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Ethnicity and Elite Mobility in the North Caucasus: From the Soviet Union to the Russian Federation

By Kathleen Gergely, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

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Abstract

This article examines the relationship between ethnicity and elite mobility in the North Caucasus from 1956 until the present. It shows that the upward mobility of non-Russian regional heads is greater within the Russian Federation than it was in the Soviet Union, but remains limited.

Governance in the North Caucasus

The North Caucasus has long imperiled the territorial integrity of Russia. Yet there has been no systemic scholarly analysis of governance within the North Caucasus that spans the Soviet and post-Soviet periods. This article represents the beginning of such an analysis. It examines Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, North Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, and Stavropol Krai, analyzing the relationship between ethnicity and elite mobility through the career trajectories of regional party first secretaries from 1956 to 1991 and regional executives from 1991 to the present. It employs Clark's (1989) model of elite mobility, which focuses on one-to-one position transfers that are defined as either upward, lateral, or downward. The article relies primarily on biographical data drawn from dictionaries, online databases, and newspapers, but also refers to scholarly analyses of elites in the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation under Yeltsin, Putin, and Medvedev.

The Soviet Union

From 1956 until 1991, thirty-four regional party first secretaries served in the regions of the North Caucasus analyzed here: four served in Dagestan, seven in Chechno-Ingushetia, four in Kabardino-Balkaria, seven in Karachaevo-Cherkessia, five in North Ossetia, and seven in Stavropol krai. Though the North Caucasus is majority non-Russian, only eleven of the thirty-four regional party first secretaries who served were non-Russians. The majority of these served in three regions: Dagestan, North Ossetia, and Kabardino-Balkaria. In Chechno-Ingushetia, only one regional first secretary, D.G. Zavgaev, was a non-Russian, while in Stavropol Krai and its autonomous oblast, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, no non-Russians served in this post. Only in Dagestan were all regional first secretaries non-Russians. Here, the regional first secretaries were drawn from two of the dominant nationalities within the republic, demonstrating the strength of local networks; three were Avars and one was a Dargin. In North Ossetia, three Ossetians served as regional first secretaries. Though Ossetians

were regarded as a trusted nationality, their status within the Soviet political system was improved after 1944, because they were never victims of the deportations. Finally, in Kabardino-Balkaria, two Kabardins and one Balkar served as regional first secretaries. Though the accusations against the Balkars and other deported nationalities were not withdrawn until April 1991, in September 1990, B.M. Zumakulov, a Balkar, became regional party first secretary after protests forced the resignation of V.M. Kokov. This appointment was perhaps intended to undercut Balkar secessionism, which gained traction at the end of the 1980s.

Did these non-Russian elites possess the same career experiences as their Russian counterparts? Willerton (1992) posits that experience within organizational party-work departments increased mobility within the Soviet political system. In the North Caucasus, seventeen of the regional first secretaries worked within regional organizational party-work departments. The majority of these served in Chechno-Ingushetia or Karachaevo-Cherkessia. They were predominantly Russian; while fifteen of the twenty-three Russian regional first secretaries possessed work experience within an organizational party-work department, only one of the non-Russians possessed that experience—M.G. Aliev of Dagestan. Though only nine of the regional first secretaries in the North Caucasus served in the military, this experience displays similar bifurcation. Seven of the regional first secretaries who served in the military were in office in ethnically-divided Kabardino-Balkaria or Karachaevo-Cherkessia. Again, only one non-Russian possessed that experience—T.K. Malbakhov of Kabardino-Balkaria. Whereas these experiences improved the mobility of Russians more than non-Russians, higher education within the fields of agriculture or industry, especially natural-resource extraction, improved the mobility of both Russians and non-Russians within the North Caucasus.

Perhaps a more important distinction between the Russians and non-Russians serving in the North Caucasus is the relative likelihood that they would have extensive work experience in a single region. Only twelve

regional first secretaries worked in their region immediately prior to their appointment; of these eight were non-Russians. Notably, all regional first secretaries of Dagestan worked in the republic prior to their appointment as the regional first secretary, again demonstrating the strength and stability of local networks there. Of the twenty-four regional first secretaries for whom a position after the regional first secretaryship could be found, only five remained within the same region. Three of these were the regional first secretaries of Dagestan. Yet, in spite of their relative lack of geographical limitations, the political mobility of the Russian elites serving within this region was not greater. Rigby (1990) argues that appointment to either a Central Committee secretary spot or deputy chairmanship of the USSR Council of Ministers would constitute promotions from the regional party first secretary position; appointment as a minister would constitute a lateral transition, while appointment to a deputy minister post would constitute a demotion. By this argument, only Gorbachev and his protégé, V.S. Murakhovskii, were promoted following their first secretaryships in Stavropol krai. The remaining twenty-two regional first secretaries—whether or not they remained within the same region—were appointed to posts that represented either lateral transitions or demotions.

The Russian Federation under Yeltsin

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991, the RSFSR became the independent Russian Federation. Regional party first secretaries were replaced by regional executives—called governors in the administratively-defined majority-Russian regions, and presidents or heads in the semi-autonomous ethnic republics. Eleven officials served in this office in the North Caucasus from 1992 through 1999; one served in Dagestan, one in Chechnya, one in Ingushetia, two in North Ossetia, one in Kabardino-Balkaria, two in Karachaevo-Cherkessia, and three in Stavropol krai. The collapse of the Soviet Union obviously altered the administrative landscape of the North Caucasus. Karachaevo-Cherkessia gained its independence from Stavropol Krai, while Ingushetia separated from Chechnya after the latter declared its independence from the Soviet Union in November 1991.

The collapse of the Soviet Union also altered the profile of the regional elites. While twenty-three regional party first secretaries serving in the North Caucasus were Russians, only three regional executives serving there in the 1990s were Russians. Moreover, all three served in majority-Russian Stavropol krai. In the ethnic republics, non-Russians became the regional executives. In ethnically-divided Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachaevo-Cherkessia, the numerically-superior Kabardins and Karachai became the regional executives. In multiethnic Dagestan, the three

dominant nationalities—Avars, Dargins, and Kumyks—controlled political life, a continuation from the Soviet era.

Examining the Russian Federation generally, Mawdsley and White (2000) conclude that the Russian elite of the 1990s was a reproduction of the late Soviet elite. Excluding Karachaevo-Cherkessia and Ingushetia because no Karachai or Ingush served as regional party first secretary, four of the remaining eight regional executives in the North Caucasus previously served as regional party first secretary. D.G. Zavgaev led the shadow government in Chechnya, while V.M. Kokov, A.K. Galazov, and A.S. Dzasokhov regained or maintained prominence in Kabardino-Balkaria and North Ossetia respectively. Yet the regional executives—whether or not they previously served as regional party first secretaries—were operating within a new institutional environment. Willerton posits that parliamentary posts would become increasingly influential over elite mobility within the contested political sphere of the Russian Federation. Indeed, six of the eleven regional executives served as representatives within local, regional, or national legislatures immediately prior to their appointment. Tenure within the new State Duma or Federation Council undermined the limitations placed on the careers of non-Russians during the Soviet era. Non-Russians like A.S. Dzasokhov of North Ossetia and A.S. Aushev of Ingushetia, both of whom became senators, could now construct personal power bases in Moscow.

The Russian Federation under Putin and Medvedev

Vladimir Putin became president after Boris Yeltsin abruptly resigned on December 31, 1999. He has piloted Russia through the majority of her post-Soviet life, serving as president from 2000 to 2008 and again from 2012 through the present. Putin and his protégé, Dmitry Medvedev, have altered the political sphere in the Russian Federation. While the 1990s could be characterized by rampant decentralization, the first decade of the new millennium was a period of recentralization. During this decade and the next, non-Russians govern the majority of the North Caucasus. In Chechnya, one Russian, S.B. Abramov, served briefly following the assassination of Akhmat Kadyrov. In Ingushetia, North Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, and Karachaevo-Cherkessia, only non-Russians served as the regional executive. In Stavropol Krai, only Russians have served. Yet, in Dagestan, the stable local networks that steered the republic through the Soviet era and beyond were disrupted in October 2017 by the appointment of V.A. Vasilyev as the acting head of the republic. Vasilyev, an ethnic Russian, was formerly the Deputy Chairman of the State Duma and worked under Putin in the Security Council in 1999. His appointment perhaps indicates that Putin

hopes to undermine longstanding local networks and gain greater control over Dagestan.

In addition to the switch from non-Russian to Russian leaders, the elites who served as regional executives under Putin and Medvedev have different educational and work experiences than their counterparts who served under Yeltsin. First, only one of the twenty-one regional executives who were appointed in the North Caucasus since 2000 was formerly a regional party first secretary: M.G. Aliev of Dagestan. This indicates that the first tier of the Soviet-era regional elite generally reached retirement over the course of the decade, opening elite posts not only to the former occupants of the second and third tiers, but also to those who were too young to have substantive political experience from that era. The current elites also have different higher educational experiences than their predecessors. While the majority of Soviet-era and many Yeltsin-era regional heads studied agriculture or engineering, many of the current regional heads have studied economics or law. Moreover, a greater proportion have business experience. While only one regional executive serving under Yeltsin had significant business experience, seven regional executives serving under Putin have that experience. These younger elites were generally only beginning their professional lives when the Soviet Union collapsed.

Yet political developments under Putin have not remained entirely in line with the developments under Yeltsin. Kryshchanovskaya and White (2003) argue that Putin has militarized the Russian elite. Militarization is evident in the North Caucasus. While only one of the eleven regional executives appointed under Yeltsin possessed significant experience in the security forces, seven of the twenty-one appointed under Putin have possessed such experience. Yet six of these appointments fell within either Chechnya, Ingushetia, or Dagestan—republics destabilized by the long Second Chechen War. These appointments could therefore be interpreted as a means to maintain territorial integrity, rather than as an illustration of the militarization of the elite.

Recentralization is a less arguable characteristic of Putin's government. His reforms included the removal of regional executives from the Federation Council in

2000 and the appointment of regional executives by the president in 2004. While the former prevented regional executives from creating personal power bases in Moscow, the latter prevented them from cultivating such bases locally. Within this system, membership in United Russia has become a key to future mobility. Of the eight officials for whom a position after their tenure as regional executive could be found, three were appointed to posts in the presidential administration and one became a senator. The legislature is perhaps no longer the center of influence that Willerton posited it would be; rather this center has moved to the Kremlin. The regional executives of the North Caucasus display greater mobility within this system than its predecessors. Yet, even though the former heads of this region no longer face the geographic limitations of the Soviet era, they can still face the limitations of being relegated to advisory roles focused on the problems of their tumultuous region of origin.

Conclusion

This brief article cannot convey the intricacies of governance in the North Caucasus across the Soviet and post-Soviet periods; it is only the beginning of such an analysis. Nonetheless, it still provides valuable insights. This article shows that the relationship between ethnicity and elite mobility in the North Caucasus has evolved. During the Soviet era, the regional elites serving here—whether Russian or non-Russian—displayed poor political mobility. Yet the non-Russian elites also tended to remain within a single region, further inhibiting their potential mobility. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, non-Russians constituted the majority of regional executives here. Their political mobility increased as they occupied parliamentary posts under Yeltsin and presidential administration posts under Putin. While their mobility is perhaps greatest under Putin, they cannot cultivate personal power bases locally or in Moscow, so their mobility is dependent on Putin. They can also face limitations similar to their Soviet predecessors, working within advisory roles focused on the problems of the North Caucasus.

About the Author

Kathleen Gergely is a student in the Master of Arts program in Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

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Outsiders and Locals: The Kremlin's Policy of Appointing Governors in the North Caucasus

By Sufian Zhemukhov, University of Maryland

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Abstract

The Kremlin does not have a consistent policy across the Russian regions regarding the election or appointment of governors. Despite allowing elections in most regions since 2012, the Kremlin has forced most North Caucasus regions to cancel direct elections, with the exception of Chechnya. The Kremlin also lacks a consistent policy in appointing governors to the regions where it has blocked elections, usually relying on locals, but not always. In Dagestan, it has appointed an ethnic Russian to rule a North Caucasus republic for the first time in post-Soviet history.

The North Caucasus's Special Status

In 2012, the Kremlin lifted its seven-year ban on gubernatorial elections in Russia. The next year, however, the Kremlin suggested that the North Caucasus republics should voluntarily ban direct elections of governors. What made the seven North Caucasus republics a unique group, among Russia's 85 regions (including occupied Crimea), that led the Kremlin to apply a different policy to them?

The Kremlin's policy for electing governors has evolved through four periods in post-Soviet Russia. During the first period, 1991–2005, Russian regions enjoyed the right to directly elect their governors. Most of those elections could be qualified as free and democratic, even though the Kremlin often openly supported some candidates against others, though not always successfully.

During the second period, 2005–2012, Russian President Vladimir Putin banned gubernatorial elections in all regions. Putin used the 2004 Beslan school terrorist attack, in the North Caucasus republic of North Ossetia, as a pretext for his crackdown. The Russian leader concentrated power in his own hands to appoint and dismiss governors, with the approval of local parliaments. This tool became one of the key components for a new policy known as the “vertical of power” (*vertikal vlasti*), which aimed to increase the Kremlin's control over the regions and reduce their sovereignty. As another element of the same policy, the next Russian president, Dmitry Medvedev, signed a law prohibiting the title “president” for regional leaders. Republican parliaments changed their leaders' title, replacing president with “head of republic,” except Tatarstan, which refused to follow the federal law, arguing that it contradicted the Russian Constitutional provision allowing the regions to choose titles for their leaders. Tatarstan's refusal to follow the Kremlin's order set a precedent for push-back against the Kremlin's policy of trying to subordinate the regions to central control.

The third period, from May 2012 through April 2013, lasted less than a year, after President Medvedev signed a new law restoring gubernatorial elections in all Russian regions. Shortly after the federal action, Russian regions, including the North Caucasus republics, adopted new laws allowing for the direct election of the local governor, indicating the regions' eagerness to hold direct elections for their chief executive.

The fourth period began on April 2nd, 2013, when Putin, again serving as president, amended Medvedev's law to allow regional parliaments to voluntarily ban direct gubernatorial elections. The Kremlin's surrogates argued that the political and inter-ethnic tensions in the North Caucasus Federal District did not allow for direct elections, even though terrorism was no longer regarded as a threat. Parliaments of all North Caucasus republics banned direct elections, except Chechnya which refused to impose such a ban as part of its larger effort opposing Kremlin efforts to impose central control over the republic.

The Kremlin's decision to single out the North Caucasus from other Russian regions raises a question: What is the Kremlin's policy of appointing governors in the North Caucasus republics? Is there any comprehensive strategy?

Allowing and Banning Direct Elections

After Medvedev's 2012 law allowed gubernatorial elections, there was a political split among the local elites in at least two republics, Dagestan and Ingushetia, which indicated that pro-Kremlin candidates might not win the upcoming elections in September 2013. In January 2013, Putin appointed Ramazan Abdulatipov as acting governor of Dagestan. Abdulatipov had made his political career outside of the region and lacked support in the republic. According to at least one poll, only 13 percent of voters supported Abdulatipov, while 59 percent backed his opponent, Said Amirov, the mayor of

Makhachkala. Just two weeks after Putin changed the law on gubernatorial elections, Dagestan's parliament urgently banned direct elections in the republic. Coincidentally, on June 1, 2013, "Commandos in armored vehicles surrounded the residence of the mayor of Makhachkala, the capital of Dagestan, and arrested him on Saturday, bringing a swift end to his 15-year rule of one of Russia's most violent cities and to his ambition to eventually lead the region." With such advantages as his rival being in jail, direct elections having been successfully banned, and Putin's endorsement, the republican parliament appointed Abdulatipov as governor with 86 out of 88 votes, easily defeating his nominal rivals, Ummupazil Omarova and Malik Bagliev, who were not supported by the Kremlin. After his appointment, Abdulatipov announced, "I have always advocated for direct elections... In the direct elections, I would win by a significant majority."

In Ingushetia, the Kremlin's appointee, Yunis-Bek Yevkurov, was also not the most popular candidate. His opponent, former governor Ruslan Aushev, was so popular that almost a third of Ingushetia's 190,746 voters signed a petition to Putin, asking him to replace Yevkurov with Aushev. These numbers marked an improvement over the situation in 2008, when over half of the voters signed a similar petition. Effectively acknowledging that the Kremlin candidate would not win direct elections, the parliament of Ingushetia changed the law in May 2013, and Yevkurov was re-appointed by the local parliament at Putin's recommendation. Yevkurov's popularity has continued to decline after his conflict with the local Islamic clergy, which took the unprecedented step of banning the governor from participating in the Muslim community in May 2018. It remains unclear if the Kremlin will encourage Yevkurov to stay in office after his second term expires in September 2018.

A similar split divided the local elite in neighboring North Ossetia, even though elections would not take place for another two years, in September 2015. However, the parliament of North Ossetia banned direct elections in November 2013. The split in the elite became apparent earlier, because of the open rivalry between the governor, Taymuraz Mamsurov, and Arsen Fadzaev, a two-time Olympic champion in wrestling. In 2012, Mamsurov blocked his rival Fadzaev from running for the local parliament as a candidate from the Kremlin's party, United Russia. Instead, Fadzaev, joined an opposition party, Patriots of Russia, and helped the party secure the second largest faction in the parliament, with 26.5 percent of the votes, a dramatic improvement from the 0.35 percent that the same party had won during the previous elections; meanwhile the Kremlin's party, led by Mamsurov, won first place, with 46.2 percent,

which marked a dramatic drop from 67.9 percent during the previous election. The governor's surrogates in the parliament argued that direct elections could destabilize the political situation in the republic. Two years later, the Kremlin did not re-appoint Mamsurov.

After Dagestan, Ingushetia, and North Ossetia banned direct elections, Putin's envoy in the North Caucasus Federal District, Alexander Khloponin, suggested that all local parliaments should follow their example. Khloponin did not give a detailed explanation for his suggestion, other than stating that it was not a good time for elections, because of the "complicated interweave of interests," in the North Caucasus, apparently meaning the interest of political and ethnic groups, but not the threat of terrorism.

While Dagestan, Ingushetia, and North Ossetia banned elections, the governors of those regions stated that they would win direct elections. Only the governor of Karachaevo-Cherkessia, Rashid Temrezov, publicly admitted that he was not ready for direct elections, even though he had three more years before the end of his term. Temrezov argued that direct elections could lead to ethnic tensions in his multi-ethnic republic. Indeed, the very first governor elections in Karachaevo-Cherkessia, in 1999, sparked a political and inter-ethnic crisis. Back then, Vladimir Semyonov, a representative of the Karachai majority and pro-Kremlin candidate who made his career outside of the region, almost lost to Stanislav Derev, a representative of the Cherkess minority and the mayor of the republican capital. Derev argued that he had won the elections and gave up only under Kremlin pressure. In December 2013, Karachaevo-Cherkessia banned direct elections. Three years later, in 2016, Temrezov was re-appointed by the local parliament, on the recommendation of President Putin. Political and civil organizations in Karachaevo-Cherkessia unsuccessfully campaigned for direct elections, arguing that the ban helped Temrezov consolidate too much power.

The reason for the prohibition on direct elections seemed less obvious in the cases of Kabardino-Balkaria and Adygea. The governor of Kabardino-Balkaria, Arsen Kanokov, hesitated to ban direct elections, even after Dagestan, Ingushetia, and North Ossetia did. However, he suddenly resigned in 2013, long before the end of his term. The new acting governor, Yuri Kokov, had the best chances to win the upcoming direct elections and, at first, was not eager to ban them, but eventually did. Later, in October 2014, he was unanimously appointed as the governor by the local parliament.

The ban on direct elections in Adygea was even less reasonable. First, Adygea was not a part of the North Caucasus Federal District, and Khloponin's suggestion against elections formally did not apply to the republic.

Second, Adygea had neither political nor ethnic complications, unlike most of the other republics. According to at least one think-tank estimate, banning direct elections lowered Adygea's stability and moved it from 19th down to 41st place in stability ratings among Russian regions; though Adygea still remained more stable than any of the North Caucasus republics. The governor, Aslan Tkhakushinov, had been re-appointed just a half a year before Medvedev's law, and stayed in office five more years. The parliament of Adygea hesitated to ban elections until March 2016; unlike North Ossetia and Karachaevo-Cherkessia which had rushed to implement the ban several years before the end of their governors' terms. Tkhakushinov did not seek another term, and instead his distant relative, Murat Kumpilov, was unanimously elected by the local parliament in 2017.

The case of Chechnya was unique for the North Caucasus. When Dagestan and Ingushetia banned elections, in 2013, the speaker of Chechen parliament dismissed such a scenario for Chechnya on the ground that the governor, Ramzan Kadyrov, needed the direct support of the people of Chechnya, as a "national leader" (*natsionalny lider*), which supposedly distinguished him from other regional leaders. However, Kadyrov's position became uncertain in 2016. The fact that Kadyrov had been in power for two consecutive terms raised questions about his legal ability to stay in office for a third term. On one hand, the Kremlin proved that it was easy to find loopholes in the election law—allowing, in 2000, several governors to seek a third term, including the governors of Dagestan and Kabardino-Balkaria, and also allowing Putin to run for his third, non-consecutive, term, in 2012. On the other hand, in a similar situation, Arsen Kanokov resigned without running for a third term in 2013, though no one formally forced him to resign. More importantly, back in 2006, the Kremlin resisted appointing Kadyrov as governor and did not change the law prohibiting the election/appointment of governors younger than 30 years old, in spite of the armed conflict between Kadyrov and his predecessor, Ali Alkhanov, on the eve of Kadyrov's 30th birthday. In 2015, according to Peterburgskaya Politika's rating of governors' abilities to survive, Kadyrov's future became less certain, for the first time in his career, because of the conflicts he faced inside Chechnya and tensions between him and neighboring governors thanks to his leadership ambitions in the North Caucasus, and further declined later that year because of the controversies with federal law-enforcement agencies. Two months before the end of Kadyrov's second term, he was still undecided if he would run for his third term. At the end of his second term, Kadyrov publicly announced that he did not want to stay in office and even proposed to find a replacement for him-

self. His announcement created such a controversy that Putin's press secretary publicly disavowed Kadyrov's statement. At the time Kadyrov's term expired, Chechnya remained the only republic in the North Caucasus that did not ban direct elections; while it was still highly uncertain if Kadyrov would compete for another term. It appeared as if Kadyrov and Putin were playing a whoblinks-first game, Kadyrov not banning gubernatorial elections and the Kremlin waiting until the very last minute before announcing its support for the Chechen leader. After Kadyrov's term expired, Putin appointed him as acting governor of Chechnya and also publicly encouraged him to seek a popular mandate through direct elections, which helped clarify the Kremlin's support for Kadyrov. Finally, Kadyrov announced his intention to run for office, and in September 2016, won the Chechen gubernatorial elections, which has remained the only direct elections, among the North Caucasus republics, since 2005.

Table 1: The Timeline of Regional Laws Allowing/Banning Direct Governor Elections

Republic	Allowed elections, after Medvedev's law on May 2 nd , 2012	Banned elections, after Putin's law, on April 2 nd , 2013
Adygea	<u>June 28, 2012</u>	<u>March 23, 2016</u>
Chechnya	<u>June 18, 2012</u>	n/a
Dagestan	<u>June 28, 2012</u>	<u>April 18, 2013</u>
Ingushetia	<u>June 18, 2012</u>	<u>May 8, 2013</u>
Kabardino-Balkaria	<u>June 6, 2012</u>	<u>April 23, 2014</u>
Karachaevo-Cherkessia	<u>June 28, 2012</u>	<u>December 26, 2013</u>
North Ossetia	<u>June 29, 2012</u>	<u>November 28, 2013</u>

Does the Kremlin Have a Comprehensive Strategy toward North Caucasus Governors?

The Kremlin banned governors' elections in 2005, in order to reduce the sovereignty of the regions. After achieving its goal, the Kremlin allowed the governor elections again, in 2012. Russian scholar Alexander Kynev argues that the Kremlin successfully took direct governor elections under control, and "muscovite appointees who are unknown in a region get 70–80 percent of the votes, even more than local heavy-weight and elder politicians."

In the case of the North Caucasus, however, the Kremlin soon realized that it did not wield extensive control over governor elections in the republics. That was

why, in 2013, the Kremlin hurried to make changes in the law and allow republics to ban direct elections. This move indicated that the Kremlin failed to develop a unified policy toward regional elections in Russia. Moreover, the Kremlin failed to develop a unified policy even within the North Caucasus. Of the seven regions of the North Caucasus Federal District, the Chechen Republic and Stavropol Krai have direct elections, while the other five republics do not. At the same time, Adygea Republic does not have direct elections, not being part of the North Caucasus Federal District, though belonging to the North Caucasus geographically. The lack of a unified policy is indicated by the fact that several other regions outside of the North Caucasus also do not have direct elections, including the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, Nenets Autonomous Okrug, and the annexed Republic of Crimea. It is obvious that the Kremlin has not been able to control elections in at least ten out of 85 regions, including seven North Caucasus republics, and that was the reason for banning the elections.

While the Kremlin obviously wants to handpick the governors of republics, does that mean that it has a comprehensive strategy toward North Caucasus governors? To put it in simple terms, does the Kremlin know who is more suited to be a governor? Observing that the Kremlin did not re-appoint many governors for the second term and even fired some governors before the end of their terms indicates that the answer to that question is negative. Further analysis shows that the Kremlin does not act the same way toward all the North Caucasus republics, which means that the Kremlin does not have a coherent strategy, but instead acts according to the political situation in each republic.

The Kremlin exercises a variety of different approaches in supporting the governors in the North Caucasus republics. First, the Kremlin statistically prefers appointing “locals” to “outsiders.” The term “local” applies to a governor who made a significant part of his career and/or successfully built his own network of supporters in the republic, previously to his appointment/election. The term “outsider” applies to a governor who made his career outside of the region and/or did not occupy high-level positions in any of the three branches of power, before his appointment/election. However, an outsider becomes a local after he serves at least one term as a governor, which allows him to create a substantial network of supporters among the local political elite.

Table 2 on p. 10 distinguishes three trends in the Kremlin’s policy since 2005: A) Only locals have been appointed in Adygea, Chechnya, and North Ossetia. B) There was a switch, in Dagestan, from appointing only locals, Aliyev and Magomedov, to appointing only outsiders, Abdulatipov and Vasilyev. C) There

were switches from an elected local, Valery Kokov, to an appointed outsider, Kanokov, and back to a local, Yuri Kokov, in Kabardino-Balkaria; and even more inconsistent switches in Karachaevo-Cherkessia, from elected outsider, Semyonov, to elected local, Batdyev, from appointed outsider, Ebzeyev, and to a local, Temrezov.

Second, the Kremlin has been implementing a learning-from-its-own-mistakes method. This erratic approach was indicated by inconsistencies in the Kremlin’s alternation between locals and outsiders. It seems that, finally, the Kremlin learned to appoint “locals” in regions where there is a high risk of destabilization among the elites. It means that the Kremlin accepted the reality that it does not have enough control over republican elites and cannot appoint “outsiders” who are not controlled by the regional elites but are subordinated only to the president. The only maneuver the Kremlin has is to choose which political group to support and make them compete for support from the Kremlin, rotating among governors from different groups.

Third, in some cases, the Kremlin’s control in the region is so weak that a high risk of destabilization in the region forced the president to apply a successor policy. In those cases, the Kremlin chose not just locals, but candidates from the same network as the former governor, as was the case of appointing Akhmad Kadyrov’s son Ramzan Kadyrov in Chechnya; Valery Kokov’s distant relative Yuri Kokov, in Kabardino-Balkaria; Tkhakushinov’s distant relative, Kumpilov, in Adygea; and Batdyev’s son-in-law’s friend Temrezov, in Karachaevo-Cherkessia. In all those cases, the Kremlin aimed to preserve stability among the local political elite, which otherwise would be highly destabilized by appointing outsiders. The Kremlin learned from its negative experience in the past, including, when support for an outsider, Alkhanov, created armed conflict in Chechnya, which dramatically decreased as soon as Ramzan Kadyrov was appointed. In Adygea, an outsider, Sovmen, could not consolidate the political elite, while, locals, Dzhirimov, Tkhakushinov, and Kumpilov proved to be able to stabilize the situation in the republic. In the case of Karachaevo-Cherkessia, a local, Batdyev, made the situation in the republic even worse—which explains why the Kremlin had a hard time learning from its mistakes there and inconsistently switched from an outsider, Smyrnov, to a local, Batdyev, back to an outsider, Ebzeyev, and finally back to a local, Temrezov.

Fourth, this article consciously, if unusually, has chosen to refer to the governor position in masculine gender, in order to make a point that the appointment of only male governors remains another tendency in the North Caucasus. A woman has never been appointed or elected as a regional leader in the North Caucasus, after

or before the fall of the Soviet Union. Gender discrimination, however, is not total. In several cases, alongside the Kremlin's favorites, female candidates were also nominally registered among un-favorable candidates, including Ummupazil Omarova in Dagestan, Elena Knyazeva in North Ossetia, and Irina Mariash in Kabardino-Balkaria. In Russia, a few female governors have been directly elected, all outside of the North Caucasus, including Svetlana Orlova of Vladimir Oblast, Natalya Komarova of Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug, and Marina Kovtun of Murmansk Oblast. In the Soviet era, at least two females served leaders of the legislative branch of power in the North Caucasus, including, Roza Eldarova who was speaker of the Supreme Soviet in Dagestan, 1962–1967, and Tamara Khetagurova, who was the speaker of the Supreme Soviet in North Ossetia, in 1963–1975.

Finally, the appointment of two outsiders in a row in Dagestan indicated the Kremlin's special approach to Dagestan. More importantly, the second appointee, Vladimir Vasilyev, is an ethnic Russian. This is not the first time when an ethnic Russian was appointed as acting governor in the North Caucasus. At least three ethnic Russians served as acting governors in post-Soviet republics in the North Caucasus, including Sergey Abramov, in 2004, in Chechnya, and Igor Vasilyev and Valentin Vlasov, in 1999, in Karachaevo-Cherkessia. What makes Vasilyev's case unique is that he is the first ethnic Russian considered for a permanent position. If appointed, Vasilyev would become the first ethnic Russian governor to serve in a North Caucasus republic in post-Soviet time. During the Soviet era, according to our research, at least 81 leaders of the North Caucasus republics were ethnic Russians, out of a total 129. Though Vasilyev identifies himself as ethnic Russian, his autobiography includes information about his non-Russian name, Alik Abduali Asanbaev, which he inherited from his father, an ethnic Kazakh, and later changed both his first and

last names to Russian versions, Vladimir Vasilyev. *Chernovik*, an opposition newspaper in Dagestan, also published an unverified rumor, claiming that Vasilyev had roots in Dagestan.

Conclusion

The Kremlin has tried different policies toward governor elections/appointments. So far, the Kremlin's policies have lacked strategic vision and were based on trial and error. As a result, the Kremlin has failed to develop a comprehensive policy even toward the North Caucasus republics, which remain deprived of direct elections of governors, unlike most Russian regions. Fearing that pro-Kremlin candidates would not be able to win direct elections in Dagestan, Ingushetia, and North Ossetia, the Kremlin quickly encouraged them to switch to appointing governors by the local parliaments, based on the Russian president's recommendation. Later, the Kremlin encouraged Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, and Adygea to adopt similar laws, even though there was no risk that direct elections would destabilize those republics. The Kremlin, however, could establish a unified approach toward all the republics, allowing direct elections everywhere as it does in Chechnya. The Kremlin's inconsistency made it obvious that it failed to achieve the desired control over the elections in the North Caucasus, in spite all the efforts made during the post-Soviet decades.

The local ban on direct elections has allowed the Kremlin to develop a more comprehensive policy, which included figuring out that it might be more effective to choose local candidates over outsiders when appointing the governors. However, this approach also remains not fully implemented in the case of Dagestan, where an outsider and an ethnic Russia have been appointed as acting governor. This latest development suggests that the Kremlin is still open to experimenting and learning from its own mistakes in the North Caucasus.

About the Author

Sufian Zhemukhov is adjunct assistant professor at the University of Maryland University College. His research interests include ethnic politics, nationalism, and Islam in the North Caucasus.

Table 2: North Caucasus Governors Appointed by the Kremlin, since 2005

Republic	Locals	Outsiders
Adygea	Aslan Tkhakushinov, 2007–2011 Aslan Tkhakushinov, 2011–2017 Murat Kumpilov, 2017–	
Chechnya	Ramzan Kadyrov, 2007–2011 Ramzan Kadyrov, 2011–2016 Ramzan Kadyrov, 2016– (elected)	
Dagestan	Mukhu Aliyev, 2006–2010 Magomedislam Magomedov, 2010–2013	Ramazan Abdulatipov, 2013–2017 Vladimir Vasilyev, 2017–
Ingushetia	Yunus-bek Yevkurov, 2013–	Yunus-bek Yevkurov, 2008–2013
Kabardino-Balkaria	Yuri Kokov, 2013–	Arsen Kanokov, 2005–2013
Karachaevo-Cherkesia	Rashid Temrezov, 2011–2016 Rashid Temrezov, 2016	Boris Ebzeyev, 2008–2011
North Ossetia	Taymuraz Mamsurov, 2005–2010 Taymuraz Mamsurov, 2010–2015 Tamerlan Aguzarov, 2015–2016 Vyacheslav Bitarov, 2016–	

ANALYSIS

The Year of a Strongman: Ramzan Kadyrov in 2017

By Huseyn Aliyev

DOI: [10.3929/ethz-b-000271418](https://doi.org/10.3929/ethz-b-000271418)**Abstract**

Despite reductions in federal subsidies to the North Caucasus—as a result of economic crisis and Western sanctions—over the past year, Chechnya’s leader Ramzan Kadyrov has been remarkably successful in retaining his control over the Chechen republic and expanding his influence regionally, as well as in some areas of Russian foreign policy. A mixture of approval with covert criticism is a new trend in the Chechen strongman’s efforts to influence Russian foreign policy. Kadyrov was also successful in retaining his image of one of the most controversial Russian regional leaders. In 2017, Kadyrov not only organised the largest Muslim human rights protest action in contemporary Russian history, but also was singled out by the Magnitsky Act for rampant human rights violations in his republic. In order to boost his credentials as a regional Muslim leader, Kadyrov has taken charge of the return of families of the North Caucasus ISIS fighters from the Middle East. At home, the Chechen leader unleashed an ambitious campaign of family and clan appointments aimed at allocating most of the high-level jobs in the Chechen government and administration to his family and close associates.

Foreign Policy Influence

Over the past several years Ramzan Kadyrov became more active in the international arena than any other regional leader in Russia. An avid Instagram and Twitter

user, Kadyrov regularly comments on international politics, as well as on Russian foreign policy. Most of Kadyrov’s views on foreign policy are in agreement with Russia’s official position. For example, his comments in

December 2017 criticising American President Donald Trump for recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital followed Russian support for the UN resolution against the U.S. policy.

Along with Kadyrov's efforts to assume the role of region-wide Muslim leader, his ambitions to influence Russian foreign policy continued to increase in 2017. On September 3rd, a large crowd of protesters gathered in front of the Myanmar embassy in Moscow following Kadyrov's appeal to all Muslims to protest against the persecution of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar. Protesters included not only Chechens and other North Caucasians, but also Muslims from Central Asian republics and the South Caucasus. Although the gathering was never officially approved by the Moscow authorities, police made no efforts to disperse the crowd. On September 5th, a much bigger demonstration consisting of approximately 10,000 protesters gathered in the Chechen capital Grozny on Kadyrov's appeal to support Rohingya. In addition to organising both protests, Kadyrov publicly denounced Russia's use of its veto against a UN resolution accusing the Myanmar government of slaughtering Rohingya civilians. During his speech, Kadyrov expressed his regret that it is impossible to "send Chechen troops" to defend fellow Muslims in Myanmar and called for an international boycott of "Buddhist terrorism."

Although a few days later, Kadyrov chose to soften his rhetoric and called for the protests to cease, Moscow had only a limited reaction to Kadyrov's criticism against its foreign policy towards Myanmar. Nevertheless, the events surrounding the anti-Myanmar protests organised by Kadyrov demonstrate the Chechen leader's growing ambitions to assume the role of Muslim leader on a regional scale. Bearing in mind that Kadyrov's call for protest in Moscow was directed towards all Muslims residing in Russia—leading to the largest protest action by Muslims in the recent history of the Russian Federation—speaks volumes about the effectiveness of Kadyrov's methods of achieving his goals. The anti-Myanmar protests in Moscow and Grozny were also first-of-their-kind Muslim protests in Russia on human rights issues.

Kadyrov's ability to criticise the Kremlin with impunity on foreign policy issues is due to both his long-term friendship with the Russian president and his regular contributions to Russia's military campaigns. Chechen military police has served alongside pro-Assad forces in Syria since the start of Russian involvement in the Syrian conflict. Chechen units allegedly participated in the siege of Aleppo in 2016. Kadyrov's militiamen also supported pro-Russian separatists during the active phases of the Donbas war in Eastern Ukraine.

New Name on the Magnitsky Act List

Notwithstanding Kadyrov's active engagement addressing human rights issues for other Muslims around the world, his image as a "human rights defender" in Chechnya received another blow in 2017. On December 20, the U.S. Treasury added Kadyrov to the list of Russian citizens sanctioned under the Magnitsky Act. The announcement came amidst growing accusations against Kadyrov of human rights violations, abductions and extrajudicial executions of his opponents. Another Chechen on the list of recently sanctioned individuals is Ayub Katayev, the top Chechen law enforcement officer, allegedly involved in the torture and murder of gay men.

Kadyrov's rule has been marked by violent persecutions of all forms of dissent. Human rights groups report that hundreds of people have disappeared in Chechnya since the mid-2000s. Allegations of torture, disappearances, extra-judicial executions and assassinations of Kadyrov's critics, opposition members, suspected Islamist insurgents and sexual minorities have been growing over the past five years. The most recent wave of human rights accusations against the Chechen leader involves the abduction, torture and murder of over one hundred gay men in Chechnya since 2016.

Russian and international human rights organisations documented that the numbers of disappeared persons in Chechnya are growing at an alarming rate. For instance, over 40 people were reported missing in 2017. Kadyrov has long been accused of human rights violations, yet few formal actions were taken, apart from occasional criticism of the Chechen strongman's actions by Western politicians. Spokesman for the Russian President Dmitry Peskov dismissed the new wave of sanctions describing them as "illegal and unfriendly".

Returning North Caucasians from the Middle East

Taking charge of the return of families of ISIS fighters of North Caucasian and Central Asian origin was another recent attempt by Kadyrov to participate in Russian foreign policy ventures. It was first announced in November 2017 that the first group of 41 women and children from several North Caucasus republics, as well as from Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, were brought from Syria to Grozny. The second group consisted of 93 mostly Russian citizens from Chechnya, Dagestan and Ingushetia. Most of the returned ISIS family members were captured either by Kurdish forces during the siege of Raqqa or by pro-Assad forces in different parts of Syria and then passed over to Chechen emissaries in Syria. A larger group of 150 Russian citizens from both Syria and Iraq was returned home in early 2018.

The return of the North Caucasians was supervised and implemented by Kadyrov's subordinates, who then passed residents of other North Caucasian republics to law enforcement agencies in their respective regions. Each of the events was covered by the Chechen TV channels, which presented the return of the North Caucasus women and children as a "great success" for Kadyrov. Indeed, the acknowledgement for Kadyrov's efforts went well beyond the praises on local Chechen TV channels. In his annual press-conference, President Putin personally thanked Kadyrov for the return of children from war zones.

Bearing in mind that since late 2016 Chechen military police units were regularly deployed to Assad-controlled areas of Syria, Kadyrov already had an opportunity to engage in Russia's military venture in Syria. There is, however, no verifiable information as to whether the return of North Caucasian women and children had been masterminded by Kadyrov or simply happened due to the inflow of ISIS prisoners to pro-Assad forces as a result of successful offensives against ISIS. Nevertheless, the occasion enabled Kadyrov to present himself not only as the only leader of North Caucasian republics to participate in "saving children" in the Middle East, but also as a regional leader who has taken responsibility for returning citizens of Central Asian republics.

Ensuring Loyalty at Home

A former separatist commander, Ramzan Kadyrov was appointed as the head of the Chechen Republic in 2007 following the death of his father Akhmad Kadyrov, the first pro-Moscow leader of Chechnya since the end of the Second Chechen War. Kadyrov remained an avid supporter of Putin and received lavish reconstruction aid from Moscow. The ongoing economic crisis in Russia reduced the Kremlin's capacity to finance Kadyrov's regime and the inflow of subsidies from Moscow began decreasing after the introduction of Western sanctions against Russia, annexation of Crimea and the decline of oil prices in 2014–16. In 2017, the Chechen republic received 40.4 billion roubles (similarly to 2016), but federal subsidies for 2018 have been reduced to 27 billion roubles. Keeping in mind that from 2007 to 2015, Chechnya was receiving on average 60 billion roubles per year, the current budget was cut by more than half.

Due to the reduction of funding from Moscow, Kadyrov is no longer able to purchase the loyalty of Chechen elites as he previously did. The new strategy of control is based on replacing nearly all key government officials with Kadyrov's clan and family members. Since his re-election in 2016, Kadyrov appointed his nephew, Yakub Zakriyev, as the first vice-prime minister of the republic. Another nephew, 28-year old Idris Cherkhigov,

was appointed as the head of the Road Police department in November 2017. Cherkhigov's father already serves as the minister of Transport and Communication. Idris's new position was previously occupied by Shamkhan Denilkhanov, who happened to be married to Ramzan Kadyrov's sister. Denilkhanov in turn was appointed to the Ministry of Interior (MVD) as the lead official responsible for Chechnya.

The trend began to increase during the last several months of 2017. Four members of Kadyrov's family received top government jobs since September. In December, a 21-year old Kadyrov family member, Khas-Magomed Kadyrov, was appointed as the Head of the Grozny Police Department. Khas-Magomedov previously was in charge of the Anti-Narcotics Department. Following his promotion, his job at the Department was given to another family member, Gayirbek Delimkhanov. The same month, Kadyrov's clan member, Tamerlan Khuchiyev was appointed as administrator of the Achkhoy-Martan region of the republic. Tamerlan's brother, Muslim, was given the job of mayor of Grozny, the Chechen capital.

Despite budgetary cuts, Kadyrov retains the absolute support of Vladimir Putin. On a number of occasions throughout 2017, the Russian president praised Kadyrov's work and expressed his satisfaction with the Chechen leader's management of his republic. Nevertheless, Kadyrov continued to seek reassurances of support from the Kremlin. On November 27, in his interview to a Russian TV channel, Kadyrov claimed that he is willing and ready to step down from his job. His claim was almost immediately dismissed by the Kremlin, which released a statement that the Chechen leader will remain in his position, because he is needed by the Russian president. Notwithstanding Kadyrov's flamboyant behaviour and the widespread accusations of embezzlement of federal funds lodged against him, an opinion poll conducted by Levada Centre in 2016 reported that about 70 percent of respondents amongst the Russian public supported the re-appointment of Kadyrov as the head of the Chechen Republic in September 2016.

Conclusion

In the March 2018 presidential elections, Putin received 91.44 percent of the votes cast in Chechnya. Although only half of eligible Chechen voters participated in the elections, Kadyrov emerged successful in securing some of the best voting numbers supporting for Kremlin in the Russian Federation. The re-election of Vladimir Putin for another six years in office is likely to ensure a secure position for the Chechen leader. Projected economic growth in Russia, as well as Kadyrov's ability to adapt to changing budgetary conditions—evidenced by

the focus on family in recent appointments—will further strengthen Kadyrov’s position in Chechnya and in Moscow. In 2017, the Chechen Republic replaced Dagestan as the most insurgency-affected republic in

the North Caucasus. With 59 conflict-related fatalities (47 in Dagestan) in 2017, from Kremlin’s perspective, Chechnya more than ever requires the strong leadership of Ramzan Kadyrov.

About the Author

Huseyn Aliyev is a LKAS Research Fellow at the School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Glasgow. He specializes in armed conflicts, non-state armed groups, and informal practices.

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BOOK ANNOUNCEMENT

A New Publication on the History of the North Caucasus: *From Conquest to Deportation: The North Caucasus under Russian Rule,* by Jeronim Perović

(London/New York, [Hurst/Oxford University Press](#), 2018)

Despite the extensive Western media coverage of the North Caucasus since the outbreak of the Chechen wars of secession in the 1990s, there are still surprisingly few Western studies dealing with the complex history of this region and its peoples. The numerous books that have appeared over the last years have originated from an interest in understanding the roots of the Chechen wars, and mostly represent cursory historical overviews rather than in-depth historical investigations. Instead of drawing on original research based on sources from Russian and other archives, many of these studies, especially with regard to Chechnya, rely heavily on publications from Chechen émigré authors. As informative as these accounts are, they need to be treated with caution, since they frequently offer a monochromatic narrative, explaining each historical episode, up to the outbreak of open war between Chechnya and Russia in the 1990s, in the context of an epic struggle between an expanding Russian power and the resistance of an oppressed people. In a similar fashion, Western scholarship tends to portray the relationship between the predominantly Muslim peoples of the North Caucasus and Russia as a long history of “permanent warfare.”

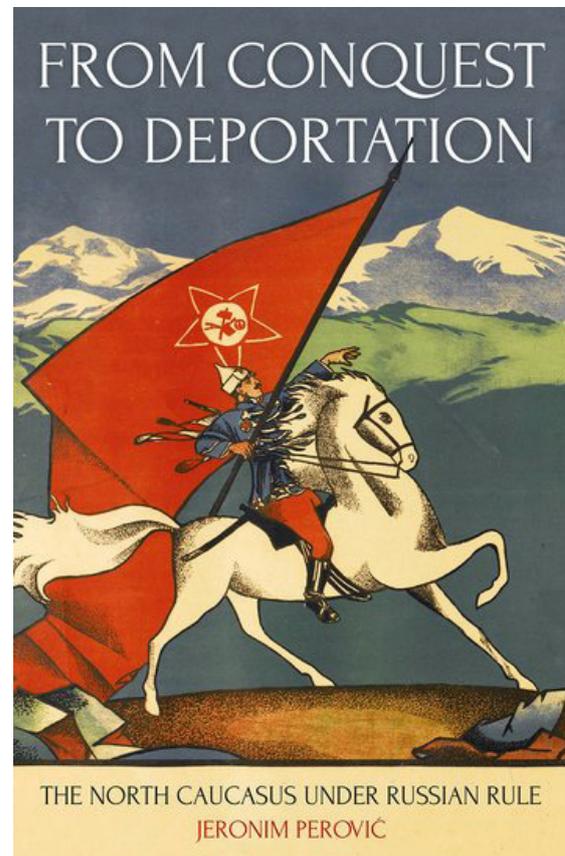
From Conquest to Deportation: The North Caucasus under Russian Rule, published in 2018 by Oxford University Press (New York) and Hurst & Company (London), seeks to rectify some of these shortcomings. Its author, Jeronim Perović, offers a major contribution about a region at the fringes of empire which neither Tsarist Russia, nor the Soviet Union, nor in fact the Russian Federation ever really managed to control. It analyzes the state’s various strategies to establish its rule over populations that were highly resilient to change imposed from outside, and which frequently resorted to arms in order to resist interference with their religious practices and beliefs, traditional customs, and ways of life. However, this book goes beyond existing Western scholarship, which typically portrays developments in the North Caucasus in the context of an epic struggle between an expanding Russian power and the resistance of an oppressed

people. In contrast, the author argues for an approach which goes beyond this dichotomy, seeking to understand the trajectories in the framework of the specific North Caucasian cultural setting. Like other peoples in the Soviet Union, the mountaineer societies of the North Caucasus suffered from state repression and frequent cruelty at the hands of the security forces. Nevertheless, the creation of ethnically-defined territories and the introduction of new institutions—public schools, Communist Party organization and Soviet state structures—combined with industrialization and urbanization offered new social prospects and career opportunities. The questions that need to be addressed are thus not only why people took up arms against certain measures introduced by the state, most notably the disastrous attempt at collectivization and dekulakization in 1929/30. But also crucial is understanding how people perceived the new opportunities and the ways in which they eventually sought to take advantage of them. Rather than viewing the history of the North Caucasus only as a matter of subjugation or resistance to Bolshevik rule, what needs examining is the changing nature of state-society arrangements, the degree of stability these arrangements produced, and the question of why arrangements at times broke down and conflict erupted.

In order to arrive at a new understanding of developments in the North Caucasus during Russian imperial and Soviet times, this analysis includes not only the perspective of state and party representatives at local, regional and central levels, but also the views of people living through this time as direct participants and observers of events. Through the story of Musa Kundukhov, a Muslim Ossetian general in the Russian Imperial Army, the famous Chechen Sheikh Ali Mitaev, the memoirs of party functionary and later dissident Abdurakhman Avtorkhanov, or the unpublished diaries of Chechen resistance fighter Khasan Israilov, we can get a better notion of how members of the indigenous society viewed Russian rule and what motivated their reactions to state policies, and thus come to a general understanding of how Russian rule affected the identities and loyalties of North Caucasian society over time and space.

While this book covers the whole of the North Caucasus, its focus is mainly on the eastern part of the region, and mostly on Chechnya, which constituted, from the state's perspective, the most troublesome spot. Although this book offers a longitudinal view of North Caucasian history from the times of war and conquest in the 19th century up to recent developments in the 21st century, the emphasis is on the early Soviet period. It was during the 1920s and 1930s that these societies came, for the first time, into contact with a modernizing state that sought not only submission and loyalty, but unconditional support and active participation in the new socialist project—demands that many of these peoples, in Moscow's judgment, failed to live up to. The Stalinist deportations constituted radical measures of a totalitarian state that was ultimately unsuccessful in enforcing its claim to power and authority over this difficult-to-govern part of the Soviet Union.

Unlike most of the extant scholarship, the account presented in this book relies on a wide range of unpublished archival material (namely from the Russian state and party archives located in Moscow), Russian-language document collections, memoirs, as well as new research in multiple languages. Most importantly, it connects the larger history with the stories of the peoples themselves, tracing developments through the accounts of state officials, religious leaders and resistance fighters. Only if macro-history is combined with concrete life stories and detailed accounts of key events can history be interpreted without the prejudice and ideology that has characterized the work of authors in both the West and Russia.



ABOUT THE RUSSIAN ANALYTICAL DIGEST

Editors: Stephen Aris, Matthias Neumann, Robert Ortting, Jeronim Perović, Heiko Pleines, Hans-Henning Schröder, Aglaya Snetkov

The Russian Analytical Digest is a bi-weekly internet publication jointly produced by the Research Centre for East European Studies [Forschungsstelle Osteuropa] at the University of Bremen (<www.forschungsstelle.uni-bremen.de>), the Center for Security Studies (CSS) at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (ETH Zurich), the Resource Security Institute, the Center for Eastern European Studies at the University of Zurich (<<http://www.cees.uzh.ch>>), the Institute for European, Russian and Eurasian Studies at The George Washington University, and the German Association for East European Studies (DGO). The Digest draws on contributions to the German-language *Russland-Analysen* (<www.laender-analysen.de/russland>), and the CSS analytical network on Russia and Eurasia (<www.css.ethz.ch/en/publications/rad.html>). The Russian Analytical Digest covers political, economic, and social developments in Russia and its regions, and looks at Russia's role in international relations.

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Research Centre for East European Studies at the University of Bremen • Country Analytical Digests • Klagenfurter Str. 8 • 28359 Bremen • Germany

Phone: +49 421-218-69600 • Telefax: +49 421-218-69607 • e-mail: laender-analysen@uni-bremen.de • Internet: <www.css.ethz.ch/en/publications/rad.html>