugees to support the armed struggle (Lischer, 2006:19). In cases where this dynamic has played out, the wars have been especially bloody and protracted. The home-state army is denied the opportunity to declare full battle-field victory, while the force in exile has created a new bargaining situation in which the refugees themselves may be used as a kind of "demographic bargaining chip" (Zolberg, Suhrke and Aguayo, 1992:277). Manipulation is not new, and using refuges as a tool of statecraft is not only for non-state actors. During the Cold War both the United States and the Soviet Union used refugees to further their own political agendas and strike back at their adversaries (Weiner, 1992).

Militarization is part of a deliberate strategy employed by violent entrepreneurs or militants to ultimately bolster their own protection. Militants' view the refugee communities as resources and potential rear-bases to launch attacks against the home or sending state and the longer refugees are forced to live

in exile, the more likely the chances of militarization. Inevitably, refugees will become increasingly distressed, anxious, and frustrated and may come to see violence as a more attractive alternative. Over time, militants will infiltrate refugee communities and manipulate these circumstances to harness refugee angst and channel it into political action, including violence, most often against the home regime, but also potentially against the host state (Salehyan, 2007:791). This is especially true in situations in which co-ethnic communities are present (Lischer, 2006:98-99).

The perception of refugees as passive victims has long been disproved. To paraphrase Charles Tilly's famous quip about the relationship between war and the state, it appears that while war makes the refugee, the refugee in turn often makes war. In particular, "refugee warriors" have been shown to be instrumental in generating political violence. Refugee warriors are:

> Usually the citizens (or the children and grandchildren) of one state who have crossed a border as a refugee and live in a neighboring state, often in camps on the borders of their native state…they are refuge warriors if they have fled their homeland and live in neighboring states, most often in refugee communities, and launch attacks against the regime in power in their homeland from bases in the neighboring states (Adelman, 1998:2).

The majority of refugee warriors tend to be estranged political elites who seek to use sympathetic co-ethnics and diaspora communities, as well as any favorable host governments, to arm themselves for continued struggle against the home-state regime. After enduring at least one significant defeat against the home-state regime, these elites seek to use "the suffering of refugees for its own political

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purpose: to siphon off aid, establish the international legitimacy of their cause…As long as [these disaffected political elites] control refugee populations, they can demand a seat at the bargaining table…" (Stedman and Turner, 2003:3).

Refugee warriors require community support for not just material concerns, like recruits and logistics for engaging in political violence against the sending regime, but also to help establish a state-in-exile, a political organization which necessitates broader legitimacy for survival. For refugee warriors, communal support is critical for international legitimacy. Indeed, according to Zolberg, et al., the "language of politics is democratic and representative," so, elites use the existence of large numbers of displaced co-ethnics to legitimize both their rule and, in some instances, the use and necessity of political violence as a tool essential to avoiding outright extermination (Zolberg, Suhrke and Aguayo, 1992:277).

Refugee warriors are symptomatic of the economic and political crises inherent in the modern globalizing world in which economic inequalities grow ever larger and where increased political repression leads to increasingly radicalized political actors. In many instances, such repression forces opposition leaders to flee their home states (Adelman, 1998). Of course, this is nothing new, but what is unique to the contemporary era is that the world today can support large numbers of displaced peoples for extended periods of time. Moreover, the political realities of today's world in which the langue of politics is democratic and representative, political leaders in exile use the existence of large numbers of displaced co-ethnics to legitimize both their rule and, in some occasions, the use and necessity of political

violence as a tool necessary to avoid outright extinction (Zolberge and Benda, 2001:277). In short, the refugee warriors and the refugee political activists/would-be leaders, both require community support.

There is abundant empirical evidence of the relationship between refugee communities and political violence: Palestinian refugees in the West Bank, Gaza, Jordan and Lebanon eventually turned their frustrations into political violence (Berrebi, 2007). Rwandan refugees in the Congo and displaced Afghans in Pakistan have similarly picked up the sword (Stedman and Turner, 2003). In fact, these latter groups formed the core of hardened reserve armies which made an immediate impact on the very conflicts which displaced them; yet, not every refugee community becomes militarized or produces refugee warriors. Most refugees care only about the most pressing and basic needs: food, clothing, shelter, water, medicine, sanitation, education for their children, and electricity. Other scholars believed that the determining factor is based on how the refugees were driven from their home state and how politicized they were during the displacement. Those refugee communities, which underwent particularly violent displacement as well as those, which had built-in political institutions were, therefore, more likely to experience increased militarization once in their host states (Lischer, 2006: 18-30; Zolberg, Suhrke and Aguayo, 1992).

Not every refugee community becomes militarized. What explains this outcome? Some scholars believed that the determining factor was based in how the refugees were driven from their home state and how politicized they were during

the displacement (Lischer, 2006:18-30; Stedman and Turner, 2003:6-8). Those refugee communities which underwent particularly violent forced migrations as well as those which had built-in political institutions were, therefore, more likely to experience increased militarization once in their host states. However, scholars such as Adelman (1998) and Lisher (2006) reject an "origins" thesis, instead arguing that militarization has more to do with host state circumstances. These scholars claim that militarization is more likely to occur when the host state itself either ignores refugee crises or actually foments militarization and/or the formation of refugee communities to further its own parochial foreign policy objectives. This claim has clear policy implications.

Host states which use refugee communities as tools in their own statecraft against rival and adversarial states are the most likely candidates to produce militarized refugee camps and refugee warrior communities (Salehyan and Gleditch, 2006; Salehyan, 2007). These governments may even arm refugees and actively encourage cross-border incursions. In doing so, they may fail to realize the ramifications of such actions: guns can be pointed both ways and there is little guarantee armed refugees will not take aim against the host state government in the future. More importantly, as noted above, cross-border attacks by refugees against the home state often increases the likelihood of reciprocal attacks, potentially spiraling into new interstate wars which eventually destabilize regional security (Salehyan and Gleditch, 2006; Salehyan, 2007). Refugees in these states will also suffer other deprivations: because these host states look to the short-term, refugee

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communities in these places are more likely to be disorderly and squalid (Lischer, 2006).

Conversely, a well-governed state with robust political institutions and civil society is less likely to permit refugees to do as they please, especially in regards to launching military incursions into neighboring states. These hosts actively dampen the conditions which produce militarization and manipulation by violent political entrepreneurs. In doing so, they separate armed refugees from the broader community and act as a protector for the community overall. They provide aid and assistance, but also are aware that over the long term refugees must not be dependent exclusively on external aid (Salehyan and Gleditch, 2006; Salehyan, 2007). Refugees must be given opportunities for self-sufficiency and afforded the chance to establish productive livelihoods (Stedman and Turner, 2003:6). Refugees may be encouraged to integrate into host state societies, although in some circumstances this may increase the likelihood of competition between refugees and locals over jobs and other resources (Lischer, 2006).

In addition, Lischer posits four policy prescriptions for preventing refugee militarization: first, international donors must provide substantial humanitarian aid. Second, host state must resist the temptation to build actual camps. Third, refugees should never be forced home against their will. Finally, western states and the USA must expand and expedite the resettlement process (Lischer, 2008:113-118).[10]

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[10] In a recent article on Iraqi refugees, Lischer reveals how refugee communities are susceptible to manipulation and militarization. Most of the Iraqi refugees were received in neighboring states as unwelcome guests. Facing local resentment and government restrictions, with little real hope for

Proximity is important (Lischer, 2006:36; Salehyan and Gleditch, 2006; Salehyan, 2007). Many refugees end up in camps or communities close to home. They leave because of direct experiences of persecution or political violence and thus have strong reasons to oppose the regime they fled. Although refugees are victims of violence, they are also prime-candidates for recruitment involving rebel factions; rather than simply being a consequence of fighting, they may also be contributors to conflict. Because they have suffered violence and often have endured substantial losses – livelihoods, property, family members, and/or homeland – refugees have clear grievances or motives for opposition activities. Because of these losses refugees have lower opportunity costs for fighting. Those refugees residing in squalid camps and who are dependent on foreign assistance have very few productive alternatives to joining rebel organizations which may offer a better quality of life and a sense of purpose. Finally, because they aren't within their home state's political jurisdiction, the state can't directly monitor or repress the refugee communities (Lischer, 2006:36; Salehyan and Gleditch, 2006; Salehyan, 2007).

Rebels may try and use refugee communities as a launching-pad for insurgent strikes against the home state. But this can only happen when the communities are located in close geographic proximity to the target state. The

returning home, the Iraqi refugee communities are potentially prime candidates for political manipulation and increased militarization, both of which increase the likelihood that this will soon be a community of refugee warriors. Of course, even if they do not become refugee warriors, this community's very existence will cause certain problems and exacerbate other political tensions.

nature of the host state matters as well. A well-governed state with robust political institutions and a strong, vibrant civil society is less likely to let refugees living on their soil free reign top do as they please, especially in regards to launching military incursions into neighboring states (Lischer, 2006:6-9; Lischer, 2009:104-107; Salehyan and Gleditch, 2006:360) . Empirically, these are the kinds of host states which actively seek to dampen the militarization and manipulation of the refugee communities by violent political entrepreneurs. In doing so, these host-states will seek to separate armed refugees from the broader community and act as a protector for the refugee community. They will provide aid and assistance, but also be aware that over the long term the refugees must not be allowed to rely exclusively on external aid (Salehyan, 2008791-792). The refugees must be given opportunities to be self-sufficient and establish productive livelihoods. They may be encouraged to integrate into the host state societies; although the host state maybe concerned that this will increase the likelihood of competition and friction between refugees and local over jobs and other resources (Stedman and Turner, 2003:179-190).

Rebels may further manipulate refugee communities by forcibly moving people to gain territory or resources. This demographic engineering is better known as ethnic-cleansing (Lischer, 2008:116). This is instigated because armed groups want to homogenize the territory under their control as a way of securing their won position. By moving out the "un-desirables" and moving the "desirables" in, they can manufacture a "shared experience of persecution." Much like nationalism rests of a history of shared trauma; in this way too can rebel leaders

socially construct new, deeper in-group ties. As new bonds form, people are more receptive to military propaganda. Second, they can encourage a security dilemma mentality among the people. This is comparatively simple since people recognize they may never return home and are vulnerable, a condition will only worsen with time. Leaders can present themselves as legitimate protectors and that the group as a whole must arm themselves and eventually act to protect themselves and prevent future threats.

On the contrary, host states which seek to use the refugee communities as tools in their own statecraft against rival and adversarial states are the most likely candidates for producing militarized refugee communities. These host governments may arms the refugees and encourage cross-border raids and incursions. These governments may fail to realize the ramifications of such actions: first, guns can be pointed both ways and there is no guarantee the now-armed refugees will not someday take aim against the host state government (Salehyan and Gleditch, 2006). More importantly, as noted above, cross-border attacks by refugees against the home/sending state often increases the risks that such attacks will spark a new interstate war and, ultimately, destabilize regional security. Because these states look to the short-term, refugee communities in these places are more likely to be disorderly and squalid.

Beyond security, refugees undoubtedly impact their host countries in other ways. It has been noted that statistically, the world's poorest states harbor most of the world's refugees (Bakewell, 1999; Dowty and Loescher, 1996).   The

"uncontrolled flow across borders produces additional stress on already weak state institutions, heightens competition over scarce resources, and exacerbates ethnic and sectarian tensions" (Bakewell, 1999; Dowty and Loescher, 1996). Refugees that mix with host societies can fundamentally affect local economies, influence foreign policies, and, especially in multi-ethnic states, modify individual and communal identities. Refugees can be a political resource to host states if they contribute to the economy or are able to be used as a foreign policy tool. Indeed, host countries often encourage refugees to engage in home state politics and conflicts, although the potential dangers of such policies have been discussed (Stedman and Turner, 2003: 167-177.

Refugees flee their homelands primarily to escape direct persecution or violence. However, threats and insecurity often follow refugees into exile. Even refugee communities which do not support militants may find themselves targeted by their home government, which may go so far as to conduct military operations, bombing camps or conducting raids and strikes. When ethnicity is a factor is the displacement, rival ethnic groups may harass and target refugees, employing violence and threats of violence to maintain the new status quo. This has happened with Sunni Iraqis refugees in Jordan and Syria (see Lischer, 2009) and has happened to Chechen refugees.

Chechen refugees have been targeted in almost every country.[11] In Georgia and Azerbaijan, male Chechen refugees accused of being active or former militants have been targeted by the Russian special services. These individuals are abducted in extraordinary-renditions, seized from foreign states and brought back to the Russian Federation. Some abductees are never seen or heard from again; the remains of most are found along roads or in ditches in Chechnya bearing signs of repeated torture and execution. Russian authorities use to existence of these bodies to bolster assertions that such individuals were active militants killed in anti-terrorist operations.[12] In Europe, Chechen refugees and asylum seekers have been targeted for assassination for speaking out against the gross human rights violations still occurring in Chechnya. Even in the Middle East, prominent Chechen leaders have been assassinated. Regardless of intent or locale, these policies have instilled a wide-spread climate of fear among Chechen refugees. As we have seen in other cases, this situation, coupled with deplorable living conditions, increases the likelihood that Chechen refugee communities will become susceptible to increased radicalization and militarization in the future.

It has been noted that refugee crises generate serious threats to state and regional security. Some argue that the danger has a much longer reach given that 9/11 was partly facilitated by one particular refugee group (the Taliban) from one

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[11] Author's interviews, Baku, 2007; Warsaw, 2007; Brussels, 2008; Tbilisi, 2011. These incidents are usually ignored in major western media outlets, however, they have been noted by Kavkaz Center, www.kavkazcenter.org; and The Jamestown Foundation, www.jamestown,org

[12] Author's interviews with Chechen refugees and UNHCR representatives in Tbilisi, Georgia and Baku, Azerbaijan, 2006 to 2008.

particular region, Northwest Pakistan (see Schmeidl, 2002). As such, it is important that we not ignore the processes of radicalization. Lischer (2006; 2009) and Stedman and Turner (2003), respectively, discuss the conditions under which refugee communities can be militarized. Yet, they do so primarily with a material focus. They acknowledge the role that a perceived security dilemma can play in increasing the likelihood of militarization, but I contend there is still much more to contribute to the debate. I believe that by better understanding how political goals and regime type preferences influence political violence, we can also glean insights into the levels of politicization within refugee communities. This is important for understanding militarization.

Currently, Chechen refugee communities are not overtly militarized. No organized bands of political elite have attempted to establish a state-in-exile and, with the possible exception of Georgia and Azerbaijan, Chechen refugee communities are not producing significant numbers of refugee warriors. This could change. Chechen refugees, especially those living in the latter two countries, have little hope for third country repatriation to Europe and their chances of returning home grow increasingly small the longer they remain in exile. Indeed, pro-Kremlin Chechen President, Ramzan Kadyrov has claimed that the war is over and all displaced Chechens should return home. According to Kadyrov, individuals who remain abroad have "something to hide" and are thus considered enemies of the state (Gilligan, 2009).

Living conditions for most Chechen refugees are deplorable and, with increased donor fatigue and fewer resources, conditions will continue to deteriorate. These are the very same material conditions which Adelaman (1998), Lischer (2006; 2008), and others warn will eventually produce militarization and refugee warrior communities, the first steps in the spiral of violence and instability. In this, communities will either be unwilling hostages to the process or willing participants. I posit that my study can, therefore, do two additional things: first, it gives us a contemporary snapshot of refugee attitudes toward political violence and establishes the overall level of contemporary politicization. If these levels are shown to be held by a significant number of refugees in a given location, it is, arguably, more likely that that community will have a greater propensity to become militarized and/or produce large numbers of refugee warriors. Second, my study provides a foundation for future work in these communities. If, over time, we see an increase or decrease in the number of refugee respondents accepting or rejecting political violence, we should know more about the likelihood of militarization.

It is not clear that militarization is unidirectional or irreversible. If conditions improve, we may witness a decrease in the number of respondents in favor of political violence. The events in refugee communities may very well be driven by home state and/or host state conditions as well. It has been shown that grievances alone are not enough; politics matter too. Future studies must be attentive to all of these variables.

Finally, elites too play a role in influencing communal attitudes. Elites can promote and propagate attitudes acceptant of political violence in refugee communities, which give communal elites, an opportune environment to indoctrinate a susceptible population psychologically primed by traumatic experiences. Under normal conditions these elites would be theoretically hindered by collective action problems. Yet refugee camps dampen the main impediments to collective action by bringing together victims and fighters and creating new in-group bonds of solidarity and increasing uniformity in beliefs, all of which elites can instrumentally manipulate.[13] In this scenario, elites frame political violence as necessary, persuading individuals that the costs of engaging in risky action are lower than inaction – a choice which would only serve to maintain what is already an untenable status quo. They could also seek to create new in-groups by contrasting the refugee "us" against an ever expanding "them" that may now include not only the original enemy, but also other actors in the camp of the host country. Moreover, the more dramatic the elite goals, the more drastic and intensive the indoctrination process may be. Elites will endeavor to use charisma and framing to sway potential recruits in an attempt to fundamentally change their general worldview. In doing so, they often resort to appeals to the nation or religious group,

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[13] There is empirical evidence of this dynamic. Indeed, the case of Nelson Mandela and the apartheid movement is illustrative because it reveals how government actions to contain and fracture a movement by incarcerating political dissidents ironically facilitated a stronger organization that was more united and dedicated to the cause.

brainwashing, or even physical force.[14] In short, these elites exploit their circumstances as a way to mobilize resources.

But why should this matter for attitudes? First, the refugee experience itself increases the likelihood that individuals will come into regular contact with elites and social networks espousing political violence simply by bringing a large number of war victims together in a very small geographic location. Elites and social networks with agendas of political violence are bound to be prevalent in refugee communities either due to displacement from war or because they strategically seek out such sites as prime recruitment grounds. Such organizations could very well form the informal power structure within the camp, and thus be in a position to influence the refugee population. As such, refugee communities may provide violent-minded elites certain select resources and other advantages that they otherwise would not have in their home country. Furthermore, over time a critical mass of individuals holding violent attitudes could produce a type of group-think that promotes the widespread expansion of such beliefs among the general refugee population. As more and more refugees agree that political violence is acceptable, psychology tells us that there will be immense pressure for even reluctant individuals to adopt congruent beliefs to remain a part of the group. There will be a tipping point at which so many refugees have violent attitudes that it produces wave of violent attitudes or even the outbreak of actual political violence. Thus, we would see a similar dynamic as the first model: the more influence elites, normative

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[14] See Pedahzur, 2005.

entrepreneurs and networks there are in a camp, the greater the likelihood that we will witness the emergence of politically violent attitudes and possible violent action. I will discuss this below in more detail.

My study offers us a way to explore variation in the attitudes toward political violence among refugees and the conditions which lead to politically violent attitudes. I do this primarily by exploring individual political goals and preferences. Still, it is important to recognize that the trauma of war and displacement are not enough to explain the root causes of attitudes supporting political violence. If the trauma of war and displacement were so significant, it follows that we should observe a homogenizing effect on the communities, therefore witnessing only modest variation among or between refugee communities. However, among Chechen refugees we do observe variation and this is a noteworthy finding, which challenges both cultural and emotive explanations for the social support of political violence in Chechen refugee communities.

METHODS

The goal of this empirical and inductive study is to explain the roots of political violence within a susceptible subset of a population that has adopted attitudes supportive of political violence. Methodologically, this inductive study employed a mixed-methods approach, utilizing qualitative and ethnographic methods, such as direct participant-observer, to conduct 301 structured-interviews (in the Chechen and Russian language) with a range of Chechen refugees: political

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elites, average civilians, former fighters, and Chechens still active in the separatist movement.

This analysis is based on nearly three years of fieldwork conducted between 2006 and 2009 and again in the summer of 2011 in Chechen refugee communities in The Republic of Georgia, Azerbaijan, Poland, and Belgium. The dissimilarities among these cases provided a unique opportunity to explore whether and how displacement into diverse environments has affected the propensity to actively support political violence or find it an acceptable means of behavior.

CASE SELECTION

In making my case selections, I was attentive to proximity, host-state politics and religion, and host-state history. The research design planned to use each country as a unique laboratory to explore how these latter factors might play a role in influencing attitudes towards political violence. To ensure the viability of my work, I conducted pre-fieldwork research trips to each country and made critical contacts in each respective Chechen refugee community. I discuss these countries in greater detail in Chapter 6.

The Republic of Georgia is the only country that shares a border with Chechnya. It is a highly nationalist, Christian country and was a part of the former Soviet Union. Relations with Russia today remain acrimonious. The displaced Chechen community in Georgia resides mostly in the infamous Pankisi Gorge, although a smaller number live in Tbilisi.

Azerbaijan, is also a former Soviet Republic and proximate to the conflict. Azerbaijan is a Muslim country with great oil wealth, but also significant poverty. The Azeri government maintains close ties to the Kremlin and this relationship has caused a number of problems for the Chechen refugees in Baku, most of who exist in abject poverty and squalor and face continuous security threats, such as renditions and kidnappings, from the Russians.

Poland was a part of the Soviet sphere, but maintained most of its distinct national culture throughout the Cold War. Like Georgia, it too is a predominantly Christian country with less than cordial relations with Russia. Poland is, for many Chechen refugees escaping along the northern route from Chechnya, the first stop. Many Chechens arrive illegally, smuggled through the Ukrainian forests. For all Chechens, life can be difficult. They are consigned to old Soviet Army barracks or military bases. The conditions are cramped and crowded and many refugees try to escape to better living conditions farther west in Europe.

In Belgium, Chechen refugees have a comparative paradise. Belgium is a non-Muslim country with a rich mix of ethnic groups. Belgium is the only country in this dissertation that was not a part of either the Soviet Union or Warsaw Pact. Firmly located in the "first world", Belgium has prospered economically. Chechen refugees in Belgium are scattered across the state in a dozen or more cities or villages.

ETHNOGRAPHY

In the best of circumstances, conducting survey research can be challenging. There are a number of potential methodological pitfalls. Researchers must control for population size, representative sampling, question framing, etc. The vast majority of survey research occurs within organized, peaceful political units. In refugee camps and communities, the usual methodological suspects do exist, but the more significant obstacles come from the inherent difficulties of working with a traumatize people still facing security threats. Conducting research in refugee camps can be daunting; conducting research in Chechen refugee communities can be fatal. There are risks specific to Chechens which need to be further discussed. These risks often complicate data collection and pose unique challengers to the researcher. But they also function as a window into the nature and scope of violence endemic to refugee communities, revealing the true politicized and militarized nature of certain displaced populations. Given these concerns and considerations, I employed the use of ethnographic research instruments to conduct a systematic exploration of the conditions under which displaced Chechens find political violence an acceptable form of behavior.

One of the main instruments of ethnographic research is the role of direct participant-observer. Ethnography seeks to study individuals and groups from the closest vantage point and as such, research is conducted through close interactions with ground-level processes and interlocutors. Given the inherent challenges of conducting a methodologically rigorous, systematic study of refugees from ongoing

conflicts (security, harsh conditions, and isolated communities) ethnography provided the most appropriate method for ascertaining the attitudinal support for political violence among Chechen refugees. Given security concerns, it was not possible to conduct a random sample survey. As such, this study utilized "snowball" sampling, an acceptable ethnographic practice used to collect data from so-called hidden populations. This method involves using initial meetings and interviews to secure subsequent interviews. This sampling method was invaluable in helping me gain trust in the refugee community.

Fenno (1990) first popularized ethnographic research, breaking ground with his "Soak and Poke" approach to the study of politics, which privileged face-to-face interactions, an approach few political scientists embraced at the time. Yet, it has since been noted that ethnographic research has long informed political science, especially among comparativists conducting fieldwork abroad. Ethnographers argue that "close person-to-person contact that is attuned to the worldviews of the people we study is invaluable for a science of politics. Taken as a whole…ethnography helps ensure an empirically sound, theoretically vibrant, epistemologically innovative, and normatively grounded study of politics" (Schatz, 2010:4).

ETHNOGRAPHY IN CONFLICT ADJACENT ZONES WITH VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

It goes without saying that any scholar conducting fieldwork in conflict and conflict-adjacent zones faces unique methodological and practical challenges

(Grima, 2004; Nordstrom, 1997). The first challenge is of course security, for both the researcher and the respondents, as well as for the collected data.[15] Personal security was not as significant an issue in Poland or Belgium, although there were instances in the latter when suspicions of my true intent led some former fighters and high-level members of the Chechen resistance to voice violent threats against me. I later learned that some of the individuals I met in Belgium were later arrested on suspicion of plotting terrorist attacks against Russian and Western targets. The same was true of the Chechen refugees labeled as "Wahhabis" by their peers.[16] Fieldwork in Georgia and Azerbaijan was far more dangerous. In Georgia, some of my research took place very close to the Chechen border in the infamous Pankisi Gorge. The Gorge has traditionally been something of a "wild west", a lawless frontier long the Georgian-Chechen border that has long been home to arms and narcotics smugglers. During the two recent Russo-Chechen wars, Chechen resistance fighters used Pankisi as sanctuary for rest and re-supply and as a way to move from one theater of action in Chechnya to another without drawing Russian attention. In particular, prominent warlord, Ruslan (Khamzat) Gelayev, the Black Angel, operated from the Gorge with full knowledge of both the Chechen refugee community and local Kists (an ethnic cousin of the Chechens and Ingush). There were numerous exchanges between Gelayev's band and the criminal gangs and local

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[15] This dissertation was conducted under the approved protocols of the human subjects review board at The University of Texas, Austin and all data was collected and stored accordingly.
[16] As of this writing, a recent raid in Belgium arrested a dozen Chechen refugees as part of a plot to raise funds and recruits for the fight against the Russians and for as yet to be released targets in Belgium (New York Times, November 2, 2010).

police. After the September 11th attacks on America, the US provided Special Forces and Marines to train Georgian Anti-Terrorism units to enter and take control of the Gorge, leading to more firefights (Nichol, 2003).

In Azerbaijan, most of the Chechen refugees live in squalid apartments or cardboard shanties in the ghettos of prosperous Baku. These places are rife with petty criminals and murders, but the real danger came from one faction of Chechen refugees. I will discuss this in more detail in Chapter 6, but for now suffice it to say that the Chechen refugee community in Baku has split between the old moderate, national secularists aligned with Dudayev and a more radical, increasingly religious group. The former operate a secular learning center funding by international aid groups, while the latter provide an austere religious instruction in a large mansion funded by Arabs and Turks. In short, these were not easy places to access and to conduct systematic research. However, it was not impossible and this fieldwork required "certain precautions and incredible delicacy" (Adler, 1992:229, as citied in Wood, 2003:40).

THE "THREE T'S": TIME, TRUST, TRAUMA, AND SECURITY

Asking questions about political violence from a community that has suffered a tremendous level of violence can be a daunting task. In doing so, I was confronted by a series of impediments which I call, the "Three T's": Time, Trust, and Trauma.

The first considerable obstacle was time. It took an extensive amount of time to conduct these interviews. First, it took time to actually travel to refugee

communities, especially those in the farther reaches of Pankisi Gorge. In Poland and

Belgium, I used Brussels and Warsaw, respectively, as a base of operations and often

had to take busses or trains several hours to other cities to conduct interviews.

Once arriving at a refugee dwelling, I was, as per the Chechen culture of the guest,

fed a meal and served tea. I was usually asked a number of personal questions.

Often, after a couple of hours of this informal vetting, I was told that the family or

individual had decided to grant me an interview, next week, thus causing the entire

process to repeat. Beyond the physical time to travel, it took time for me to gain the

community and individual Trust. At first, in many settings I was viewed as being a

spy or CIA agent. I was viewed with deep suspicion for my ability to speak Chechen

and for the political nature of the questions I sought to ask. Over time, especially in

the Caucasus, the longer I stayed and lived among the people, the more I was

trusted. The more I endured the same physical hardships – sleeping in the freezing

cold of the mountains, drinking the same "crunchy" calcium-laden water, suffering

lice, stomach ailments, and what the Chechens jokingly referred to as "The Chechen

Cough," the more I was trusted. In short, the more miserable my physical condition,

the more likely the refugees were to speak with me. Of course, I must note that in

Belgium the opposite happened. There, the longer I stayed the less I was trusted,

being viewed with each passing day with growing suspicion. Displaced Chechens in

Belgium live good lives, and they recognize this. In part, a sizeable number suffer

from "NGO fatigue," the natural exhaustion that comes with the countless hours of

bureaucratic paperwork and forms necessary for third-country repatriation. Among

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another part of the population, individuals were seeking to protect criminal enterprises.

The role of Trauma was an unexpected one. In crafting my research design I did not initially pay adequate attention the role that trauma would play in my research. The Chechens pride themselves on being a "people without tears." Chechens try to not complain about their problems and, has been well documented by various human rights organizations, a number of Chechens suffer from a range of post-traumatic stress disorders and other psychological problems related to the war, many of which are exacerbated by communal cultural norms prohibiting speaking of ones problems. As a result, in many instances a respondent had not spoken of his or her time in the war or during their forced migration. Finally doing so often proved emotionally overwhelming, with some crying profusely. From my point, I always tried to be sensitive to respondent's emotional needs. These incidents, although rare, also affected my own psyche. I did, by the nature of this kind of research, become close with many Chechen refugees and it was not easy to hear personal stories of tragedy. Psychologists are trained to distance themselves from their patients. Political scientists conducting fieldwork in conflict and conflict adjacent zones are not and I raise this issue as both a caveat to contextualizing and understanding the inherent challenges and difficulty in conducting this kind of work and as a cautionary tale to future researchers.

Finally, Security played a considerable role in this work. First, as noted, all efforts were made to protect the identity and information of respondents. This

study was given the full support and clearance of the IRB. Personally, I made the decision that it was better to try and fit in with the Chechen refugee communities. It is important to note that kidnapping is a cottage industry in the Caucasus and foreigners are viewed essentially as "walking ATMs". As such, I grew my beard long, cut my hair short, and wore local clothing, usually a black skullcap, an olive-drab army coat or sports wind-breaker, dark jeans, and black leather boots. The result was that many people thought I was Chechen, including the authorities. On innumerable occasions I was stopped and harassed by local security forces and authorities. In the cities these stop and searches were usually little more than documents checks and attempts to solicit bribes. In the mountains, things were different. On several occasions I was held at gunpoint by purported special forces and security personal. Thankfully, I was always able to talk my way out of these situations, but was told repeatedly that I was suspected as a foreign jihadist mercenary. Despite the natural anxiety such encounters invariably caused, they did tend to increase my status and esteem with some members of the Chechen refugee community. For others, especially in Belgium, these stories proved my employment with the American intelligence agencies. Indeed, they reasoned, how could someone escape from so many encounters if they were not CIA?

I again highlight these challenges to underscore the nature and difficulty of conducting such research. It is, therefore, important to appreciate the work that can be done. The alternative is to do nothing at all and, as noted, too little work of this nature is done as it is.

THE STRUCTURED-INTERVIEW PROCESS

Research conducted in circumstances where conflict and violence are endemic must be done with careful deliberation and the utmost care. My goal was to better understand specific attitudes, namely those pertaining to the use and limits of political violence. In doing so, ensuring the safety and security of all parties was paramount. Many Chechens rightfully fear for the safety of their families and I have taken significant precautions to ensure the anonymity of all respondents.

For independent variables, I asked every respondent the same battery of questions related to demographic profiles, grievances, political goals and preferences, and preferences for regime type. The dependent variable, attitudes towards political violence, was gleaned from structured-interviews which called on subjects to offer general assessments of their position on the acceptability of political violence as well as express their views on the legitimacy of four concrete events related to the conflict in Chechnya: the 2002 attack on Moscow's Dubrovka Theater during a performance of, *Nord-Ost*; the 2004 attack on School #1 in Beslan, North Ossetia; the 2004 attack on military and police personnel in Nazran, Ingushetia; and the 2005 attack on military and police personnel in Nalchik, Kabardino-Balkaria. These latter two attacks primarily targeted representatives of the state, while *Nord-Ost* and Beslan exclusively targeted civilians. Questions regarding views on political violence are often susceptible to social desirability bias, a condition in which participants may be wary of expressing their true views in front of the researcher or may give answers they think the researcher wants to hear.

To avoid social desirability bias, I framed questions about political violence as such, "Certain members of the Chechen resistance claim that acts such as *Nord-Ost*, Beslan, Nalchik, and Nazran were both legitimate and necessary. Do you think they are correct?"

My structured interviews used both open and closed ended questions and were broken down into three sections. Each respondent was asked the same questions in the same order. In the first section, I asked basic demographic and personal information: date of birth; previous residency; previous occupation; levels of education; personal loss, status as a fighter or veteran, history of torture or personal injury, etc. In the second part of the interview I asked a series of questions about life as a Chechen refugee and about the challenges of maintaining Chechen culture during displacement, especially into presumably alien host countries and cultures. I asked about their most pressing problems, about expectations and relative deprivation, about whether they were harassed by either the locals or local authorities, and about their general views and attitudes about life and family, religion and politics. In the final section, I asked questions specifically pertaining to politics and political life. In order to gauge and measure individual perceptions of political efficacy, I asked about voting patterns and, for example, whether they voted in the 1997 Chechen Presidential election and if so, for whom;[17] I asked about Doku Umarov, constitutional successor to Aslan Maskhadov and Abdul-Khalim Sadulayev

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[17] Different presidential candidates represented very different views. Maskhadov was considered a moderate while Yandarbiev was an Islamic theologian and Basayev was considered the radical choice.

(both assassinated by Russian special services) and current leader of the Chechen separatist movement,[18] and about which course of action he and his followers should pursue (e.g., should they continue to fight or lay down their arms); I asked about what should Chechnya be politically: a part of Russia; a part of Russia, but Autonomous, like the republic of Tatarstan; Independent; or part of a Caucasus Emirate. This latter political entity would be an Islamic state composed of Ingushetia, Dagestan, parts of northern Georgia and Azerbaijan with Chechnya at the political and administrative apex. I asked which form of governing institution was best for Chechnya. Finally, the last four questions asked about the legitimacy of four concrete acts of political violence, two directed at civilians and two directed at representatives of the state: the 2002 hostage taking at the Dubrovka Theater in Moscow, the 2004 Beslan school tragedy, and the attacks on military and police personnel in Nazran in 2004 and Nalchik in 2005. Each of these events occurred after the respondent had settled into a refugee community. The final chapter explores the relative influence of various "country effects". This analysis looks at the relationship between levels of relative deprivation, the extent of harassment from police and/or local populations, rates of employment, opportunities for education, access to social benefits and services, assessment of current living conditions, hopes for the future, and pressing concerns.

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[18] Umarov also holds the title of "Emir", an Islamic-inspired military title, which reflects his stance on the establishment of a Caucasus caliphate as well as the growing shift towards international jihadism among the Chechen separatists.

All interviews began with an introduction by someone known to the refugees. This was sometimes an aid worker, but more often than not it was through a local contact, fellow refugees. In Georgia the son of a prominent resistance leader assisted me in my research. I met this young man in a previous trip to Georgia to study the Chechen language and our friendship undoubtedly paved the way for most of my interviews. It was through this contact that I was put in touch with a group and some individuals in Baku. I was fortunate that my contact was a familiar face to both sides of the intra-communal split and as such I was able to easily conduct a number of in-depth structured interviews. In Poland and Belgium I relied on my contacts from The Chechnya Advocacy Network. In Poland I was eventually put in touch with the eldest daughter of a village elder. This man and his village were rather famous for their stand against Russian aggression in the two wars, providing me again with a trusted endorsement. In Belgium my contact was a former spokesman for Dudayev. All of the individuals spoke fluent English as well as Russian and Chechen (both written and spoken).

All interviews were conducted in whichever language the respondent preferred, usually Chechen. Many Chechens from urban areas have only a rudimentary knowledge of Chechen since the Soviet authorities banned it. Chechens from rural areas are more literature in both spoken and written Chechen. Most interviews involved an initial meeting, often with a group or entire family, in which my project and security protocols, especially anonymity for the interviewee were discussed. In essence, these were opportunities for the potential respondents to

evaluate and vet me. Very few individuals refused an interview after such a session. Refusals were more common when the request was made by my contact independent of my knowledge. The structured interview utilized both open and closed ended questions and was divided into three sections. In the first section, I asked questions related to basic demographics. In the second section, I asked about culture and daily life. Finally, in the third section I asked about political views and attitudes towards violence. The interviews lasted anywhere from a few minutes to several hours depending on the respondent.[1] In all instances, the structured interviews were conducted on a one-on-one basis. This includes interviews with displaced Chechen females. In some interviews with women, Chechen male relatives demanded to remain in visual proximity of the interview but out of earshot, thus increasing the likelihood of more accurate responses from female respondents.

The goal of this research was, like most micro-comparative studies of political violence, to disaggregate the "community," expand the number of observations, and generate new hypotheses about the relationships of different variables. There are, however, still empirical expectations about various relationships between certain groups or individuals and the support of political violence and militant activity. The following are the original hypotheses, based on the common expectations which helped guide my pre-fieldwork research design:

H1: Young men will be more acceptant of political violence than other demographic groups within Chechen refugee communities.

The expectation is that young men are both more likely than others to have directly participated in the war (thus increasing their pre-camp grievances) and more likely to be subject to elite persuasion as recruits for future acts of political violence. More importantly, young men are viewed as being the most prone to violent group in many societies for a number of genetic or biological, social, or cultural reasons (Hayden and Potts, 2008). These are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

H2: Chechen refugees who have lost immediate family members in the war will be more acceptant of political violence than other refugees.

Numerous psychological studies have shown that victims of violence often resort to violence. This dynamic in Chechnya is compounded by the predominant social norm of a "blood code," which demands reciprocal vengeance for murdered kin (Boehm, 1984; Bodansky, 2007; Tishkov, 2004; Volkan, 1997; Zaurbekova and Yandarov, 2001).

H3: Chechen refugees who hold maximal political goals (e.g., support for an Islamic Caucasus Emirate) will be more acceptant of political violence than refugees who hold more modest political goals.

I have argued that attitudes supporting political violence are based on both emotive and rational considerations. Emphasizing the latter, it should be the case

that those refugees who support maximal political goals such as the complete independence of Chechnya from Russia would be more apt to find violence as an acceptable instrument of political action.

H4: Chechen refugees from rural areas and mountain teips (clans) will be more acceptant of political violence than other Chechen refugees.

According to several sources, Chechens from rural areas and the mountain teips were more likely than Chechens who lived in the northern plains and urban centers to support the war effort against the Russians and thus more likely to have been active participants in the fighting (Tishkov, 2004). Besides providing the opportunity to investigate this link between local identities and violent attitudes, questions regarding place of birth and residence may also be used as a proxy for battle experience.

H5: Chechen Refugees will be more likely to support acts of political violence directed at authorities and representatives of the state and reject acts directed exclusively at civilian targets.

This assumption follows from the logic of natural human aversion to violence, thus placing non-combatants outside the acceptable framework for legitimate targets (Silke, 2003). This logic would not hold for representatives of the state, such as police of soldiers.

H6: Chechen refugees with higher education will be more acceptant of political violence than other less educated Chechen refugees.

This hypothesis could be posed in the inverse; a number of socio-economic theories suggest that lesser educated individuals are more likely to support and actually commit violence (Berebbi, 2003; Kreuger and Maleckova, 2003; Lochner, 2007). Of course, other evidence suggests that higher education creates more awareness and, consequently, more political dissatisfaction (Lerner, 1958; Shafiq and Sinno, 2010)..

H7: Chechen refugees living in communities closest to the conflict and farthest from the conflict will be more likely to have attitudes acceptant of political violence as a legitimate means to achieve political goals than refugees living in other camps.

Refugee communities closest to the conflict may be disproportionately populated by elites and social networks that advocate the use of violence because these individuals and groups can use these communities as areas of rest and re-supply (Adelman, 1998; Salehyan, 2007; Stedman and Turner, 2003). . Moreover, the proximity of war produces an environment of endemic fear that makes engaging in or supporting political violence more attractive (Lischer, 2006:36). Refugees living in communities farthest from the conflict may experience higher rates of relative deprivation, cultural isolation and/or discrimination, which translate into a higher probability of engaging in or supporting such behaviors. Moreover, the geographical distance from the conflict reduces the threat of retaliation for supporting and engaging in political violence, thus altering the rational calculations of supporting political violence. This logic is similar to the Irish-American's support of the Irish Republican Army.

H8: Chechen refugees living in communities located in non-Muslim countries will be more acceptant of political violence than their counterparts living in camps located in Muslim countries.

Theoretically, Chechen communities in non-Muslim countries will experience real or perceived cultural isolation and/or discrimination which in turn will produce closer in-group cohesion and will make the religious and ethnic component of individual and communal social identities a more salient identification marker. As ethno-religious identities crystallize, tensions between the minority in-group and majority out-group can lead to existential fears (Posen, 1993) which may make Chechen refugees more acceptant of political violence.

H9: Chechen refugees living in larger refugee communities will be more acceptant of political violence than refugees living in smaller ones.

Other studies have confirmed that larger refugee populations are more often involved in political violence than smaller populations (Lischer, 2006:38-40). The larger the camp, the worse the conditions are likely to be, increasing grievances, and the higher the probability that elites and networks that advocate violence will be present, increasing the chances for elite persuasion.

H10: Chechen refugees who rate the conditions of their camp as worse than they expected will be more acceptant of political violence than refugees who hold more favorable views of camp conditions.

This hypothesis builds on our argument that the perception of poor conditions inside the camp can exacerbate feelings of grievance and relative

deprivation, which in turn should increase acceptance of political violence as a legitimate means to escape an intolerable situation (Lischer, 2006:38-40).

The discussion thus far has presumed there would be sufficient variation among or within communities. It is important to note that if my study yielded no variation among or within the Chechen refugee communities the result would be because of one of two arguments. First, perhaps grievances arising from an intolerable war-time experience are so severe and widespread that all of Chechen society has turned to political violence as the only attractive solution. If this is the case, my research would show little variation in levels of perceived victimization and dissatisfaction with camp conditions. Secondly, a lack of variation in attitudes on political violence may lend support to a cultural argument about the particular nature of Chechen society. This study starts with the assumption that certain subgroups within Chechen society are more amenable to violent attitudes because of their war-time experiences and the likelihood of being targets of elite persuasion. If such groups actually did not hold different beliefs about political violence than other, presumably less violence-prone, subgroups it may very well be due to an overwhelming influence of deeper cultural attitudes. Boehm (193), Ross (1993), Tishkov (2004), Volkan (1997) and others argue that there are indeed violent ethno-national groups and that individuals socialized in a culture of shared meanings and understandings would be instilled with an interpretive framework that influences subsequent perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. As such, any lack

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of variation on the dependent variable could be attributed to Chechen cultural norms, traditions, and symbols, all of which anthropological, historical, media and literary sources have suggested explain Chechen violence and belief in the acceptability of violent behavior. In short, widespread acceptance of political violence among Chechen refugees may indicate that there is some truth to the idea that Chechens are a people prone to violence. Fortunately, this study did expose significant variation and, in doing so, provide both insights into the social support for political violence among displaced Chechens and give us new relationships for future exploration.

POPULATION SIZE AND DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

How many Chechen refugees are there? In general, it has been noted that it is difficult if not impossible, to accurately count the number of refugees in any conflict (see Blakewell, 1999; Crisp, 1999). Regrettably, it is impossible to ascertain accurate figures for the total size of the Chechen refugee population, mainly because each side has an incentive to misrepresent the real numbers. The Russians have traditionally underestimated the actual number of refugees while the Chechens have tended to overestimate the number. In many cases, this is done out of practical necessity to survive. The Chechen refugees, many of whom rely exclusively on subsistence from either host governments or some combination of NGO/IGO aid, often inflate the size of their family members so that they will receive more goods. The surplus can then be stored away or sold on the black-market for other

commodities. This fact, coupled with the UN mandate protecting refugees, means that UNHCR representatives are equally wary of discussing population numbers, especially with outsiders. Consequently, we can only estimate the total size of the Chechen refugee population. In Georgia, there are anywhere from 500 to 2,000 Chechen refugees (this is down from a high of 10,000 in 1999). In Azerbaijan, they range from 1,000 to 3,000. In Poland, there are between 1,000 and 3,000. Lastly, in Belgium there are approximately 1,500.[19]

I interviewed a total of 301 Chechen refugees. Disaggregated by country, I conducted 71 interviews in Georgia, 71 in Azerbaijan, 100 in Poland, and 59 in Belgium.[20] 75% (226) were males and 25% (75) were females and 61% (184) came from rural areas, while 38.8 % (117) came from the urban centers and cities. Most (89.3% [269]) had only secondary education with just 10.6% (32) reporting to have completed university or technical school. Fifteen were tortured and six were amputees. 77.7% (234) were self-declared civilians and 21.9% (66) self-declared former-fighters or veterans.[21] 4.3% (13) were verified political or economic elites.

It is not clear if there are indeed more males than females in Chechen refugee communities. There is a strong possibility that this is the case. Many Chechen males I interviewed had wives and children back home. This was due to the deplorable

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[19] Author's confidential interviews with United Nations High Commission on Refugees officials, various human rights groups, non-governmental organizations, and intergovernmental agencies.
[20] These numbers represent the total number of refugees I could interview in the time allocated in each site.
[21] These numbers are not accurate representations of the number of former fighters in the various refugee communities. Given the security concerns, a number of individuals who I was later told had indeed fought still identified themselves as civilians caught up in the war. These numbers represent those who actually admitted to being a former fighter.

conditions in the refugee communities and the males' inability to find gainful employment and provide for the whole family, the traditional/cultural expectation. Some men sent their wives home because of their extended kinship ties which meant supporting the family was best done at home. In post-war Chechnya women are better able to find work, thus making them the sole bread-winner for many families. There is also a security element at play. Predominantly, Chechen males are more likely to be targeted by the Russian or Kadyrov authorities in Chechnya, so it is safer for them to flee, although in the Caucasus this is not always the case. A final answer is that because of the Chechens strong patriarchal norms regarding women and foreigners, I, as a foreign male, was not afford equal access to a proportionate number of female refugees. This too happened in some instances in which I interviewed a male but was not allowed to interview or even be introduced to a wife, sister or daughter. It has been noted that female scholars researching Chechens have experienced the opposite effect (see Sczepanikova, 2008).

In this dissertation, I make three principle arguments: 1) Refugees who desire maximal political goals, such as the establishment of a Caucasus Islamic Emirate, are more likely to support political violence; 2) There is a correlation between refugees who embrace religious authority (sharia) as political authority and support for political violence; 3) Male Chechen refugees will be more likely to support political violence than female refugees.

In the next chapter, I present a brief case history of Chechnya and her relations with Russia. Russia has fought a number of Islamic guerrilla campaigns in

the North Caucasus over the centuries and this turbulent history has clearly affected modern relations. As such, it is important to contextualize the current violence in light of these historical precedents. For many Chechens, this past is viewed as being an integral part of contemporary relations and future outcomes.

Chapter 3: Chechnya – A History, A People, A Culture, A Tragedy

An angel came down from Heaven and saw an old man weeping on the banks of a river. "Why do you cry?" the angel asked. "I am a Chechen," the old man replied. And the angel sat down and wept with him.
Chechen Proverb

Chechnya is a small, mountainous republic, roughly 12,000 square miles, located between the Black and Caspian Seas. Its total population prior to the wars was approximately one and a half million, making Chechens the largest homogenous ethnic group in the North Caucasus. The republic is comparatively flat in the northern lands, becoming increasingly rugged farther south into the Caucasus Mountains. Economically, the region was distinguished for its vast petroleum and natural gas reserves and prior to the wars Chechnya was a major hub for petroleum refinement. Still, under the Soviets the Chechens remained one of the more economically backward peoples (Jaimouka, 2004).

The peoples of the North Caucasus have historically been uncompromising to foreign domination, yet no group has resisted as long and as ferociously as the Chechens (Gammer, 2004). Under the Soviets the Chechens suffered disproportionate hardships, even by Communist standards, culminating in the forced deportation of the entire ethnic population to the frozen steppes of Kazakhstan during the apex of World War II, because Joseph Stalin feared Chechen collusion with the advancing German Army (Dunlop, 1998:61-75). Accordingly, when the Soviet Union began to disintegrate the Chechens became hopeful that, like other conquered peoples, they too would finally receive their long awaited freedom

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and independence.   History has repeated itself, however, in the quest for

independence and the Chechens have endured near-constant warfare since the

collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

In this chapter, I will explore the contentious relationship between the

Russians and Chechens, chronicling the history of warfare as a way to better

understand the current environment. I will briefly discuss the tumultuous first

encounters between the Russians and Chechens in the 1700s and the emergence of

Islamic-based resistance to Tsarist forces. Then, I will chronicle the events of the

20th Century starting with the post 1917 Revolution and attempt to break free to the

1944 Great Deportation and later Rehabilitation under Khrushchev. Finally, I will

chronicle post-Soviet Chechnya, paying particular attention to the 1991 Chechen

Revolution, the surprising Chechen victory in the First Russo-Chechen War, the rise

of warlordism and foreign Islam in the inter-war years, and the launch of the Second

Russo-Chechen War in 1999. In doing so, it is important to note that this chapter

will primarily discuss military and political events. Chechen economic and social

issues are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

FIRST ENCOUNTERS

Conflict in the North Caucasus and in the region now known as Chechnya has

raged intermittently since the mid-18th century, although the earliest reports of

fighting between Czarist Russian forces and local Muslim tribes in the region date

back as early as 1722 when Tsarina, Catherine the Great first sent her armies to

probe Russia's southern flank along the Ottoman Empire (Gammer, 2004; King and Menon, 2010:22-25). By the mid-18th century Russian troops came to occupy much of the area and this presence sparked what would become the first of many Muslim insurgencies against Russian forces. The first resistance was led by Sheikh Mansur, a Muslim cleric of dubious origins, who unified the numerous Chechen clans and declared holy war on the Tsarist army, delivering a shocking defeat to Russian forces in 1785 (Gammer, 2006:17-54). Mansur is viewed as a mystical figure and an inspiration to generations of Chechen separatists. Today many displaced Chechens hang portraits of the more famous Imam Shamil, but among the more committed Chechen separatists one finds pictures of Mansur hanging prominently.

In the aftermath of Mansur's victory, the Tsar dispatched additional troops to the North Caucasus with the politico-military objective of annexing the region. This decision had more to do with fears of Ottoman invasion than it did with the particulars of the Chechen lands (Blanch, 1960; Dunlop, 1998:35). Nonetheless, it was during the course of this renewed escalation in violence that the second great military leader of Muslim resistance to the Russians emerged, an ethnic Avar from Dagestan named, Imam Shamil. Shamil would lead a four decade resistance against the overwhelming power of the Russian state by using emerging guerilla techniques to the region, tactics like hit and run ambushes, attacks on supply lines, and targeted assassinations to thwart Russian efforts (Blanch, 1960; Dunlop, 1998:28; Gammer, 2004; Gammer, 2006:45-59).

As the Muslim fighters continued to resist, Russian forces poured into the region and began to counter Caucasian guerrilla warfare with their own brand of warfare, total war. Presaging the conduct of Russian forces some century and a half later, under the direction of General Yermolov, a hero of the Napoleonic Wars, the Russians engaged in a scorched earth policy, burning crops and villages, hacking down the thick birch forests that sheltered the guerillas, and establishing a series of forts, the largest of which he called "Terrible" to convey the appropriate levels of fear he deemed necessary to quell the rebellious mountaineers (Dunlop, 1998; Gammer, 2006; Toft, 2010:115). The fort city still stands to today and still bears the same name, in Russian, Grozny. These tactics, while incredibly harsh and brutal, eventually crushed the resistance. Shamil was captured in 1859 and although the Chechens fought on after his arrest, they too surrendered a decade later (Blanch, 1960; Dunlop, 1998:29; Gammer, 2006:64-66).

It was during this period that the greater Russian people were introduced to their formidable neighbors to the south. A number of later literary greats, men such as Alexander Pushkin, Mikhail Lermontov, and Leo Tolstoy served with Tsarist troops in Chechnya and Dagestan. After witnessing the destruction of one particular Chechen village and the brutal repression of its inhabitants, Tolstoy described the residents' reaction as,

> No one spoke of hatred for the Russians. The feeling which all Chechens felt, both young and old, was stronger than hatred. It was...such a revulsion, disgust and bewilderment at the senseless cruelty of these beings, that the desire to destroy them, like a desire to destroy rats, poisonous spiders and wolves, was as natural as the instinct for self-preservation.

FROM TSAR TO COMMISSAR

Despite the long 18th Century War and the nature of its conduct, Chechnya remained fairly stable after it was granted a semi-autonomous status within Russia. This relative calm would last until the Bolshevik revolution in 1917 (Broxup, 1992). When the Bolsheviks seized power the Chechens again used the chaos within Russia to attempt to create an independent North Caucasian state, an Islamic Caucasus Emirate. I will discuss the significance of this political goal in greater detail in Chapter 4, however, for now I will briefly address the historical context of the Caucasus Emirate.

Mansur and later Shamil articulated similar goals in their respective campaigns against Tsarist forces. In the 20th Century, the peoples of the Caucasus tried to create such a political unit from 1918 to 1920 in the detritus of the collapse of the Tsarist regime. After Tsar Nicholas II abdicated the throne, a Congress of the North Caucasus met in Vladikavkaz to establish a new overarching governing body for an independent state, the Independent Democratic Republic of Mountaineers of the North Caucasus, a political unit that is similar to today's Caucasus Emirate (Avtorkhanov, 1992:152). The North Caucasus Emirate proposed in 1918 was even recognized by foreign powers; Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey all recognized the polity, the Turks going so far as to enter into a formal alliance with the North Caucasians on June 8, 1918 (Avtorkhanov, 1992:152).

Eager to enlist the support of the highlanders in the struggle against the pro-Tsarist White Armies in the emerging Russian Civil War, on January 20, 1921,

Vladimir Lenin sent Josef Stalin, as Commissar of Nationalities, to meet with delegates from the North Caucasus Emirate at a Congress of Mountaineers in North Ossetia (Avtorkhanov, 1992:152). Although he later reneged, Stalin offered the Caucasians, in exchange for highlander recognition of Soviet power, the possibility of a unique Soviet polity, autonomy in the form on an Autonomous Soviet Mountain Republic (Schafer, 2010:95-98). As the Soviets took full control in Moscow, they exerted more power in the Caucasus, forcibly subduing the resistance in the early 1930s. When the Russians again offered the Chechens a nominally autonomous republic in 1936 in a bid to end the violence, the Chechens joined with neighboring Ingushetia in 1934 to form a joint republic that was later named the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (Dunlop, 1998:46).

THE GREAT DEPORTATIONS OF 1944

Less than a decade after the seeming normalization of relations between the center and periphery, Soviet leader Joseph Stalin, on the heels of numerous purges of the communist party, the military and other ethnic groups, decided the Chechens could not be trusted in such a pivotal region, especially as Hitler's Nazi Armies were pouring into the Soviet Union. Accusing the Chechens of being pro-Nazi, Stalin deported nearly the entire population, more than 500,000 men, women and children, to the frozen steppes of Central Asia and Kazakhstan. Stalin's deportation orders were carried out on February 23, 1944, a date that remains a touchstone in Chechen history (Dunlop, 1998:61-72; Gall and de Waal, 1998:56-75).

The Chechens stayed in Kazakhstan for more than ten years, isolated from the local Kazakhs and resentful of the Soviets. Following Stalin's death in 1953, the Soviets eased their restrictions on the Chechens and Ingush and almost all had begun to return to their homeland by 1957 (King and Menon, 2010:26). Although reports vary widely, experts estimate some 200,000 Chechens died during the exile (Dunlop, 2008:70). Khrushchev finally allowed the Chechens to return home en mass. Yet, ever mindful of the role of religion in fomenting resistance the Soviets continued to curtail their ability to practice Islam, and many of the region's mosques were not rebuilt until well into the 1970s (Gammer, 2006:166-184).

The region once again experienced an uneasy calm during the 1970s and 80s, but as the Soviet Union began to unravel, Chechnya once again made a move towards independence (Dunlop, 1998:80-84). Like prior attempts, the independence movement would soon devolve into a guerilla war between the Russian army and militant separatists aimed at ending more than 150 years of Russian rule.

THE CHECHEN REVOLUTION AND THE QUEST FOR INDEPENDENCE

As early as November 1990, the Chechen people formed the Chechen National Congress as a platform to address national issues and as a mechanism to organize politically for what they assumed would be inevitable autonomy (Lieven, 1998:159). Indeed, the Chechens naturally assumed that if Tajiks and Uzbeks were being granted sovereignty, they too would soon be independent. Newly elected

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President of the Russian Federation, Boris Yeltsin, was even telling the republics to "swallow as much sovereignty as you can," a declaration which resonated deeply with the Chechens (Trenin and Malashenko, 2004:57).

Soon after its inception, the Chechen National Congress held a number of events to celebrate and glorify Chechen history and culture and to exert pressure on the local Communist authorities, still technically in charge, to initiate change. Among the guest speakers was a newly promoted Soviet Air Force General, Dzhokhar Dudayev (Gall and de Waal, 1998:76-86). Dudayev was already a minor celebrity for his rare achievements. As discussed in Chapter 5, under Soviet rule there was a highly formalized hierarchy of ethnicity. Ethnic Russians, Ukrainians, and Byelorussians were at the top, thus affording them access to the best education and the top positions in the Communist Party and Red Army. At the bottom of this hierarchy were the Central Asians, the Uzbeks, Tajiks, Kyrgyz, and Turkmen, and Caucasians, Azeris, Armenians, and Ingush. Below them, at the very bottom, were the Chechens. Long distrusted, they were primarily relegated to the world of migrant labor and low-level factory work. Accordingly, a former fighter pilot and Soviet General, one in charge a nuclear bomber-wing in Estonia was afforded significant admiration (King and Menon, 2010:26).

Dudayev took the stage and gave an unexpectedly resounding and inspiring speech calling for Chechen unity and independence.[22] Within a month, Dudayev was

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[22] Dudayev's outspoken nationalism may have been used to as a compensation for his weak Chechen roots. He was born in exile and spent most of his adult life in the military – stationed outside Chechnya – and had married an ethnic Russian whose father was a top-ranking Soviet officer.

elected Chairman of the National Congress, and within the year, parliamentary and presidential elections were held in which Dudayev received 85% of the popular vote (Gall and de Waal, 1998:75-77). For the first time in 150 years, it appeared the Chechen people were finally free.

At this point in Chechen domestic politics, the key factor in the initial political mobilization was not primarily nationalist or religious, but anti-Communist. Dudayev played upon the Chechen aversion of certain aspects of Communist ideology, such as the hyper-centralization and inefficiency of the political and economic systems, and sought to mobilize support against the only other prominent politician in Chechnya, the former first secretary of the Chechen Communist party, Doku Zavgayev (Evangelista, 2002:15-16). These initial appeals to simple and emotional themes of freedom, fatherland and resistance would prove momentarily effective, but ultimately insufficient for the societal mobilization to come. Of course, it should be noted that though he professed secular ambitions, Dudayev was acutely aware of the traditional role of Islam in Chechen society and, as such, made several token gestures and overtures to the emerging class of Sufi clerics, including using the Quran to swear the oath of office and changing the official day of rest from Sunday to Friday. More importantly, these gestures were motivated by Dudayev's desire to attract foreign capital and support from his southern Muslim neighbors (German, 2003:65).

Chechnya's democratic experiment would prove short lived; once elected Dudayev issued a decree bestowing the executive office with emergency powers for

one month, although he would never relinquish these powers. His second decree, on November 2, 1992, was an official declaration of Chechen independence from the Russian Federation (Handleman, 1995:240). Dudayev publicly stated, "I've always had just one idea – to fight for the Chechen people's right to independence. That's my life's goal and I will not shy away from it. Not under any conditions or any pressure" (Smith, 1998:128).

In accordance with these goals, Chechnya, along with Tatarstan, refused to sign the new Russian Federal Treaty. At the time, Kremlin officials were preoccupied with consolidating their own domestic power and were in no position to react. They issued a desultory attempt to pressure Chechnya into signing the treaty, yet tacitly recognized Chechen independence in exchange for bilateral agreements codifying mutually close relations. Yeltsin initially endorsed Dudayev in the mistaken belief that he could be a reliable partner, but the relationship soon soured (Dunlop, 1998: 169-170; Shetsova, 1999:110).

In Moscow, the Kremlin feared the broader geo-political implications of a sovereign Chechnya. In particular, the Kremlin feared a "domino effect" whereby independence in one Muslim republic would begin to spread to the rest of the North and West Caucasus and, eventually, up the Volga River to the resource-rich republics of Tatarstan and Bashkortostan. To avoid an all-out invasion, Yeltsin tried to create a more pragmatic and pro-Moscow government in Chechnya. He erroneously believed Dudayev's own mistakes and administrative impotence would result in a popular revolt against the former general. Yeltsin and his advisors

believed that by applying minimal economic pressure on Dudayev his rule would disintegrate from within. But rather than weakening Dudayev, Yeltsin's sanctions elevated him to folk hero status. Indeed, Russian actions gave Dudayev the necessary exogenous 'enemy' against which to mobilize the Chechen people and keep the now burgeoning opposition parties in check (Bennett, 1999:329). Dudayev continued his call for full independence and opposition to Moscow, despite the sanctions, and quickly moved to solidify his support with the militant Chechen highlanders (Gall and De Waal, 1998: 187).

By the spring of 1994, Russia's reentry into Chechnya was becoming obvious. The indigenous opposition to Dudayev, although diverging on parochial goals, collectively called for the reconciliation of Chechen political groups and issued an appeal for Dudayev to seek negotiations with Yeltsin as the relationship between the two was were becoming increasingly antagonistic. (German, 2003:95) Still, even with public articulations of solidarity, the opposition groups were composed of political novices and no one rival was able to match the military prowess of Dudayev's Chechen National Guard (Seely, 2001:115). Nonetheless, making little progress politically, the groups decided to take Dudayev on directly and soon engaged in low-intensity military engagements. The violence remained limited until June 1994, when former prisoner and warlord, Ruslan Labazanov's forces protested in the Grozny town square, calling for the government's resignation. A fierce battle

ensued and Labazanov was forced to flee.[23] Dudayev's harsh treatment towards the opposition and desecration of human remains, posting the severed heads of slaughtered protesters, disgusted the Chechen people and rather than abolishing a dangerous but relatively small group, he had unwittingly provided it legitimacy and recruits (German, 2003:100).

Once more Dudayev's rule seemed destined to collapse, and faced with the emergence of new political competition, several assassination attempts, and increasing Russian military support to his rivals, he sought advice from his Vice President, Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev who, based on his experience and contacts with Wahhabi clerics and militants, persuaded him to utilize more overt and radical Islamic appeals. It was at this point that Dudayev decided to "turn Chechen Islam into an instrument for the manipulation of mass awareness" (Dunlop, 1998:148). Dudayev soon dissolved the Chechen Parliament and relied on the elevated public status of the traditional, religiously sanctioned Council of Elders to provide a façade of democracy and political legitimacy although he continued to rule exclusively by presidential decree (Gall and de Waal, 1998:101-102).[24]

In the summer of 1994, Yeltsin decided to increase support to the opposition groups. The Russians began to actively support armed revolt against Dudayev and by August 1994, open civil war had erupted in Chechnya. Yeltsin provided the opposition with arms, helicopters, and tanks in order to topple the Dudayev regime

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[23] Dudayev executed and beheaded four of Labazanov's cousins and put the severed heads on public display thus, igniting a traditional Chechen blood feud between the two men.
[24] Dudayev did maintain the actual body and the Constitutional Court, although neither had any power, thus making the republic a presidential dictatorship; See Dunlop, 1998.

(German, 2003:109). The decision to abandon negotiations and embark on a military campaign was made primarily because Yeltsin misperceived the domestic situation in Chechnya and the dynamics of Chechen domestic politics. In Chechnya's incipient civil conflict, Dudayev had taken only limited military actions against his rivals. Yeltsin perceived this as a dispositional weakness while in all likelihood Dudayev acted in this manner so as to not alienate potential supporters. The Kremlin realistically hoped to exploit inter-Chechen divisions, and in exchange for the military assistance given to opposition forces, usher into power a pro-Moscow, puppet government. In order to ensure success, "volunteers" from the Russian army were recruited by the FSB (the successor agency to the KGB) to join the opposition (Souleimonov, 2007:92-93).

From November 25, 1994 through November 27, 1994, bitter fighting ensued between the two factions. In the end, even with Russian military assistance, Dudayev's regime was able to rout the opposition and in doing so captured some twenty-one Russian soldiers (Souleimonov, 2007:98-100). Dudayev realized the political capital these troops represented and openly called on the Russian government to recognize the troops as prisoners of war; in the absence of such an admission they would be executed as mercenaries (Gall and de Waal, 1998:156). More importantly, the revelation of Russians fighting in and against Chechnya provided Dudayev with the ultimate mobilization tool – foreign invasion. Although inter-clan fighting plagued Chechen society, whenever the clans were faced with an invading force they quickly abandoned their quarrels and join together to repel the

aggressors. Yeltsin's plan did not weaken Dudayev's position, but rather strengthened it as the populace coalesced around their leader in the face of a foreign invasion from a historical enemy.

Dudayev's unexpected maneuver with the captured soldiers put Yeltsin in an embarrassing and difficult situation. Yeltsin could not ignore Dudayev's challenge. If Yeltsin chose to negotiate for the captives' freedom, it would implicitly signal the recognition of Dudayev's regime and Chechen sovereignty. However, to ignore the crisis would surely draw the umbrage of domestic nationalists, the media and the populace as a whole – an unattractive proposition given the state of Russian domestic politics at the time. This was an especially objectionable prospect given the relatively close proximity of the presidential and parliamentary elections the following year (Fowkes, 1998:107-110). In a late-night meeting with heavy drinking all around, Defense Secretary Pavel Grachev finally convinced Yeltsin that a "small victorious war" would be good for domestic politics and, moreover, the entire endeavor could be accomplished in less than two hours by Russian paratroopers. With this idea in mind, the Russians were poised to once again become embroiled in a long, bloody, slog in the North Caucasus (Trenin and Malashenko, 2004:57).

THE FIRST RUSSO-CHECHEN WAR (1994 TO 1996)

On December 11, 1994, some 40,000 Russian troops accompanied by armored personnel carriers, tanks and helicopters began their assault on Chechnya. Despite the strategic absurdity of initiating a war during winter in the Caucasus

Mountains, the Russian military strategy was for three separate columns to converge on the capital city of Grozny. This massive show of force was intended to intimidate and crush the separatists aligned with President Dudayev. Yeltsin's confidence that flexing Russian military muscle would force the separatists to flee the city was a crucial miscalculation, a tactical error leaving open the corridor to the south. This decisive mistake about Chechen resolve and relative Russian military capability permitted the Chechen fighters an avenue for re-supply and became indicative of the many tactical errors Yeltsin would make in his prosecution of the military campaign (Gall and de Waal, 1998:173-177).

The Chechen resistance was well prepared for the Russian onslaught and utilized the urban environment of Grozny to its full potential. Through the sewers and in buildings, the Chechens had established sniper niches and rocket propelled grenade nests. The Chechen guerrillas employed the age-old tactics and strategies their ancestors had utilized during the first Caucasian war in the 18th and 19th centuries, when resistance fighters to the tsar's armies countered the overwhelming asymmetry in force by hit and run strikes through the rugged mountains and thick birch forests. As the first column of armored personnel carriers lumbered down the main road into Grozny's town square, the Chechens identified a crucial Russian error in not accompanying the vehicles with infantry support. Exploiting this mistake, the Chechen guerrillas used shoulder-fired, rocket-propelled grenades to knock out the first and last carriers in the caravans, trapping the middle vehicles. As the young soldiers panicked and fled the protection of the armored shells, they were

mowed down in the streets by machine gun fire. This scene was repeated throughout the city, as the Chechens used mobile phones and an intimate knowledge of the city to maneuver small bands of guerrillas, unleashing a deadly barrage of fire on the Russians (Gall and de Waal, 1998:289-317; Souleimanov, 2007:226-301:102-113). The Chechen fighters, a high proportion of whom made the solemn vow to fight jihad based on Dudayev's earlier encouragement, quickly adopted Islamic slogans and articulated that they the soldiers were "already dead to this world" (Shaz-Kazemi, 2000:45). Within a couple of hours of the initial assault, the main Russian force was scattered, shocked and suffering from a near fifty percent casualty infliction. Incredulous officers ordered a retreat to the city outskirts and tried to regroup while Russian artillery held back the guerrillas. The first Chechen war had begun and within a month, Grozny would be destroyed. It would be the first European city razed since the end of World War II (Menon and Fuller, 2000:48).

At this point the war in Chechnya shifted to a new phase, where classic guerrilla tactics in the mountains and forests of the south replaced the horrors of urban conflict. Throughout the spring the Russian army used indiscriminate force against rebels and civilians alike. They would shell small cities and villages during the day then at night hunker down and await the counter attacks of Chechen guerillas. Even in territory that was purported to be under Russian control, Chechen rebels were consistently able to attack checkpoints and bases as well as lay mines and booby traps. This not only took a physical toll on Russian troops, but a

psychological one as well, further decreasing morale (Gall and de Waal, 1998:289-317; Souleimanov, 2007:109-113).

In spite of these events the Russian war machine continued its slow trudge south, eventually capturing most of the flat northern plains. For the next two years, the Russians and Chechens slogged it out in cities like Bamut, Argun, Shatili, and Vedeno. The Chechen resistance proved to be a superior fighting force, utilizing key terrain to inflict tremendous damage on the Russian forces, many of whom had little desire to fight. The resistance had one significant comparative weakness, however, supplies (Bennett, 1998; Smith, 1999). Russian forces were poorly trained and poorly equipped, yet the Chechens eventually began to wear down, fighting more stalemates than victories as the war continued. In April 1995, Dudayev was killed by an air to surface missile and it was at this point that the decision was made to exert a new kind of pressure on Russian. The new tactic was to exploit the already high levels of popular dissatisfaction for the war among the Russian people and push them to pressure their elected leaders to acquiesce to the Chechens territorial and political demands (Gall and de Waal, 1998:257-275; Souleimanov, 2007:116).

It is important to note that by May 1995, the Chechens seemed destined for defeat as ammunition supplies dwindled and combat fatigue intensified (Evangelista, 2002; Lieven, 1998:120-123). In short, the realities of asymmetric warfare had seemingly caught up with the Chechens. However, a daring raid changed the course of the war and, some argue, established a dangerous precedent

in the Chechen struggle, namely the justification of terrorism (Bodansky, 2007; Murphy, 2006).

On June 14, 1995, Shamil Basayev managed to smuggle over two hundred insurgents into the sleepy Russian town of Buddennovsk, some one hundred miles north of the Chechen border. He succeeded in doing this through bribing border guards and police. Once in Buddennovsk, the Chechen fighters seized over two thousand hostages and barricaded themselves in the local hospital (Gall and de Waal, 1998:257; Souleimanov, 2007:11-112).

Yeltsin was attending the G-7 meeting in Halifax, Canada at the time. In his absence, the decision was made to eschew negotiations and, instead, send in elite Russian troops to storm the hospital and rescue the hostages. This attempt tragically failed, and the indiscriminate use of firepower by the Russian troops killed hundreds of hostages, all of which was broadcast live on national television. As a result, Russian public disgust reached such a crescendo that then Prime Minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin was left with few options to maneuver out of the crisis. In six months parliamentary elections were to be held and the presidential election was now only a year away. Political self-preservation dictated that Chernomyrdin alleviate the situation as quickly as possible, and without further bloodshed. Accordingly, he initiated negotiations with Basayev and by June 19, 1995, the insurgents were given safe passage back into Chechnya, where they received a heroic welcome. Chernomyrdin further capitulated to a cease-fire and to begin

negotiations for an end to Russia's involvement in the Chechen quagmire (Lieven, 1999:124-125; Gall and de Waal, 1998:263-275; Souleimanov, 2007:111-112).

The raid on Buddennovsk became the pivotal episode of the first Chechen campaign. In pure desperation, the guerrillas had launched a seemingly suicidal raid for both themselves and the cause of Chechen independence. However, due to the pressure of public opinion they had managed to instigate peace talks and secure breathing space from the near constant warfare of the seven-month-old campaign. In the ensuing break from hostilities the Chechens shrewdly filtered back into the territories they had been driven from, all without firing a shot. Seemingly out of nowhere, the first Chechen war had ended in a humiliating Russian defeat (Gammer, 2006:209).

On August 14, 1996, Yeltsin charged Security Council Chairman, Alexander Lebed with full powers to negotiate a settlement. The accord stipulated the full withdrawal of Russian troops from Chechnya and for the question of Chechen sovereignty to be addressed in five years' time. In the interim the Chechen people would be allowed free elections and limited autonomy in conducting domestic affairs. After eighteen months of war the Chechen separatists had won de-facto independence. By late December, the last of the Russian combat troops withdrew from Chechnya ending a war whose human toll dwarfed that of the Afghan crusade. Conservative estimates announced by Lebed after signing the treaty put the total

human cost of the war between 70,000 and 90,000 people killed (Fowkes, 1998:180-183; Gall and de Waal, 1998:358-361; Lieven, 1998:143-145).[25]

What is most remarkable is that the Chechens were able to do what no one had anticipated. They beat the remnants of a formidable army and did so in a remarkable way. But the celebrations of victory would be short-lived. On the one hand, the Chechens had won independence after 200 years of struggle. On the other hand, it came at a tremendous cost, and Chechen society was utterly destroyed.

THE INTER-WAR YEARS (1997 TO 1999)

It has oft been quipped that the Chechens won the war, but lost the peace. In the aftermath of the surprising Chechen victory, Chechnya faced a number of serious challenges. Most of the republic was destroyed. Its economy was as ruined as its cities. Bands of armed men, some bent on exploiting the situation for their own financial gain, roamed the country killing and kidnapping. The lawlessness in Chechnya and attacks on foreigners would keep even the most determined NGOs from entering the war-torn republic to help rebuild. Finally, a new element was spreading, namely a foreign version of Islam (Bodansky, 2007; Murphy, 2010; Wilhemsen, 2006). In this context, the leaders of the Chechen resistance tried to stitch together a new state.

The first Chechen war ended in a humiliating Russian defeat and an agreement to allow Chechnya de facto independence for a period of five years. Once

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[25] Casualties figures must be viewed with caution since there is no consensus on the true number of dead or wounded.

again, local Chechen elites attempted to maintain the cohesion of the endemically fractious Chechen society by institutionalizing central rule. In this, three central figures emerged: Maskhadov, leader of the armed forces, acting President, Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, and Basayev (Souleimanov, 2007:127-132). Each man had different ideas about what type of political institutions should be implemented, but each ultimately wanted to preside over a centralized and hierarchical Chechen state. However, the traditional centrifugal pull of Chechen society would prove too great an impediment to centralized institution building (Hughes, 2007:96-99). In this environment, the predatory groups that had formed to fight the Russians now engaged one another in fierce competition for scarce material goods. In the absence of any government, lucrative black markets emerged dealing drugs and weapons, and kidnapping became a cottage industry. The kidnapping was often done by neighbors and acquaintances. Many times ransoms were demanded for the dead bodies. Foreign influence also grew. The trickle of foreign dollars and recruits that began to filter in during the war became a flood as Arabs began to shower Chechen warlords with money for rebuilding and to influence the form of government. To attract these funds, the public violence became exactly that as death and violence was taped and televised as a perverse form of advertisement for foreign dollars (Wilhemsen, 2006).

In January 1997, the developing rift between competing visions of Chechnya's future appeared set the stage for another violent civil war. During the 1997 presidential elections Maskhadov, rationalizing that were Chechnya to have a

chance for sustained independence it would need international support, which would likely frown upon yet another radical Islamic state, ran on a secular platform and received 60% of the vote. Yandarbiyev and Basayev, espousing more Islamist and radical rhetoric and openly backed by the Wahhabis, received 20% and 10%, respectively (Evangelista, 2003). The results revealed that although a majority favored a secular state, a third of the population favored some version of fundamentalism. Hence, the election presaged the growing tensions within the postwar religious community whereby a serious confrontation between Wahhabis and Sufis emerged over the degree to which Islamization should influence state institutions and daily norms of behavior. Maskhadov immediately sought to quell internal dissatisfaction and hope to coop the popularity of Basayev by appointing him prime minister. But soon Basayev would chafe at his subordinate status and began to overtly court the foreign Islamic radicals he had grown close to during the war (Cornell, 2003).

By any account Maskhadov had a daunting task. Chechnya's failure to develop robust political institutions stemmed from five over-arching challenges: "the absence of resources for post-war construction, profound confusion about the structure of the new state, weak political leadership… the proliferation of private armies, and a failure in Moscow to undertake constructive policies for building relations with Chechnya" (Lanskoy, 2003:27). Maskhadov's inability to impose centralized control and establish hierarchical institutions is explained by the parochial goals of individual warlords. Like Afghanistan, tribal societies with no

historical antecedents of hierarchical governance face problems not so much because of ideational appeals to traditional social structures, but rather from material variables. In the aftermath of conflict, individual warlords find themselves in possession of weapons, territory, prestige, and armed men who, in an economically devastated environment, have few avenues to pursue non-militarized occupations (Barfield, 2010). Why would these warlords acquiesce to a centralized government which by definition would decrease their power and influence? The continued existence of armed factions presented the most serious obstacle to state security and institution building and Maskhadov initially tried to offer either free university training or the opportunity to mobilize into a standing national army. Both of these endeavors failed because of a lack of funds and a lack of desire, especially from field commanders who had no incentive to lay down their arms and surrender power to Maskhadov.[26] Fairbanks compared Maskhadov's position to that of a medieval monarch who is at a disadvantage in his struggle with powerful lords and often had to resort to giving away part of the royal estate. Similarly, Maskhadov made such concessions with private commanders to bring them into the government.[27] This proved more detrimental than helpful, and his actions were commonly perceived as the acts of a weak man. Accordingly, this was a perception Basayev tried to propagate to simultaneously discredit Maskhadov's reputation and increase his own esteem. Ultimately, Basayev triumphed.

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[26] See Derluguian, 1999.
[27] For more discussion, see Fairbanks, 2002.

The violence committed by Chechens against foreigners has been by any measure horrific. Foreign aid workers were murdered in their sleep; foreign technologists were captured and be-headed on TV. Kidnapping again became a cottage industry and the poor souls who were kidnapped suffered immensely. They were often forced into slave labor and when they were not working they were kept in dank rotted pits dug into the earth (Tishkov, 2004:107-126). Those with rich families were ransomed, usually after a toe or finger was sent off to the grieving relative. The rival warlords began to see the kidnapped as currency in their rivalry (there also emerged a relative value scale: Russian officers and foreigners were of top value, while conscripts were of little worth. Chechens of varying wealth fell between the two extremes), as markers of esteem and power, and actively sought to accrue as many as possible (Bodansky, 2007; Murphy, 2006). In several interviews I conducted with Chechen refugees and former fighters I was told how some, especially the Barayev brothers, would joke and laugh about the number of hostages they had. They would trade them to other warlords and often talk about how much they had received for one. In some instances to show how powerful they were or to scare people into submission, the warlords would publicly murder their victims. I was told that this too was often done with the cavalier attitude of a millionaire who burns money.

The religious strife between the traditional clerics and the small but powerful Wahhabis was particularly acrimonious in the interwar years. It is essential to note, however, that the conflict between the traditional Sufi clerics and the Wahhabis had

little to do with religious concerns and arguably more with parochial political and power issues as each side tried to exploit religion.[28]

In time, Maskhadov's tenuous hold on power grew increasingly weak. He eventually commanded little more than Grozny and a few other cities, which were sparsely populated and devastated, and the clans associated with his family. The private armies continued to grow because they offered one of the few employment opportunities in Chechnya. Maskhadov's repeated attempts to reach out to both the international community and the Chechen people for support failed. Soon Maskhadov became a president without a state and like Dudayev, proved unable to sustain hierarchical control over Chechen society (Fairbanks, 2002). Ever the peacemaker, Maskhadov sought to quell internal dissatisfaction and tried to co-op the popularity of Basayev by appointing him prime minister. Basayev openly chafed at his subordinate status and soon began to overtly court the foreign Islamic radicals he had grown close to during the war (Evangelista, 2003).

The role of religion in the inter-war years merits further discussion, especially since, as we shall see in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 ideas on religious authority are correlated with certain views on the legitimacy of political violence.

THE ROLE OF ISLAM

The radicalization of Islam in Russian and the former Soviet republics has not been restricted to the North Caucasus (Cornell, 2003:178-179). Indeed, the Islamic

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[28] For a more detailed discussion, see Lanskoy, 2002.

renaissance that had been underway throughout Russia since the late 1980s had inevitably politicized Islam, spawning both nation-wide and regional parties and creating a situation where Islam was fast becoming the prime motivating factor in North Caucasian ethnic forces (Howard, 2011: 171; Zelkina, 2000).

Throughout Chechen history, Islam was held as something that served as a cultural marker between the Chechens and the 'others'. This included not only the Russians, but also fellow Caucasian Muslims who, because of their willingness to subordinate themselves to Russian rule, were considered to be lesser Muslims (Lieven, 1998:354-356). Chechen Islam is a peculiar case because although they adhered broadly to the mystical Sufism (more specifically, Chechen traditional Islam is *tarekat* – the path or method of instruction akin to a brotherhood, of which the *Nakhshbandiya* and *Kadiriya* schools are most influential), most combined Islamic tenets of faith with the pre-Islamic pagan rituals pervasive amongst the mountainous peoples of the Caucasus. Though they considered themselves as being more observant practitioners of Islam than their Caucasian brethren, it has been noted that the Chechen interpretation of Islam was viewed by other Russian and later Soviet Muslims as being so out of sync with Islamic teachings that the Chechen faith had little in common with the teachings of Muhammad. Thus, it has been suggested that this lack of an "authentic" historic Islamic identity has contributed to the contemporary "hyper-Islamic" identity as a way of overcompensating for their embarrassing religious foundations (Zelkina, 2000). Of course, during Soviet times the Kremlin had little desire or incentive to allow even limited expressions of

Muslim faith (with the exception being the partial degree of religious freedom afforded the Central Asian republics) and as such, mosques remained closed in the republic until 1978. Soviet policy had done substantial damage to the faith and permanently erased many Islamic traditions (Gall and de Waal, 1998:33-38).

In the buildup to the First Russo-Chechen War, Dudayev moved cautiously and incrementally in reintroducing a politicized Islam, attempting to create the common identity boundaries of a new Chechen that was both novel and authentic. He began by adopting a new Chechen flag, peppering his speeches with Islamic slogans and Quranic verses and organizing the widespread construction of mosques throughout the republic. This was consistent with an overall trend in Chechnya where it had become fashionable to read Arabic, express knowledge of the Quran, wear Islamic dress, and fast. He even called on the Chechen Muslims to pray to Allah, but interestingly, only three times a day rather than the scripture-mandated five, thus illustrating his Islamic illiteracy (Wilhemsen, 2006). The capital for these endeavors came from foreign sources, particularly Saudi Arabia, and provided Chechen leaders and individuals with another incentive to promote and construct an Islamic Chechnya, money. However, with Saudi dollars came Saudi radicalism, and this would prove the critical juncture in the evolution of a politicized Islamic identity to a militarized one. The Wahhabis opened religious centers and began to spread austere Islamic literature, organize mass prayers, and use the local media to propagate their ideas while simultaneously establishing indoctrination camps for young Muslims from the entire North Caucasus to learn the necessity of jihad and

the military skills necessary to wage holy war. The Wahhabis regarded the Sufi faith as a delusion and deviation from pure Islam and their initial emergence in Chechen society was greeted with significant skepticism, particularly from the elders.[29] Again, it is important not to understate the economic situation the average Chechen faced at this time. Many had turned to organized crime and selling off family possessions to make ends meet, and it was in this contextual chaos that a foreign group, espousing a simple, utopian solution to these economic grievances, often offering financial incentives, were able to gain a foothold in the Chechen society. Soon, these militant elites were able to hijack the public discourse (with the complicity of indigenous Chechen elites eagerly pursuing their own parochial objectives) on the role of Islam in society (Cornell, 2003:178-179; King and Menon, 2010:32-34).

The economic hardships and astronomical rates of unemployment made Chechnya a fertile ground for new recruits to a movement and identity that offered hope and a positive message for anyone who believed (Souleimanov, 2007:290-292). The Wahhabis were particularly successful at attracting young Chechen males – especially during and after the first war – who became enamored with the "Muslim warrior culture" that came out of Afghanistan. Indeed "to the extent that Wahhabism actually is finding a significant base of social support in the North Caucasus, it is likely to be among militant youths who have no employment opportunities, were members of militia units to which they remain loyal and that

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[29] See Akaev, 2002.

provided – and continue to provide – them with a security and a sense of belonging to a community... [It] appears attractive in the way that gang membership is for teenagers in the West" (Seely, 2001:305). This has become especially true in the inter-war and second war environment where a new generation has come of age knowing little more than the atrocities of war and the abuse of Russian soldiers.

As noted, Maskhadov struggled in his attempts to create a new Chechen state. In particular, he felt increasing pressure from the Islamic factions and, in attempting to bring them into his state-building project, amended the Chechen Constitution, proclaiming Islam both the official state religion and basis for codified law (Hughes, 2007:100-105). Counter to Maskhadov's wishes, Basayev immediately exploited this endorsement of politicized Islam and utilized it as a way to criticize both Maskhadov and head Mufti of Chechnya, the former rebel leader and future Russian backed president Akhmed-Hadji Kadyrov. Countering Basayev's challenges and rhetoric presented Maskhadov and Kadyrov with their own difficult situation. Strategically, they increased their denunciations of radicalism and portrayed Wahhabism as an ideology of terror; however, they realized that alienating radical sympathizers would bolster Basayev's already growing ranks and risk plunging the war torn republic into civil war once more (Sagramoso, 2007:693-699). Ultimately, they decided to acquiesce to parliamentary demands and implemented sharia in February 1999 (Trenin and Malashenko, 2002: 32-34).

According to some scholars, sharia had been an integral, albeit informal and un-codified part of Chechen society for 300 years (Bodansky, 2007; Hahn, 2011;

Murphy, 2006; 2010). It was never formally institutionalized, although there were attempts. In the Great Caucasus Wars Imam Shamil attempted to implement sharia but was met with much resistance, surprisingly from the Chechens who found sharia too austere and too far a deviation for traditional norms and mores (Akhmadov, 2010:122). In the inter-war years, most sharia courts operated as something like military courts martial, giving lashes to drunkards.

According to Akhmadov, sharia had always existed alongside secular legal institutions, although in some contexts it was not entirely clear which legal form was subordinate to which. Yet the chaos and uncertainly of the First Russo-Chechen War played a significant factor in helping sharia, or at least the idea of sharia, seem further and further into public life and political discourse. More importantly, as noted above, sharia became a political platform for would-be leaders, especially young males. "How could one make a name for oneself? Simple; join a sharia court or force women to wear headscarves, or segregate buses along gender lines. The introduction of alien religious norms represented a sphere of activity where any young man who wanted to be noticed could show that he had initiative" (Akhmadov, 2010:124). He further explains that in a society known for giving respect and deference to elders and their opinions, on the issue of sharia the elders were curiously and conspicuously silent. The debate about the proper role of sharia was left to the young, some of whom had indeed studied abroad at Islamic universities, but most did so without any credentials.

Despite Maskhadov's overtures to the Islamic factions, hostility erupted in July 1998 in the city of Gudermes. Gudermes was under the control of the Yamadayev brothers, one-time allies of the Kadyrov clan. After a group of Wahhabis harassed a local man related to the Yamadayevs they organized a band of loyal fighters and confronted the Wahhabis in a standoff. Soon, anyone who had a grievance against the Wahhabis was soon arriving in the city and violence soon erupted, leading to a six-day battle which left over one hundred dead (The Jamestown Foundation, Eurasia Daily Monitor, August, 1998)

The battle of Gudermes illustrated the level of public antipathy towards the foreign religious zealots and revealed the relative military weakness of the Wahhabis. Although Maskhadov would still feel pressure to acquiesce to certain Islamic demands, the Wahhabis would never be a serious political force again. Yet, they were still important for some Chechen resistance leaders, like Basayev who viewed them as critical allies in the looming new war with Russia (Akhmadov, 2010:131-132), once again underscoring Basayev's ever-strategic pragmatism.

Basayev was a charismatic and shrewd political calculator. It remains unclear, however, whether Basayev was truly adhering to militant ideology or merely utilizing it for material gains, a debate further discussed in Chapter 4. There has been much speculation about the authenticity of his embrace of Islam after the deaths of several friends and family members, and journalists have noted that he did pray five times a day. Moreover, he adopted an Arabic name, Abdullah Shamil Abu Idris, and declared himself leader of the *Gardens for the Righteous Islamic Brigade of*

Martyrs. In videos from the period, he was shown shouting "God is great" in Arabic and wearing Islamic dress.[30] Nevertheless, he too reasoned that an open struggle against Maskhadov risked a civil war in which both sides could lose; worse still another internal war could present a tempting opening for another Russian invasion. Therefore, he believed that he could maximize and consolidate his influence in Chechen politics by reinforcing the heroic image that had followed him since he fought for the Abkhazians in Georgia in the early 1990s and from his actions at Buddennovsk. In a purported attempt to boost his popularity, Basayev launched a raid into neighboring Dagestan with Ibn Khattab in the hopes that a successful campaign would bring him home a hero once more, solidify a base of political support among radical and moderate Islamists alike and provide him the requisite political capital to challenge and dispose of Maskhadov. Clearly, events have not transpired as he planned, and the consequences of his actions, along with a series of suspicious bombings of Russian apartments that killed over three hundred, were used as a justification for the renewed Russian invasion. In this new war, a new strong, resolute political leader, Prime Minister, Vladimir Putin, would ride a wave of popularity for his harsh prosecution of the Chechen war to the apex of the Russian political system.

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[30] The Wall Street Journal, September 16, 2004.

THE SECOND RUSSO-CHECHEN WAR (1999 TO PRESENT)

As Russian forces once again invaded the tiny yet intransigent Chechen republic in 1999, they were determined to exact revenge and to avoid the strategic, tactical, and political mistakes, which had plagued their previous endeavor (Cornell, 2003:171). This new campaign was framed as an anti-terrorist operation instead of a war. Deliberate efforts were made to control the media, restricting access to military approved areas and forcing journalists to use an officially sanctioned rhetoric that attempted to sanitize the conflict. The Kremlin wanted to avoid the political fallout and public outcry that characterized the first war. To avoid large scale popular opposition, the decision was made to control and manipulate the media. Accordingly, the army was never fighting, but rather "working" and "cleaning" areas. Strategically, Russia would take a new approach, abandoning the usual script of invading from the north, driving the resistance to the south, and then engaging in a slow, methodical, and bloody protracted guerrilla campaign. The Kremlin was particularly concerned with avoiding the deadly consequences of fighting an urban campaign. Fighting wars in the cities has long been shown to be one of the most deadly environments for modern warfare. Indeed, famous historic battles from Stalingrad and Berlin to Hue and Fallujah, all illustrate the inherent difficulties of engaging in urban combat. The Russians devised an ingenious, albeit deadly, solutions to avoiding the pitfalls of urban combat, namely, eliminate the urban. In the Second Russo-Chechen War Russian forces relied almost exclusively on heavy air and artillery power. Prior to any patrol or probing action against

Chechen forces, Russian forces first "softened up" zones, usual civilian areas, with heavy bombardments. If, after extensive bombing, a patrol was fired upon, the decision was made for all units to withdraw while renewed fire was rained down. Moreover, the decision was made to wage a republic-wide campaign, attacking both major urban centers in the north and cities and villages throughout the south (Souleimanov, 2007:160-171).

The Russians use of massive artillery and aerial bombardments to crush the separatist army limited Russian casualties, but also caused an unprecedented flow of refugees as hundreds of thousands fled to neighboring Ingushetia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan. The Chechen resistance was initially un-prepared for another Russian onslaught. Nonetheless, thousands were once again mobilized and the inter-factional fighting was forgotten as all Chechens braced for war. In doing so, Chechen forces massed in Grozny and waited for the invading Russians (Hughes, 2007:81-87).

The Chechen resistance grossly underestimated the Russian's willingness to rely so exclusively on air and artillery power. The strategic shift to attack all parts of Chechnya at once, instead of attacking from the north while slowly pushing south, forced the Chechens to spread their forces out to the villages. The Russians also finally learned to surround Grozny and in doing so trapped a number of Chechen fighters and top field commanders. As the fighting wore on, the Chechens attempted to break out of Grozny and believed they had bribed a safe passage. The bribe was a trap, however, and the purportedly safe route was in fact a mine field covered by

Russian paratroopers. In the dash hundreds of Chechens were killed, blown-up, or mutilated. Basayev lost a leg and nearly died alongside 75% of the field commanders. The Second Russo-Chechen War had begun and it appeared it would be an even bloodier affair than the first war (Hughes, 2007:108; Tishkov, 2004:226).

After major combat operations died down, Putin implemented "Chechenization", a policy which delegated significant political and military power to pro-Moscow Chechens (Hughes, 2007:118-125; Souleimanov, 2007:200-216). The former Mufti of Chechnya, and former rebel, Akhmed Kadyrov was appointed President and he quickly used his powerful plains clan to exert control over Russian occupied territories. Within a year, a national Referendum was conducted in which the Chechen people purportedly signaled their desire to remain a part of Russian. Chechenization allowed the Russians to control Chechnya in a way they could never do directly (King and Menon, 2010:30-31). Of course, a significant part of the population distrusted the Kadyrovs and in June 2003 Akhmed was killed by a bomb planted in the Diamo Stadium in Grozny during a military parade. In short order his son, current pro-Kremlin Chechen President, Ramzan Kadyrov came to power and has used this position to establish a regime of terror in Chechnya today. Scores of people, particularly human rights advocates and opponents of the regime have been arrested, tortured, and, in many cases, summarily executed.

The Russians and Kadyrovsky both have also used an innocuously sounding policy, "zachistkys" or cleaning operations, to instill fear in the Chechen people and hunt down possible insurgents (Gilligan, 2009; Cornell, 2003:172-174). The

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zachistkys have been pointed to be numerous human rights groups as being one of the vilest aspects of the new war. In a usual operation, small villages are surrounded and swept for males aged 12 to 90. In many cases all the men are rounded up and taken to filtration camps, usually deep pits dug into the earth, abandoned buildings, or old tankers, where they are subjected to systematic and prolonged torture and abuse. Many are permanently maimed and significant numbers are killed or never seen again (Cornell, 2003:172-174).

The Chechen resistance has faced its own challenges. The international support they enjoyed in the first war has all but disappeared. The secular-nationalist leadership has been decimated by Russian assassinations and a new-generation of increasingly radicalized youth, many of whom adhere to non-traditional forms of militant Islam, has filled the ranks. The rebels have also changed tactics, attempting to spread the conflict beyond Chechnya to the rest of the North and West Caucasus through a system of jamaats, small cells of militants organized around Islamic militancy (Sagramoso, 2007:697-699; Souleimanov, 2007:292-298). .

Most observers agree that although local concerns fuel the attractiveness of the jamaats, the Chechen resistance is the main beneficiary. The formation of regional jamaats in Dagestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, and Karachay-Cherkessia keep Russia occupied elsewhere, drain its resources and ability to provide patronage to local satraps, and give the Chechens breathing space to rest and recover demographically (Sagramoso, 2007:697-699; Souleimanov, 2007:292-

298). Basayev, the mastermind behind the idea, tried to spark rebellion throughout the North Caucasus not a goal in and of itself, but rather "to establish Chechen statehood" (Akhmadov, 2010:232-233).

These local factors, however, cannot be ignored. The issue of why individuals join insurgent movements is addressed in the recent literature and is beyond the scope of this study. However, in the North Caucasus there are some concrete incentives and benefits to actively participating in the insurgency rather than remaining a passive observer. These considerations give us insights into both the nature of the current campaign and its potential future trajectory. Akhmadov contends that most, if not all, individuals who join the North Caucasus jamaats do so not out of religious fervor, but rather because of very specific local concerns and grievances, arguing that "injustice, arbitrary political violence, clan rivalries, and the absence of recourse through legal or political channels…" (Akhmadov, 2010:241-242) drive scores of young men to, in the local euphemism for joining the insurgents, "go to the forest." This is a very different story than the one propagated by Russian and many Western analysts and politicians who view such behavior as evidence of the globalized Islamic radicalism found among adherents of Salafism/Wahhabism. I contend that we see the same instrumental and strategic considerations as those driving many Chechen refugees to desire maximal political goals like the Caucasus Emirate, viewing Islam as an overarching identity force to unite the disparate nationalities of the region. Akhmadov concurs, noting that today's political climate has changed significantly from the early 1990s when

nationalism was the main rallying cry. Today, the political atmosphere is markedly different and there is little to untie the North Caucasus peoples save religious identity. Islam is seen as a protest to the endemic corruption and injustice and pervasive unemployment and other socio-economic woes. The jamaats "offer people stability, social cohesion, and protection from a dysfunctional and predatory state" (Akhmadov, 2010:243).

The Chechen militants have also increasingly relied on suicide bombings and mass-hostage takings against Russian civilians (Hahn, 2011; Murphy, 2006; Murphy, 2010; Pape, 2005). As discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, Chechen suicide bombers have detonated bombs at rock concerts, in metro stations, on busses, in cafes and trains, and even on two airplanes simultaneously. Finally, they have engaged in the so-called "spectaculars", major coordinated attacks against Russian targets. Four such actions merit further discussion.

FOUR ACTS OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE

On October 23, 2002, Movsar Barayev commanded 36 militants, including a dozen of the so-called Black Widow female suicide bombers, to seize the affluent Dubrovka Theater in Moscow during a showing of the musical, *Nord-Ost*. The militants seized approximately 900 people and demanded the immediate withdrawal of Russian troops from Chechnya and a stop to the war. The Russian authorities objected to any negotiations and instead pumped a secret weaponized anesthetic gas into the theater, rendering all occupants unconscious. Under

sedation the militants were executed, while 130 hostages died from cerebral-hypoxia and other complications from the gas (Hughes, 2007:150-157; Souleimanov, 2007:236-245).

On September 1, 2004 in the North Ossetia town of Beslan, another group of militants stormed School #1 and seized approximately 1,200 hostages, most of them young school children. The demands were the same – the immediate withdrawal of Russian troops from Chechnya and a stop to the war. The Russians refused to negotiate and instead tried to storm the building, an act which caused the militants' explosives to detonate prematurely and initiated a massive firefight. In the end close to 400 people were killed, the majority of whom were young children (Hughes, 2007:150-155; Souleimanov, 2007:246-261).

In the summer of 2004 in Nazran, Ingushetia several hundred militants orchestrated a well-coordinated action against the Interior Ministry, FSB, and Military Headquarters, and the local police station. According to witnesses, the militants attacked as revenge against those deemed responsible for the humiliation and violence committed against local Muslim youths. The militants appear to have had more material interest and after a day of fighting they withdrew to the mountains and forests, managing to seize large quantities of weapons and ammunition. Approximately 100 Russian authorities were killed (Hughes, 2007:122; Souleimanov, 2007:289-291).

The Nazran attack spurred a similar raid into the city of Nalchik, Kabardino-Balkaria in 2005. The attacking force was mostly comprised mostly of

inexperienced but hostile Muslim youths equally frustrated by the poor treatment and harassment inflicted by the Russian authorities. Unlike the Nalchik raid, the authorities were alerted to the attack in advance and the militants suffered heavy losses. Later, militant leaders declared the operation a failure (Hughes, 2007:122; 205).

Today, the war drags on. It was spread to Dagestan to the east and Ingushetia in the west, leaving Chechnya as a relative island of calm between the two, and, as discussed above, spread farther to Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachay-Cherkessia. In Dagestan and Ingushetia a low-level insurgency has taken thousands of lives from all sides and the violence is growing. This assumption of relative peace in Chechnya is also misleading. In the past year violence has begun to occur with more frequency. More importantly, in June 2011, a number of former fighters who had accepted amnesty into the Kadyrovsky defected back to the resistance (The Jamestown Foundation, Eurasia Daily Monitor, May - June, 2011).

The ethnic Russian population in the Caucasus has long fled and the population as a whole has become increasingly vocal in its opposition to the continued funding Moscow lavishes on the Caucasus, particularly Ramzan Kadyrov. This opposition is one of the few key contentious issues Putin is encountering in his all but assured Presidential re-election campaign. Yet, the Kremlin does not appear to be ready to deviate from its usual playbook of supporting local corrupt satraps while using a heavy-hand with suspected militants, many of whom are young Muslim males frustrated and angry with their lack of opportunity and the

repression. The history of the Caucasus has been one of violence and bloodshed. It does not appear the future holds any deviation from this age old dynamic.

In the next chapter, I explore the general attitudes displaced Chechens express when speaking about political violence. Contrary to the prevailing assumptions, displaced Chechens are more likely to either support or reject the legitimacy of select politically violent acts due to strategic considerations instead of emotive factors like revenge or fear. Next, I reveal how individual political goals choices and preferences for certain regime types influence attitudes supporting political violence among Chechen refugees. Finally, I address the potential role that level of education and living location (urban versus rural) have on both attitudes towards political violence and choice of political goals and regime type.

Chapter 4: Political Goals, Regime Type and Attitudes Supporting Political Violence

The people always desire two things: the first is to avenge themselves against those who were the cause of their being enslaved; the other is to regain their freedom…a small part desire to be free in order to command; but all others, the countless majority, desire liberty in order to live in security.
Machiavelli, *Discourses*, Book I, Chapter 16

The expectation in ethnic wars, or wars between two nations, is that violence and attitudes supporting violence will be driven primarily by emotive factors, like fear or revenge (Fearon, 1995; Petersen, 2002). Strategic considerations are deemed less consequential. Yet, as we are beginning to better understand, even ethnic wars, those conflicts presumed by their very nature to be thick with emotion, are more often than not driven and fueled by strategic, material and instrumental considerations (Mueller, 2000). "Strategic considerations are fundamental in ethnic conflicts despite…the strong passions involved…and these considerations have been largely neglected" (Fearon, 1995:5). This is the case with the Chechens and their support for political violence.

There are also a number of assumptions about the relationship between select political goals, regime type preferences, and dissatisfaction and the increased likelihood of political violence (Shapiro and Fair, 2009). All of these suppositions suggest a natural relationship between certain objectives and pro-violent sentiments. High levels of political dissatisfaction have long been proffered as an explanation of why certain individuals support political violence as acceptable form of social behavior (Lerner, 1958; Shafiq and Sinno, 2010). Individuals espousing

maximal political goals and the belief in using political violence to achieve these objectives are presumed to go hand in hand (Crenshaw, 2007; Jenkins, 1980; Kydd, 2006; Pape, 2005; Sandler, Tschirhart, and Cauley, 1983). The same is true of regime type preferences. In recent years, it is expected that individuals or groups desiring religious authority as political authority are, as a general rule, more likely to favor politically violent solutions. In particular, those desiring Islamic forms of authority, like sharia, are expected to be overwhelmingly pro-violent (Pipes, 2003; Lewis, 2004; Rapoport, 1998). Indeed, as discussed previously, this view is now the basis for a number of Western aid packages and policies in the Islamic world (see Shapiro and Fair, 2009). In all, these explanations support an instrumental and material or interest view of political violence. Simply put, individuals and/or groups use political violence to achieve select objectives. This is only part of the story.

The study of political violence and certainly of the dynamics of protracted insurgency is not exclusive to perpetrators alone. The social environment in which these individuals operate matters greatly to both the goals such individuals pursue and the means used to achieve such ends. Understanding the social environment in protracted insurgent movements has both theoretical and policy implications. Such understandings certainly matter for constructing effective foreign policy solutions. As Mao famously quipped, the "people are the sea" and militants can only operate within the confines of popular acquiesces. Accordingly, we must better understand what drives non-participant support for militant activity and political violence. I argue that among displaced Chechens, attitudes supporting political violence are not

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primarily influenced by emotive factors, like revenge, but rather by strategic, material considerations. Conversely, the rejection of such behaviors is not driven by emotive or moral factors, but rather by strategic considerations as well.

In this chapter, I explore the relationship between political goals and regime type preferences and the support for militant activity and political violence. In the next two chapters, I will use an individual level of analysis to better understand the micro-level processes driven displaced Chechens to either support or reject militant activity back home against the Russian state and Russian people. In doing so, this chapter first explores alternative explanations, such as level of education, age, and residence (urban versus rural). Then, it looks the relationship between the support of maximal goals, like the establishment of an Islamic Caucasus Emirate, and the desire of religious authority as political authority (sharia) and the support of militant activity.

Why do some Chechen refugees support political violence while others do not? Prior to observation, the expectation of such a study would expect to find little variation among respondents. Indeed, if any population was expected to hold pro-violent attitudes it would be the Chechens, especially in regard to Russia and Russian targets (Hahn, 2011; Murphy, 2006; Tishkov, 2004; Zaurbekova and Yandarov, 2001). According to this logic, the displaced Chechens scattered across the Caucasus and Europe purportedly support or tolerate insurgent activity carried out in their name, as part of the Chechen nation, against Russian targets due to one of four factors or logics: first, historical animosities between the two peoples (Hahn,

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2011; Murphy, 2006; Tishkov, 2004); second, cultural norms of "blood-feud" privileging revenge against intruders (Tishkov, 2004); third, the acute trauma of the war and forced migration (Spekhard and Akhmedova, 2005; Zaurbekova and Yandarov, 2001); and fourth, abnormal psychology as a result of the war and carnage (Spekhard and Akhmedova, 2005; Zaurbekova and Yandarov, 2001). In this chapter, I will illustrate that although these factors can play a role in influencing pro-violent attitudes, they are not as determinative as many suggest. Indeed, I argue that strategic and material considerations are the primary determining factors, not historical relations, emotive factors, or some variety of psychopathy. Nonetheless, these factors do merit further discussion.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the Chechens and Russians have a long and bloody history. Over the past three hundred years Russia has fought several protracted Muslim insurgencies in the region, all of which were extremely violent affairs (Gammer, 2006). In the Twentieth Century, Soviet authorities had to deal with continual strife from the intransigent Chechen people, deciding in 1944 to deport the entire population to the frozen steppes of Central Asia rather than risk local collusion with the encroaching Nazi Armies (Gall and de Waal, 1998). The Deportation killed some third of the population and remains a source of contention to this day (Dunlop, 1998). Finally, after the collapse of the Soviet Union two bloody wars for secession have taken place, furthering souring relations between the two seemingly perennial enemies (Evangelista, 2003; Hughes, 2007; Souleimanov, 2007). In these latter wars the Russians have been accused of committing gross

human rights violations and their tactics in the Second Russo-Chechen War, heavy bombardments, has sent hundreds of thousands into forced migration (Gilligan, 2009). In short, we would expect displaced Chechens to express disproportionately high levels of support for militant activity against the Russians.

This expectation is bolstered by extant cultural considerations. Beyond the deep-psychological trauma from both the war and the violent displacement, alternate hypotheses suggest that Chechen culture, sometimes called a "Kalashnikov Culture", instills in all Chechens a normative acceptance of violence, particularly revenge (Lieven, 1998; Trenin and Malashenko, 2004; Tishkov, 2004). As noted previously, the Chechens do have a formalized institutional system, *adat*, which utilizes a "blood feud" logic of reciprocal violence to control and punish deviant social behaviors (Jaimoukha, 2005) . According to this understanding, pro-violent attitudes are primarily driven by personal loss (of property, family, or both) (Lieven, 1999; Tishkov, 2004).

As a related factor, the abhorrent nature and horrendous loss of life and property during the two Russo-Chechen Wars have scarred scores of people. The capital city, Grozny, as well as much of the rest of the republic, was completely razed in the Second War and the fighting was brutal. There are countless stories about the true horrors of modern total war (Dunlop, 1998; Gall and de Waal, 1998; King and Menon, 2010; Lieven, 1999; Politskovskaya, 2001; Politskovskaya, 2003; Souleimanov, 2007). As a result, many find it quite reasonable that Chechens would desire revenge for their losses and, as part of a protracted insurgency, continue to

support any action against the Russian state or its quisling allies, Ramzan Kadyrov and his militias (Bodansky, 2007; Tishkov, 2004).

Finally, behavioral scientists have long studied the psychological effects of war on both combatants and non-participants (Grossmen and Christensen, 2008). Few, if any, would seriously claim that protracted warfare has little to no psychological effect on people (Grossman, 2010; Hunt, 2010). The relationship between humans and combat and the inherent toll of organized conflict is arguably older than written civilization. In Homer's classic tales we see signs of post-traumatic stress syndrome and the psychological struggle to reintegrate into society and return to normalcy (Shay, 1995; 2003). Some observers have noted that a significant percent of the Chechen population now suffer from collective psychological trauma and as such, their attitudes and views, particularly on violence, are irrational (Fields, 1978; Tishkov, 2001; Zaurbekova and Yandarov, 2001). This is a sentiment articulated by some Chechen respondents in this study. In short, the argument is that the Chechens have been so badly damaged by the trauma of war and loss that they know little more than war, an argument frequently applied to the youth, and are warped into thinking all violence is legitimate or socially acceptable (see Fields, 1978; Spekhard and Akhmedova, 2005; Tishkov, 2001; Zaurbekova and Yandarov, 2001). This certainly plays a role for some displaced Chechens, but again, as we observe below, this accounts for an extremely small percent of respondents.

The discussion above underscores the belief that if we should ever expect to find a unified, pro-violent populace, then certainly the Chechen refugee community would be a prime suspect. Yet, this is not what we find. We do find significant variation and I contend this variance is due to material interests and instrumental considerations, namely disparate political goals, dissimilar regime type preferences and gender. This does not mean that revenge or culture or trauma play no role in generating attitudes supporting political violence. Instead, culture, experiences and emotive variables simply do not tell the whole story. There is certainly a role for each of these in understanding both the genesis of and conditions under which Chechen refugees find political violence an acceptable form of behavior. However, these things are near-universal experiences among Chechen refugees. We should expect uniform views on the legitimacy of certain politically violent acts if these factors were determinative. Yet, the Chechens display marked variation in their attitudes towards militant activity and political violence. What explains this variation? In this chapter, I will explore the role of political goals and regime type preferences in influencing the support or tolerance of militant activity.

CHECHEN REFUGEES AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS POLITICAL VIOLENCE

Research conducted in circumstances where conflict and violence are endemic must be done with careful deliberation and the utmost care (Grima, 2004; Nordstrom, 1997). My goal was to better understand specific attitudes, namely those pertaining to the use and limits of political violence. In doing so, ensuring the

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safety and security of all parties was paramount. Many Chechens rightfully fear for the safety of their families and I have taken significant precautions to ensure the anonymity of all respondents.

My structured interviews used both open and closed ended questions and were broken down into three sections. Each respondent was asked the same questions in the same order. In the first section, I asked basic demographic and personal information: date of birth; previous residency; previous occupation; levels of education; personal loss, status as a fighter or veteran, history of torture or personal injury, etc. In the second part of the interview I asked a series of questions about life as a Chechen refugee and about the challenges of maintaining Chechen culture during displacement, especially into presumably alien host countries and cultures. I asked about their most pressing problems, about expectations and relative deprivation, about whether they were harassed by either the locals or local authorities, and about their general views and attitudes about life and family, religion and politics. In the final section, I asked questions specifically pertaining to politics and political life. In order to gauge and measure individual perceptions of political efficacy, I asked about voting patterns and, for example, whether they voted in the 1997 Chechen Presidential election and if so, for whom; I asked about Doku Umarov, constitutional successor to Aslan Maskhadov and Abdul-Khalim Sadulayev (both assassinated by Russian special services) and current leader of the Chechen separatist movement, and about which course of action he and his followers should pursue (e.g. should they continue to fight or lay down their arms); I asked about

what should Chechnya be politically: a part of Russia; a part of Russia, but Autonomous, like the republic of Tatarstan; Independent; or part of a Caucasus Emirate. This latter political entity would be an Islamic state composed of Ingushetia, Dagestan, parts of northern Georgia and Azerbaijan with Chechnya at the political and administrative apex. I asked which form of governing institution was best for Chechnya. Finally, the last four questions asked about the legitimacy of four concrete acts of political violence, two directed at civilians and two directed at representatives of the state: the 2002 hostage taking at the Dubrovka Theater in Moscow, the 2004 Beslan school tragedy, and the attacks on military and police personnel in Nazran in 2004 and Nalchik in 2005. Each of these events occurred after the respondent had settled into a refugee community.

How many Chechen refugees are there? In general, it has been noted that it is difficult if not impossible, to accurately count the number of refugees in any conflict (see Blakewell, 1999; Crisp, 1999). Regrettably, it is impossible to ascertain accurate figures for the total size of the Chechen refugee population, mainly because each side has an incentive to misrepresent the real numbers. The Russians have traditionally underestimated the actual number of refugees while the Chechens have tended to overestimate the number. In many cases, this is done out of practical necessity to survive. The Chechen refugees, many of whom rely exclusively on subsistence from either host governments or some combination of NGO/IGO aid, often inflate the size of their family members so that they will receive more goods. The surplus can then be stored away or sold on the black-market for other

commodities. This fact, coupled with the UN mandate protecting refugees, means that UNHCR representatives are equally wary of discussing population numbers, especially with outsiders. Consequently, we can only estimate the total size of the Chechen refugee population. In Georgia, there are anywhere from 500 to 2,000 Chechen refugees (this is down from a high of 10,000 in 1999). In Azerbaijan, they range from 1,000 to 3,000. In Poland, there are between 1,000 and 3,000. In Belgium there are approximately 1,500 Chechen refugees.

I interviewed a total of 301 Chechen refugees.[31] Disaggregated by country, I conducted 71 interviews in Georgia, 71 in Azerbaijan, 100 in Poland, and 59 in Belgium. 75% (226) were males and 25% (75) were females. 61% (184) came from rural areas, while 38.8 % (117) came from the urban centers and cities. Most had only secondary education 89.3% (269) with just 10.6% (32) reporting to have completed university or technical school. 15 were tortured, 6 were amputees. 77.7% (234) were self-declared civilians and 21.9% (66) self-declared former-fighters or veterans. 4.3% (13) were verified political or economic elites.

It is important to note the social desirability bias inherent in this work. Questions regarding views on political violence are often susceptible to social desirability bias, a condition in which participants may be wary of expressing their true views in front of the researcher or may give answers they think the researcher wants to hear. To avoid social desirability bias, I framed questions about political

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[31] In all instances, the structured interviews were conducted on a one-on-one basis. This includes interviews with displaced Chechen females. In some interviews with women, Chechen male relatives demanded to remain in visual proximity of the interview but out of earshot, thus increasing the likelihood of more accurate responses from female respondents.

violence as such, "Certain members of the Chechen resistance claim that acts such as *Nord-Ost*, Beslan, Nalchik, and Nazran were both legitimate and necessary. Do you think they are correct?"

It is important to stress that this study does not, in any way, purport to explain the attitudes of all Chechens, nor of all Chechen refugees. These findings are a qualitative assessment of observations made during systematic fieldwork in various displaced Chechen communities. These findings are impressionistic; as such, they are meant to be viewed as part of the broader exercise in developing theory. In particular, in accordance with the inherent caveats of the micro-comparative turn in the study of political violence, these findings are meant to generate arguments regarding the patterns of attitudes towards political violence and the potential factors contributing to such attitudinal patterns. As noted previously, this study pushes the limits of what can be done and serves to generate hypotheses more than test them. It is clearly difficult to conduct any research involving refugees, especially Chechen refugees who live in appalling circumstances and who, even in exile, face significant security threats from Russia and the Russian-backed, pro-Moscow Chechen government under Ramzan Kadyrov. This is a vulnerable population, and most observers would expect a monolithic, rebellious, pro-violence population (Bodansky, 2007; Murphy, 2006; Zaurbekova and Yandarov, 2001). My work challenges this assumption. The Chechen refugee population exhibits a highly sophisticated view toward political violence, thus bolstering claims for an instrumental theory of political violence.

In the following tables, Chechen refugee respondents who believed that each of the four concrete acts (the 2002 attack on Moscow's Dubrovka Theater during a performance of, *Nord-Ost*; the 2004 attack on School #1 in Beslan, North Ossetia; the 2004 attack on military and police personnel in Nalchik, Kabardino-Balkaria; and the attack on military and police personnel in Nazran, Ingushetia) legitimate are grouped under, *Supports All Acts of Political Violence*. Respondents who rejected all four acts are grouped under, *Rejects All Acts of Political Violence*. Respondents who fell in-between the two extremes, *Supports Some Acts of Political Violence*, answered one of three ways: 1) *Supports All Acts of Political Violence Not Targeting Civilians* (Nalchik and Nazran); 2) *Supports All Acts of Political Violence Except Beslan*; or 3) *Rejects All Acts of Political Violence Except* Nord-Ost.

GENERAL VIEWS ON POLITICAL VIOLENCE

Necessary for Survival	Revenge	Everything Legitimate in War	Russia Commits PV	Demonstrative	"We are Different"
51.6%	25.0%	12.5%	4.7%	3.1%	3.1%

Table 4.1: Positive Support for All Acts of Political Violence

It Does Not Work	It Gives Chechens a Bad Image	It is Wrong to Kill Innocents	Fear of Reciprocal Attacks
37.5%	31.3%	18.8%	12.5%

Table 4.2:   Negative Support for All Acts of Political Violence

Before discussing the relationship between political goals, regime type preferences and political violence, it is first necessary to explore what displaced Chechens say in general when discussing political violence. In doing so, there are basic trends and sentiments expressed. These are portrayed in Table 4.1 and Table 4.2 above, respectively.   In exploring the structured-interview narratives, the general view towards the acceptance or rejection of political violence is revealed above. Table 4.1 and Table 4.2 clearly demonstrate that displaced Chechens overwhelmingly support or reject political violence due to strategic or instrumental considerations.   Slightly over half of the respondents (51.6%) claim that such militant actions and political violence are necessary to ensure the survival of the Chechen people. 3.1% claim such acts are simply "demonstrative" and conducted to draw global attention to the suffering of the Chechen people. Emotive factors play a lesser role with only 25.0% of respondents claiming Revenge as their primary reason for supporting political violence. Conversely, among individuals who reject political violence, 37.5% do so because they believe such actions do not work, 31.3% claim such actions cast Chechens in an unfavorable light and therefore should not be conducted, and 12.5% reject such actions out of fear of reciprocal attacks; all

three reasons suggest strategic viewpoints. In contrast, moral considerations are less important with only 18.8% of respondents claiming that the four attacks were immoral and that civilians are not to be considered a legitimate target. A form of moral logic is also expressed by 12.5% of respondents who claim violence is legitimate because all methods are acceptable in war, while 4.7% feel violence is justified because of Russian actions.

Some Chechens who support political violence as necessary also claimed to do so out of desperation. Several refugees used the metaphor of a wounded animal backed into a corner. Others articulated an analogy of a mouse caught by a cat that, even though smaller and sure to die, nonetheless, bit its attacker. Comparable analogies were of dogs, chained and repeatedly beaten by an owner. After such abuse, what behavior would one expect from the animal? In these instances, the Chechen refugee was trying to make the case that repression and brutality breed additional violence.

A small number, some 3.1% of Chechens, claimed that the psychological trauma of the war and of the horrendous things they had personally witnessed and endured had changed them. They professed that what was now normal for them was indeed abnormal for others. So, one young man who witnessed cats and dogs eating corpses in the streets of Grozny felt a degree of indifference for the suffering of others, irrespective of presumed innocence or purported guilt. Individuals such as this recognized their cognitive distance from common humanity but were strikingly candid about their feelings.

Individuals like the latter, as well as those who did not confess to any trauma induced cognitive changes, frequently cited the need for vengeance. It has been well noted that in the Chechen culture the system of *adat,* or blood feud is still practiced. Indeed, in many of my interviews Chechen refugees, especially young males, claim that they were driven in past instances to commit violence against Russian soldiers because of personal loss. The idea of reciprocal violence is deeply embedded in many cultures. A cursory reading of contemporary events demonstrates that the Israelis and Palestinians often, even today, seem to engage in a seemingly endless spiral of tit-for-tat violence. Among the Chechen refugees, significant support for extended reciprocity (violence directed not against the actual perpetrator of some grievance against you or your family specifically, but rather against the perpetrator's in-group, either civilian or solider in arms) does exist. In rare instances, this even holds true for the perpetrating in-group's children. Among some Chechen refugees, support for political violence is driven by considerations for past losses. Some Chechens claim that the current violence must continue because so many had already given their lives in the name of the struggle. For these respondents, to stop now would be to forfeit those lives as wasted in vain. Nonetheless, it is important to recognize the relative influence of strategic over emotive factors in generating attitudes towards political violence.

GEOGRAPHIC PROXIMITY AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION AND SUPPORT FOR POLITICAL VIOLENCE

Before exploring the various political goal choices and regime type preferences, it is first necessary to rule out other potential sources of pro-militant attitudes. In particular, literature suggests certain socio-economic factors,[32] such as level of education, age, and/or location of occupancy (rural dwellers versus urbanites) play a significant factor in determining support for political violence (Berebbi, 2003; Johnson and Monkkonen, 1996; Kreuger and Maleckova, 2003; Lochner, 2007; Miguel, 2007). Kruger (2010) further notes the prevalence of this purported relationship among prominent political elites. Indeed, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the King of Jordan, and former America Presidents, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush have all publically proclaimed that policies directed at ameliorating both poverty and poor education will reduce future acts of poitical violence.

A common thought is that rural dwellers are more comfortable with violence than urbanites (Cohen and Nisbett, 1996). As applied to Chechnya, there is a myth that the rural highlanders, or mountain men, were more rugged and more militant than their plain-dwelling or urbanite brethren (Lieven, 1998; Tishkov, 2004). What is the effect of living location on attitudes towards political violence, political goals, and regime type preferences?

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[32] Environmental factors will be further explored in Chapter 6.

Living Locale	Supports All Acts of Political Violence	Rejects All Acts of Political Violence	Supports Some Acts of Political Violence	No Response
Urban	23.9%	17.4%	42.9%	15.8%
Rural	20.5%	24.8%	48.7%	6.0%

Table 4.3:   Living Locale and Attitudes towards Political Violence

Table 4.3 reveals that there is no significant difference in attitudes towards political violence or regime type preferences between rural inhabitants and urbanites. The only noticeable difference is that urbanites were more likely than rural dwellers to Non-Response (15.8% to 6.0%, respectively).

Level of Education	Supports All Acts of Political Violence	Rejects All Acts of Political Violence	Supports Some Acts of Political Violence	No Response
University	28.1%	31.3%	40.6%	0.0%
High School	21.9%	19.0%	45.7%	13.4%

Table 4.4:   Level of Education and Attitudes towards Political Violence

There is a debate about the role of education and the support of political violence (Berebbi, 2003; Kreuger and Maleckova, 2003; Lochner, 2008). Some claim that education can help moderate political violence, while others suggest higher education removes the ignorance about certain socio-economic problems, highlights these issues, and breeds greater political dissatisfaction, a purported cause of political violence (Lerner, 1958; Shafiq and Sinno, 2010).

According to Tables 4.3 and 4.4, among displaced Chechens there is no significant difference in the support or rejection of political violence between those with a university education and those with only a high school education or less. One noticeable difference is that no university educated respondent declined to answer questions about political violence, meaning that all Non-Responses came from high school educated respondents. This is interesting since all but one Non-Response took place in Georgia, thus telling us more about the composition of the Chechen refugee community closest to the current insurgency.

POLITICAL GOALS, REGIME TYPE PREFERENCES, AND SUPPORT FOR POLITICAL VIOLENCE

Political Goals	Supports All Acts of Political Violence	Rejects All Acts of Political Violence	Supports Some Acts of Political Violence	No Response
Total: 301				
Autonomy	0.0%	46.7%	51.1%	2.2%
Independence	17.5%	20.2%	44.3%	18.0%
Caucasus Emirate	55.8%	1.6%	42.6%	0.0%

Table 4.5:   Political Goals and Attitudes towards Political Violence

In Table 4.5, we observe the relationship between political goals and attitudes supporting political violence. The conventional wisdom is that the more maximal the respondents' political goals, the more likely they will be to support all or some forms of political violence. Table 4.5 demonstrates that Chechen refugees who desire maximal goals, like the establishment of an Islamic Caucasus Emirate, are more likely to accept all forms of political violence, while more moderate goals

drive more pacific views towards violence. This suggests that among Chechen refugees, political violence is not driven primarily by culture or trauma (either from the war and forced displacement or from personal loss), but is rather viewed instrumentally, as a means to achieve some desired objective. Indeed, refugees who desire more moderate political goals, like Autonomy within the Russian Federation are overwhelmingly against (46.7%) all acts of political violence. The reason there is a correlation between moderate political goals and the rejection of political violence is that there is no need to employ violence to achieve such a political objective. On the other end of the spectrum, 55.8% of refugees who desire a Caucasus Emirate favor all politically violent acts. Only 1.6% rejects all acts. In this instance, political is perceived to be necessary to achieve the desired goal. Again, these findings bolster an instrumental theory of violence.

Refugees who desire Independence, a maximal political goal for some are closely divided between those in favor of all violent acts (17.5%) and those who reject all (20.2%). The division in support for political violence among those desiring Independence as a political goal is explained further in Chapter 5. The comparatively high levels of *Rejects All Acts of Political Violence* can be explained by the inordinate number of displaced Chechen women, the group most likely to reject violence in general, supporting Independence.

Regime Type	Supports All Acts of Political Violence	Rejects All Acts of Political Violence	Supports Some Acts of Political Violence	No Response
Total: 301				
Democracy	8.4%	30.5%	44.2%	16.9%
Sharia	39.5%	10.2%	46.9%	6.4%

Table 4.6:   Regime Type and Attitudes towards Political Violence

Table 4.6 elucidates the relationship between preferred regime type and attitudes supporting political violence.   It is important to note that I asked respondents to state their preference for the form of government they thought was best for Chechnya.   This was an open-ended question and responses were either democracy or sharia.   The findings reveal that Chechen refugees who prefer sharia over democratic institutions are more likely to accept all forms of political violence. 39.5% of refugees desiring sharia favor all acts of political violence, while only 10.2% reject all acts.   In contrast, only 8.4% of refugees preferring democracy as a regime type accept all acts of political violence, while 30.5% reject all acts.   These findings closely mirror one other in reverse.   There is only modest statistical difference between Chechen refugees who desire sharia and those who prefer democracy and the support some acts of political violence.   These responses are identical to the ones discussed previously regarding Beslan and *Nord-Ost.*

Undoubtedly, the finding of a relationship between sharia and the support of political violence is a controversial one.   It is not clear that such support has anything to do with piety or, for that matter, it is not clear that respondents had an

accurate understanding of what sharia truly entails. For some of these individuals, sharia might be chosen as a rejection of all other forms of regime type. Some may feel that because they are Muslim, and the ideal regime according to the Quran is sharia, that there is no other choice. However, in keeping with the other findings which suggest instrumentalist views on violence, I contend that the correlation between refugees who embrace religious authority as political authority and political violence is due to the current situation. In order to implement sharia in Chechnya it would take tremendous efforts and violent means.

Finally, why do maximal political goals drive attitudes which support political violence? Despite the instinctually negative connotations towards employing violence to achieve some desired goal, most societies, in fact, permit some form of institutionalized violence and possess the ancillary norms for regulating such behavior. I argue that such means are necessary given contemporary circumstances. The Russians have established considerable control over the once-rebellious republic. Today an organized resistance operates in the southern mountains and western forests and foothills with a fair amount of operational freedom, but they do not hold any concrete territory and they no longer possess the conventional capabilities necessary to achieve a military stalemate, much less a decisive victory, which would implement independence or establish the first step in an eventual Caucasus Emirate (Souleimanov, 2007:226-301). This explains the adoption of more unconventional military tactics and suicide bombings. In short, achieving either Independence or an Islamic Caucasus Emirate is an

extreme objective and as such, equally extreme measures are necessary. Finally, I

posit that many Chechen refugees, males and females alike, still feel as if they are a

people at war. Consequently, politically violent actions, even those which might be

viewed as abhorrent in times of peace, are legitimate.

ISLAMIC CAUCASUS EMIRATE

As noted, although for some Chechen refugees attitudes towards political

violence are driven in part by revenge, this doesn't take away from the dominant

strategic nature of such views. This study has shown that attitudes supporting

political violence are more frequently driven by strategic considerations. I contend

that where emotive factors do gain traction is in channeling sentiments like fear and

survival into concrete political choices and desires. A significant number of

displaced Chechens truly fear outright extermination by the Russians, a more than

plausible fear given the mutually antagonistic history between the two peoples. As

a solution, some displaced Chechen perceive Independence as a salvation, while

others claim Chechnya is too small and too isolated to ever effectively counter

Russian aggression in the region. A common sentiment expressed by displaced

Chechens was their observation that, every fifty years the Russians attempted to

exterminate the Chechen people. Accordingly, a significant number of displaced

Chechens perceive their best chance of national survival coming from the

establishment of a Caucasus-wide Islamic state. When they imagine and talk about

an Islamic Caucasus Emirate, I do not find among the vast majority, over 90% of

respondents, the same religious, fundamentalist language of global jihadist rhetoric espoused by people like Osama bin Laden, but rather views of a surprisingly secular, nationalist form of political organization. A small minority does articulate the global jihadist lingo, yet the overwhelmingly majority of Chechen refugees who support an Islamic Caucasus Emirate envision a large, independent, self-sufficient state with numerous resources and warm water ports to access the outer world, thus securing the ability to procure resources. When coupled with the natural barriers of the Caucasus Mountains, such a political unit seems to ostensibly provide full protection against foreign invasion and war.   This idea of a state is not new.

In describing a Caucasus Emirate in security terms, many see sharia not in purely religious terms, but rather as a kind of unifying, overarching ideology and identity. Sharia acts as a mechanism to unite the myriad disparate nationalities of the Caucasus. Sharia is a way to unite a Chechen with an Avar, an Ingush, a Cherkessk, and a Balkar. The Caucasus-wide Islamic Emirate would be the ultimate shield against any Russian aggression and the ultimate guarantor of Chechen survival. The finding that support for political violence, especially violence with ostensibly religious overtones, is in fact driven by more parochial concerns and insecurities suggests very different policy prescriptions and is something policy-makers and academics alike need to better understand and appreciate. In short, the support for an Islamic Caucasus Emirate and sharia in the Caucasus appears to have less in common with Al Qaeda's goals than those with any number of nationalist groups.

Security	Religious
90.9%	9.09%

Table 4.7:   Reasons for Supporting the Caucasus Emirate

25 year old Male student from Urus-Martan (Poland)
I want to see an Islamic Caliphate. There we would have Muslims and sharia law. We would have to do nothing more than to serve Allah. We would be strong. Who could ever defeat such a place? That is what happened in Afghanistan with the Communists, and it will happen to the Americans there too. If Chechnya becomes part of an Islamic Caliphate no one will ever be able to kill so many of us ever again.

47 year old Male collective farmer from Grozny (Belgium)
I am not a religious man, but a Muslim Emirate is best. We are a small people but if we all stick together, we will have access to the sea. No one will ever be able to defeat us.

57 year old Male doctor from Urus-Martan (Azerbaijan)
We must have an Islamic Emirate. Chechnya will be prosperous and will give help to its neighbors. And we will have a seaport. We will build a port city that will reach to the Mediterranean Sea. And we will re-open the Silk Road, which we controlled for 200 years....Sharia unites all the different Muslim nations in the Caucasus. Together we will be united under one law and our old differences will be forgotten. With sharia we are once again brothers.

Many observers claim the Chechen resistance's 2007 adoption of the Islamic Caucasus Emirate as their new political goal marks a new chapter in an increasingly radicalized movement. Originally nationalist and secular, the current resistance is purportedly comprised of more radicalized members, many of whom are younger than their predecessors. These new recruits lack prior connections to their Russian adversaries (during Soviet times many Chechens served in the Red Army, they worked together, and lived as neighbors) and have known little more than war and violence in their lives, thus making them ostensibly more violent. Certainly, there

are such individuals in the movement and this has led some analysts categorize the recent and highly public clash among the separatists over leadership between Umarov and Khassan Vertkaev as a generational clash more so than an ideological one (see below). Certainly, there might be truth to that as well. Yet, I contend that Umarov cloaked himself in jihadist garb and adopted jihadist jargon not out of personal beliefs or piety, but rather as the result of strategic considerations and as a way to create a force-multiplier.   It is important to make this case since it bolsters my argument about the strategic rather than emotive character of Chechen support for political violence.

The Chechens realized during their first war with Russia that external support from the western world was nonexistent. Russia was too powerful a geopolitical player for western states to challenge over tiny Chechnya.   As a result, Chechnya was forced to fend for herself and this was no small task. Chechnya is a rugged and mountainous place located almost entirely within Russia proper. Their one external border is with Georgia along the infamous Pankisi Gorge, itself difficult to access. Topography prohibits large influxes of recruits and volunteers and to survive Chechnya needed not men or arms, which they managed to procure from the Russians themselves, but funding. Money was easily smuggled into Chechnya and it was instrumental in keeping the Chechen war-machine alive. Money paid for everything from weapons to bribes. Money, not recruits, became the lifeblood of the movement and espousing global jihadist rhetoric became the chief instrument to draw vital funds.

Yet the Chechen Diaspora is relatively small and external donations from sympathizers were never more than a pittance, especially in the early years when many displaced Chechens struggled to even survive. The Chechens needed to attract money and the best way to do so was to play up their Islamic identity, particularly to a Middle Eastern audience. Clearly, the greater Islamic community was aware of Chechnya and her struggles against Russia. The Chechens made a deliberate effort to accentuate their identity to attract funds. The result was video-taped battles, which served essentially as commercial advertisements for foreign investors to engage in their own form of "checkbook diplomacy". It was only natural, and a matter of time, before Umarov, one of the old guard secular nationalists, adopted the title of Emir and declared the establishment of an Islamic Caucasus Emirate as the ultimate goal. In doing so, he tried, strategically, to simultaneously unite the various Muslim nationalities of the Northern Caucasus and attract foreign investment, the latter of which became increasingly important as actual fighters decreased in number.

Appeals to pan-Islamic political goals are not new to the region. As discussed in Chapter 3, the legendary resistance leader, Imam Shamil first articulated similar goals in the 19th Century during his near half-century campaign against Tsarist forces. In the 20th Century, the peoples of the Caucasus tried to create such a political unit from 1918 to 1920 in the detritus of the collapse of the Tsarist regime. After Tsar Nicholas II abdicated the throne, a Congress of the North Caucasus met in Vladikavkaz to establish a new overarching governing body for an

independent state, the Independent Democratic Republic of Mountaineers of the North Caucasus, a political unit that is similar to today's Caucasus Emirate. The North Caucasus Emirate proposed in 1918 was actually recognized by several foreign powers: Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey all recognized the polity, the Turks going so far as to enter into a formal alliance with the North Caucasians on June 8, 1918 (Avtorkhanov, 1992:152).

During the Russian Civil War, Lenin and the Bolsheviks were eager to enlist the support of the highlanders in the struggle against the pro-Tsarist White Armies. On January 20, 1921, Lenin sent Stalin, as Commissar of Nationalities, to meet with delegates from the North Caucasus Emirate at a Congress of Mountaineers in North Ossetia. Stalin offered the Caucasians, in exchange for highlander recognition of Soviet power, the possibility of a unique Soviet political unit, autonomy in the form on an Autonomous Soviet Mountain Republic. "Thus was created a completely unnatural Soviet Republic with a Soviet emblem on its banner and a sharia constitution…" (Avtorkhanov, 1992:154). The highlanders were even encouraged to replace the portraits of Lenin with ones of Imam Shamil and his naib warriors. When the highlanders went to sign the agreement with Lenin in Moscow they were tricked and diverted to Rostov where they were executed. The Bolsheviks eventually defeated the White Armies, but a low-level insurgency persisted throughout the 1930s in the North Caucasus (Schafer: 2010:95-98).

In the early 1990s as the Soviet Union began to disintegrate, newly elected Chechen President, Dzhokhar Dudayev initially advocated a unified pan-Caucasus,

but never took any serious action to promote the agenda (Hughes, 2007:102). Indeed, according to members of his inner circle, after the war between Abkhazia and Georgia erupted Dudayev seemed almost fearful of the possibility of a Caucasus-wide Islamic state.[33] After the surprising Chechen victory over Russian forces in 1996, some elements began to clamor for religious authority as political authority. Movladi Udugov, chief propagandist for the resistance movement and Deputy Prime Mister under President Aslan Maskhadov became leader of the Islamic Order and the Islamic Nation, groups comprised of members of various ethnic groups from the North Caucasus. The groups' objectives were to re-establish the "Imamate" of 18th Century guerrilla leader, Imam Shamil. Despite the lofty sounding religious goals, many believed the movement was essentially cover for a Chechen land grab (Hughes, 2007:103). In the spring of 1998, Basayev established the Congress of Peoples of Chechnya and Dagestan, an organization seeking to create an independent state. This became the banner for Basayev and Khattab's 1999 invasion of Dagestan, the event which helped instigate the Second Russo-Chechen War (Hughes, 2007:105).

In the Second Russo-Chechen War, the Chechen resistance fought under the banner of national independence from Russia for seven years. In October 2007,

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[33] Authors interviews, Baku, Azerbaijan, 2007. Dudayev did, however, have less concern about the idea floated by some members of his administration to push for a union with Dagestan. Supporters of this new political unit claimed that the two polities should join for three main reasons. First, there was a long history and close geographical proximity between the two republics.   Second, a substantial Chechen minority population resided along the border, itself the site of disputed land claims over the years. And finally, the topography of the regions would make any would-be invaders wary of conquest, as the high and rugged mountains were a natural fortress, tailor made for a protracted guerrilla war; See Hughes, 2007.

Chechen President, Doku Umarov announced the surprising new political aims of the Chechen resistance. The Chechen leader called for all Muslim brethren in the North and West Caucasus to join together and drive out the Russians, creating a new political unit, the Islamic Caucasus Emirate. The borders of the Caucasus Emirate have yet to be well defined. Some maps posted on the Chechen pro-resistance website *Kavkaz Center* show a political unit which spans from the Caspian Sea to the Mediterranean, with a small "island" in the middle, apparently pro-Christian Georgia. Others show the North Caucasus as part of the Middle and Far East, spanning from North Africa to Central Asia.

Why did Umarov decide to change the goals of the decade's long Chechen resistance movement from national sovereignty to a transnational Islamic state? Observers posit three possibilities. First, it is said that in the aftermath of Maskhadov's assassination the resistance was close to collapse and did not knowing which way to maneuver. Declaring a Caucasus Emirate is thus viewed as essentially a panic move. Second, because they had little support from the West, observers claim that Umarov had no choice but to reach out to the Islamic world for assistance. Finally, Umarov might have recognized the futility of negotiating with the Russians and thus decided to push the resistance as far, politically, from Russia as possible. Certainly after Beslan it was clear that Putin's government would never agree to any concessions and as such, war was the only realistic alternative to achieve any degree of Chechen autonomy (Akhmadov, 2010:243-244). In separate analyses, the likes of which dominate contemporary American policy towards the region, the claim is that

Umarov and the Chechen resistance has morphed into a radical jihadist movement in full alliance with transnational Islamic terrorist organizations like Al Qaeda (see Murphy, 2010; Hahn, 2011).

I contend that the shift in political goals has a material rather than religious basis. This shift denotes a shift in strategy, not goals. The turn to the East, to the greater Muslim world, was made less out of religious piety or even religious extremism of the kind associated with transnational jihadists, but instead was a purposeful, strategic attempt to marshal support from the Islamic world and, simultaneously, exploit the growing frustration among Muslims, particularly the youth, in the greater Caucasus region, channeling populist anger into military force.

It is an old truism that all politics are local and I contend this is as true as it is in American politics as it is in the North Caucasus. The Caucasian Islamic Emirate is a fundamentally local political solution to fundamentally local grievances dressed in Islamic rhetoric. The use of Islamic appeals to secure non-religious political or material goods in Chechnya predates Umarov. Wilhelmsen argues that most of the prominent Chechen elites in the 1990s who espoused radical Islam to one degree or another did so primarily out of strategic and personal reasons rather than theocratic piety.[34] Dressing themselves in Islamic garb to conceal more parochial political and

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[34] On that note, Wilhelmsen (2005:35) argues that radical Islam, itself an alien concept in Chechnya, was brought about principally by three potential mechanisms. First, the First Russo-Chechen War led to a radicalization of key leaders. Second, foreign groups were able to co-opt the Chechen cause as part of the broader Muslim struggle against the West. Third, Russian polices influenced the balance of power between Chechen moderates and the radicals in such a way as to undermine the former while emboldening the latter. The adoption and articulation of radical Islam for Basayev became a gateway to international funds, contracts, skills and training, and recruits. It is important

even financial objectives was surprisingly common among the first generation of Chechen resistance leaders, men who had lived their entire lives under the Soviet system and who had little understanding of the religious tenets of their faith. These were men who smoked and drank and lived anything but pious lives. Yet, they claimed religiousness when it suited them. Still, as discussed below, there appears to be a fundamental shift among these one-time secularists in terms of politic-religious goals.

Many contemporary resistance groups mobilized around tribal and/or Islamic appeals are thought to give rhetorical lip-service to global jihadist groups, like Al Qaeda, above all because it is a useful tactic for raising funds and recruits in their quest to achieve local political objectives. Such espousals can bestow these groups with a certain international prestige and publicity. For their part, transnational terrorist organizations use these local conflicts to pursue their own objectives, wedding indigenous grievances to broader political goals. In doing so, David Kilcullen, a contemporary counter-insurgency theorist, claims this deadly bargain creates "accidental guerrillas", whereby indigenous fighters become caught up in transitional struggles despite their exclusively local concerns. This is especially problematic when outside forces, like the United States or NATO, invade such traditional spaces in search of transnational terrorists, thus forcing local agents

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to note that not all of the Chechen resistance leaders are so disingenuous about their faith and their religious goals. This is certainly true among a number of displaced Chechen refugees, particularly those in Baku and Belgium, who articulate and adhere to a set of belief closer to Salafism than their Sufi roots, extremely seriously.

to fight what they perceive to be a hostile Western presence. This is purportedly the dynamic underlying a number of contemporary conflicts from Afghanistan and Pakistan to the Philippians and Somalia. Scholars and policy-makers alike must not allow themselves to be tricked into thinking these disparate groups are part of some greater homogenous terrorist threat. In regard to the North Caucasus, I believe these groups are far more concerned with local considerations and grievances (see also Topf and Zhukov, 2010). They continue their struggle not because of emotional, ideational, religious, or transnational religious objectives, but rather because of concrete local political goals. Support for political violence and militant activity among displaced Chechen is driven by the same material and strategic considerations.

Public statements by the resistance provide additional evidence of a strategic rationale. A close reading of Umarov's Islamic appeals and rhetoric, as well as those of other purportedly Islamic extremists in the Chechen resistance, demonstrates such sentiments to be driven more by nationalist political concerns than either transnational or religious objectives. Even the violence and suicide bombings are driven by strategic considerations rather than emotions, like revenge. These claims are bolstered by the popular sentiments articulated by displaced Chechens regarding the Caucasus Emirate. I contend that Chechen militants are, in fact, driven more by local concerns, namely establishing Chechen independence. The instrumental use of Islamic rhetoric is driven towards attracting funds to wage a

secular fight. I contend this has been the case as well for most of the Chechen resistance, including the infamous Shamil Basayev.[35]

Basayev was above all a strategic pragmatist who dressed himself in whatever garb he deemed necessary to achieve his singular goal, the establishment of Chechen independence.[36] Time and again Basayev's motives were repeatedly revealed to be more national and secular than religious. After the success of the First Russo-Chechen War, Basayev recognized the utility and value of employing Islamic rhetoric to the appropriate audience. In an infamous 2005 interview with Babitsky, which aired on ABC, Basayev displayed political acumen by abandoning his usual jihadist rhetoric, knowing that such lingo would be highly inflammatory to Western audiences still seething about September 11th. Instead, Basayev framed the Chechen struggle as a colonial one against a historic oppressor. This war, he claimed, was a fight for independence and national sovereignty. The implications of this act of political theater are clear; Basayev, like many of his purportedly "jihadist" compatriots adopt whichever rhetoric and/or goals suit the circumstances. When

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[35] Prior to his death in 2006, Basayev was the face of Chechen Islamic terrorism. In May 2003 Basayev initiated Operation Boomerang, a plan, as the target name suggests, of visiting back upon the Russians the very same tactics they had employed against the Chechen civilians (Hughes, 2007:157). Basayev had come to the conclusion that the conflict with the Russians had become a total war and he would bring that war to the Russian homeland. To do anything else, he reasoned, was to prolong the genocide of the Chechen people. In this endeavor he would have to be especially brutal. In a February and July interview with Western media Basayev promised a series of "Beslans", claiming that all Russian citizens were now legitimate targets, a sentiment he had first expressed in 1995 during the siege of Buddennovsk.

[36] According to journalist Antol Lieven, who spent considerable time with Basayev during the First Russo-Chechen War, throughout the early campaign Basayev appeared outwardly to typify the stereotypical Islamic holy warrior. He even took an Islamic name, Abdallah Shamil Abu-Idris and published a lengthy Islamic manifesto. Yet, Basayev seemed curiously disinterested in Islamic jurisprudence or an Islamic state (Hughes, 2007:101), thus bolstering the assertion that he is indeed pursuing more secular goals.

they need finances from abroad, the message becomes more religious and fanatical. When they need to bolster their image with the West, especially when the latter were closer to Russia in fighting a common foe, their language is more subtle and accepted. Conversely, for the Russian media, he frequently cast himself as the "Islamic bogeyman" they eventually perceived him to be.

Former Chechen Foreign Minister, Ilyas Akhmadov, recounts that in a discussion about the merits and plausibility of achieving Chechen sovereignty with Basayev in 1998, Basayev claimed, "The Russians will never permit us to establish a normal state…we need to create a Caliphate…" (Akhmadov, 2010:138). Even during the so-called spectacular terrorist attacks, actions which purposefully took on Islamic dress, themes, symbols, and rhetoric, the actual goals were exclusively national in character. In a closely guarded note of demands given to the Russians during the siege of Beslan, Basayev wrote, "The Chechen people are conducting a national liberation struggle for our Freedom and Independence, for our self-preservation, and not to destroy Russia or humiliate it. Being free, we would be a strong neighbor. We offer you peace, but the choice is yours." If true, this casts both the Beslan siege and Basayev in a new light, one quite different than the image perpetrated by governments and media. It appears that Basayev was indeed above all a nationalist. [37]

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[37] Akhmadov also believes that both *Nord-Ost* and Beslan were operations meant to repeat the success of Buddennovsk, namely military attacks meant to draw Russian once again to the bargaining table (2010:174).

Observers like Pape (2010) concur with this overall conclusion. Specifically, he notes that although Umarov's rhetoric is frequently of the kind found among global jihadists, in fact, this is all a cover. Pape contends that despite the Islamic dressings, Umarov is, at heart, a national secularist and that the struggle he wages is still primarily focused on achieving one goal. That goal is not the establishment of an Islamic Caucasus Emirate, but rather Chechen independence. In an apparent nod to this assertion, in the aftermath of the March 2010 airport bombing, Umarov momentarily deviated from the fiery jihadist rhetoric and confessed, "...this is the land of our brothers and it is our sacred duty to liberate these lands." It is all political theater, a thought echoed by prominent scholars like Hughes who caution that "we should remain cautious about the fundamentalist motivations of leaders such as Basayev. When pushed to define his philosophy of struggle in June of 2005, Basayev emphasized the predominance of the statist content of his ideology over the religious, imparting the sense that taking power in the state was his political and military objective" (2007:101). I contend this is exactly what current resistance leader Doku Umarov is doing when he articulates the push for an Islamic Caucasus Emirate. It is merely a cover for other goals, namely Chechen independence.

For most Chechens today, both at home and abroad, the idea of a Caucasus Emirate has little practical meaning. The vast majority are much more concerned with security and basic needs like education, food, medicine, etc. (*Jamestown Terrorism Monitor*, January 20, 2010, Vol. IX, Issue 3). Those who do support the Caucasus Emirate have particular political calculations. The vast majority support it

as a way to ultimately stop the violence and bloodshed. This has both short-term and long-term aspects. In the short-term, enlisting the support of fellow Caucasus Muslims acts a force-multiplier, adding fresh new recruits to the struggle. It also spreads the theater of operations, forcing the Russians to expand and stretch their own troops. In doing so, if history is any guide, Russian behavior towards locals in areas plagued by insurgents has been especially brutal, a factor driving support to the insurgents.   As troops spread, the pressure is lifted off Chechnya, thus decreasing short-term violence. Moreover, as the structured-interviews reveal, a unified political unit from the Caspian Sea to the Black Sea, rich with resources and formidable natural defenses would indeed be a major player in regional geo-politics. It would certainly be an area able to withstand Russian military pressure.

Umarov's decision to abandon the goal of Chechen independence in favor of establishing a Caucasus Emirate caused a serious split in the Chechen resistance. However, this cleavage has not been without some unintended benefits, particularly in regard to the international community. Thus far, most financial support for the resistance has come from either the now sizable Chechen Diaspora spread across the Caucasus, Middle East, and Europe, or from foreign donors in the Islamic world. The recent split, however, has allowed each ideological side the chance to see what it wants in one of the two resistance movements. For the west, they can still support the national secularists, now represented by moderates like Zakayev in London and Akhmadov in Washington DC, while more religious supporters can look to Umarov. (Schafer, 2010:240).

Age Groups	Russia	Autonomy	Independence	Caucasus Emirate
18 to 24	0.0%	12.1%	72.7%	15.2%
25 to 34	0.0%	4.1%	67.0%	28.9%
35 to 55	1.2%	8.1%	69.0%	21.8%
56 to 66	0.0%	11.1%	33.3%	55.6%

Table 4.8: Age and Political Goals

Age Groups	Democracy	Sharia
18 to 24	61.5%	38.5%
25 to 34	40.0%	60.0%
35 to 55	60.2%	39.8%
56 to 66	31.3%	68.7%

Table 4.9: Age and Regime Type

It is important to note the generational aspect in the support of maximal political goals. The conventional wisdom is that in protracted insurgencies and civil conflicts younger generations of militants will purportedly be more radical and extreme than their elder counterparts in both desired political goals and the accepted means to achieve such goals. Empirically, this has been true in places like Afghanistan. However, this does not seem to be the case among the Chechens. Table 4.8 and Table 4.9 reveal that although the older generation of Chechen separatists once supported national independence and democracy, they are now more likely to desire more maximal goals, like the establishment of an Islamic Emirate in the Caucasus, and support religious authority (sharia) as political authority. This is especially puzzlingly since this generation experienced the secular

world of the Soviet Union. They spent significant time with ethnic Russians, serving together in the military or Communist Party, working in factories, competing in athletic endeavors, and sharing neighborhoods. This was the generation foreign fighters from the Middle East repeatedly condemned as "infidels" for drinking alcohol and smoking.

Unlike other regions, the younger generation of Chechens is ostensibly less interested in global jihad or any pan-Islamic, pan-Caucasian political unit. Indeed, the high-profile defection of young Chechen field-commanders last summer from current leader, Doku Umarov, himself a former "old guard" national secularist turned global jihadist, suggests the younger generation is interested in the comparatively moderate and exclusive goal of Chechen national sovereignty. It is not clear if the younger generation is also moderating their views on political violence, but as of this writing there have been fewer terrorist attacks on Russian civilians in recent months. Although much work needs to be done, I suspect the generational shift in political goals among non-participant Chechens is related to two factors, desperation and time. The older generation has endured inconceivable trauma; many have lost members of their families, their homes, their honor and reputation, their livelihood, and any conceivable hope of a normal future. Supporting an Islamic Caucasus Emirate may be viewed as the best option to regain some material or ideational good. Second, each passing days brings the recognition that time is not on their side, and perceivably the quickest way to achieve the goal of a Chechnya free from Russian rule may be to untie together the disparate ethno-

national groups of the North Caucasus. Chapter 5 explores another aspect to these generational findings. When disaggregated along gender lines, an interesting new pattern emerges.

In general, this puzzle does merit further inquiry. Foreign policy decision-makers engaged in protracted insurgencies or civil wars often lament the paradox that although it is necessity to eliminate top militant leaders (many of whom may represent an older generation) doing so may stymie any subsequent attempts at negotiating peace since younger militants will be purportedly less willing to compromise. Understanding the conditions under which generational political shifts occur in insurgency can plausibly help better inform foreign policy decision-makers and help us better understand the micro-level dynamics of non-participant support for militant activity.

CONCLUSION

The data reveals a remarkable level of sophistication among Chechen refugees and how they view certain acts of political violence. On the one hand, Chechens see political violence as a strategic tool, which helps achieve certain goals. On the other hand, there are equally powerful constraints on violence, especially in regard to whom it targets. Children, it appears, are for the most part off-limits. Representatives of the Russian state, like military and police personnel, are fair game, and Russian citizens fall somewhere in-between. More importantly, these findings significantly challenge both the conventional wisdom regarding refugees

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and violence and cultural arguments, which have overwhelmingly categorized Chechens as a congenitally war-prone people.

The expectation, as stated above, is of a uniformly, pro-violent community. There is considerable variation, however. In addition to the differences discussed here in Chapter 4, there is also significant variation between displaced Chechen men and women in both their attitudes towards violence and in their political views. In the next chapter, I explore the role of gender in influencing attitudes towards political violence and in generating political goals choices and regime type preferences. Women are less likely to support political violence and they are less likely to desire either an Islamic Caucasus Emirate or sharia as a regime type. As I reveal in Chapter 5, women make these decisions based on the perception that they have no material interest in an Islamic world.   This chapter will further explore how gender roles have evolved during the war and in exile, empowering women and challenging traditional Chechen patriarchal norms, and discusses the role of women in the conflict, exploring in particular the so-called "Black Widow" phenomenon.

Chapter 5: The Interactive Effect – The Role of Gender

It is a kind of revolution, the start of a matriarchy, which is threatening to destroy the nucleus of Chechen society – the family – and it could ultimately be even more destructive than Stalin's Deportations. The Deportations killed us demographically, people died of cold and hunger. But this war is actually doing more damage by destroying Chechen traditional society and values.
Abdul Sultygov, Chechen sociologist

A common misperception of the Chechens is that they are a congenitally war-like people (Bodansky, 2007; Hahn, 2011; Murphy, 2006; Murphy, 2010; Zaurbekova and Yandarov, 2001). This is a view propagated in the classic Russian works of literature by Pushkin, Lermontov, and Tolstoy, and, in recent years, popular films like "Prisoner of the Mountains" and various media accounts. In this view, Chechen males were sometimes noble savages, but more often, bandits, murders, and blood-thirsty terrorists. In the past, Chechen women were mostly absent from these narratives. However, in recent years there has emerged a new, predominant stereotype of Chechen women as being particularly, and near-universally prone to violence as well (Murphy, 2010). Indeed, various media accounts, especially Russian, have perpetuated the view of ubiquitous, bomb-laden Black Widows lurking in Moscow's every shadow; even in the West, *The New York Times* published an Op-Ed titled, "Why are Chechen Women So Dangerous?", seemingly lumping all Chechen females into one pro-violent community. Are Chechen women really so dangerous?

Undoubtedly, Chechen women have been as much a part of the post-Soviet wars against Russia as have their male counterparts. Some observers might argue

Chechen women have been more involved than their men. Chechen women have taken up arms as militants and insurgents; they have participated in the so-called "spectacular" terrorist attacks in Moscow during the showing of the play, *Nord-Ost* and at School #1 in Beslan, North Ossetia; they have committed a number of suicide bombings against Russian civilians; and they have provide material support to the rebel fighters in the southern forests and mountains. It is hard to argue that the protracted insurgency in Chechnya could persist were it not for the integral role Chechen women have played.

In taking up arms, a significant number of women have been killed, but a greater number still have lost their lives to indiscriminant bombardments from Russian artillery, planes, or helicopters, or from the innumerable land mines that pepper the republic as they tried to peddle their wares in the market, gather firewood or food in the forests, or attempted to secure the release of family members, both dead and alive.[38] They have been the target of direct persecution. In the so-called "zachistky" or "cleansing" operations, they have been arrested, detained, and brought to filtration camps where many are raped, tortured and executed; for many such women, their only crime is to be the wife, sister or cousin of a purported militant. A number of women brought to the filtration camps are never seen again (Gilligan, 2009).

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[38] The Russian armed forces have capitalized on the Chechen traditions of burying their dead in ancestral homelands by frequently ransoming remains as well as live captives; See Politskovskaya, 2001; 2003.

Russians are not the only threat to Chechen women. Their own ethnic brethren have been accused and often documented perpetrating violence. The pro-Kremlin government of Ramzan Kadyrov acts much like Russian forces in targeting women because of purported family ties to suspected separatists or for other acts of alleged collusion. Kadyrov has further introduced draconian measures to control Chechen female behavior and dress, institutionalizing abuse for women who fail to adhere to the regime's strict new interpretations.[39] On the other side, it has been claimed that members of the Chechen resistance kidnap Chechen women to turn them into suicide bombers by coercion, drugging and/or brainwashing or by impugning her honor by rape. In Chechen culture the worst fate for a woman is not to be killed, but rather raped, an action that brings dishonor upon the family. In this scenario, Chechen women who are raped are told they have but one way to remove the stain and tarnish from their family's honor, namely by becoming a suicide bomber (see Hahn, 2011; Murphy, 2010).

Whatever the cause, it is clear that Chechen women are an especially vulnerable group and, in some cases, a source for violent actions. They have indeed been both victim and perpetrator of violence. Displaced Chechen women are arguably even more vulnerable, isolated from their traditional support networks and forced to endure countless hardships from displacement. There is no evidence to suggest that any displaced Chechen female has become a Black Widow, but the

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[39] See Human Rights Watch, "You Dress According to Our Rules: Enforcement of an Islamic Dress Code for Women in Chechnya," March 2011.

question remains, are Chechen refugee women potential recruits and future Black Widows? Becoming a Black Widow is a behavioral outcome, yet it is also important to understand the relationship between gender and attitudes towards political violence. In particular, how do Chechen refugee women feel about political violence and militant activity? Do displaced Chechen men and women desire the same political outcomes?

Conventional wisdom seemingly suggests that the community of displaced Chechens presents an ideal population from which to recruit individuals to commit acts of political violence, particularly against Russian targets (Bodansky, 2007; Hahn, 2011; Murphy, 2006; Murphy, 2010). As discussed previously, the historical animosities between the two groups as well as the conduct of the Russians during the two post-Soviet wars provide ample grievances and potential cause for pro-violent sentiments. Still, it is important to better understand whether or not gender plays a role in influencing attitudes supporting politically violent means to achieve select objectives. Moreover, it is important to understand the relationship between gender and choice of political goals and regime type preferences.

Despite the shared common experiences of culture, war, and displacement there is significant variation among displaced Chechen females and males regarding their attitudes on the legitimacy of political violence. I argue that in general Chechen refugee women are more likely than Chechen refugee males to reject all acts of political violence. Chechen refugee women display a remarkably sophisticated view of political violence, especially as it pertains to the legitimacy of

target. They also display significant variation from the Chechen refugee males in choice of political goals and regime type preferences, a finding which challenges contemporary views about Chechen gender relations and patrimonial dominance and suggests a material or interest-based argument for the support of political violence and militant activity.

Conversely, the prevalent and constant view of Chechen males is that they are a hyper-violent group (Bodansky, 2007; Hahn, 2011; Murphy, 2005; Murphy, 2010). Chechen males do indeed have a culture which privileges violence and individual bravery and a significant number of male Chechen refugees are former fighters. Among the refugee communities there are large numbers of young males,[40] a group usually associated as being particularly prone to violence,[41] and all Chechen refugee males have endured the acute trauma of both war and displacement. Moreover, although Chechen refugee males escaped the every-day violence of war and insurgency that still rages in the North Caucasus, they are not immune to violence. Feelings of insecurity and vulnerability are endemic throughout the European and especially Caucasian refugee communities. In addition to the episodic violence that takes place between Chechen refugee males and locals or other forced migrants, many have been deliberately targeted for liquidation by the Russian and Kadyrov special security services. As a result, Chechen males have been assassinated in the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Austria, Georgia, and Azerbaijan

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[40] The common view of refugee communities is that they are predominately composed of women and children. In the Chechen refugee communities in Georgia, Azerbaijan, Poland, and Belgium, males make up a plurality of the total population. This is discussed further in Chapter 6.
[41] See Lischer, 2006.

and a considerable number of Chechen refugee men fear that they too will be executed.

Given the circumstances, it is perceived that Chechen males, particularly young males, are a uniformly pro-violent group. Indeed, according to a number of scholars and policy-makers, if we should expect to find pro-violent attitudes anywhere it should be among the males in the Chechen refugee communities. Under what conditions do Chechen refugee males find political violence an acceptable form of social behavior? I argue that Chechen refugee males will be more likely to support all acts of political violence than Chechen refugee females. Yet, Chechen refugee males too display marked variation in their views towards violence. What explains this variation? As discussed in Chapter 4, I argue that for both Chechen males and females, attitudes supporting political violence are driven primarily by the desire for select political goals and regime type preferences. In this chapter, I will discuss this interactive affect whereby gender determines support for political violence and, in turn, also determines choice of certain political goals and regime type preferences. I will also discuss the surprising generational cleavage that has emerged among displaced Chechen men.

Chapter 5 proceeds as follows: After a discussion of the literature on gender and violence, a literature which spans from the cultural to the biological, I discuss the history of traditional Chechen views on gender and how these have changed over time, exploring how structural changes, in particular the differing socio-economic experiences under communist and post-communist rule, has impacted

and influenced contemporary attitudes towards political goals and regime type preferences. Then, I briefly discuss how displacement and the wars have challenged traditional Chechen norms on gender. I also examine in detail the Black Widows, revealing competing debates on their underlying motivations and exploring whether the refugee communities are breeding grounds for future recruits. Finally, I discuss gender's discernible influence on generating attitudes towards political violence and political goals and regime type preferences. In doing so, I also reveal how gender influences the support or rejection of certain concrete acts of political violence, in particular the attacks on *Nord-Ost* and Beslan, respectively.

PATRIARCHAL SOCIETY

Prior to discussing attitudes towards political violence it is important to understand the broader historical and cultural environment of Chechen gender relations and illustrate how these relationships have been influenced by recent social disruptions, like the wars and displacement. Chechen society is based on patriarchal-patrimonial clan and familial structures and the patron-based organization is characterized primarily by solidarity to the tribe. Nevertheless, there are relics of ancient matriarchy manifest in the fact that women enjoy a number of privileges, including a measure of financial independence (Jaimouka, 2005:83). Classical Chechen society went through two phases of gender domination, as did most other indigenous North Caucasian societies, with society

being "initially matriarchal, later transforming to patriarchy when the physically more powerful males took control" (Jaimoukha, 2005:84).

Historically, women acted as the "guardians of traditions and culture". They were treated with respect and deference and, in some instances, were bestowed with the power to adjudicate physical disputes. Yet, in many respects women were subordinate in Chechen society and their behaviors were significantly proscribed, especially in decision-making processes (Jaimoukha, 2005:92).

GENDER RELATIONS IN EXILE

Gender relations between Chechen men and women have been in flux since the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the heady days of the so-called Chechen Revolution, Dudayev, like many other new, ethno-nationalist leaders, engaged in widespread nationalist mythmaking, articulating an idealized past of brave Chechen warriors and strong Chechen female mothers and homebuilders. This was a shock for many Chechen women, especially those in the cities and large towns who had enjoyed a period of relative "Soviet feminism". When the First Russo-Chechen War broke out in 1994, significant numbers of Chechen males left for battle, leaving Chechen women behind to essentially fend for themselves and their families. These women sold goods at the markets and risked their lives daily in the search for food and provisions. For the women whose husbands did not go off to fight, there was still a disproportionate shift in responsibilities because of the security threat to males. Although the situation would become far worse after the Second Russo-

Chechen War broke out in 1999, Chechen men were not safe to walk about for fear

of kidnapping or execution by Russian soldiers. Men who ventured outside could be

arrested and accused of any crime, usually confessing after torture. As such, a

number of Chechen women actually confessed to preferring to see their men at

home instead of outside working because at least at home the women knew they

were safe.[42]

During the inter-war years Chechen women were subjected to new, alien

ideas about their role and their image in society. The influence of foreign Islamic

thought introduced a new austerity for Chechen women, one that ironically has

continued today under the Russian-approved leader, Ramzan Kadyrov, who has

mandated a strict dress code for women and institutionalized harsh penalties for

violators (see Human Rights Watch, March 2010).

The staggeringly high loss of Chechen males from the total population has

created new challenges for Chechen women. It has always been socially acceptable,

although relatively rare in urban areas, for Chechen men to take more than one wife.

Recently, Kadyrov has stated that this should in fact be a goal for all Chechen men

and women so as to replenish their lost ranks. Polygamy is thus seen as a necessary

prescription, especially given the Chechen cultural taboo of marrying foreigners,

particularly foreign men. The loss of so many men has also impacted the lives of

women in the home. Chechen females are now more tolerant of abusive and lazy

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[42] Authors interviews, Pankisi Gorge, Georgia, 2006; Baku, Azerbaijan, 2007; Oostanda, Belgium, 2008.

behavior from their husbands because they are simply not enough men to go around. The loss of men is not just problematic for finding potential husbands. Brothers, key enforcers of women's rights after marriage, are also gone, thus removing a last defense against abuse for many Chechen women. For many women, a bad husband is better than none. "Thus women's position becomes precarious. On the one hand they have to struggle to provide for their families; on the other hand, they have to tolerate any kind of behavior, even though men are no longer then main breadwinners and protectors of the household because marriage still represents a 'compulsory' institution without which women can easily lose their 'honor' and 'respect' in the community" (Szczepanikova, 2006:289).

Forced migration of any kind has been shown to be extremely disruptive to family and kin structures. As a result, there frequently emerge new familial arrangements, many of which are contested in violent ways behind closed doors (Szczepanikova, 2005:281). Once the refugees arrive in a camp or community they are no longer threatened by the once daily horrors of war. They are, however, confronted by new challenges and new restrictions, especially on mobility, and are confronted by new economic realities which challenge traditional views on gender. In many instances, this outcome is an unintended consequence of foreign aid organizations.

Turner (2004) reveals that the institutional basis of altered gender norms. Organizations like UNHCR and other NGOs, especially in Africa, have deliberately engaged in policies, which empower females. The dominant groups in the camps

meet these attempts with derision and hostility. Why do organizations do this? According to Szczpanikova, it is primarily due to the predominant view of women as victims. Women are seen as particularly vulnerable, yet ironically, the very policies established to ameliorate this vulnerability actually exacerbates it along with other gender tensions, often leading to a more dire environment for female refugees (Szczepanikova, 2005:284). Refugee camp authorities too both tacitly and explicitly alter gender relations. In many refugee communities, the organizers offer employment opportunities exclusively to women. In many places, refugees are not permitted to work anywhere except for within the confines of the refugee camp itself. The camp organizers do this because they consider refugee women to be "more reliable and docile than men, who are perceived to be troublemakers" (Szczepanikova, 2005:286). These polices affect and influence gender relations by making females the sole breadwinners, a problem for Chechens because of a culture which views women as homemakers and men as the primary care-takers. As a result, in many Chechen refugee families the men have become depressed, engaged in illegal drug use, and committed record levels of domestic abuse. Although I never personally witnessed any domestic abuse, I did occasionally see the signs of physical abuse and in some instances, in Poland, for example, I was told confidentially that a woman was beat by her husband. I also never observed any drug abuse, but was informed in the same way that it did occur.

During my fieldwork I observed a range of patriarchal relations. I will chronicle daily life in more detail in Chapter 6, but for now will provide a brief

discussion. In many families, regardless of country location, the females always did the majority of the housework like cleaning, cooking, and tending to the children. In some homes the women acted like invisible servants. In these settings I was never introduced to wives, sister, or daughters even though they served me food directly or cleaned the mud from my boots while we ate. The women and children would eat only after the men were done with their food and tea. I witnessed this dynamic in a range of families in a range of locales – abandoned office buildings turned living quarters in Pankisi Gorge, in crowded and dilapidated old buildings in Baku, dormitory refugee centers in Poland, and comparatively nice flats in Belgium.   Yet, in these very same places, in some instances right next door, although the women did the chores, they sat and ate with the men, joining the conversation.

Szczepanikova argues that although traditional male and female gender norms among Chechen refugees have been radically altered by war and displacement, the "idealized notions" remain. In general, forced migration of any kind has been shown to be extremely disruptive to family and kin structures. As a result, there frequently emerge new arrangements (Szczepanikova, 2005:281). Once the Chechen refugees arrive in a camp or community they are no longer threatened by the once daily horrors of war. They are, however, confronted by new challenges and new restrictions, especially on mobility.

In addition to being the victims of war and violence, Chechen women have found themselves on a new front-line, the battle over traditional gender roles. Chechen women today are more likely than not to be the main, if not sole,

breadwinner for many families and this has caused no dearth of consternation among Chechen males. According to Chechen men, females, regardless of level of education or occupation or increased responsibility, must never forget that their primary function is as mother and housewife (Murphy, 2010:5).   To be a true Chechen woman, females are expected to fulfill four vital social functions: birth, marriage, bear children, and die (Murphy, 2010:10).

Chechen women must fulfill the role of both mother and father. They are expected to maintain all domestic duties involving the home and the children, and provide the necessary funds from external employment (Murphy, 2010:11-15). Yet, Szczpanikova argues that despite the stark realities of the new gender relations, Chechen men and women alike both maintain idea-type views of gender and notions of femininity. For Chechen refugees, females are still associated with housework and children, while Chechen males are associated with honor, honesty, and protection of the family (Szczepanikova, 2006:290).

Chechen men and women spend their time differently in most refugee communities. As shown in other studies of refugees and forced migrants, Chechen female refugees have been better able to adapt to their new circumstances. They appear markedly more resilient, a fact due, perhaps, to the maintenance of daily habits and chores from before the displacement. For most refugee women, they are still, regardless of environment or circumstance, expected to fulfill their domestic duties and this very pattern of routine might provide a sense of structure and normalcy, which eases the psychological trauma of displacement. These behaviors

are also seems to provide self-confidence and a better mental state (Buijs, 1993; Franz, 2003). The same cannot be said for refugee males. Most male refugees, including Chechens, are used to outside employment prior to displacement. The inability to work and provide for their family takes away a key component of what it means to be a man for most Chechens. This in turn creates a sense of impotence and powerlessness. Chechen male refugees adapt to this new reality differently. Some have been documented as taking on traditional "women's work" and have later reported to being happy to spend time dotting on their children, a cultural taboo back home. Others, however, grow increasingly depressed or despondent. Many have resorted to drug use and physically violence against their wives and/or children. Rates of domestic abuse are notoriously difficult to ascertain, but studies (Szczepanikova, 2006:292), and my own observations (discussed in Chapter 6) suggest that it is quite prevalent. Again, this is not unique to Chechen refugee families. Most major studies of forced migration "explain the rise of domestic violence…by the loss of male status in the family and consequential frustration, which is vented by violent behavior towards women and children…." (Szczepanikova, 2006:293). Similar to the gender relationships, domestic violence in many cases predates displacement and may be related to the near-total loss of social support networks of family and friends. Most Chechen refugees in Europe arrived as nuclear families and are separated from friends and relatives who might have stopped such abusive behavior (Szczepanikova, 2006:294).

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In sum, gender relations between displaced Chechen males and females have been in a state of constant flux essentially since the collapse of the Soviet Union. As we will observe below, these changing dynamics arguably help explain the wide discrepancy between the political goals, regime type preferences, and views on violence expressed by displaced men and women, respectively. Chechen women, for the most part, had access to high status occupations and higher education under the Soviets; conversely, Chechen males were predominately relegated to menial labor positions. Upon collapse, Chechen began to reassert age-old patriarchal norms, but the two violent wars shifted autonomy back to women. The forced migration into refugee communities across the Caucasus and Europe has exacerbated these roles and tensions. Meanwhile, back in Chechnya a new campaign against women's freedoms is being prosecuted in earnest. It remains to be seen how gender roles will be constructed in the future.

THE BLACK WIDOWS

Any discussion of Chechens, gender and political violence would be remiss to not explore the so-called Black Widow phenomenon. Indeed, it is precisely the existence of these female suicide bombers which has lent credence to the perception of a predominately pro-violent female community and thus, a homogenously pro-violent people. In this section, I explore three questions: 1) What drives insurgent movements and/or terrorist organizations to deploy female suicide bombers in the first place? 2) For that matter, what drives women to strap high-explosives to

themselves and then detonate them among crowds of civilians? Conventional wisdom posits abnormal psychology, desperation, brainwashing, or coercion. Is there a common driving factor? 3) Finally, what is the role of the community in supporting or tolerating the use of female suicide bombers?

The term Black Widow originated in Russian media sources. These journalists initially claimed the Black Widows were Chechen women driven by grief and the personal loss of male relatives to simultaneously commit mass murder and suicide. Later claims suggested that such women had been drugged or brainwashed into detonating their bombs in crowds, at cafes, and on metros and airplanes. The first Chechen female suicide bombers were Khava Bareyeva, sister to infamous criminal leader and warlord, Arbi Baryev, and Luisa Magomadova. On January 7, 2000, Barayeva drove a truck loaded with explosives into an OMON (Russian Interior Ministry Troops) checkpoint in the village of Alkhan-Yurt.   The attack reportedly killed both women as well as two others and wounded five (Murphy, 2010; Spekhard and Akhmedova, 2005). This first use of female suicide bombers exclusively targeted a military objective; future deployments of Black Widows would turn their attention to a number of Russian civilian targets. Two such attacks, the mass hostage-taking at the Moscow Dubrovka Theater during the play, *Nord-Ost,* and at School #1 in Beslan would bring international attention to the deadly Chechen women.   Additional attacks at rock concerts, in metros, and aboard airplanes would kill scores of Russian civilians.

In the modern era, female suicide bombers have been around for nearly thirty years.[43] Over the years, the tactic has spread from the Middle East (Lebanon, Iraq, Israel, Turkey) to South East Asia (Sri Lanka) and Central Asia (Afghanistan) (Bloom, 2010:23). In 2007, the Chechens became the fourth modern group to deploy female suicide bombers, after terrorists in Lebanon, the Tamil Tigers, and the Turkish PKK. In the ensuing years the overwhelming majority of all Chechen suicide bombers were women, a curious fact given Chechnya's strong patriarchal norms.   What explains the emergence and seeming acceptance of female suicide bombers in Chechnya? What caused the Chechen resistance to decide to use female suicide bombers?   More importantly, what is the reaction of the Chechen community to such developments?

It is important to note that the onset of suicide terrorism tells us something about the present conflict in Chechnya. Religious fundamentalism and Russian cleansing operations are relatively recent developments in the Chechen conflict, yet both have a role in explaining suicide terrorism. Second, Chechen suicide terrorism is a strategic tactic. The Chechen resistance is engaged in a protracted insurgency, using any means available to achieve their political goals. Chechen militants have used suicide terrorism as a way to attract support and as a means to force Russian troops out of Chechnya. Third, an examination of the psychology, motives, and demographics of individual suicide bombers provides helpful insights into

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[43] The first documented case was when a seventeen year old Lebanese girl, Sana'a Mehaydali, blew up an Israeli convoy in April 1985. By the end of the 1980s there would be another twelve suicide bombers in that conflict.

Chechnya's war-torn society. In particular, the war in Chechnya has profoundly changed the role of women in Chechnya. Fourth, understanding the motives and circumstances of Chechen suicide terrorism leads to certain conclusions about Russia's presence in the region. Russia's brutal prosecution of the war in Chechnya, combined with its unwillingness to negotiate with moderate forces in the Chechen resistance, has spawned and exacerbated suicide terrorism in Chechnya.

A primary underlying cause for the rise of suicide terrorism in Chechnya are the Russian cleansing operations. These so-called "zachistky" operations have resulted in the abduction and extrajudicial killing of thousands of Chechens constitute. The frequency of Chechen suicide terrorist attacks has been directly proportional to cycles of violence against civilians in Chechnya. Indeed, Pape argues that the main driving force for individuals to become suicide terrorists is their direct interaction and experiences with Russian soldiers (see Reuter, 2004).

Between 2000 and 2010, there were forty-two separate incidents of suicide terrorism committed in the name of the Chechen cause. According to Pape, et all, few of these suicide terrorist attacks were religiously motivated, most were committed by males (60%), and by individuals from the region (thirty-eight of the forty-two), and, most importantly, were not primarily driven by a global jihadist ideology. Instead, Pape argues, the attacks in Chechnya, much like those committed in Lebanon, Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Sri Lanka are strategic actions taken as a last resort in a fight against the foreign military occupation of an occupied territorial homeland. In most cases, functional democratic polities commit the

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occupations and these governments must be attentive to popular pressures from their respective constituencies. In short, there are electoral consequences for governments which ignore the suffering of its people in favor of occupation.

For the terrorist groups, Pape's argument is one of efficacy. He argues that suicide terrorism is a tactic that groups are reluctant to engage in. Indeed, he points out that most groups do so only after all other means have been tried and exhausted. Accordingly, he sees this assertion bolstered by events in Chechnya when suicide bombings were nonexistent during the First Russo-Chechen Wars.

ORGANIZATIONS AND THE DEPLOYMENT OF FEMALE SUICIDE BOMBERS

What drives insurgent movements and/or terrorist organizations to deploy female suicide bombers? There is a robust literature on suicide terrorism that is beyond the scope of this dissertation.[44] Here, I wish to focus predominately on the Black Widows. In the Russo-Chechen Wars, the Chechen resistance did not deploy female suicide bombers until well into the second iteration of combat. There are a number of debates regarding suicide bombers and terrorism. Many scholars now agree that such actions are usually not driven by religion, a common sentiment some years ago given the perceived nature of Islam and Islamic terrorism, but rather by some combination of territorial grievances and foreign occupation (Pape, 2005), organizational out-bidding for recruits, funds, and/or influence (Bloom), or a prevailing normative acceptance of such tactics, sometimes called the "cult of

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[44] See Pedahzur, 2005 for an authoritative analysis of suicide terrorism.

martyrdom" (Moghadam, 2008). In examining Chechen suicide terrorism, the main themes have posited religious extremism and/or despair.

Whatever the driving force, suicide bombings appear to play a greater role in ethnic disputes, where perpetrators and victims belong to different groups. In such conflicts targeting the other side is easier when its members are of a different race, ethnicity, religion, or nationality, especially when such contentious issues revolve around the control if territory. Certainly, it is much easier to demonize and dehumanize the "other" in these instances and thus help ease the limits on who can be legitimately targeted. Moreover, "if the perpetrating group has a dominant culture that is hospitable to violence and has a significant animosity towards the target group, we will also witness a lower threshold for who can be legitimately targeted" (Bloom, 2006:30-31), a claim which perhaps helps explain why the vast majority of suicide bombing attacks target civilians rather than representatives of the state.

Clearly, not all insurgent movements or terrorist organizations use suicide bombers. Some groups may use suicide bombers as a way to claim a moral high ground, or to morally shame the target government. Suicide bombing is a form of political theater and audience reaction matters. "Violence signals that they are proactive and engaged in the struggle...in order to survive, succeed, and achieve political power" (Bloom, 2006:26). Some organizations, like the Chechen militants, only do so after a protracted struggle.

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Despite some assertions of a religious element, particularly Islam, O'Rourke (2009) finds that secular groups are more likely to employ female suicide bombers, although traditional societies that predominately view females as subordinate to men and as nurturers and caregivers may be particularly reluctant to employ a "female destroyer" (Bloom, 2010:34). Religiously-inspired groups as well as groups from traditional or patriarchal societies, including ones which may have already used political violence, are reluctant to use female suicide bombers mainly due to the belief that females are somehow physically or psychologically weaker than males. Moreover, they may view the public world as one not suited for women, who belong to the private world behind closed doors. In many such societies women are not only subordinate to males; they are subservient, used principally to support the men. Finally, such groups may be wary of using female suicide bombers because of a fear of alienating male support. This may be why groups such as Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia have been particularly reluctant to use female suicide bombers (just three percent). Yet although religious groups may be reluctant at first to use female suicide bombers because of scriptural interpretations regarding women, many might eventually adopt the tactic after witnessing the success rates (O'Rourke, 2009:692).

In a number of conflicts it has been shown that women are often as willing as men to engage in armed struggle, but why do terrorist groups deploy female suicide bombers? Simply put, because they work. Female suicide bombers are more likely to succeed in their mission than men principally because they are better able to

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avoid detection (O'Rourke, 2009:689-692). Female suicide bombers, unlike their male counter-parts are less likely to arouse the suspicion of the authorities and pass easily through checkpoints. These women tend to more readily blend in with their social surroundings, frequently dressing like the target populace and can employ a number of other distracting disguises. Female suicide bombers have feigned pregnancy, a ruse, which ironically makes the attacker more deadly since the prosthetic, is filled with more explosives. In many traditional societies, the prohibitive norms against touching women mean females can avoid serious searches and pat-downs (Bloom, 2010:21-22). More importantly, for organizations, in addition to high kill rates, female suicide bombers generate significantly more media attention; something terrorist groups clearly enjoy (Bloom, 2010:23).

As previously noted, despite the nature of the first iteration of combat between the Chechens and Russians (1994 to 1996), the Chechens only began to use suicide bombers in the Second Russo-Chechen War which began in 1999. Initially, the Chechen use of suicide bombers closely resembled the tactics of groups like Hezbollah, driving heavy trucks loaded with explosives into Russian checkpoints or barracks (Pedahzur, 2005:111-113). However, shortly after these initial attacks the infamous Chechen warlord, Shamil Basayev, created a so-called "suicide battalion", the *Riyad Us-Saliheyn*.[45] The objective of this organization was to recruit, train, and deploy suicide bombers, both male and female, against Russian civilian targets. According to an ABC News interview with Basayev, the Russian people were

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[45] The *Riyad Us-Saliheyn* was revived by Doku Umarov in 2009.

legitimate targets since they voted for the politicians waging the campaign in Chechnya. For him, like many Chechens, the Russian people were complicit in the genocide of the Chechen people. Moreover, the very methods and tactics used by the Russians, indiscriminately attacking Chechen civilian and fighter alike, created an additional justification for targeting civilians. "They kill our women and children, why should we not do the same?"[46]

Terrorist organizations use a range of recruitment tactics for would-be female suicide bombers. They may appeal to gender equality or offer the mission as a way to achieve redemption for some real or perceived violation of the social norms regarding gender behavior. This may seem counter-intuitive, especially in traditional/patriarchal societies where the very act of a female becoming a suicide bomber challenges and violates extant norms. However, in many such places the males have maintained their domination over women by controlling their dress and even chaperoning the women to the target. Interestingly, there is even a discrepancy in financial restitutions to the families of successful suicide bombers whereby families of female bombers received less than the families of male suicide bombers. Finally, in many cases, groups appeal to nationalism or religion (O'Rourke, 2009:701) or revenge (Pedahzur, 2005:142-151).

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[46] Author interview, Male, 40 years old, Baku, 2007.

MOTIVATING WOMEN: WHY BECOME A SUICIDE BOMBER?

The common perception of female suicide bombers is that they are driven by "despair, mental illness, religiously mandated subordination to men, and a host of other factors specific to their gender" (O'Rourke, 2009:682). Yet O'Rourke claims that female suicide bombers are not motivated by gender-specific motivations, but by the very same things which motivate male suicide bombers, namely a deep commitment to a common cause (O'Rourke, 2009:682). In short, it is in-group loyalty.

The prevalence of female suicide attackers in Chechnya can be attributed to several factors. The first factor is tactical. As stated previously, women have an easier time reaching targets in Chechnya and Russia, since they apparently do not arouse as much suspicion as men. Another factor that probably contributes to the large numbers of female suicide bombers is strategic. Female suicide bombers affect a greater psychological impact on the target audience, and thus attract more publicity and attention. Chechen militants observed and learned from the small, though much publicized upsurge in female suicide bombings that occurred in Iraq, Palestine, and Sri Lanka. They recognized that female suicide bombers could generate significant media attention.

The final reason why women represent such a high proportion of Chechen suicide bombers is tied to the main undercurrent of the broader suicide terrorism phenomenon in Chechnya. As we have seen, desperation and hopelessness are major underlying precipitates of suicide terror, since these states naturally

precipitate feelings of helpless anger that is easily exploited by recruiters. Not surprisingly, Chechen women are more prone to experience these intense feelings of anguish and despair. Having lost husbands, sons, brothers, and fathers in the course of two wars, Chechen women have clearly been grievously afflicted by the devastation and brutality of the Russo-Chechen wars.

Most organizations are willing to use a number of tactics to achieve their stated goals. Why do individuals, women in particular, agree to become suicide bombers? There is no dearth of confusion and misinformation about the motivating factors for female suicide bombers. The literature on female suicide bombers is problematic. According to O'Rourke, many scholars mistakenly assign personal motives for female suicide bombers and, in doing so tend to over-generalize their findings (2009:701). Some claim that men drive these women to action or that they are motivated by anger, sorrow, revenge, nationalism, or religion (see Murphy, 2010). Of course, terrorist groups have long been joined and supported by females. In 19th Century Russia, anti-Tsarist groups were full of radical women willing to die for their cause. In the 1960s women joined with a number of the anti-colonial struggles taking place throughout the world and by the late 1960s women appeared in a number of Marxist-inspired terrorist organizations like the Italian Red Brigades, the German Baader-Meinhof Gang, the American Black Panthers and The Weathermen, and in the Japanese Red Army (Bloom, 2010:32). Yet, scholars agree that there is a fundamental difference between engaging in armed struggle and becoming a suicide bomber.

Scholars like Barbara Victoria have claimed that female suicide bombers are motivated by a desire to amend social or culturally imposed gender inequalities. By becoming a suicide bomber, it is claimed that such women simultaneously make themselves an integral part of the struggle while raising the profile of female agency and efficacy. According to Victoria, the Palestinian women were said to behave in this manner, but in the Chechen case, the opposite appears true. As discussed previously, Chechen women, were overall "much more emancipated than their Arab sisters" (Spekhard and Akhmedova, 2005). Indeed, it was not unusual for Chechen women to pursue higher education and outside employment in the Communist era when Chechen women "enjoyed a Soviet type of feminism in terms of equality is seeking education and worked in many professions as equals to men – thus to volunteer from the first as bombers alongside the men is in keeping with their egalitarian occupational traditions" (Spekhard and Akhmedova, 2005). In more peaceful times, many non-traditional occupations were open to Chechen women and even during the wars, a number of Chechen female suicide bombers were either currently university students and/or had once planned to pursue professional jobs like lawyers and doctors (Spekhard and Akhmedova, 2005). When these women decided to become female suicide bombers, they arguably became "more repressed" taking on restrictive alien clothing, and, during the attacks on the Moscow Theater and Beslan, put their lives in the hands of their male counterparts who controlled the detonating mechanisms.

Another difference is that in the Palestinian case, female suicide bombers were a tactic of last resort, utilized only when it became increasingly difficult, and often impossible, for male suicide bombers to penetrate Israeli security checkpoints. However, in the Chechen case it has been noted that the resistance began to employ female suicide bombers almost from the start of the Second Russo-Chechen War. What explains the difference? Spekhard and Akhmedova argue that it is most likely because of the "willingness, availability, [and] high motivational status" of Chechen women. Over time, the Chechen resistance certainly recognized the relative freedoms of movement Chechen women were afforded. It would become increasingly difficult for Chechen men to travel and more difficult to blend in; conversely, Chechen women could blend in with relative ease in cafés, or on trains, planes, buses, or on the metro. By the early 2000s, for the Russian people the danger and threat appeared to be anywhere and everywhere, a highly successful outcome for the Chechen resistance. The costs of a continuing Russian war in Chechnya meant a pervasive and ubiquitous danger for Russians in their own hometowns. Another, arguably more determinative factor was the shift in Russian tactics, particularly the decision to directly target civilians.

What kind of woman is more likely to become a suicide bomber? Some scholars have claimed that females may desire to become suicide bombers because of fertility issues (Ness, 2007). However, there is very little evidence to bolster the claim. First, it is extremely difficult to know this and our evidence suggests it is not common. Only one Palestinian female suicide bomber and two Chechen women are

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documented as having been infertile. The claims about divorce are equally unclear,

although female suicide bombers are more likely to be divorced than married.

Most female suicide bombers have been in their late-20s, statistically older

than the average for all known male suicide bombers. They also tend to be

unmarried (O'Rourke, 2009:707). Female suicide bombers are more likely than

male bombers to have experienced some type of personal loss. O'Rourke finds that

one-third of all female suicide bombers experience such loss compared to less than

three percent for males. However, O'Rourke cautions that this does not necessarily

mean that it is loss, which is driving women to blow themselves up. Rather, she

claims that this fact presents an attractive recruiting tool for terrorist organizational

leaders (O'Rourke, 2009:710).

The majority of Chechen female suicide bombers were under 30 years of age

and had indeed lost male relatives; most also suffered personal humiliation or

assault during Russian sweeps operations. All of this helped to create a "new

culture…in which the norms of Chechen society and expectations of what women

could contribute changed irrevocably. Many girls are convinced that a martyrdom

operation is there best option" (Bloom, 2010:66).

Organizations that seek to deploy female suicide terrorist usually do so by

first targeting vulnerable women for recruitment. In Chechnya, it is claimed such

women are those who have lost male relatives. Once recruited, organizers are

thought to indoctrinate the women by instilling an even greater hatred for the

Russians, blaming them for the killing of so many innocent civilians. Moreover,

recruiters are thought to use a psychological trick employed by many Special Forces groups, like the USMC training in boot-camp. The goal is to simultaneously "break down" recruits while building them up. In the case of Chechen female suicide bombers, this means demeaning the women and forcing them to do menial tasks like laundry and cleaning while also telling them how great and special they are (see Nivet, 2001).

It is believed that in this process religion plays only a marginal role. "While one sees an ideology in accordance with the global Salafi jihad in Chechnya, there it is focused mainly on motivating action in behalf of a nationalist cause, and in belief of achieving independence from what is seen as a brutal, repressive regime...achieving worldwide Muslim domination is not and never has been the separatist aim..." (Spekhard and Akhmedova, 2005). Indeed, among Chechen female suicide bombers it has been noted that most were not very religious at all. Most came from urban centers and grew up listening to western music and wearing western style dress. Yet recruiters adroitly manipulate traditional views of family and culture and in addition promise to provide financial rewards for the families left behind.

In the Chechen case, rape has also been posited as being a primary motivation for females becoming suicide bombers. Many Chechen women were reportedly raped and or sexually assaulted. Rape is a serious taboo in Chechen society and women, who are raped, especially by outsiders, are considered to have dishonored the family, often a crime that merits death by honor killing at the hand

of a male relative.[47] As such, rapes usually go unreported. However, a report by

Doctors Without Borders estimates that 85% of Chechen women in occupied

territory were raped by Russian soldiers or police.[48] In some instances, Russian

soldiers solicited bribes from fathers, brothers, or husbands to not rape Chechen

females. For the Russians, such behavior falls under the Russian policy of *bespredel*,

or "without limits" (Bloom, 2010:58-63). As a result, Politkovskaya claimed that in

her experiences with Chechen women a significant number were "zombified" by

sorrow and grief. There are also claims that the Chechen resistance leaders too have

engaged in rape deliberately to shame a woman into becoming a suicide bomber.

Any woman who fails will find a videotape of the act sent to their families. O'Rourke

(2009) acknowledges that rape among the known Chechen female suicide bombers

is a factor, yet argues that it is difficult, if not impossible, to accurately ascertain the

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[47] In an interview conducted in Poland, M. a Chechen woman from Bamut, an infamous stronghold of Chechen resistance and home to the Melkhi clan, one of Chechens oldest and most austere teips, retold the story of how profound the fear of rape was. As Russian troops began to surround the town M. and her extended family all huddled together in her father's house. The men, all armed, went out to join the local resistance at the edge of town, leaving behind her 14 year-old male cousin with an assault rifle. In the coming days the initial fear of the assault was replaced by a strange familiarity of the bombs and shooting. M. noted that although they were all obviously frightened, they began to joke a little, perhaps, she admits, as a way to cope with such stress. Yet, throughout the siege they young cousin never relaxed, looking sullen and morose. It was only then that an aunt recognized what was happening. The young cousin was not there to fight off an approaching Russians soldiers, but rather he was there to execute all the family women so that they would not fall victim to rape. As these realities set in some women were horrified and afraid, but one aunt took to teasing the young boy about how, as a youngster, she used to bathe him, imploring his, "how can you kill me?' This young man was saved from having to deal with this dilemma when his relatives and fellow townsmen managed to turn the city into "Fortress Bamut," holding off the Russians indefinitely.

[48] In the summer of 2002 the Russian Duma approved Operation 12/309 "Operation Fatima," which mandated that all women wearing headscarves while passing through Russian security checkpoints be detained and strip-searched. As a result, many women were tortured, raped, and/or sexually assaulted (Bloom, 2010:58).

exact role that rape plays. I agree given that rape does appear to be widespread while the incidence of females becoming suicide bomber is much less.

Much has been made of the purported role of both revenge and past trauma. I find the argument that Chechen women are driven to blow themselves up because of the loss of a male relative to be an incomplete explanation. Indeed, because the Chechen population is relatively small and has such strong kinship ties, it is hard, if not impossible to find a single Chechen woman who has not lost a close relative. Moreover, seeking revenge for such losses is a cultural attribute shared by all Chechens. However, this has historically been a feature assigned to the males.   As such, there must be something else at work. Some scholars believe that missing factor is some version of psychological trauma (Spekhard and Akhmedova, 2005).

There is no evidence that any of the known female suicide bombers had a history of serious mental illness.   None were thought to be seriously depressed or suicidal before their attacks (O'Rourke, 2009:704). In a unique "psychological post-mortem" of Chechen female suicide bombers and interviews with their family members, Spekhard and Akhmedova provide insights into the socio-economic and psychological profiles of Chechen female suicide bombers.   Spekhard and Akhmedova found that the Black Widows ranged in age from fifteen to thirty-eight. Three were married at the time of their death, while thirteen were single, four were divorced, five were widows, and one was currently in her second marriage. Among them were mothers and one woman known to be infertile. Sixty-five percent had completed the equivalent of a high-school education while eleven percent was

enrolled in university at the time of their attacks. Nineteen percent had completed their university degree.

Among the women, none were shown prior to their deaths to have exhibited any behavior known to be symptomatic of any serious underlying personality disorder, although they all had experienced deep personal trauma and, according to Spekhard and Akhmedova, most likely suffered from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). It is not clear how many, if any, suffered from dissociative phenomenon. The women had all lost close family members in "air-raids, bombings, landmines, so-called cleansing operations carried out by Russian forces, and in battle" (Spekhard and Akhmedova, 2005). Many had personally witnessed killings and beatings of family members, neighbors and strangers by Russian forces.

According to interviews with surviving family members, after witnessing or suffering such abuses, ninety-two percent of the Chechen women began to exhibit social alienation and isolation; twenty-three percent exhibited aggression with thirty-four percent repeatedly claiming to desire revenge. Fifty-four percent spontaneously told their family of their desire for revenge and, regardless of timing; all women at some point had revenge as a motivating factor, a fact consistent with Chechen cultural norms on the social acceptability of revenge.

As noted, as part of the discussion of the correlation between Islam and suicide bombings, it has been well documented and that Muslim males, who die as a *shaheed*, or martyr, are promised a paradise with seventy-two virgins. There is much theocratic dispute over this claim, but nevertheless, this is the common belief

among many in the Islamic world. As such, what do Muslim women perceive as their heavenly rewards for ostensibly becoming a *shaheed*? According to Sheik Yassin from Hamas, female suicide bombers will go to paradise and become even more beautiful than the seventy-two virgins. If they die while single they will receive in heaven a pure husband and will be allowed to bring with them seventy-two relatives into paradise. Others claim that female suicide bombers will be in charge, like managers, of the harems of the seventy-two virgins (O'Rourke, 2009:709). Among my interviews with Chechen women, I heard a number express a similar sentiment in that the more they suffer here on earth the better they perceive their lives will be in the afterlife.

Finally, Spekhard and Akhmedova also challenge the claim that Chechen female suicide bombers received months of training, observing that any training must be minimal given the time that the women were reported missing from their homes and the date of a give attack, usually no more than two weeks. This arguably casts doubt on the claims of intensive indoctrination and brainwashing as well. Spekhard and Akhmedova found no evidence of coercion. They found no evidence of brainwashing, drugs, or coercive rape by the Chechen resistance.[49] Bloom (2010:66) agrees that it is highly unlikely that any of the Chechen female suicide bombers were coerced. "A coerced bomber is considered to be vocationally

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[49] The idea of coercion, like the purported role of an organizing "Black Fatima" came from failed Chechen female suicide bomber Zarema Matskevaya, who later confessed to lying.

unsuitable and would blow-up at any moment. In the end, the girls go to their deaths voluntarily."

In the end, we have yet to fully understand why some Chechen women decide to become female suicide bombers. We do know that the Chechen resistance is more than happy to continue deploying female suicide bombers, especially since the tactic, despite new attention to women from the Caucasus, seems to consistently be successful. Moreover, it appears that the tactic may be bearing political fruit in the ways Pape suggests. Indeed, a recent Russian public opinion poll notes that for the first time the vast majority of the Russian people have little desire to maintain their hold on the predominately Muslim territory of the North Caucasus. As more and more ethnic Russians continue their exodus out of the region, as indigenous Muslim birthrates remain high, and as socio-economic problems plague the impoverished region, tensions will increase and frustration, from both sides, grow exponentially. The future does not portend a peaceful the North Caucasus, especially if Chechen militants believe the continued use of suicide bombers can help achieve their political objectives. Of course, as events in Beslan reveal, the militants must remain attentive to public sentiments if they are to continue waging a protracted insurgent campaign.

PUBLIC SUPPORT AND SUICIDE TERRORISM

Most societies and cultures have norms against committing suicide. What explains the popular support for such tactics? We now know that societies that have

endured air or artillery attacks are more likely to engage in suicide bombings, a fact clearly applicable to the Chechen case. In general, militant success on depends on whether the broader community approves the use of violence. If popular support is lacking or if the militants kill too many civilians, or as the Beslan examples shows, kill the wrong people, militant organizers will be forced to change tactics (See Bloom, 2010:25; Moghadam, 2008:53; and Pedahzur, 2005:80-84, 88-91, 96). As shown previously, this is exactly what the Chechen resistance did in the aftermath of the overwhelming rejection of the Beslan attack.

Insurgent groups and terrorist organizations should recognize the rise and fall of public support for a given strategy or tactic by nature of their close contact with the community.[50] If groups employ highly controversial tactics, like suicide bombings, and the greater community does not subsequently endorse them, the group will abandon the tactic for other, less controversial means (Bloom, 2006:28). The IRA and ETA were forced to abandon certain practices in the face of popular opposition and, as discussed in Chapter 4, so too did Chechen militants abandon attacks targeting certain civilians, such as children after Beslan. Non-participant support was so low after the latter attack that Chechen militants self-imposed a three-year moratorium on the use of any suicide bomber.

Conversely, although non-participants can demand restraint, they can also be the driving force behind increasing violence against the state and its constituents.

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[50] An internal criticism of Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia was that because the group was primarily composed of foreign fighters, they did not adequately heed local concerns or, for that matter, have access to such grievances. It was this division which American counter-insurgency military leaders sought to exploit during the 2006 "surge" in Iraq.

Indeed, not all civilians will reject civilian casualties on the other side. If during the course of the fighting the opposing government demonstrates its sheer disregard for the other side and sacrifices civilian lives in the pursuit of terrorism, the propaganda by militant leaders begins to resonate with the population upon whose support the insurgent group relies. The use of indiscriminate air, drone or artillery bombardments on civilian centers often makes that government's civilian constituents a legitimate target in the eyes of many from the targeted populace. This insight has clears implications for governments engaged in counter-terrorist or counter-insurgency operations and has not been lost on current American military planners in Iraq and Afghanistan. To paraphrase newly appointed Head of the CIA and former General, David Petraeus, in every conflict the population is the prize. Winning over any population is the best way to separate it from the terrorists embedded in its midst.

This is insight has both theoretical and foreign policy implications. If non-participant support erodes in the aftermath of a specific event or in light of a change in tactics or target, we directly observe the power of the community to potentially dampen political violence. Militants are often, like elected politicians, captives to their respective constituents. It is not clear what kinds of foreign policies might exploit such divisions, but much political discourse in Washington, DC invokes the image of "swamps" and breeding grounds of discontent. The first step in "draining the swamp" might be to find ways to further alienate the "mosquitoes" from the swamp; being attentive to shifts in non-participant support for certain actions will

arguably help inform such policies. That said, engaging in such a course of action may be easier said than done because of the intrinsically extensive ties between the two.

Non-participant support can also reach a critical mass in which a "cult of martyrdom" emerges (Moghadam, 2008). The cult of martyrdom refers to a society in which suicide operations and the suicide bombers themselves are glorified in popular songs, videos, posters, and discourse. The act of committing a suicide bombing is viewed by the public as being a positive development, one which generates little to no negative social consequences. In fact, such actions often lead to not only positive support from the community at large but also financial restitution for the surviving family members.

What about the greater Chechen community? How do they view suicide terrorism specifically? Although one must view such figures cautiously given that they come from interviews conducted in Chechnya where individuals might be reluctant to express true feelings, Spekhard and Akhmedova (2005) found surprisingly little public support for the tactic. Popular songs about Khava Barayeva were written, but overall the Chechen people do not yet seem ready to adopt the "cult of martyrdom" seen in other places like the Middle East. Among those Chechens interviewed, twenty-one percent expressed pity for the female suicide bombers, while twenty-three percent said they understood why these women behaved as they did. Forty-four percent thought the operations were planned by the FSB or that the women had been "used" by terrorist groups. Twelve percent

criticized the tactic negatively. Overall, fifty-nine percent spontaneously expressed pity for the hostages and other victims of any suicide bombing. Yet, we must also be cautious in our optimism that, even if such figures are true representations of the lack of Chechen public support for suicide bombings that these trends will continue over time. It is important to recognize that although a "cult of the martyr" does exist among the Palestinians today, it was not the dominant sentiment during the First Intifada (Spekhard and Akhmedova, 2005).

CHECHEN WOMEN AND "THE SPECTACULARS"

The world came to know the Black Widows most famously after the so-called "spectacular" terrorist action in the Moscow Theater and in School #1 in Beslan. These events were discussed in Chapter 3, and in this chapter, I focus exclusively on the role of the Black Widows and the gendered division of labor during the attacks.

I argued that one reason for the disproportionate support for *Nord-Ost* among displaced Chechens was, in part, the mission objective. Barayev and several other attackers claimed that they did not come to Moscow to kill anyone. In a challenge to those claiming an international Islamic influence on the Chechen resistance, in fact the *Nord-Ost* planners chose the Dubrovka Theater because they believed it would have fewer foreigners in attendance (Murphy, 2010). According to witness reports, the Chechen attackers claimed to have seen enough killing and war in Chechnya and that they came to Moscow exclusively to try and stop the war. Indeed, several hostages claimed that the attackers went to great lengths to actually

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protect the hostages from their own government, which exhibited little regard for the hostages' safety.   This echoes similar reports from the attack at the hospital in Buddennovsk in 1995.

At *Nord-Ost* the attackers demanded that Putin declare an end to the war in Chechnya and that Russian forces begin an immediate withdrawal from the territory. All air and artillery bombardments were to stop as were the zachistky cleaning operation sweeps. Finally, they demanded that an anti-war rally take place in Moscow's Red Square. In the end, all the attackers would be killed and their families back home would suffer Russian retribution. The family members and relatives of the known attackers at *Nord-Ost* would be imprisoned and tortured, executed, and have their homes bulldozed or blown-up.

At *Nord-Ost*, the male attackers secured the perimeter while the female attackers were assigned to control the hostages, ensuring above all that the hostages not panic, an outcome, which would make the demands of the attackers impossible. The Black Widows distributed water and blankets and chewing gum to the hostages. They also shared their own food, dried dates, and later some candies found in a vending machine. The hostages noted that the Black Widows were especially attentive to the needs of the children and appeared to one hostage as "more nurse than terrorist" (Murphy, 2010). Indeed, this behavior was noted by the Chechen women back home who, according to Russian investigative journalist, Anna Politkovskaya (2006), believed the Black Widows of *Nord-Ost* were "real heroines".

Why were there Black Widows at *Nord-Ost* at all?   Some claim that these women were there as a result of male coercion or perhaps that they had been drugged or brainwashed (Bodansky, 2007; Murphy, 2010).   Others claim that they were there to avenge the loss of male relatives or to exact revenge for their own humiliation and suffering during the "zachistky" raids (Reuter, 2004:2-5). For their part, the Russian authorities and media have claimed that the Black Widows were drugged and brainwashed, but many observers point out that this is a convenient excuse because to "blame societal dynamics in Chechnya is easier than facing up to the role played by Russian soldiers in radicalizing Chechen women. The authorities do not want people to conclude that the situation in Chechnya is so desperate and the living conditions so awful that women are driven to suicide and murder" (Bloom, 2010:64).   It is not clear what motivated these women, although it is obvious again that Russian behavior in Chechnya during the two wars created a climate of a "generalized revenge directed at all Russians" and that all Russians were somehow complicit in Russian abuses.

Similar to insurgent or guerrilla actions, many believe organizations employ suicide bombers to simultaneously reveal the target government's inability to protect its own constituents and provoke the government's harsh response, an act which further reveals the brutality of the regime (Eurasia Daily Monitor, March 20**,** 2011). This is not the dynamic we observe in Chechnya, however. The Chechen resistance uses suicide bombers as both a weapon to inflict physical and psychological damage on Russian and Kadyrovsky military and police forces, as a

psychological weapon against the Russian populace in order to drive Russian citizens to push elected leaders to acquiesce to territorial demands, namely Chechen independence. Further, I contend it is used as a form of political theater and advertisement. Any military force requires certain material goods necessary to wage a successful campaign.

Chechen militants have been aided in their protracted struggle by favorable terrain and topography and a population willing to support their actions. They amassed large stockpiles of weapons systems during the chaotic collapse of the Soviet Union and in exchanges with Russian troops during the wars. Their main needs are recruits and ammunition. Ironically, the very topography which allows them to wage a successful guerrilla campaign precludes large numbers of foreign fighters from joining the battle. Foreigners have fought alongside the Chechen resistance, some quite prominently. These fighters, however, never exceeded more than a couple of hundred at most, regardless of Russian and later Western pronouncements. As such, the resistance realized that it could use, and receive, an equally valuable community, foreign money. In doing so, the Chechen resistance began to appeal to the international Islamic community for help, especially after Western support failed to materialize. The Chechens in the Second Russo-Chechen War now frequently videotape their ambushes and battles, broadcasting them on a number of jihadist websites and on-line chat rooms. These actions, much like the more high profile "spectaculars" in Moscow and Beslan are essentially commercials or advertisements to raise the necessary funds to continue their campaign. In the

end, I contend the use of female suicide bombers, like the use of jihadist slogans and even political goals, like the establishment of an Islamic Caucasus Emirate as discussed in Chapter 4, are driven more by strategic and instrumental calculations.

What does the use of suicide bombers tell us about the state of the current conflict? Pape highlights a certain pattern of Chechen suicide terrorism, which underscores the influence popular attitudes have on the behavior of perpetrating organizations. From the first instance of Chechen suicide terrorism in June 2000 to November 2004 there were twenty-seven attacks. From then until October of 2007, there were none, and from October 2007 to the time of his *The New York Times* Op-Ed in March 2010 there were eighteen attacks. What explains the three-year hiatus in Chechen suicide bombings? Pape argues that the pause was created by two separate factors. First, the Russian military abandoned its scorched earth policies in favor of a campaign to win "hearts and minds." In doing so, the number of civilian casualties attributed to the Russians dropped significantly. Pape does not clarify the causal mechanism, but I believe he means to suggest that the softening of Russian behavior towards civilians coupled with a widely popular amnesty for former fighters, lead many Chechens to mollify their views on attacking Russians. The second factor was the loss of public support following the attacks on Beslan. I believe this is critical. The attack on Beslan and resulting loss of so many children was a devastating humiliation for the Chechen resistance. It conferred upon all Chechens the label and stigma of congenital monsters, a perception expressed by a number of respondents in my structured-interviews. Chechen resistance leaders

understood that the widespread rejection of Beslan curtailed the usually high levels of public support they had enjoyed and knew they needed to step back and reevaluate their tactics and strategy. In both cases the factors, which lead to the pause in Chechen suicide terrorism, was the community. As was discussed earlier, this has clear theoretical and policy implications, which I will discuss in greater detail below. For now, it is important to note that public attitudes do matter.

Of course, the pause did eventually end and there now appears to be a steady rise in the rates of suicide terrorism. What explains this? Pape's logic suggests that Kadyrov's heavy-handed tactics in Chechnya has caused a new surge in suicide bombers. By the autumn of 2007 Kadyrov had reverted back to a ruthless policy of exterminating the resistance. In doing so, he relied heavily on pressuring suspected family members, engaging in a widespread policy of torture against his fellow Chechens. In fact, Kadyrov has behaved so abhorrently that many Chechens now feel the Russians may be the lesser of two evils, acting as a moderating force on Kadyrov's excesses. Still, this does not fully explain the return to suicide bombings. I contend that the return has more to do with strategy and strategic goals. More importantly, it has to do with perceptions of success. Since the renewal of suicide attacks there has been a gradual erosion of Russian support for continued action against the Caucasus. In a shocking admission, a recent Russian public opinion poll revealed that the vast majority of Russian respondents actually desired that the Caucasus be "let go" rather than remain a part of Russian. Suicide terrorism is

purposefully driven and goal-oriented and, in the case of the Chechen resistance, a successful tactic.

GENDER AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS POLITICAL VIOLENCE

The goal of this empirical and inductive study is to explain the roots of political violence within a susceptible subset of a population that has adopted attitudes supportive of political violence. Methodologically, this inductive study employed a mixed-methods approach, utilizing qualitative and ethnographic methods, such as direct participant-observer, to conduct 301 structured-interviews (in the Chechen or Russian language) with a range of Chechen refugees: political elites, average civilians, former fighters, and Chechens still active in the separatist movement.

This analysis is based on nearly three years of fieldwork conducted between 2006 and 2009 in Chechen refugee communities in The Republic of Georgia, Azerbaijan, Poland, and Belgium. The dissimilarities among these cases provided a unique opportunity to explore whether and how displacement into diverse environments has affected the propensity to actively support political violence or find it an acceptable means of behavior. More importantly, this work continues the recent trend in the study of social violence, which utilizes thick ethnographic research at the micro-level and seeks to generate and inform theory building rather than testing hypotheses.[51]

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[51] See Kalyvas (2006), Lyall (2009), and Wood (2006).

It is important to note the social desirability bias inherent in this work. Questions regarding views on political violence are often susceptible to social desirability bias, a condition in which participants may be wary of expressing their true views in front of the researcher or may give answers they think the researcher wants to hear. To avoid social desirability bias, I framed questions about political violence as such, "Certain members of the Chechen resistance claim that acts such as *Nord-Ost*, Beslan, Nalchik, and Nazran were both legitimate and necessary. Do you think they are correct?"

It is important to stress that this study does not, in any way, purport to explain the attitudes of all Chechens, nor of all Chechen refugees. These findings are a qualitative assessment of observations made during systematic fieldwork in various displaced Chechen communities. These findings are impressionistic; as such, they are meant to be viewed as part of the broader exercise in developing theory. In particular, in accordance with the inherent caveats of the micro-comparative turn in the study of political violence, these findings are meant to generate arguments regarding the patterns of attitudes towards political violence and the potential factors contributing to such attitudinal patterns. As noted previously, this study pushes the limits of what can be done and serves to generate hypotheses more than test them. It is clearly difficult to conduct any research involving refugees, especially Chechen refugees who live in appalling circumstances and who, even in exile, face significant security threats from Russia and the Russian-backed, pro-Moscow Chechen government under Ramzan Kadyrov. This is a

vulnerable population, and most observers would expect a monolithic, rebellious, pro-violence population (Bodansky, 2007; Murphy, 2006; Zaurbekova and Yandarov, 2001). My work challenges this assumption. The Chechen refugee population exhibits a highly sophisticated view toward political violence, thus bolstering claims for an instrumental theory of political violence.

For independent variables I asked every respondent the same battery of questions related to demographic profiles, grievances, political goals and preferences and preferences for regime type. The dependent variable, attitudes towards political violence, was gleaned from structured-interviews which called on subjects to offer general assessments of their position on the acceptability of political violence as well as express their views on the legitimacy of four concrete events related to the conflict in Chechnya: the 2002 attack on Moscow's Dubrovka Theater during a performance of, *Nord-Ost*; the 2004 attack on School #1 in Beslan, North Ossetia; the 2004 attack on military and police personnel in Nazran, Ingushetia; and the attack on military and police personnel in Nalchik, Kabardino-Balkaria. latter two attacks primarily targeted representatives of the state, while *Nord-Ost* and Beslan exclusively targeted civilians.[52]

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[52] As discussed on Chapter 2, questions regarding views on political violence are often susceptible to social desirability bias, a condition in which participants may be wary of expressing their true views in front of the researcher or may give answers they think the researcher wants to hear. To avoid social desirability bias I framed questions about political violence as such, "Certain members of the Chechen resistance claim that acts such as *Nord-Ost*, Beslan, Nalchik, and Nazran were both legitimate and necessary. Do you think they are correct?"

In this chapter, make three principle arguments: 1) Male Chechen refugees will be more likely to support political violence than female refugees; 2) Male Chechen refugees are more likely to desire maximal political goals, like the establishment of a Caucasus-wide Emirate than female refugees; 3) Male Chechen refugees are more likely to prefer religious authority as political authority (sharia) than female refugees.

In the following tables, Chechen refugee respondents who believed that each of the four concrete acts (the 2002 attack on Moscow's Dubrovka Theater during a performance of, *Nord-Ost*; the 2004 attack on School #1 in Beslan, North Ossetia; the 2004 attack on military and police personnel in Nazran, Ingushetia; and the attack on military and police personnel in Nalchik, Kabardino-Balkaria) was legitimate are grouped under, *Supports All Acts of Political Violence.* Respondents who rejected all four acts are grouped under, *Rejects All Acts of Political Violence.* Respondents who fell in-between the two extremes, *Supports Some Acts of Political Violence*, answered one of three ways: 1) *Supports All Acts of Political Violence Not Targeting Civilians* (Nalchik and Nazran); 2) *Supports All Acts of Political Violence Except Beslan*; or 3) *Rejects All Acts of Political Violence Except* Nord-Ost.

Gender	Supports All Acts of Political Violence	Rejects All Acts of Political Violence	Supports Some Acts of Political Violence
Total: 265			
Male (204)	32.4%	13.2%	54.4%
Female (61)	3.3%	55.7%	41.0%

Table 5.1:   Gender and Attitudes Towards Political Violence

Table 5.1 illustrates the attitudinal differences between Chechen refugee males and females regarding political violence. 32.4% of males and only 3.3% of females deem all four acts of political violence (*Nord-Ost*, Beslan, Nalchik, Nazran), regardless of target, legitimate. In contrast, only 13.2% of males reject these violent acts, while the vast majority of females, 55.7% reject all. Both genders support some acts of political violence. These respondents typically supported all acts of political violence except for Beslan (20.3%) or expressed exclusive support for *Nord-Ost* (22.2%). I discuss this finding in more detail below, but in short, Table 5.1 reveals that among Chechen refugees, males are more likely to support political violence than females.

There is much debate about the biological underpinnings of behavior. Commonly, despite numerous counter-examples, these debates center on the premise that males are inherently prone to conflict and competition, while women are predisposed to consensus building and cooperation. Most males are not inherently murderous, but scholars agree that male violence is an "evolutionary hangover" of certain select impulses, which once gave willing males reproductive advantages for violent risk-taking behavior (Potts and Hayden, 2009:2-14). Early in

our human history young males banded together in small groups and set out to prey upon neighboring groups in search of resources. Accordingly, man's propensity to kill other members of our own species is an evolved behavior and those who did it successfully were more successful in passing on their genes than those who did not. Certainly, women have used violence to protect their family and kin and indeed, there have even been a number of female terrorists and murderers. Yet, there is no evidence that women in our early history engaged in the same behavior as men in joining small bands to target outsiders and as such, scholars claim the same evolutionary baggage does not saddle women. For women, the dominant strategy for reproductive success was to align with violent male mates. In the case of Chechen refugees, it is clear that men are more likely to support all acts of political violence, while women express entirely different sentiments, yet it is not clear these dissimilarities are driven exclusively by biology. Biology may play a role, as may culture, especially in the Chechen case. However, these are common to all Chechen refugees and as such, I argue that these findings have less to do with either biology or culture than they do with material interests and expectations for the future derived from recent experiences.

When Chechen refugee males speak about violence, they usually do so in reference to the necessity of violence to stop the genocide of their people. Others claim that they support violence as a last resort given that all other methods have failed. Some claim that they are merely supporting actions and tactics which the

Russians have used against them and as such, anything is legitimate. Finally, a common theme was one of desperation and survival.

> ### 39 year old Male former Rebel Commander from Grozny (Belgium)
> These actions are legitimate. When you commit genocide against a whole people, what do you expect?

> ### 47 year old Male businessman from Shalinsky (Azerbaijan)
> When people will not leave you alone, you must do something. We tried to negotiate, but it did not work and so now we have no choice but to fight. This is war and in war all things are acceptable.

> ### 29 year old Male athlete from Grozny (Azerbaijan)
> Russia ignores the rules of war. Why should we pay any attention to them then? Why do we do these things? Because we are small and Russia is big. How can we fight against Russia? We have no planes, no tanks, nothing. What else can we do?

> ### 26 year old Male student from Grozny (Belgium)
> Beslan was terrible, but the other three? We had to do them. What choice did we have? This is about survival. We will do whatever it takes to win and survive. I support 1,000 Nalchiks and Nazrans and Moscows. I do not care how many Russians die. They have killed too many of us already.

Conversely, Chechen refugee females express markedly different sensibilities about the efficacy and legitimacy of political violence. Chechen refugee women express concerns over the loss of innocent lives and express concern with how contemporary actions affect future threats against the Chechen people. Finally, many worried about how the world would view Chechens because of these attacks.

> ### 38 year old Female physician from Grozny (Poland)
> No one can say that it is legitimate when innocent people die.

> ### 37 year old Female pharmacist from Bamut (Belgium)
> If I kill some peaceful people I will only make them angry against me. They will do something to me and my family will do something back to them. It will just go on and on. That is what this war has become.

42 year old Female housewife from Grozny (Poland)
You can do something in a war, but only if it is an equal fight. We do not have this [ability], so we need to achieve results through peace and diplomacy. Chechens have become synonymous with "terrorist". These acts have given us a dirty reputation.

For Chechen refugees who favored some acts of political violence, the vast majority of responses were either "Supports all acts of political violence, except Beslan" or "Rejects all acts of political violence, except *Nord-Ost*". Among all respondents, the attacks on Nalchik and Nazran were linked nearly identically and were exclusively supported by only 6.8% of the population.[53] The rejection of Beslan is almost certainly due to universal norms prohibiting the harm of children. Indeed, the interview narratives make clear that it was the very act of targeting children, which made this so unpopular. Chechen refugee women in particular overwhelmingly rejected Beslan with over 96.0% rejecting the legitimacy of the attack. It is worth noting that few of the respondents who believed Beslan was legitimate advocated the wholesale slaughter of children. Frequently, individuals who supported Beslan did so by blaming the Russians (either for driving the perpetrators to such an act, or for being the ones who actually started shooting during the stand-off and thus bearing ultimate responsibility) or out of revenge for personal losses, especially of their own children. In one case, a 40-year-old male Chechen refugee in Azerbaijan confessed, "The Russians have killed my whole

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[53] Only 6.8% of respondents chose this option, thus illustrating that there is scant support for political violence exclusively targeting state representatives and/or attacks which are viewed as peripheral to the main conflict.

family. What do I care for their children? They did not care for mine. This is war and war is an ugly business for everyone...."[54]

While Beslan is the negative outlier, at the other end of the spectrum is the overwhelming support for *Nord-Ost*. The preponderance of responses, 72.5% across the cases, regardless of gender, political goals, or regime type, supported the *Nord-Ost* attack. I argue that it has to do with four factors: select cultural antecedents, political learning, and target selection, and mission objective. First, there is an underlying cultural acceptance in the Caucasus of certain forms of social violence. Even among their people, symbolically or not, kidnapping, bride snatching and hostage taking are socially acceptable and as such, this behavior is deemed appropriate for adversaries. Second, many Chechens view the Moscow attack as being similar to the 1995 raid on a hospital in the southern Russian town of Buddennovsk, an act which helped bring the first Russo-Chechen War to an end in 1995. Chechens who made the connection between these two events are more likely to view the actions in Moscow as being ultimately directed towards achieving peace, especially since the main demand of the hostage-takers was to end to the war in Chechnya. This latter point also underscores the instrumental rather than emotive nature of political violence in this community. Fourth, target selection plays a role in that this event was the only one of the four that actually struck Moscow, the heart of the Chechens enemy. Finally, mission objective plays a critical role in

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[54] Author's interviews, Baku, 2007.

understanding disproportionate support for *Nord-Ost*. A significant number of Chechen refugees, males and females alike, claim that *Nord-Ost* was legitimate because it was meant as a demonstrative action, a way to draw attention to the atrocities occurring in Chechnya. Respondents who support *Nord-Ost* claim that the perpetrators meant only to serve as a voice of the people, and did not intend to harm anyone. Indeed, this perspective is frequently cited for support.

GENDER, POLITICAL GOALS, AND REGIME TYPE PREFERENCES

Gender	Russia	Autonomy	Independence	Caucasus Emirate
Total: 301	0.3%	15.0%	64.5%	20.2%
Male (226)	0.4%	7.1%	67.3%	25.2%
Female (75)	0.0%	38.7%	56.0%	5.3%

Table 5.2:   Gender and Political Goals

Gender	Democracy	Sharia
Total: 301	51.2%	48.8%
Male (226)	44.2%	55.8%
Female (75)	72.0%	28.0%

Table 5.3:   Gender and Regime Type

In Chapter 4, this dissertation showed that among Chechen refugees, political goals and regime type influence attitudes towards political violence. Those that desire maximal political goals, like the establishment of an Islamic Caucasus Emirate were more likely to accept all acts of political violence. Moreover, those who desired religious authority as political authority (sharia) were also more likely to accept all acts of political violence. I argued that these sentiments were driven

primarily by security concerns and not religious ideology. These individuals felt that

Chechnya was too small and too isolated to ever be able to effectively challenge

Russia and as such, the Chechen resistance needed to join together with other

Caucasian nations, an idea with historical precedent in previous 20th Century

attempts to establish a similar political unit after the Bolshevik Revolution. Indeed,

the structured-interviews revealed that when Chechen refugees spoke about a

Caucasus Emirate, exceedingly few employed the global jihadist rhetoric of Osama

bin Laden. In fact, the overwhelming majority frequently spoke in nationalist and

secular terms; in this, sharia became an overarching identity to unite the disparate

ethno-nationalist groups of the North and West Caucasus.

       In all of this, gender matters. Clearly, there are discernable gender patterns in

the support for political violence. Chechen refugee males are more likely than their

female counterparts to support all of some acts of political violence. But gender

plays another role. Gender influences both the preference for certain political goals

and for regime type. Table 5.2 and Table 5.3 reveal that Chechen refugee women

are more likely to prefer more moderate political goals, like Autonomy (38.7%) and

reject maximal goals like a Caucasus Emirate (5.3%). They are also more likely to

prefer democracy (72.0%) to sharia (28.0%). Conversely, Chechen refugee males

are more likely to accept more maximal goals (67.3% for Independence and 25.2%

for a Caucasus Emirate, respectively), while rejecting more moderate goals (only

7.1% for Autonomy). Chechen refugee males are also more likely to prefer sharia

(55.8%) to democracy (44.2%).[55] These latter figures are most likely close due to the nature of the Chechen resistance. The majority of the original resistances were secular, national separatists while the current generation is more religious. This includes both younger participants in the armed struggle as well as older individuals who, for a number of reasons, have become increasingly religious. However, there remain a number of Chechen refugees who feel that democracy most closely resembles the traditional Chechen political institutions and that democracy holds true to the ideals of the Chechen independence movements of the early 1990s. These individuals may feel that, like Churchill, democracy is the worst form of government besides any other, in this case communism or sharia.

In regard to the gendered differences towards political goals and regime type revealed above, what explains the variation between Chechen refugee males and females? Where do political goals and preferences come from? In general, early socialization can lead to certain political ontologies and consequent preferences. In early adulthood, society and social groups influence preferences by one of two mechanisms: first, individuals are attracted to like-minded people and their respective in-groups, or, conversely, people get together and then become like-minded; regardless, the effects are the same. Culture can play a significant role in

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[55] It is important to note that my structured-interview question about regime type preference was open-ended. I did not offer regime type choices, nor channel responses. Respondents themselves answered their choice for either democracy or sharia. Moreover, I did not probe what respondents meant by either regime type preference. Nonetheless, whatever these regime types symbolize for respondents, it is clear that these choices align with certain viewpoints about the legitimacy of political violence.

driving political ideas. Finally, religion has been shown to influence individual and community views on political matters.

However, I argue that among Chechen refugees, political preferences are driven first and foremost by personal experiences and the consequent perceptions about the future that these experiences generate. Refugees who perceive select social advantage from certain political systems and outcomes, like independence or the establishment of a Caucasus Emirate, will desire such outcomes and the empirical evidence reveals that these individuals will be more likely to accept political violence as a legitimate form of social behavior. In the Chechen refugee community, these individuals are predominantly male. Chechen refugees who perceive an expected loss of select social advantages under these political systems will chose different political outcomes and different political systems. These individuals are predominantly female. The empirical data reveals that for women, remaining a part of Russia and instituting democratic institutions are dominant desired goals.

Political learning and expectations for the future can explain the gender-gap in both political objectives and preferences for governing institutions. I argue that Chechen refugees base their future goals on their past experiences, particularly the perceived lessons learned from living under past systems like Communism and then post-Communist rule. Chechen men and women experienced remarkably disparate social and economic opportunity structures in post-Soviet Chechnya. This translates directly into current political preferences.

Under the Soviet system, Chechen women, like most women in the state, were extended generous benefits and allowed a significant degree of social mobility. High-status occupations, like doctor, scientist, and engineer, were all available positions under Soviet philosophy, what some have called "Soviet-style Feminism". Conversely, under the same rule Chechen men fared far worse. Under the Soviets, the Caucasus, despite all its petroleum generated wealth, was one of the state's most economically backward regions, faring only slightly better than the Central Asian republics. In this environment, many Chechen males sought out seasonal labor and migrated from one place to another, usually earning a pittance. To supplement their meager wages, the Chechen mafia emerged as a key and powerful player in the maintenance of the so-called "shadow economy" which propped up the Communists for so long. The latter fact caused a great deal of umbrage among the ethnic Russians and helped to perpetuate the stereotype of Chechens as bandits and thieves.

However, since the collapse of the Soviet Union, especially in places like the economically backward northern Caucasus, women have been subject to a surprising trend in social regression. In the immediate aftermath of the collapse, Chechen society began to re-assert age-old, patriarchal traditions, disproportionately privileging males. Once independent, Chechen men were able to achieve high positions in government and business. For many men, although their wives, mothers and sisters have become the main breadwinners in the post-war economy, they are nonetheless pressured to "return to the home and the scarf."

Clearly, many women accurately perceive living under a paternalistic form of government, especially with the rigid, dogmatic sharia law, as one in which their social advantages are decreased. 100% of displaced Chechen women rejecting religious authority as political authority did so because they viewed it as a repressive regime type. In short, Chechen women have a material interest in a non-Islamic world and this is expressed in the structured-interviews.

> ### 36 year old Female housewife from Agishty (Poland)
> I never want to see sharia again. I have seen that time back home and it is more repressive than the Communists.

> ### 35 year old Female lawyer at the Ministry of Internal Affairs from Grozny (Belgium)
> Chechnya must be free and must never have any sharia. We saw how that worked and we did not like it. I was a professional woman. Who are these young boys to tell me what to do? What right do they have? I am a good Muslim and I know that Allah does not say that women should sit home all day or walk around in a sheet!

> ### 37 year old Female teacher from Grozny (Belgium)
> My parents had no opportunity to get good jobs, but in my day you could. If you went slowly and earned your education and experience, you could get a better life in Russia as in any part of the world. This was especially true for women. Now? Look at what they say. They say we must wear scarves and sit at home. These are modern times. How can we go back to that?

What about the gendered differences in regime type for males? When the Soviet Union collapsed, although some Chechen males became part of the new rich, in reality the vast majority actually witnessed decreasing opportunities. Migrant work became especially difficult with new international borders and legal regimes. Most of the petroleum industry was dismantled in the anarchy of the early days, and as Soviet economic investments dried up, so too did many of the available

occupational opportunities. This, then, was how many Chechen males perceived their experience with democracy and as such, only 25% see democracy as legitimate. For these respondents, democracy was a system that offered few comparative advantages. The majority of displaced Chechen males who do support democracy (75%), however, do so out of perceived notions about traditional forms of political organization, a point of historical dispute according to other Chechen males as we observe below.

Chechen refugee males fall into three categories when speak about religion and regime type. First, 55.8% of Chechen refugee males favor sharia because they are Muslims and this is the law of Allah. As mentioned above, many associate democracy with corruption, a view common among Muslims throughout the world. As such, 41.2% support sharia primarily because it is viewed as being the least corrupt form of regime type.[56] Finally, 11.8% of Chechen men based their current regime type desires on perceptions of tradition. However, it is important to note there is significant disagreement over Chechen history. A number of individuals claimed that the Chechens have a history of democracy, while others are convinced that their traditions were based on sharia.

> *28 year old Male student from Grozny (Poland)*
> I prefer sharia…we are Muslim people, and that is how Allah says we must govern ourselves, with His laws.
> *26 year old Male university student from Grozny (Belgium)*
> Democracy is only good for corrupt people and rich people who want more money and power.

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[56] See 2008 Gallop Poll of ten Muslim countries.

34 year old Male oil industry worker from Bamut (Azerbaijan)
We are proud Muslims. Democracy is not good for us Chechens. When power goes to one person it will be a problem. He will want all his own people to come to his side and help govern.

55 year old Male doctor from Cheri-Yurt (Belgium)
In sharia, there is only good, and in democracy, there is nothing but bad. Sharia is our tradition.

47 year old Male doctor from Alkhan-Yurt (Belgium)
I am in favor of democracy because of our Chechen traditions. Many people here favor sharia, but sharia is not our tradition. It has never been in our land. To have sharia, one must study the Quran, and no one in Chechnya does that.

GENDER AND GENERATIONAL CLEAVAGES

It is important to explore the role of other factors in exploring the various potential sources of attitudes supporting political violence. In particular, I disaggregated the data to examine the role of age and gender in determining political goals and regime type preferences as well as views on political violence.

Age Groups	Supports All Acts of Political Violence	Rejects All Acts of Political Violence	Supports Some Acts of Political Violence	No Response
Males				
18 to 24	30.3%	6.1%	36.4%	27.3%
25 to 34	32.0%	13.4%	52.6%	2.1%
35 to 55	23.0%	13.8%	50.6%	12.6%
56 to 66	55.6%	0.0%	44.4%	0.0%

Table 5.4A: Age, Gender, and Attitudes towards Political Violence – Males

Age Groups	Supports All Acts of Political Violence	Rejects All Acts of Political Violence	Supports Some Acts of Political Violence	No Response
Females				
18 to 24	5.3%	47.4%	26.3%	21.1%
25 to 34	0.0%	39.1%	47.8%	13.0%
35 to 55	3.9%	50.0%	19.2%	26.9%
56 to 66	0.0%	42.9%	57.1%	0.0%

Table 5.4B: Age, Gender, and Attitudes towards Political Violence – Females

Age Groups	Russia	Autonomy	Independence	Caucasus Emirate
Males				
18 to 24	0.0%	12.1%	72.7%	15.2%
25 to 34	0.0%	4.1%	67.0%	28.9%
35 to 55	1.2%	8.1%	69.0%	21.8%
56 to 66	0.0%	11.1%	33.3%	55.6%

Table 5.5A: Age, Gender, and Political Goals – Males

Age Groups	Russia	Autonomy	Independence	Caucasus Emirate
Females				
18 to 24	0.0%	47.4%	47.4%	5.3%
25 to 34	0.0%	52.2%	39.1%	8.7%
35 to 55	0.0%	23.1%	76.9%	0.0%
56 to 66	0.0%	28.6%	57.1%	14.3%

Table 5.5B: Age, Gender, and Political Goals – Females

Age Groups	Democracy	Sharia
Males		
18 to 24	60.6%	39.4%
25 to 34	29.9%	70.1%
35 to 55	56.3%	43.7%
56 to 66	11.1%	88.9%

Table 5.6A: Age, Gender, and Regime Type – Males

Age Groups	Democracy	Sharia
Females		
18 to 24	63.2%	36.8%
25 to 34	82.6%	17.4%
35 to 55	73.1%	26.9%
56 to 66	57.1%	42.9%

Table 5.6B: Age, Gender, and Regime Type – Females

Table 5.4A and Table 5.4B look at the role of age, by gender, and the *Support for Political Violence*. Once again, as shown in Chapter 4 there was little support for the idea that attacks on representatives of the state are more legitimate, and thus more popular, than attacks on civilians. The most likely group to support political violence are males aged 25 to 34 (65.0%) and males aged 56 to 66 (77.8%). As shown in Table 5.5A and Table 5.6A, this latter group is also the most likely to support a Caucasus Emirate (55.6%) and to reject Independence (33.3%) and Autonomy (11.1%). Table 5.6A and Table 5.6B show the group most likely to support democracy are males aged 18 to 24 and 35 to 55 (60.6% and 56.3%, respectively); while males aged 25 to 34 and 56 to 66 are more likely to support sharia (70.1% and 88.9%, respectively).

As discussed previously, this generational split reflects current tensions within the Chechen resistance. Indeed, last year the high-profile split in the resistance leadership actually reflected an emerging generational cleavage, namely the older fighters, the onetime national secularists, are now more likely to support a Caucasus Emirate and sharia than the younger fighters who desire more nationalist goals. If true, this fundamentally challenges the conventional wisdom about younger generation militants being more radical and certainly more likely to support transnational Islamic political goals. This is the conventional story from Iraq and Afghanistan. Yet this does not appear to be the case, as it pertains to political goals, with the Chechens and the data, as well as a recent research trip back to Pankisi Gorge underscores.

What explains this? In order to better understand these findings I looked back at these age groups and documented what age they were in 1989 (a period of glasnost and radical social changes in USSR), 1991 (independence), 1994 (first war begins), 1997 (inter-war years; sharia introduced in Chechnya), and 2000 (start of second war). I contend that it is the timing of the wars which makes males aged 25 to 34 particularly prone to express pro-violent attitudes. During this time, male respondents were 13 to 22 years old when the First Russo-Chechen War began and thus grew up in a world of war and violence and probably engaged in heavy fighting. Males aged 56 to 66 are from the generation which grew up on the frozen plains of Central Asia after being deported by Stalin. This generation grew up with an intense hostility toward to the Russians, particularly after returning to Chechnya to find

their world occupied by Russians and their opportunities for social and economic advancement significantly impeded because of their ethnicity. This group was 44 to 54 during the First War and in their mid-fifties when the second began, thus making them less likely to be active fighters and more likely to be passive observers or victims. This generation suffered again and again at the hands of Russia and it is therefore little surprise that they both endorse attacks against any Russians while simultaneously supporting a political system as alien to the one they perceived discriminated against them as possible. Finally, there is the idea that time is running out.

It is also important to note that 27.3% of all Non-Responses came from males aged 18 to 24. All but one Non-Response occurred in Pankisi Gorge and Tbilisi, the location closest to the conflict. As it is, 48.5% of this group expressed support for at least some acts of political violence; if social desirably is playing a role, total support for political violence would be 75.3%, thus making this group the most likely group to support political violence. Although there is no interview data to support this claim, there is anecdotal evidence from my direct observations, spending countless hours with this demographic, watching violent video footage from jihadist websites on Iraq, Afghanistan, and Chechnya. Given these experiences, I posit the vast majority, if not all, of Non-Respondents do indeed support at least some acts of political violence.[57]

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[57] The idea that studying Chechen refugees as the "next best thing" to studying actual Chechens in Chechnya (principally because conducting such work in Chechnya is dangerous and bound to fail

GENDER, GEOGRAPHIC PROXIMITY, LEVEL OF EDUCATION, AND SUPPORT FOR POLITICAL VIOLENCE

There are many assumptions about the role of education in driving support for political violence and militant activity. Some argue that lower education breeds both violence and support for violence (Berebbi, 2003; Kreuger and Maleckova, 2003; Lochner, 2007).. By this logic, higher education is viewed as a moderating force, exposing people to new ideas and, ideally, new solutions and alternatives to violence. Conversely, others argue that higher education leads to greater awareness of social problems and, often, the inability of individual action, through normal channels, to effect change (Lerner, 1956; Shafiq and Sinno, 2010). As such, it is claimed that higher education creates greater political dissatisfaction, a purported cause for both politically violent action and the support or tolerance of such behaviors. A cursory reading of current events seems to give credence to each competing claim. What role, if any, do these factors play in determining political goal choice, regime type preference, and views on political violence? Moreover, what about geographic setting?[58] Again, there is a debate about whether rural individuals or urbanites are more likely to support violence (Johnson and Monkkonen, 1996). In the American context, the stereotypical expectation is that rural dwellers are

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because of the extant political climate) is given some credence. There does appear to be an emerging generational cleavage among the active resistance in Chechnya and this is reflected in attitudes among displaced Chechens. In terms of theory and policy, more work needs to be done to better understand this phenomenon, but for now it is clear that what is happening in Chechnya and among displaced Chechens can help us better understand other protracted insurgencies.

[58] Urban versus rural dwelling is based on previous occupancy. Displaced Chechens were asked where they came from back in Chechnya.

more at home with guns and hunting and therefore have a culture acceptant of violence (Cohen and Nisbett, 1996). To bolster this assertion, advocates of this approach point to the higher recruitment rate for rural men in the United States Armed Services (Cohen and Nisbett, 1996; Kleykamp, 2006). Challenging this point, critics say rural dwellers are more religious and, in fact, it is the urban environment which destroys the social fabric of community and influences any number of criminal and deviant behaviors (see Anderson, 1999). These socio-economic debates are well beyond the scope of the dissertation. However, in the course of my fieldwork I was attentive to home-state geographic setting as a potential factor.

Level of Education	Supports All Acts of Political Violence	Rejects All Acts of Political Violence	Supports Some Acts of Political Violence	No Response
Males				
University	30.8%	19.2%	50.0%	0.0%
High School	29.0%	11.0%	49.0%	11.0%

Table 5.7A: Level of Education, Gender, and Attitudes towards Political Violence – Males

Level of Education	Supports All Acts of Political Violence	Rejects All Acts of Political Violence	Supports Some Acts of Political Violence	No Response
Females				
University	16.7%	83.3%	0.0%	0.0%
High School	1.5%	42.0%	36.2%	20.3%

Table 5.7B: Level of Education, Gender, and Attitudes towards Political Violence – Females

Living Locale	Supports All Acts of Political Violence	Rejects All Acts of Political Violence	Supports Some Acts of Political Violence	No Response
Males				
Urban	30.1%	12.6%	46.2%	11.2%
Rural	27.7%	10.8%	54.2%	7.2%

Table 5.8A: Living Locale, Gender, and Attitudes towards Political Violence – Males

Living Locale	Supports All Acts of Political Violence	Rejects All Acts of Political Violence	Supports Some Acts of Political Violence	No Response
Females				
Urban	2.4%	34.2%	31.7%	31.7%
Rural	2.9%	58.8%	35.3%	2.9%

Table 5.8B: Living Locale, Gender, and Attitudes towards Political Violence – Females

Living Locale	Russia	Autonomy	Independence	Caucasus Emirate
Males				
Urban	0.7%	3.%	72.7%	23.1%
Rural	0.0%	13.3%	57.8%	28.9%

Table 5.9A: Living Locale, Gender, and Political Goals – Males

Living Locale	Russia	Autonomy	Independence	Caucasus Emirate
Females				
Urban	0.0%	31.7%	63.4%	4.9%
Rural	0.0%	47.1%	47.1%	5.9%

Table 5.9B: Living Locale, Gender, and Political Goals – Females

Level of Education	Russia	Autonomy	Independence	Caucasus Emirate
Males				
University	0.0%	19.2%	53.9%	26.9%
High School	0.5%	5.5%	69.0%	25.0%

Table 5.10A: Level of Education, Gender, and Political Goals – Males

Level of Education	Russia	Autonomy	Independence	Caucasus Emirate
Females				
University	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%
High School	0.0%	42.0%	52.2%	5.8%

Table 5.10B: Level of Education, Gender, and Political Goals – Females

Level of Education	Democracy	Sharia
Males		
University	42.3%	57.7%
High School	44.0%	56.0%

Table 5.11A: Level of Education, Gender, and Regime Type – Males

Level of Education	Democracy	Sharia
Females		
University	83.3%	16.7%
High School	71.0%	29.0%

Table 5.11B: Level of Education, Gender, and Regime Type – Females

Living Locale	Democracy	Sharia
Males		
Urban	45.4%	54.6%
Rural	41.0%	59.0%

Table 5.12A: Living Locale, Gender, and Regime Type – Males

Living Locale	Democracy	Sharia
Females		
Urban	68.3%	31.7%
Rural	76.5%	23.5%

Table 5.12B: Living Locale, Gender, and Regime Type – Females

In regard to views on violence, it appears that neither Level of Education nor Living Locale plays a significant role in generating attitudes supporting political violence. Views on violence between levels of education among males are closely matched. Among females, university educated females are more likely to support all acts of political violence (16.7%) than high school educated females (1.5%). Yet, the rest of university educated women, an overwhelming 83.3%, also reject all acts of political violence. Among high school educated women, 42.0% reject all acts of political violence while 36.2% supports some acts of political violence, mostly in favor of *Nord-Ost (*21.7%).

What explains this relative support for all acts of political violence, on the one hand, and extremely high rejection of political violence on the other? Although more research needs to be done, I believe a potential answer to this question can also be found in personal experiences. Most university educated women came from

the cities and urban centers. These were the places hardest hit by the Russian forces. Many such women were forced to endure countless hours of bombardments huddled in dank cellars. These women were also more likely to be isolated from their extended kin network, increasing feelings of isolation and desperation. As a result, it is plausible to expect those witnessing the true horror of war would be less likely to support violent means to achieve political ends. Conversely, it is also plausible to expect that a small percent of women experiencing such hardships may come to harbor extreme hatred and anger towards the perpetrators and, as such, support political violence as either a way to exact revenge for past suffering or as the only alternative to stop the continued suffering.

The final interesting point is that among both males and females, no university educated individual was reluctant to share views on political violence (all Non-Responses came from high school educated respondents). Given that all but one Non-Response came from displaced Chechens in Georgia, we can glean important insights into the composition of the Chechen refugee community in Tbilisi and Pankisi Gorge.

In regard to political goals, Table 5.10A and Table 5.10B show the difference in the support for political goals among university educated males. Among this group, university educated men are more likely to support Autonomy (19.2%) than high school educated males (5.5%), while females with a university education overwhelmingly rejected Autonomy in favor of Independence (100.0%). Conversely, 42.0% of high school educated females supported Autonomy.

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In regard to regime type preferences, males from both groups are, in general, more likely to support sharia (57.7% for university educated and 56.0% for high school educated males, respectively). Both university and high school educated women are more likely to reject sharia (83.3% and 71.0%, respectively). High school educated females, however, are more likely to support sharia (29.0%). This number probably represents the youngest and oldest generation of women who were either too old or too young to benefit from Soviet gender equality.

Table 5.8A and Table 5.8B show that geographic setting does not seem to play a significant role in driving either support or rejection of political violence. For that matter, geographic setting does not seem to play a role in regime type preferences (see Table 5.12A and Table 5.12B). Yet, as briefly discussed previously, there are differences related to political goals. Table 5.9A and Table 5.9B reveal that in particular, the support for Independence and a Caucasus Emirate are similar, while views differ on moderate political goals like Autonomy. Rural males are more likely to support Autonomy (13.3%) than urban males (3.5%). Rural females exhibit the same pattern, thus making rural dwellers more likely overall (23.1%) to support moderate goals than urbanities (9.8%).

What explains this finding? I offer that such a difference can also be explained by personal experience during the Russo-Chechen Wars. Much like the previous discussion of university students, the war was felt most in the cities and urban centers. It is entirely plausible to suspect that individuals who suffered inordinate hardships at the hands of Russian forces would be enthusiastic about

remaining in Russian. Perhaps these individuals, those who lost their entire homes, property, livelihoods, and often relatives would be willing to support a political that could be viewed as making such losses been in vain. Finally, rural dwellers are usually, by necessity, more independent and less reliant on the state for subsidies and commodities. Perhaps these individuals view Autonomy as less threatening to their usual living routines. Again, much more work must be done to better understand the nature of these relationships. As discussed in previous chapters, at this point micro-comparative studies of political violence are still in the world of hypothesis-generating. As such, I contend the field has a number of new avenues to explore and further flesh out and test relationships in the quest to develop new theories.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have explored the various aspects of gender among Chechen refugees. It has been noted that in a number of ways the two post-Soviet Russo-Chechen Wars have made Chechen women more independent and self-reliant. This is especially true for Chechen women in the refugee communities scattered across the Caucasus and Europe. However, in both environments Chechen women's newfound freedom and responsibility has been met with hostility and derision by Chechen males. It is not clear what the long-term implications of contested gender will have for Chechens. On the one hand, Chechen women have a voice and many are not afraid to use it to articulate conflicting viewpoints from their husbands,

fathers, and brothers. It has been argued that empowering women in post-conflict zones can help establish a more robust peace. Will this be the case for the Chechens? In Chechnya today, Kadyrov has sought to quell women's rights and placate the men by establishing his vision of traditional Chechen culture and values, most of which rely heavily on reference to Islam. However, there is no such counter-force in the refugee communities. It is now evident that a significant majority of Chechen men strongly desire a change back to traditional patriarchal norms. "They have decided to take revenge...demanding a return to centuries old traditions," claimed the recently murdered human-rights activist, Natasha Estimirova in 2007 (Murphy, 2010:270). How this battle of genders will play out remains to be seen.

The role of gender in both generating violence and attitudes supporting violence remains understudied, particularly in refugee communities. As discussed in Chapter 2, refugees are often the victims of violence, but many often commit future acts of violence against the sending state. Again to paraphrase Tilly, war often makes the refugee and the refugee often makes war. Community support is integral for maintaining insurgencies and more work needs to be done to better understand the conditions under which political violence is accepted as legitimate. This dissertation gives us a window into contemporary Chechen refugee attitudes towards political violence and helps us better understand the factors which influence these sentiments.

In the next chapter, I explore the relative influence of the so-called "country effects". Country effects are the general term used for the expected state of

displaced peoples. In this chapter, I provide a brief history of the Chechen refugee populations in The Republic of Georgia, Azerbaijan, Poland, and Belgium. The theoretical expectation is that refugees who live in the most squalid of refugee communities, those which have the least hope, will be more likely to produce more extreme views on political violence. I then discuss daily life and living conditions and discuss the challenges and problems refugees endure.

Chapter 6: Country Effects

An insurgency often creates many groups of internally displaced persons and refugees on short notice. . . . Nongovernmental organizations and other civilian agencies normally furnish this support to internally displaced persons and refugees. However, conditions may prevent these agencies from providing these services quickly. Furthermore, in [counterinsurgency] operations, internally displaced person and refugee security may take on heightened military importance. Traumatized and dislocated persons may become vulnerable to insurgent threats and recruitment.
The U.S. Army and Marine Corps, *The U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual*

The expectation is that external conditions influence attitudes on political violence (Adelman, 1998:2; Zolberg, Suhrke and Aguayo, 1992:277). In refugee camps and communities, it is believed that the most salient grievances are those that arise from experience in the communities themselves (Lischer, 2006:18-30; Stedman and Turner, 2003:). In communities where refugees perceive their conditions to be particularly squalid or comparatively worse than other communities, the expectation is that we will observe a higher proportion of individuals who view political violence as acceptable (Lischer, 2006:18-30; Stedman and Turner, 2003:179-190; Zolberg, Suhrke and Aguayo, 1992). . Proximity also matters (Salehyan and Gleditch, 2006:335-344; Salehyan, 2007:791). Refugee communities closest to the conflict are thought to be the most squalid and the most vulnerable to militarization and the creation of refugee-warrior communities (Lischer, 2006:38-40). It is presumed that militants will seek to exploit these grievances as recruitment tools to bolster their own ranks. Militants will also use these proximate communities for sanctuary and to re-supply (Adelman, 1998:2; Zolberg, Suhrke and Aguayo, 1992:277). The nature and actions of the host-state

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also matter. Host-states can have a significant influence on refugee communities within their borders (Lischer, 2006:18-30). All of this, as discussed in Chapter 2 increases the likelihood that new wars will erupt, increasingly regional insecurity. What are we to make of these assumptions? Does the location and/or the condition of the refugee community matter in generating attitudes supporting political violence? Does location play a role influencing the choice of political goals or regime type preferences? This chapter explores these suppositions.

In this chapter, I explore the relative influence of the so-called "country effects". Country effects are the general term used for the expected state of displaced peoples. In this chapter, I provide a description of the Chechen refugee populations in The Republic of Georgia, Azerbaijan, Poland, and Belgium, exploring their living conditions, primary concerns, political desires, and attitudes towards political violence. The theoretical expectation is that refugees who live in the most squalid of refugee communities, those which have the least hope, and those that feel the most desperate or isolated will be more likely to express support for political violence. I then discuss daily life and living conditions and discuss the challenges and problems refugees endure.

CASE SELECTION

In making my case selections, I was attentive to proximity, host-state politics and religion, and host-state history. The research design planned to use each country as a unique laboratory to explore how various factors might play a role in

influencing attitudes towards political violence. To ensure the viability of my work, I conducted pre-fieldwork research trips to each country and made critical contacts in each respective Chechen refugee community.

The Republic of Georgia is the only country that shares a border with Chechnya. It is a highly nationalist, Christian country and was a part of the former Soviet Union. Relations with Russia today remain acrimonious. The displaced Chechen community in Georgia resides mostly in the infamous Pankisi Gorge, although a smaller number live in Tbilisi.

Living conditions for Chechen refugees in Georgia are, for the most part, deplorable, especially for those living in Pankisi Gorge. The inhabitants in Pankisi live in one of six small villages. Most local inhabitants are subsistence farmers, a formidable enterprise in the tough terrain, or sheep and cattle shepherds. Electricity in the gorge is rare and most live in small, dilapidated houses or shacks. Pankisi was already an economically depressed region before the first waves of Chechen refugees entered the gorge in 1999. In the span of six months the population of Pankisi had swelled by 90,000 to 100,000 people. The local inhabitants, known as Kists, (ethnic cousins of the Chechens) were initially hospitable to their northern brethren. Over time, tensions rose, however. A number of Chechen militants sought refuge in Pankisi and the presence of extern armed factions displeased the local criminal elements who worried their smuggling operations would be disrupted. The criminal elements never enjoyed wide support from the Kist community and, as an act of thanks, several Chechen militants targeted

the criminal groups, leading to several high profile gun battles in the gorge. The good will these efforts engendered was short-lived, however. The Chechens began to resent the Kists for posing as Chechens to garner NGO and humanitarian aid supplies and the Kists began to resent what was increasingly becoming a permanent Chechen settlement. Tensions were further strained after the terrorist attacks on America on September 11, 2001 when the United States sent Special Forces and Marines to Pankisi to train local units and search for purported Al Qaeda members.

Displaced Chechens in Tbilisi often live better lives. A small number are former political and business elites. These individuals live in large, spacious flats with their extended families. A number have opened businesses, like internet cafes, and operate import-export transactions from contacts in Turkey. These families often send one or two children to the local universities, but younger children have little opportunity to attend secondary school. Other refuges in Tbilisi are less fortunate. A sizable number of Chechen refugees live in crowed shacks in the slums on the outskirts of town. These shacks are built closely together and joined by thick mud paths. Here, when possible, electricity is stolen from municipal generators.

For all Chechens employment is a challenge. They are not technically able to work because of their legal status, so many seek illegal employment, usually in construction. This becomes a point of contention when employers refuse to pay Chechen laborers after a job is completed. The same outcome occurs in Azerbaijan and Poland, where work is also scarce. Finally, a number of refugees, especially those in Pankisi suffer a range of acute health problems. Tuberculosis, kidney and

stomach ailments, skin rashes, and lice are all common afflictions. A number also have war wounds. When active militants are wounded in Chechnya they are usually brought back to Tbilisi for medical treatment. The seriously wounded are taken to sympathetic doctors in Istanbul.

Azerbaijan, is also a former Soviet Republic and proximate to the conflict. Azerbaijan is a Muslim country with great oil wealth, but also significant poverty. The Azeri government maintains close ties to the Kremlin and this relationship has caused a number of problems for the Chechen refugees in Baku, most of who exist in abject poverty and squalor and face continuous security threats, such as renditions and kidnappings, from the Russians. The overwhelming majority of Chechen refugees in Baku live in truly abject poverty. They have no access to employment, education, or health care. Like those in Georgia, they suffer from a range of chronic illnesses and war-wounds, all of which are further exacerbated by the low standards of living. Malnutrition and anemia are constant problems. These problems are made worse by the recent decision by NGOs to stop aid. As a result, a number of Chechens in Baku have had to move in together into already small dwellings. These shacks are also in the slums and ghettos on the outskirts of Baku and one readily finds raw sewage flowing along the narrow paths. The refugees have petitioned to construct tent-cities but have been denied. For many the only option is to return home, where many have been killed or simply disappeared. Of course, at noted previously, one need not return home to suffer such a fate. There have been a number of renditions of Chechen refugees from both Azerbaijan and Georgia. In

these operations men are taken off the street and not seen for months until their remains, bearing signs of extensive torture, are found back in Chechnya.

Poland was a part of the Soviet sphere, but maintained its distinct culture throughout the Cold War. Like Georgia, it too is a predominantly Christian country with less than cordial relations with Russia. Poland is, for many Chechen refugees escaping along the northern route from Chechnya, the first stop. Many Chechens arrive illegally, smuggled through the Ukrainian forests. For all Chechens, life can be difficult. They are consigned to old Soviet Army barracks or military bases. The conditions are cramped and crowded. Chechen families are usually assigned to one room and must use communal kitchens and bathrooms, the latter causing considerable consternation among the Chechen people. Health problems are less severe but employment remains a constant worry. The refugees in Poland recognize that their life is better than it would be in either Georgia or Azerbaijan, but a number still try to make their way further west where they believe living conditions and opportunities will improve.

In Belgium, refugees live in a comparative paradise. Belgium is a non-Muslim country with a rich mix of ethnic groups. Belgium is the only country in this dissertation that was not a part of either the Soviet Union or Warsaw Pact. Firmly located in the "first world" Belgium has prospered economically. Chechen refugees in Belgium are scattered across the state in a dozen or more cities and small villages. The Belgium government provides language and occupational training, a living stipend, and free flats. The Chechen refugees in Belgium are well dressed and seem

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to have none of the health problems plaguing their brethren elsewhere. All refugees have access to employment and educational opportunities and many live in modest, comfortable flats; a sizeable number own personal automobiles. In general, they claim good relations with the locals although violence has been documented between Chechens and refugees from North Africa, particularly Morocco, over perceived slights in public.

YOUTH IN EXILE

Much is written about the role of young, alienated Muslims in Europe and the Caucasus (Kepel, 2004; Roy, 2004). This former group, above all, is seen as being especially vulnerable to transnational Islamic appeals (Wiktorowicz,, 2005). In conducting this dissertation fieldwork, I spent considerable time with young Chechen males, usually aged 18 to 34. These young men had the latest cell-phones and appeared to be highly computer literate. The Chechens used computers to keep in contact with friends and relatives on-line and, like most young men, tried to attract the attention of young women, although Chechen women were always treated with respect. They spend much of their free time, like most unemployed young men, hanging out or engaged in athletic activities, particularly martial sports like boxing, wrestling, judo, karate, kick-boxing, and the new mixed-martial arts. I spent countless hours sparring with various individuals or watching internet videos. These young men especially enjoyed watching war footage from Chechnya as well as internet clips from Iraq and Afghanistan. The footage from the latter was usually

gleaned from Islamic and jihadist websites, which many young men frequently

visited.

Country	Security	Economic	Education	Health	Rights
Georgia	73.3%	19.7%	4.2%	0.0%	2.8%
Azerbaijan	39.5%	43.7%	7.0%	9.9%	0.0%
Poland	0.0%	98.0%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Belgium	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Table 6.1:   Primary Concerns by Country

In the second part of my structured interviews, I asked respondents about

their living conditions. Table 6.1 reveals what displaced Chechens in each country

location felt was the most pressing problem or concern. In Georgia, the

predominant concern is security; 73.3% expressed this as the most significant

challenge they faced. As stated previously, this is understandable given the

proximity of Georgia, especially Pankisi Gorge, to Chechnya and the conflict. There

is evidence that active Chechen militants still operate from Pankisi, using it as a

temporary sanctuary to rest and resupply. The Russians have also bombed Pankisi

Gorge in purported retaliation to cross-border militant attacks. I have contended

that this unique situation explains the disproportionately high levels of Non-

Response to questions about political violence from Chechen refugees in Georgia

(See Chapter 2 and Chapter 4 for more detail). For displaced Chechens in

Azerbaijan, approximately 40.0% worry most about security. This is most likely due

to the shared fear both communities have about renditions back to Chechnya.

The most pressing concern for refugees in Azerbaijan and Poland (43.7% and 98.0%, respectively) is the economic situation. This is the second concern of Chechens in Georgia with 19.7% of all respondents claimed that the inability to secure steady employment and afford essential goods was the most serious problem they faced. Lesser concerns expressed by displaced Chechens in Georgia include lack of education (4.2%) and lack of human rights (2.8%), while displaced Chechens in Azerbaijan are also concerned about the lack of educational opportunities (7.0%) and health and health care (9.9%). Finally, it is interesting to note that displaced Chechens in Belgium express no such worries or concerns. When asked, Chechen refugees in Belgium consistently and uniformly reported no pressing concern or worry. Respondents are satisfied with educational and occupational opportunities and access to health care. The structured-interview data highlight these concerns. Here are samples of Chechen reactions to the issues they perceive as being their most pressing concerns.

PRESSING CONCERNS

Security
56 year old Male truck driver from Grozny (Georgia)
Here we must be very careful. There are Russian spies everywhere. They steal our young men right off the street and kill them. I am old now and not afraid. I left all my fear back in Chechnya.

25 year old Male (unemployed) from Grozny (Azerbaijan)
The situation is very bad here. I am afraid to walk down the street. I have lived through many terrible things. I do not want to end up on the side of a road in some Chechen field.

Economic

56 year old Male university student from Grozny (Azerbaijan)

We have no jobs, no way to survive. How can you tell a man he cannot work but you give him no food for his family? Are we animals? No, even animals are treated better than we are. Here they want us to wait to die like chickens.

Health

40 year old Female housewife from Grozny (Azerbaijan)

I am sick and need an operation, but I cannot afford it. My son, he was wounded in Chechnya and now has tuberculosis. What are we to do? No one cares about us. We are waiting to die, simple as that.

Human Rights

50 year old Male poet from Grozny (Georgia)

This is all a game of chess and the Chechen people are the pawns. We live in a civilized world, and we must above all be treated as human beings with respect and dignity. Without such things, we are just killing one another. But there are no rights here for the Chechens. It must start with this, with the respect of us as fellow human beings.

Education:

38 year old Female housewife from Grozny (Azerbaijan)

There are no opportunities for my children to go to school. They are not allowed into the public schools, and who has money for private schools? I do not have enough money to pay my rent or buy food. And my children do not speak Azeri. What are we supposed to do?

43 year old Female university professor from Grozny (Georgia)

My daughters have never been to school because of the war. I have tried to teach them the best that I can but even I do not speak Georgian and they must know it to attend school. Even the entrance exams for the university are in Georgian. There is no hope for them.

CULTURAL LOSS AND LOCAL INTERACTIONS

Country	Losing Culture/Traditions	Not Losing Culture/Traditions	Harassed by Locals	Harassed by Authorities
Georgia	15.5%	84.5%	7.0%	53.5%
Azerbaijan	2.8%	97.4%	2.9%	97.9%
Poland	51.0%	49.0%	93.0%	65.0%
Belgium	84.7%	15.3%	0.0%	25.0%

Table 6.2:   Everyday Life – Cultural Loss and Local Interactions by Country

In addition to trying to ascertain the most salient concerns and problems of displaced Chechens, in the second part of my structured interviews I also asked about the daily lives of refugees. In particular, I was attentive to a series of interactions with the local, host-state population. I asked a series of questions about whether the respondent had been harassed by a local or by an authority figure. I asked about perceptions on culture and tradition, specially asking Chechen refugees to evaluate whether they believed their traditions and values, their culture, was being lost as a result of their forced displacement.

Table 6.2 shows that the vast majority of Chechen refugees in Georgia (84.5%) do not believe their culture is under threat or that they are losing their traditions. This is not unexpected given that most displaced Chechens live in the Pankisi Gorge, surrounded by co-ethnics and living in places not markedly different from their previous homes in Chechnya. The Kists speak a dialect of Chechen, eat the same foods, and share a number of cultural traditions, thus social isolation remains low.

Chechen refugees in Azerbaijan also feel secure in maintaining their culture and traditions. 97.4% of displaced Chechens in Azerbaijan reject the claim that they are losing their traditions; only 2.8% believe this to be true. The Chechen people are Muslims and Azerbaijan is the only predominately Muslim country in my research study. A number of Chechens claimed that, despite their deplorable living conditions, they feel some peace and solace for living among fellow Muslims. Many claimed a sort of kinship bond between the two peoples, pointing out that dietary considerations were the same as were opportunities to pray or wear Islamic dress. I believe an additional factor can be found in the maintenance of Chechen community in Baku. The Chechens tend to live close to one another and congregate at one of two local Chechen community centers. One center, previously operated by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), provided language (English, Russian, and Chechen) and technical skills, such as computer and cell phone repair, along with history, literature, and poetry classes. Many refugees sent their children to the NRC center and spent much of the day there themselves. Another center funded by Arab countries teaches religious instruction. The more radical Chechen refugees in Azerbaijan tended to congregate at this latter center. In all instances, the displaced Chechen refugee community remains close, and in doing so, constantly reinforces their traditions.

Azerbaijan and Georgia are comparatively close to Chechnya. As refugees move farther away we observe higher rates of cultural and traditional loss. In Poland, 51.0% of the refugee community feels their way of life is being lost. In

Belgium, the location farthest from Chechnya an overwhelming 84.7% feel they are becoming assimilated into the host country culture. This is not surprising given the marked difference between life in Brussels or Antwerp and Grozny or Itum-Kale, a small village in southern Chechnya. Displaced Chechen parents in Belgium lamented especially the assimilation of their children, noting they no longer adhered to even the most basic of Chechen norms. As noted in Chapter 3, I have made the case that the displaced Chechen communities in many places, including in countries not included in this dissertation, are shifting away from being refugees, a term which denotes temporary status, and evolving into the more permanent presence of a diaspora community. All migrants face the struggle and pull between assimilation into their new societies and maintenance of traditional norms and cultures. It is not yet clear whether this trend will continue among displaced Chechens.

To gauge Chechen relations with the host-state I asked questions about whether the respondent had been harassed by either a local or by an authority. In most cases harassment by locals was low. There were no reports from Belgium, in Georgia 7.0% claimed to have suffered harassment by a local citizen, and in Azerbaijan only 2.9% acknowledged such behavior. In Poland, however, a considerable number, 93.0% claimed to have been harassed by the local Polish people. In almost all instances, the harassment in Poland was reported by displaced Chechen women. The vast majority claimed that this usually occurred in stores or shopping centers where local merchants or their hired security continuously viewed the Chechens as potential thieves, even small children. I observed this harassment

on a number of occasions. It happens with such frequency that it is simply part of the daily routine for most Chechen refugees.

Chapter 5 considered the role of gender in influencing attitudes towards political violence, political goals, and regime type preferences. Gender also plays a role in harassment. Displaced females are more likely to be harassed by average local citizens, while displaced males are more likely to be harassed by the local authorities. Among the displaced males by country, 53.5% in Georgia, 97.9% in Azerbaijan, 65.0% in Poland, and 25.0% in Belgium claim to have been harassed by local authorities. I observed and experienced this personally in each country visited during my fieldwork. In Georgia, the harassment is more brutal in Pankisi. According to several human rights organizations, Georgian Special Forces patrolling the gorge seem to view harassing the Chechen males as a way to alleviate boredom. Often, for no apparent reason, Chechen males are forced to lie in the mud or snow for a prolonged period of time at the point of an AK-47. They are occasionally beaten, sometimes severely. These instances spiraled so far out of control in 2006 that one young Chechen man threw several hand grenades at a passing police patrol, sparking a prolonged fire-fight.

In Tbilisi, Azerbaijan, and Poland local authorities frequently harass Chechen males as a way to solicit bribes. Several Chechens spoke of instances when local authorities tried to plant evidence, such as narcotics, as a way to solicit higher bribe fees. These encounters are usually done under the guise of the ubiquitous document checks that most Chechen males endure on a daily basis.   In Belgium

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document checks also occur, but no Chechen mentioned attempted bribery. In most cases Belgium authorities were looking for illegal migrants or criminals.

Here are a sample of Chechen reactions to the perceived loss of culture and traditions and their experience with local harassment.

Loss of Culture and Traditions
48 year old Male former Rebel Commander from Grozny (Georgia)
Here it is very easy to keep our old ways. We live the same, eat the same dzdzgullnash (Chechnya's national dish of boiled lamb and garlic in rendered fat), we pray the same. Our children are respectful of the elders, as they should be. We speak our language with our neighbors (Kists). This part of life is good.

56 year old Male oil industry worker from Grozny (Belgium)
He who forgets his traditions forgets his ancestors and he who forgets his ancestors forgets himself. The Chechen people in Belgium are forgetting themselves. My father gave me our tradition like it was, like he received from his father. It is my duty to give it to my son, also unchanged. Now we must physically stand against Russia and also stand in our traditions. We will always say we are Chechens and we will always stick together.

34 year old Female teacher from Bamut (Poland)
In my family we try very hard to eat the same meals, wear the same clothes, and keep our traditions, but there are many here who act like the Poles. They dress like Poles and eat Polish food. They smoke and drink. What lesson is this for their children? We have lost everything. We cannot lose our ways as well.

55 year old Female housewife from Cheri-Yurt (Azerbaijan)
We Chechens are like wild garlic. No matter where you put us we still stink.

38 year old Female housewife from Bamut (Belgium)
It is very hard to maintain our traditions here. The children are not respecting their elders. They do not want to even speak Chechen. Here we are unable to have proper wedding ceremonies or funerals. It is very sad to lose everything and to lose ourselves.

Harassment by Locals

26 year old Male university student from Grozny (Belgium)
The police harass us all the time. They try to check our papers. The real reason is that the police understand that we have special characteristics like fighting and they do not like that. They do not let us fight with one another [sparring in public].

44 year old Female housewife from Bamut (Poland)
We are always harassed and bothered in the supermarket. They recognize us immediately, and they make the security guards follow me. One time my children had a small celebration at school, and on the way home, I stopped in the store. It was the winter and very cold outside. The security guard asked me why I brought my children inside with me. I told him because of the weather. He demanded that I leave my children in the cold and I refused. I had to pay and leave. He followed me the whole time, and even then he looked through all my bags and belongings. They even checked my children's bags. Of course, they found nothing and they did not even apologize. I have seen many things in this life and had many experiences, but I could not understand this behavior towards the children. I cried the whole way home, and I still want to make that man [security guard] pay [for his actions].

55 year old Male farmer from Cheri-Yurt (Azerbaijan)
Here the police are always looking for money. What money? I am a refugee. I have no money. For the young boys, it is a big problem. The police will put drugs in their pockets and threaten to arrest them without a fee. The police are the real criminals.

47 year old Male oil industry worker from Grozny (Georgia)
The police are much worse in Pankisi. Here it just little things, but in the mountains they mean business. You can have serious problems up there. They like to wave their automatics and show how tough they are but really, they are cowards. I saw how they fought in Abkhazia. They are no soldiers.

23 year old Female teacher from Khasavyurt (Poland)
The people here watch us like we are from another planet. They do not like the scarves on my head and because we always wear scarves they at once recognize us and dislike us.

CHECHEN REFUGEE COMMUNITIES AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS POLITICAL VIOLENCE, POLITICAL GOALS, AND REGIME TYPE PREFERENCES

My structured interviews used both open and closed ended questions and were broken down into three sections. Each respondent was asked the same questions in the same order. In the first section, I asked basic demographic and personal information: date of birth; previous residency; previous occupation; levels of education; personal loss, status as a fighter or veteran, history of torture or personal injury, etc. In the second part of the interview I asked a series of questions about life as a Chechen refugee and about the challenges of maintaining Chechen culture during displacement, especially into presumably alien host countries and cultures. I asked about their most pressing problems, about expectations and relative deprivation, about whether they were harassed by either the locals or local authorities, and about their general views and attitudes about life and family, religion and politics. In the final section, I asked questions specifically pertaining to politics and political life. I asked about what Chechnya should be politically: a part of Russia; a part of Russia, but Autonomous, like the republic of Tatarstan; Independent; or part of a Caucasus Emirate. This latter political entity would be an Islamic state composed of Ingushetia, Dagestan, parts of northern Georgia and Azerbaijan with Chechnya at the political and administrative apex. I then asked which form of governing institution was best for Chechnya. Finally, the last four questions asked about the legitimacy of four concrete acts of political violence, two directed at civilians and two directed at representatives of the state: the 2002

hostage taking at the Dubrovka Theater in Moscow, the 2004 Beslan school tragedy, and the attacks on military and police personnel in Nazran in 2004 and Nalchik in 2005. Each of these events occurred after the respondent had settled into a refugee community.

In Georgia, there are anywhere from 500 to 2,000 Chechen refugees (this population has decreased from a high of approximately 10,000 in 1999). In Azerbaijan, the refugee community ranges from approximately 1,000 to 3,000. In Poland there are between 1,000 and 3,000, and in Belgium there are approximately 1,500.[59]

I interviewed a total of 301 Chechen refugees. Disaggregated by country, I conducted 71 interviews in Georgia, 71 in Azerbaijan, 100 in Poland, and 59 in Belgium.[60] 75% (226) were males and 25% (75) were females. 61% (184) came from rural areas, while 38.8 % (117) came from the urban centers and cities. Most had only secondary education 89.3% (269) with just 10.6% (32) reporting to have completed university or technical school. 15 were tortured, 6 were amputees. 77.7% (234) were self-declared civilians and 21.9% (66) self-declared former-fighters or veterans.[61] 4.3% (13) were verified political or economic elites.

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[59] Author's confidential interviews with United Nations High Commission on Refugees officials, various human rights groups, non-governmental organizations, and intergovernmental agencies.

[60] These numbers represent the total number of refugees I could interview in the time allocated in each site.

[61] These numbers are not accurate representations of the number of former fighters in the various refugee communities. Given the security concerns, a number of individuals who I was later told had indeed fought still identified themselves as civilians caught up in the war. These numbers represent those who actually admitted to being a former fighter.

In the following tables, Chechen refugee respondents who believed that each of the four concrete acts (the 2002 attack on Moscow's Dubrovka Theater during a performance of, Nord-Ost; the 2004 attack on School #1 in Beslan, North Ossetia; the 2004 attack on military and police personnel in Nalchik, Kabardino-Balkaria; and the attack on military and police personnel in Nazran, Ingushetia) was legitimate are grouped under, *Supports All Acts of Political Violence.* Respondents who rejected all four acts are grouped under, *Rejects All Acts of Political Violence.* Respondents who fell in-between the two extremes, *Sup ports Some Acts of Political Violence*, answered one of three ways: 1) *Supports All Acts of Political Violence Not Targeting Civilians* (Nalchik and Nazran); 2) *Supports All Acts of Political Violence Except Beslan*; or 3) *Rejects All Acts of Political Violence Except* Nord-Ost.

Country	Supports All Acts of Political Violence	Rejects All Acts of Political Violence	Supports Some Acts of Political Violence	No Response
Georgia (70)	7.1%	17.1%	25.7%	50.0%
Azerbaijan (71)	60.6%	4.2%	35.2%	0.0%
Poland (100)	10.0%	45.0%	45.0%	0.0%
Belgium (59)	36.0%	15.0%	47.4%	1.6%

Table 6.3:   Attitudes towards Political Violence by Country

Table 6.3 presents attitudes towards political violence by country. As discussed previously, 50.0% of respondents in Georgia refused to answer questions about political violence. This non-response was given in spite of freely speaking about all other issues including political goals and regime type preferences. Accordingly, it is impossible to know whether these individuals do support political

violence and, if so, to what degree. As noted earlier, however, the fact that males aged 18 to 24 were the group most likely to not answer questions about political violence it is plausible to infer that they, like most other Chechen males, do indeed support at least some acts of political violence. If so, this would tell a very different story about the levels of support in Georgia and about the role of proximity in generating pro-violence attitudes. As reported, only 7.1% of displaced Chechens in Georgia support all acts of political violence, while 17.1% reject all acts. Refugees in Azerbaijan express the highest level of support for all acts. 60.6% of displaced Chechens in Azerbaijan believe that each attack was legitimate. Moreover, 95.8% of this population supports at least some violence, thus making the Chechen refugee community in Azerbaijan the most pro-violent of any other location. In Poland, support for all acts is remarkably low; only 10.0% reported full support for all the attacks. A significant number, 45.0% reject all acts of political violence although an equal number supports some acts, mostly *Nord-Ost.* Finally, in Belgium, 36.0% of all respondents express support for all acts of political violence with only 15.0% rejecting all the attacks. 47.4% of displaced Chechens in Belgium support some acts of political violence.

It appears that the anticipated "U-shaped" distribution in support for political violence has some validity. This idea posited that the closer one is to conflict the higher the subsequent levels of support for violence. Conversely, the farther one goes away from the conflict the higher the levels of support for violence will be as well. The logic is based on the expected costs and consequences of supporting or

rejecting violence. In locations proximate to the conflict the cost of support might be high; however, the conditions might make such support natural. In contrast, the farther away one moves from the actual conflict the lower the perceived costs of supporting violence. The expectation comes from the example of the so-called Boston Irish who, perceiving no cost to publically supporting IRA actions against the British, did so in greater numbers. Another potential factor may be the role that proximity plays in engendering feeling of isolation among displaced Chechens. As noted above in Table 6.2, a significant number of Chechen refugees in Belgium feel their traditions and culture are slipping away as they, as a community, fear becoming increasingly assimilated. These perceptions may lead to higher support for political violence as a way to re-connect with the community.[62] The feeling may well be that through the support of political violence they again become an active and vital part of the broader Chechen nation and share in its struggles and burdens. This might explain why the foiled 2010 terrorist plot against Western and Russian targets took place in Belgium. At the time of the arrests, this group was also recruiting displaced Chechens to return to the homeland and fight. Clearly, Chechen refugees in Belgium, more than any other refugee community in this dissertation, desire to play a greater active role in the Chechen struggle. Finally, the comparatively better living conditions experienced by the Chechen refugees in Belgium might lead this community feel a sense of collective guilt, thus providing yet another motivation for supporting violence.

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[62] On the role of assimilation and violence, see Conversi, 1999.

It is important again to stress that as a micro-comparative study of political violence, this dissertation attempts to reveal and discover causal relationships. This process of hypothesis-generation can be later used to test and develop new theories. At this point, we observe significant variation between different refugee communities in their attitudes towards political violence, and there are several plausible explanations for this variation. This dissertation is a first cut at establishing a better understanding of the factors influencing such attitudinal outcomes is necessary for sound policy formation and theory building.

Country	Russia	Autonomy	Independence	Caucasus Emirate
Georgia	0.0%	1.0%	95.7%	1.0%
Azerbaijan	0.0%	0.0%	47.8%	52.1%
Poland	1.0%	37.0%	50.0%	13.0%
Belgium	0.0%	11.9%	71.9%	16.8%

Table 6.4:   Attitudes towards Political Goals by Country

Table 6.4 shows the choice of political goals among the respective Chechen refugee communities by country. Overall, there is scant support for remaining an integral part of Russia. In Belgium, support for Autonomy is 11.9%. Support for Autonomy is highest in Poland with 37.0% of respondents desiring political life within the Russian Federation with significant control over local issues. Independence remains the most sought after political objective in each refugee community regardless country. Half the refugee community supports Independence in Poland, 71.9% of displaced Chechens in Belgium desire Independence, and in Georgia, an overwhelming majority of Chechen refugees (95.7%) favor sovereignty.

Indeed, even 47.8% of displaced Chechens in Azerbaijan support Independence. The degree of support for Independence in Azerbaijan is surprising given that over half the population (52.1%) desire an Islamic Caucasus Emirate, making Azerbaijan home to the largest percent of respondents desiring both transnational political objectives and religious authority as political authority. Support for the Caucasus Emirate is next highest in Belgium with 16.8% desiring an Islamic state.

Country	Democracy	Sharia
Georgia	62.8%	37.2%
Azerbaijan	15.5%	84.5%
Poland	66.0%	34.0%
Belgium	42.4%	57.6%

Table 6.5:   Attitudes towards Regime Type by Country

Table 6.5 reveals regime type preferences by country.[63]   In Georgia and Poland (62.8% and 66.0%, respectively), the majority of the displaced community prefers democratic institutions. Support for democracy is lowest in Azerbaijan with only 15.5% of respondents desiring non-religious political institutions. In Belgium, the community is more evenly divided in its regime type preferences with 42.4% preferring democracy and 57.6% wanting sharia. Support for sharia is highest in Azerbaijan where an overwhelming 84.5% of the displaced Chechen community prefers religious authority as political authority. The nature and evolution of

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[63] The definitional meanings of democracy and sharia were discussed earlier in Chapter 2, Chapter 4, and Chapter 5.

political goals among the Chechen people as a whole was discussed previously in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.

What explains the variation between refugee communities by country? There are three alternative explanations. First, one could argue that support for sharia is highest among Chechen refugees in Azerbaijan because they reside in a predominately Muslim country, albeit a fairly secular one. The logic of this explanation is that religious identity becomes more salient in essentially homogenous co-religious enclaves. The Chechen community is Azerbaijan is able to more freely express their Islamic identity through dress and custom and reside among fellow believers, many of whom share similar customs. When Islamic or religious affiliation is the most salient in one's hierarchy of identities, it is natural to expect support for sharia due to devotion and piety. Second, the Chechen refugee community is Azerbaijan is cited as the poorest of all displaced Chechen settlements. The people live in abject poverty, suffer from a number of physical and mental ailments, and harbor little hope for the future. As expected, individuals are more likely to seek spirituality in difficult times and supporting sharia could signal widespread desperation. Finally, the controversial finding of a correlation between adherents of sharia and the support for political violence has been noted previously. Still, it may be true that this relationship has some validity. It is not clear which way the causal arrow moves in this relationship and it may be that support for sharia is higher in Azerbaijan because an inordinately high number of individuals there

support political violence as legitimate. Future research can further test these relationships.

The rising support for sharia in Belgium may be product of opposite dynamics. Belgium is neither a Muslim country nor an overtly religious one. Accordingly, Chechen refugees there may feel isolated and separated from their co-religious brethren and seek to close the physical distance through increased piousness. In doing so, these refugees may begin to overcompensate in the face of perceived assimilation, resisting the pull into the local culture by exaggerating their own cultural symbols and behavior. Similar to other Muslims in Europe, displaced Chechens in Belgium may actively seek out fellow Muslims and exhibit hyper-Islamic dress and rhetoric, thus raising their awareness of being Muslim; desiring or supporting religious goals is one plausible outcome of this mechanism. Moreover, as noted previously, geographic distance may spur a stronger desire to connect to the homeland and participate in the struggle, thus leading some displaced Chechens in Belgium to recruit militants back to the North Caucasus and plan attacks on Russian targets in the name of the struggle.

CONCLUSION

This chapter explored the relative influence of the so-called "country effects." Country effects are the general term used for the expected state of displaced peoples. In this chapter, I provided a description of the Chechen refugee populations in The Republic of Georgia, Azerbaijan, Poland, and Belgium, exploring

their living conditions, primary concerns, political desires, and attitudes towards political violence. The lives of Chechen refugees are significantly influenced by their residence. Chechen refugees closest to the conflict in Georgia and Azerbaijan face pressing security and economic challenges. In Azerbaijan the abject poverty and deplorable living situations are leading to widespread health problems in the community. Chechen males fear to walk down the streets and the community as a whole is becoming increasingly desperate, unable to return home and unable to improve their lives. Theoretically, these are the conditions we expect to breed further discontent and, given the proximity to the on-going insurgency in the North Caucasus, perhaps renewed violence. A number of Chechen refugees in Azerbaijan were former fighters and it is not unreasonable for a number of these disgruntled men to perceive life in the proverbial trenches as preferable to their current situation.

In Poland, the primary concerns are economic. The current global financial crises do not portend well for ameliorating these economic concerns any time soon. As in Azerbaijan, the expectation is that as conditions worsen frustration will increase, potentially leading to some form of violence. The Chechen refugees in Poland do not express and fear over personal security. It is entirely plausible that many may consider returning back to Chechnya, especially as life in Grozny appears to be normalizing.

Finally, the life of a Chechen refugee appears to be one of relative comfort. They have access to most middle-class amenities and are in no danger of being

deported back to Chechnya. Many live quiet and content lives. However, the pull of assimilation and loss of traditions is a serious threat for many refugees.   A significant number feel a new kind of existential threat, one not emanating from Russian guns.   It is not yet clear how this community will respond to these pressures. We do know that Belgium is producing terrorist plots and a desire, for some, to rejoin the insurgency back home in the Caucasus. Time will tell whether other communities of displaced Chechens in Western European states also begin to travel back home to pick up the fight. The implications for regional security in the North Caucasus are obvious.

The next chapter concludes the dissertation by analyzing the meaning of the central findings. I discuss the policy implications of my study and the potential avenues for future research, addressing the broader theoretical and policy questions this dissertation has raised.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

This dissertation began with a question. What drives refugees displaced by war to hold attitudes supporting violence to achieve political ends? The conventional wisdom suggests that refugee communities are breeding grounds for the emergence of political violence, terrorism, and radicalism, especially among displaced Muslims. Yet, given the inherent difficulties of conducting primary research, the literature on refugees and political violence offers little empirical evidence of such a connection or systematic investigation of the root causes of attitudes toward political violence among refugees. I believe this dissertation contributes to this literature and furthers our understanding of the political and material, rather than emotive or religious, nature of non-participant support for political violence and insurgent movements. This is not to say that emotive factors play no role; indeed, these factors are not mutually exclusive, but rather it appears that material and instrumental factors play a more prominent role in influencing attitudes towards political violence. More work must certainly be done and I believe this dissertation provides a template for future research endeavors.

This challenging, inductive research study was conducted under extremely difficult and often dangerous circumstances. The expectation prior to this research was that if we ever expected to find support for political violence it would be among Chechen refugees. Indeed, the conduct of the two Russo-Chechen Wars and the historical animosities between the two peoples created the assumption of a homogenous, uniformly pro-violent community. There was, however, significant

variation in the attitudinal support for political violence and there was significant variation between the various refugee communities. The results from my dissertation suggest the following three main findings: first, political goals do determine support for political violence. Displaced Chechens desiring an Islamic Caucasus Emirate are more likely to support political violence than those desiring moderate political objectives, such as Autonomy. Second, there is a correlation between regime type preferences and attitudes supporting political violence. Displaced Chechens who prefer religious authority (sharia) as political authority are more likely to support political violence than those who desire more pluralistic or secular political institutions, such as democracy. Third, gender has an interactive effect. Displaced Chechen males are more likely to desire maximal political goals. They are more likely to accept religious authority as political authority in the form of a sharia regime, and they are more likely to accept all forms of political violence. I argue that these gender effects are driven by differential political goals between males and females based on social status. Female Chechen refugees desire different political goals and regime types because, unlike males, they perceive that they will likely suffer in terms of social status in a Caucasus Islamic Emirate and/or under sharia. Consequently, women's material interests drive them to less extreme political goals, such as Autonomy in Russia, and less tolerance for political violence as a means. This suggests a material basis for the support of political violence. Moreover, if women do have a moderating effect on views toward violence, policy

makers should consider empowering women in post-conflict settings[64], an idea with some currency in contemporary policy circles regarding Iraq and the countries involved in the recent Arab Spring.

In regard to location, in Georgia the displaced Chechen community prefers independence and democracy, yet the high levels of insecurity and the close proximity to Chechnya, especially in the Pankisi Gorge, left many Chechen refugees unwilling to share their attitudes on political violence. In Azerbaijan, extremely poor living conditions, coupled with high levels of insecurity has left an entire community hostile and fearful for their future. For these refugees, most desire an Islamic Caucasus Emirate and sharia. Most also believe at least some acts of political violence are legitimate. In Poland, economic issues are paramount and support for political goals and regime type preferences are evenly distributed across the spectrum. Finally, in Belgium the comparatively better living conditions leaves most displaced Chechens satisfied with their everyday lives. Chechen refugees in Belgium are more likely to desire independence, but a growing number express their preference for a Caucasus Emirate and religious authority (sharia) as political authority. Cultural isolation and the perceived pull of assimilation have led many to fear a new kind of existential threat, however. These conditions may be what prompted some individuals in the community to try and become active participants in the conflict.

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[64] See Hudson, Caprioli, Ballif-Spanvilli, McDermott, and Emmett, 2008; Nachtwey and Tessler, 2002.

Theoretically, this dissertation contributes to the broader literature on political violence, providing unique insights into the relationship between forced migration and international security and the strategic, material, and political nature of non-participant support for militant and insurgent activity. These findings bolster the conclusions of several contemporary micro-comparative studies of political violence, all of which suggest instrumental rather emotive determinants. This dissertation further challenges the purported nature of ethnic war. The prevailing wisdom in ethnic conflicts is that emotions play a preponderant role in driving violence and the support for violence. Yet, as Fearon (1995) observed, even in such ostensibly emotional conflicts as these strategic considerations are usually the primary engines of violence. This dissertation thus provides additional empirical evidence in support of Fearon's argument about ethnic conflicts.

The data in this dissertation also refutes cultural, emotive, and psychopathological explanations for Chechen attitudes towards political violence. These alternative explanations dominate the discourse on Chechnya and all expect a uniformly pro-violent community, particularly in regard to actions towards Russia and Russian targets. Cultural arguments claim that Chechnya's extant cultural views, namely the prevailing acceptability of violence as a form of social behavior, make all Chechens tolerate political violence carried out in their name. The traditional Chechen institution of "blood feud", mandating revenge for the infliction of any number of grievances, contributes to the assumption of a homogenously pro-violent people. These suppositions are closely tied to the emotive explanations,

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which claim fear and revenge explain most support for political violence. Psychopathological explanations claim the acute trauma of war and forced displacement, coupled with the deplorable conditions most Chechen refugees endured in their initial time in exile, create a natural psychological acceptance of violence, particularly against the perceived perpetrators. These conditions and experiences are universal to all displaced Chechens. As such, according to these explanations we should expect to find only slight variation among displaced Chechens in their views on political violence. Yet the data reveals significant variation in attitudes toward political violence. These alternative explanations can perhaps help shed light on certain aspects of Chechen views on violence, yet they are unable to account for the considerable variation we observe among Chechen refugees. I contend that we must look to political goal choices, regime type preferences, and even gender to account for this variation. Of course, in regard to the latter, in recent years the emergence of the Black Widows has created a perception that the stereotypical role of gender in influencing political violence (i.e. men are, by nature more violent than women) no longer holds among the Chechens. This assumption too has been proven false.

In terms of policy, this dissertation has generated a number of significant foreign policy considerations. First, the public and political discourse on displacement and political violence suggests a relationship between the greater community and militants carrying out acts of political violence in the name of the group. Thus, in foreign policy discussions we often hear rhetoric about challenging

the "cults of martyrdom" or the necessity to influence the "Arab Street" or drain the swamps. The policy world contends dampening popular support for militant activity dampens actual militant behavior and acts of political violence. Yet, there are no rigorous studies demonstrating a direct linkage between popular support for militant activity and subsequent militant violence. "That said, the fact that militant organizations cannot engage in meaningful levels of violence without some measure of popular support remains a first-order concern" (Shapiro and Fair, 2009:84).

Although Shapiro and Fair claim that there is no evidence that decreasing non-participant support for militant activities reduces militant violence, in this dissertation I revealed how non-participant rejection of certain acts of political violence can decrease subsequent levels of militant activity, particularly in regard to target selection. As we observed, the overwhelming rejection of the attack on schoolchildren in Belsan spurred a re-evaluation about targets and methods among Chechen militants that led to a three-year gap in all terrorist attacks against civilians. This clearly illustrates the potential power of non-participants have on militant behavior and gives hope to foreign policy decision-makers that sound policies can be constructed.

As noted, this dissertation has demonstrated a correlation between the support for religious authority (sharia) as political authority and a higher propensity to support political violence. This is certainly a controversial finding. However, it is important for policy-makers to explore the true nature of this relationship as well as that of support for an Islamic Caucasus Emirate. I have

argued that both these goals reflect more local concerns and grievances rather than signal Chechen support for transnational political objectives along the lines of groups like Al Qaeda. This is a crucial insight for policy-makers and a warning to not conflate the two threats. To do so is to create what Kilcullen calls "accidental guerillas" and protracted conflicts. Once again, it is important that policy-makers recognize these key cleavages in crafting appropriate foreign policy strategies.

This dissertation challenges the dominant views on generational changes in protracted insurgent campaigns. The conventional wisdom is that in protracted insurgencies and civil conflicts younger generations of militants will purportedly be more radical and extreme than their elder counterparts in both desired political goals and the accepted means to achieve such goals. Empirically, this has been true in places like Afghanistan. However, this does not seem to be the case among the Chechens. Initial evidence suggests that although the older generation of Chechen separatists once supported national independence and democracy, they are now more likely to desire more maximal goals, like the establishment of an Islamic Emirate in the Caucasus, and support religious authority (sharia) as political authority. This is especially puzzlingly since this generation experienced the secular world of the Soviet Union. They spent significant time with ethnic Russians, serving together in the military or Communist Party, working in factories, competing in athletic endeavors, and sharing neighborhoods. This was the generation foreign fighters from the Middle East repeatedly condemned as "infidels" for drinking alcohol and smoking.

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Unlike other regions, the younger generation of Chechens is ostensibly less interested in global jihad or any pan-Islamic, pan-Caucasian political unit. Indeed, the high-profile defection of young Chechen field-commanders last summer from current leader, Doku Umarov, himself a former "old guard" national secularist turned global jihadist, suggests the younger generation is interested in the comparatively moderate and exclusive goal of Chechen national sovereignty. It is not clear if the younger generation is also moderating their views on political violence, but as of this writing there have been fewer terrorist attacks on Russian civilians in recent months. Although much work needs to be done, I suspect the generational shift in political goals among non-participant Chechens is related to two factors, desperation and time. The older generation has endured inconceivable trauma; many have lost members of their families, their homes, their honor and reputation, their livelihood, and any conceivable hope of a normal future. Supporting an Islamic Caucasus Emirate may be viewed as the best option to regain some material or ideational good. Second, each passing days brings the recognition that time is not on their side, and perceivably the quickest way to achieve the goal of a Chechnya free from Russian rule may be to untie together the disparate ethno-national groups of the North Caucasus.

This puzzle merits further inquiry. Foreign policy decision-makers engaged in protracted insurgencies or civil wars often lament the paradox that although it is necessity to eliminate top militant leaders (many of whom may represent an older generation) doing so may stymie any subsequent attempts at negotiating peace

since younger militants will be purportedly less willing to compromise. Understanding the conditions under which generational political shifts occur in insurgency can plausibly help better inform foreign policy decision-makers and help us better understand the micro-level dynamics of non-participant support for militant activity.

As stated previously, the so-called "micro-comparative turn" in the study of political violence is still in its nascent stages. As such, scholars contend that such methods are still in the world of hypothesis-generating, rather than hypothesis testing. Indeed, this dissertation has revealed that there are a number of relationships between variables which have yet to be tested or fully fleshed out. In terms of endogeneity, is it that politically violent people desire an Islamic Caucasus Emirate and prefer sharia, or is it the other way around? Does holding maximal political goals or preferring religious authority as political authority lead one to be more acceptant of political violence and militant activity? This dissertation is a first-cut at exploring these relationships. In this inductive study, I employed systematically rigorous ethnographic research instruments to collect a unique dataset. Determining causality is an important and future endeavor. Ideally, future work would go back into the field to ask displaced Chechens to interpret the findings. Such an endeavor is clearly beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Nonetheless, the data collected for this dissertation can speak to some of the purported hypothetical relationships raised in Chapter 2.

Individual-Level Hypotheses:

H1: *Young men will be more acceptant of political violence than other demographic groups within Chechen refugee communities.*

Inconclusive. As discussed in Chapter 5, currently males aged 55 to 66 (77.8%) are the most likely to support political violence. The second most likely constituent is males aged 25 to 35 (65.0%). 48.5% of males aged 18 to 25 years old support violence, yet 27.3% of this group answered Non-Response. Again, as discussed previously, if these Non-Responses are, in actually, pro-violent sentiments, over 75.8% of the young males would support violence. This is plausible, but not certain. Moreover, the data reveals that the overwhelmingly majority of Chechen men, regardless of age, support violence, thus casting doubt on the hypothesis.

H2: *Chechen refugees who have lost immediate family members in the war will be more acceptant of political violence than other refugees.*

Inconclusive. It is a sad reality that virtually every displaced Chechen I interviewed or met lost immediate family members. The high percent of such loss is influenced by social and cultural considerations that tie even second cousins as "brother or sister." In the end, the loss of relatives, like the trauma and experience of war and displacement or the existence of cultural norms of revenge, is common to all Chechens and, as such, cannot account for the variation in attitudes towards political violence.

H3: Chechen refugees who hold maximal political goals (e.g., support for a Islamic Caucasus Emirate) will be more acceptant of political violence than refugees who hold more modest political goals.

True. There is a relationship between those who support an Islamic Caucasus Emirate in the Caucasus. However, as noted above, it is not clear, beyond the strategic rather than religious character of such support, the exact causal nature of this relationship. For now, we can only say with certainty that individuals who support maximal political goals also are more likely to support political violence.

H4: Chechen refugees from rural areas and mountain teips (clans) will be more acceptant of political violence than other Chechen refugees.

False. As discussed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, there is no significant relationship between living location and support for political violence. Moreover, there is no longer a geographic concentration of mountain clans in the southern mountains and plains clans in the north. The plains clans do tend to still dominate the northern flatlands, yet the mountain clans have, since the 1970s and 1980s increasingly moved into the cities, thus removing the purported isolation and maintenance of highlander tradition as suggested in the original hypothesis.

H5: Chechen Refugees will be more likely to support acts of political violence directed at authorities and representatives of the state and reject acts directed exclusively at civilian targets.

False. In fact, only 6.6% of all displaced Chechens expressed exclusive support for such actions. Conversely, as discussed in Chapter 4, the act of political

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violence which engendered the most support was the attack on civilians in the Dubrovka Theater in Moscow. Target selection does play a role, however, in driving rejection of certain demographics. As the overwhelming rejection of the Beslan attack underscores, significant numbers of displaced Chechens, while exhibiting sophisticated views on political violence, seem to reject any action which targets children.

H6: Chechen refugees with higher education will be more acceptant of political violence than other less educated Chechen refugees.

False. As discussed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, there is no significant relationship between level of education and support for political violence. This hypothesis could have been posed inversely; a number of socio-economic theories suggest that lesser educated individuals are more likely to support and actually commit violence. Of course, other evidence suggests that high education creates more awareness and, consequently, more political dissatisfaction (see Chapter 4), a purported cause of supporting political violence. In regard to displaced Chechens, the level of education plays no significant role in the support of political violence. Level of education did play a role in Non-Responses; university educated respondents were uniformly willing to answer all questions on political violence. All Non-Responses came from those with a high school education of less.

Environmental Hypotheses:

H7: Chechen refugees living in communities closest to the conflict and farthest from the conflict will be more likely to have attitudes acceptant of political violence as

a legitimate means to achieve political goals than refugees living in other communities.

Inconclusive. It is true that displaced Chechens in both Azerbaijan and Belgium are more likely to support political violence. However, Chechen refugees in Georgia reside directly adjacent to Chechnya and the conflict. As discussed previously, all but one Non-Response came from the Chechen refugee community in Georgia and, as such the accurate level of support for political violence is unclear.

H8: Chechen refugees living in communities located in non-Muslim countries will be more acceptant of political violence than their counterparts living in communities located in Muslim countries.

False. The highest levels of support for political violence came from Chechen refugees living in Azerbaijan. The logic does perhaps still hold, however. In Belgium, 84.7% of the population feels their culture and traditions are under threat. This sentiment is expressed at higher rates in Belgium than in any other site visited for this dissertation. Yet, at this point it is not clear what role, exactly, feelings of cultural loss play in driving individual support or rejection of political violence.

H9: Chechen refugees living in larger refugee communities will be more acceptant of political violence than refugees living in smaller ones.

Inconclusive. As discussed in Chapter 2 and Chapter 4, it is impossible to accurately ascertain refugee community size. Nonetheless, the underlying logic of this hypothesis may still hold, namely that the larger the refugee community, the more deplorable the living conditions; thus, higher levels of support for political

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violence (Berrebi, 2007; Kreuger, 2002; Kreuger and Maleckova, 2003). Displaced Chechens in Azerbaijan do live in deplorable conditions, the purported driving factor in larger refugee communities, and do express disproportionate support for political violence. Clearly, more work needs to be done to better understand this relationship, although, to paraphrase Trotsky, if poverty alone were enough to spark revolution and rebellion the masses would always be in a state of revolt. As the findings in this dissertation suggest, violence may be driven more by material and strategic consideration, although economic stress could easily be considered part of the former.

H10: *Chechen refugees who rate the conditions of their camp as worse than they expected will be more acceptant of political violence than refugees who hold more favorable views of camp conditions.*

Inconclusive. As discussed in Chapter 6 and in Hypothesis 9 above, displaced Chechens do not hold uniform views on grievances. The main grievance in each country differs. Of course, in Belgium, no grievances are expressed, yet support for political violence is substantial.

Understanding refugee attitudes towards political violence has policy implications for international security and for host nations. For better or worse, there are large numbers of Chechen refugees throughout Eurasia and Eastern and Western Europe and many will presumably remain for the foreseeable future as third country repatriation remains a glacial process and return home is viewed as

undesirable and dangerous. If governments are to have any hope of implementing policies that dampen the attractiveness of political violence as a socially acceptable form of behavior the first step must be identifying the factors that give rise to violent attitudes.

What does the future portend for the North Caucasus? Today a growing and protracted insurgency plagues the region. High levels of unemployment among the local youth, endemic corruption among the indigenous elites, and the incessantly harsh hand of the Russian authorities has prompted many to "go to the forests", the local euphemism for joining the militants. In the summer of 2011 the Kremlin acknowledged that hundreds of amnestied fighters also rejoined the insurgent ranks. It now appears certain that, as it was in the times of Sheik Mansur and Imam Shamil, the Chechen militants will launch new offensives once the winter snows melt, thus allowing the insurgents free range under the cover of the thick birch forests. This has always been the Chechen way of war, utilizing the same tactics against the same enemy, Russia.

The optimism and relative calm in the mid-2000s under Russian President Dmitri Medvedev was dashed with the spring 2010 suicide bombing in the Domodedova International Airport in Moscow. This attack, the first of its kind directed primarily at foreigners rather than ethnic Russians, was carried out by Dagestanis, signaling a further spread in the regional turmoil. Indeed, Chechnya today under the iron-rule of Ramzan Kadyrov has become a comparative island of peace in an increasingly hostile neighborhood. Ingushetia and Dagestan have

witnessed ever increasingly levels of militant activity in the past six years and now both Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachay-Cherkessia are hotbeds of Islamic militancy. The 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi will certainly prove an attractive target for Caucasus militants eager to spread their message to a global audience.

At one time the modern conflicts in Chechnya could have been classified as a tale of two wars. The military disaster in the First Russo-Chechen War, from 1994 to 1996, was extremely unpopular and a political handicap for then President, Boris Yeltsin. Three years later, Vladimir Putin was catapulted to national prominence with his successful prosecution of a new and popular Second Russo-War. In those early days Putin used his tough stance on Chechnya as a political tool to garner supporters and crush potential rivals. Today the North Caucasus has again become a political issue, but not in the way Vladimir Putin expected. Indeed, it now appears that the Russian adventures in Chechnya appear more likely to be the story of just one war, and an extremely costly and unpopular one at that. The Russian people have grown frustrated with both the lack of progress and with the amount of blood and treasure expended in the volatile south. For the first time, a significant number of Russians prefer to let the entire region break-away from Russia proper. The financial implications in particular have become a significant political thorn for Putin in his re-election campaign with the vast majority of Russians viewing the extravagance at Ramzan Kadyrov's recent birthday gala as an affront to their own socio-economic hardships. It is not yet clear how Putin's political machine will manage this crisis, nor how his military will solve the crisis in the Caucasus. The

Kremlin policies thus far have been complete failures. If what is past is indeed prologue, the future of Chechen and the North Caucasus will remain one of continuous struggle. In this, the role of the displaced Chechen community remains to be seen.

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