CAUCASUS CONFLICT CULTURE

Anthropological Perspectives on Times of Crisis

Stéphane Voell and Ketevan Khutsishvili (eds.)

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Der Kaukasus ist gekennzeichnet durch ein komplexes Nebeneinander von Menschen, die sich als Teil unterschiedlicher ethnischer Gruppen verstehen. Ungelöste Territorialkonflikte wie Bergkarabach führten bis in die jüngste Zeit zu bewaffneten Konflikten. Geschichte und Identität werden auf nationaler und lokaler Ebene stets neu ausgehandelt, um Ansprüche und Interessen geltend zu machen. Zu eben jenen Themen forschten Ethnologinnen und Ethnologen aus dem Südkaukasus und Deutschland. Sie dokumentieren eine alternative Perspektive auf Konflikt und Kultur in der Region. Die Arbeiten basieren auf intensiver Feldforschung und dokumentieren mit ihrer Sichtweise ›von unten‹ ein vielschichtiges Bild von beispielsweise interkulturellen Beziehungen, die sich trotzt der konfliktreichen Gegenwart entwickelten.

The Caucasus is characterised by a complex side-by-side of people who claim to be of different ethnic origin. Unsolved territorial conflicts, like in Nagorno-Karabakh, have led until recently to armed conflicts. History and identity are constantly negotiated and renegotiated on the local level based on ever-changing claims and interests. Precisely these issues are at the core of the research of the contributing anthropologists from the South Caucasus and Germany. Their work is based on intensive field research and they present, with their perspective ›from below‹, a multi-layered picture of, among other things, intercultural relationships that have emerged despite the conflict-torn present.

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edited by
Stéphane Voell
Ketevan Khutsishvili

CURUPIRA

Cover picture: Sergey Parajanov, Collage (1989) from the series ›Several Episodes from Gioconda's Life‹, Sergey Parajanov Museum, Yerevan (Armenia), printed with the grateful permission of the Sergey Parajanov Museum.

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Ketevan Khutsishvili and Stéphane Voell

Preface

At beginning there was a conference in Tbilisi. At the end there is this book. The latter is closely related to the former. The book would not have been possible without the initial conference. But the conference and the book are very different from each other.

In November 2011 the Department of Ethnology of the Ivane Ja-vakhishvili Tbilisi State University hosted the conference ›Caucasus, Conflict, Culture: First Symposium on Anthropology and the Prevention of Conflicts in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia‹ (CCC1). The event was organised together with the Department of Cultural and Social Anthropology of the Philipps-Universität Marburg. It was probably the first purely anthropological conference (just three years after the Georgian-Russian War in August 2008) to deal with conflictual relations in the South Caucasus, focussing on the perspective ›from below‹ and including numerous local scholars.

Many papers given at CCC1 referred explicitly or implicitly to the conflict-torn Caucasian present. The presenters touched a wide variety of topics, from mass protest rallies in Yerevan preceding the Nagorno-Karabakh war to staged skirmishes between prominent chefs in local restaurants, enacting a culture war on which nation supposedly invented which dish.

During the conference in Tbilisi, local researchers and German experts on the Caucasus met. The Department of Cultural and Social Anthropology in Marburg is specialised on research on conflict in Latin America and colleagues working in this area left the conference in Georgia with a fresh perspective. The present volume reflects to a certain extent the multilayered event in November 2011.

Despite the variety of topics presented and discussed at the conference, they can all be subsumed under three core headings. The first concerns social life in times of conflict and thereafter. Interesting here were the alternative pictures drawn by the participants, i.e. how the local population cooperate even though – on a national level of regions in conflict – one might

suspect no interrelations at all. The second heading might be called the role of ethnicity and the third the (re)construction of history. These three core issues are reflected in the contributions to this volume.

Fig. 1: Participants of ›Caucasus, Conflict, Culture 1‹ in Uplistsikhe, November 2011; some participants are not on the picture (photo: CCC).

For various reasons, only half of the papers presented at CCC1 made it into the present book. Apart from the authors in this volume, the following colleagues presented their research during the conference in Tbilisi: Parvin Ahanchi, Milena Baghdasaryan, Sylvia Karl, Harutyun Marutyan, Teona Mataradze, Satenik Mkrtchyan, Irakli Pipia, Ruzanna Tsaturyan and Manana Tsereteli. Lale Yalçın-Heckmann held the keynote lecture at the beginning of the conference on citizenship in the Caucasus. We also want to name here the discussants and panel chairs: Nino Abakelia, Susanne Fehlings, Oliver Reisner, Nino Ghambashidze, Ernst Halbmayer, Elke Kamm, and Natalie Turabelidze.

The conference did not have a clear-cut conceptual or theoretical frame. Consequently, it is not possible to create retrospectively for the present book a comprehensive approach that could include all the contributions. Many articles are based on the presentations made in Tbilisi, but developed their arguments further in the longer text. We, the editors, refrained consciously from creating some kind of umbrella concept that is and was not there and which might, most importantly, contradict our original ›Caucasus, Conflict, Culture‹ project idea. CCC meant for us the collaboration with

local colleagues in anthropology. This collaboration did not take place ›on paper‹ alone, but in day-to-day research, together with our students in intense relationships. It was important to get involved with the position of the other, even if we were often not of the same opinion. This was not always easy; different academic traditions collided, and different ideas on theory and methodology.

Fig. 2: Participants of ›Caucasus, Conflict, Culture 2‹ in Akhaltsikhe, August 2012 (photo: CCC).

The symposium in Tbilisi in November 2011 was the first part of ›Caucasus, Conflict, Culture‹. In a second project, entitled ›Transgressing Conflicts from Below: Interethnic Contacts in Border Villages in the Southern Caucasus (CCC2)‹ (Akhaltsikhe, August 2012) we organised a student research project in Caucasian border regions. Three groups of students did research on cross-border contacts between Abkhazia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia at the Enguri Bridge to (near Zugdidi, Georgia), Novemberyan/Bagratashen (Armenia) and at the Red Bridge (border post between Georgian and Azerbaijan).

The third part of ›Caucasus, Conflict, Culture‹ took place in August 2013 and had the title ›Caucasus Germans: Conflictual Relations in a Multiethnic Region‹ (CCC3). The aim of the student research project was – first – to do research in multinational teams on the cultural memory of Germans in former German villages in Georgia and Azerbaijan and conduct interviews with the local population on their perception of the Germans, who once

lived there. The second aim of CCC3, and the central aim to all ›Caucasus, Conflict, Culture‹ projects was to create a forum in which student and graduate anthropologists (and scholars in related disciplines) could work and discuss together intensively.

Fig. 3: Participants of ›Caucasus, Conflict, Culture 3‹ in Tbilisi, August 2013; some participants are not on the picture (photo: Oliver Reisner).

The projects show that conflict continues to be an important research topic in the Caucasus, but that alternative approaches – on issues not related to the conflict directly – can bring new knowledge on the background and consequences of the conflicts. Our series of projects also demonstrate that anthropological approaches especially, based on research on the ground, preferably in mixed teams with researchers from the Caucasus and foreign experts, can reveal the local dimension of conflicts in collective memory, transborder trade, day-to-day social life, material culture, conceptions of space or in interethnic contacts in urban and rural life.

It was only possible to organise this series of projects (CCC1-3) in cooperation with our co-organisers, friends and colleagues from Armenia (Levon Abrahamian, Gayane Shagoyan, Satenik Mkrtchyan, Hamlet Malkumyan, Artak Dabaghyan), Azerbaijan (Ilham Abbasov, Sergey Rumyansev), Georgia (Giorgi Cheishvili, Lavrenti Janiashvili, Tea Kamushadze) and Germany (Susanne Fehlings, Sascha Roth, Natalie Wahnsiedler and especially Elke Kamm). We want to thank Ernst Halbmayer, the director of the Department of Cultural and Social Anthro-

pology in Marburg. He was the official applicant for the project and stood behind all of our work in the Caucasus. Halbmayer, like his predecessor as chair of the department in Marburg, Mark Münzel, made it possible that the Caucasus (and the post-socialist sphere in general) could find a niche in an anthropology department specialised on research in Latin America.

The cover image for this book is a detail of a collage by the artist and film maker Sergey Parajanov (1924-1990). Levon Abrahamian, who knew the renowned cineaste and artist well, and who played a role in one of his films, suggested the collage from the series ›Several Episodes from Gioconda's Life‹ (1989). The same image was used for the programme booklet of the conference CCC1. We used to call it ›Mona Lisa in Conflict‹. We can use this picture for the cover with the kind permission of the ›Sergey Parajanov Museum‹ in Yerevan.

Marburg and Tbilisi, November 2013

Stéphane Voell

Going Beyond Essentialism
Introduction

It's always about conflict. This is the impression one could get when read-ing about or doing research in the Caucasus. Especially since the so-called ›Five-Day War‹ between Georgia and Russia in August 2008, the topics ›war‹ and ›conflict‹ (again) gained prominence in scholar's accounts on the Caucasus. The smoke of the ›guns of August 2008‹ (Cornell 2009) has not yet settled before the researchers arrived. Since the summer of 2009, only one year after the war, a conference marathon has taken place in Tbilisi on the topic of conflict. Armies of researchers invaded the Georgian capital, but many stayed for only a few days. One could speak with the conflict specialists in the comfortable and expensive café-bars, which function as a sort of panic room, providing shelter from the ›threats‹ of the real world outside. In those days one could find in Tbilisi all kinds of experts, who could start, end or mediate conflicts. There were specialists for writing about conflicts, analysing conflicts, comparing conflicts or taking pictures of conflicts. In Tbilisi, the researchers on conflict met representatives of GOs, NGOs, INGOs and local or foreign governments looking to react to the consequences of conflict. After the Russian tanks, the white, all-terrain vehicles of the international organisations began patrolling in the country-side. Elizabeth C. Dunn described the situation of the Georgian internally displaced persons (IDPs) – the refugees from South Ossetia – caught up in the mechanisms of humanitarian organisations: crowded into ready-made camps, they were victims of an ›adhocracy‹ of humanitarian aid, »a form of power that creates chaos and vulnerability as much as it creates order« (2012: 2).

›Something on conflict again?‹ – The responses to our invitation to take part in a conference on anthropological perspectives on conflict in the Cau-casus were often far from enthusiastic. A German colleague wrote me that research on conflict in this area had been going on for years and to contin-ue in this direction was in his mind far from fascinating. We generally

agreed with our colleagues, but projects often follow paths that funding programmes foresee. We had the opportunity to apply for financial support within a funding initiative of the German Federal Foreign Office through the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) called ›Conflict Prevention in the South Caucasus, Central Asia and Moldova‹. This initiative offered financial support for all kinds of activities organized by various academic disciplines. The programme did not have very specific requirements regarding the content of proposals or core aims. The main criterion was that the project should create an open forum for meeting and dialogue between students, graduates and researchers in the conflict region. Our first goal was consequently to use the possibilities of the DAAD to bring researchers and students from the three South Caucasian states and Germany together in order to discuss new perspectives on conflict in the region.[1] Despite general reservations about conferring yet again on conflict, we managed to put together a list of renowned anthropologists from the Caucasus that would participate and applied to the DAAD.

The conference ›Caucasus, Conflict, Culture: First Symposium on Anthropology and the Prevention of Conflicts in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia‹ took place from 31 October to 5 November 2011 at the Tbilisi State University. For four days a group of 37 scholars discussed topics such as interethnic relations, self-conception and construction of ethnic groups, conflict and collective memory, political protest, ethnicity and conceptions of space, expressions of conflict and what might come after the conflict. It became clear that despite a certain degree of saturation, this topic remained a powerful factor in the accounts of the people and the researchers, whether in relation to refugees from the internal wars or to constructed ›food wars‹ between the states, i.e. where did this or that meal or beverage originate.

Even on a more general, organizational level, the conflict background was constantly present. The conference only could take place in Tbilisi because of the political relationships between the South Caucasian states. An Armenian would never attend a conference in Baku, and his Azerbaijani colleague – even if it would theoretically be possible – would have difficulties getting to Yerevan. These difficulties are not only of a formal nature. An

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[1] The funding initiative only permitted us to invite researchers from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Germany. It was not possible to finance the trips of researchers from other countries (e.g. from the Russian Federation), no matter what their credentials.

Azerbaijani researcher who had attended a conference in Armenia could have problems in planning their future academic career back home if the trip to Armenia was made public. The situation is equally complicated for Georgians in regard to Abkhazia. This problem has many more dimensions, and during the preparation of the conference and during the event itself, concrete problems did in fact arise. Meetings such as ours in November 2011 are consequently far from being a banal get-together among local scholars.

Our symposium therefore took place in a specific setting: On the one hand in an atmosphere of satiation with talk of conflict because – at least since the troubles in Nagorno-Karabakh – it is the main lens through which the Caucasus is perceived.[2] But on the other hand there were and continue to be conflicts in the region, from full-fledged wars and ›frozen conflicts‹ to local imaginaries strongly affect by legacies of conflict.

I personally experienced this situation during my research on local legal practices in Svan villages in the south of Georgia.[3] At the beginning of my research in summer 2009, I conducted, together with my field assistant, several exploratory interviews in the village of Asureti. It was once a German village called ›Elisabethtal‹. Its German population was deported to Central Asia in 1941. The village is part of the multi-ethnic administrative region Kvemo Kartli in which the Georgians are one of many minorities together with Azerbaijanis, Armenians, Greeks, a few Ossetians and Russians (Wheatley 2005). Kvemo Kartli was often affected by intensive power struggles between locals and intruders in the past. It was the scene of large confrontations like the Battle of Didgori (AD 1121) in which a relative small army lead by the Georgian King David IV defeated a much larger Seljuq army (Fähnrich 1994). It was where, until the late Soviet period, groups were often resettled to and deported from (Trier/Turashvili 2007). Open conflicts were rare since 1991 but many small incidents between

ethnic groups, mostly between Georgians (Svans) and Azerbaijanis or Greeks have been recorded (Wheatley 2006). In the last years, especially since the so-called ›Rose Revolution‹ (2003) and the election of President Mikheil Saakashvili (2004), things have been quiet. But after the Five-Day War between Russia and Georgia, numerous Georgian IDPs arrived in Kvemo Kartli. They were Svans who lived in the Kodori Gorge in Abkhazia. The valley was still under Georgian control, but the Russian and Abkhazian armies used the war in 2008 to gain full control of Abkhazia and drove the Svans out.

In this situation I arrived in Asureti with my field assistant. The purpose of our casual conversations was not so much to gather detailed information but more to get to know the region and its people. We asked questions, but the questions were maybe a little too direct. In the anthropology of law, one often tries to document legal practice on the basis of case studies, processes related to specific events that in general are some kind of conflict.[4] These were our very first days in the field and we approached the people sitting on the main street in Asureti and asked straightforward questions about problems and conflicts in the village and how the local population copes with them. Many respondents said little, if anything. Why should they speak to foreigners about conflicts in the village or between ethnic groups in the region? One man got angry. Why do foreigners, he asked, always ask questions about conflicts? Why are they only interested in conflicts? There are no conflicts here and apart from that, so many other things to speak about.

I came to Kvemo Kartli to study conflict, but many people there did not want to talk about it. This was not only because nobody likes to speak to foreigners about conflicts. The locals gave me the impression that I stood at the end of a long queue of researchers all asking the same thing. What should I do? I had no idea and stayed in the queue. Conflict remained an

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[4] The conflicts I was interested in – in relation to my research on traditional law – were of another type. During the conference and in this edited volume ›conflict‹ generally referred to interstate and intrastate conflicts, which oppose larger groups of people. Conflicts in the Svan villages in Kvemo Kartli on the other hand consisted of controversies in the neighbourhood, fights between young people, car accidents, arguments about property relations, thefts and the many comparable incidents in which the daily routine of village life is disturbed.

important part of my research, because conflict relations[5] continue to shape the day-to-day life of the people of Kvemo Kartli (but not only there).

Conflict in the Caucasus is a ›gatekeeping concept‹ (Appadurai 1986), a category that limits theorizing and outlines prevailing research topics in the region. The literature on the Caucasus is steeped with conflict or conflict-related issues. Conflict appears to be general to the Caucasus and one of the most important points to start with when doing research on the region.

There are two problems inherent to such a gatekeeping concept, and both shaped our conference in November 2011 and the articles collected in this book. First, research works generally on the basis of project-based funding. The programmes of the funding organisations have in the recent years focussed on conflict-related issues. If a researcher wanted to apply for a research project or for funds to organise a conference they were often obliged to focus on conflict or to choose an issue closely related to conflict. The contributions in this edited volume are the product of a conference funded by the DAAD within the frame of such a conflict-related programme.

Second, when many scholars in the political sciences, conflict studies, sociology, history and other disciplines research, write and confer on topics related to conflict, it will tend to overlay other important issues. But this does not mean that conflict is not a relevant topic. Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh continue to be important issues, never mind the trouble spots in the North Caucasus, like in Chechnya, Kabardino-Balkaria or Dagestan. Borders are closed for some groups of people and the exchange of fire (Armenia-Azerbaijan)[6] or incidents with armed groups (Dagestan-Georgia) continue to take place.[7] And anthropology – as this edited volume shows –, with its emphasis on the local, emic point of view and long-term field studies, can provide important contextualisation of often only macro-political explanations of these conflicts.

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[5] With ›conflict relations‹ I mean a situation characterised by open conflicts, e.g. between Svans and Azerbaijanis (Trier/Turashvili 2007) or Svans and Greeks (Wheatley 2006). The social memory of these conflictsand how past conflicts inform contemporary social interrelations are also important.

[6] Exchanges of gunfire are reported frequently between the Armenian and Azerbaijani armies at the borderline, see e.g. Radio Free Europe 2010.

[7] In August 2010 there were shootings at the border between Georgia and Dagestan between twenty ›gunmen‹ from the North Caucasus and Georgian security forces (Civil.ge 2010).

This edited volume aims at recalibrating research on conflict, and its first task it to present anthropological informed approaches to conflict. Anthropological research is based, ideally, on long-term fieldwork on the ground, including intensive contact with local populations. It is a view from below, and from this perspective, anthropology has shown the relevance of culture in the understanding of conflict dynamics and their impact on political decision-making. Anthropologists look at the local experience of ethnic boundaries, nationalist imaginaries, intercultural relations in everyday life, expressions of fear and the social memory of conflicts. Anthropology cannot replace sociological or political science approaches, but it is in a position to analyse how macro-level policies are received, experienced, practiced, ignored, amplified or transgressed on the local level. Without anthropology, one would only have a partial view of the issue under investigation.

Another goal of this volume is to show that scholars from different nations of the Caucasus and beyond can work together, even jointly in the same projects, on the topic of conflict. This cooperation is not always easy because the scientific worlds in which these researchers have been socialised are very different in respect to theory, methodology and research goals. Our different approaches are often informed by what I would call essentialist orientations in our points of view. But we must go beyond these essentialisms, these *ethnos*-related conceptions of culture (which emerged in the late Soviet period and are still to be found today) and the pronounced deconstructivist theories because they merely reproduce the conventional points of view on conflict in the Caucasus (that is, conflicts are explained on the basis of ›competing *ethnoses*‹ or cost-benefit calculations). The historical emergence of the social fields in which conflicts emerge and reproduce conflictual relations or the social experience of conflict (and post-conflict) situations in everyday life are beyond the scope of such approaches.

Essentialism

When studying the Caucasus, one is often confronted by primordialist conceptions of culture. More concretely, from this perspective, the reasons for conflict between ethnic groups are presented as being founded in the clash of cultures itself. Contemporary notions of culture in many postsocialist countries are shaped by the Soviet *ethnos* theory (Bromlej 1977 [1973]). This theory is based on – in simple terms – the supposed existence of common and durable cultural features and related psychological traits that form the core of an ethnic group. Political motivations do not affect the *ethnos*. Some researchers in the Caucasus do not speak of *ethnos* specifically, but of the

persistence of a specific ›mentality‹ over time. The interesting thing is that the basic assumptions of the *ethnos* approach overlap in the Caucasus not only with folk sociology but also with statements made by politicians in which ›competing *ethnoses*‹ or different mentalities are a recurrent theme.

For Michael Herzfeld, essentialism is the ›violation of anthropological relativism‹ and is for him the original sin of anthropology (1996: 188). Essentialism in its broadest sense is the implicit or explicit idea that culture has, despite any and all contemporary context or interpretation, a specific essence that outlives all changes and which defines its true nature. Culture consists of a hereditary core with identifying features that shapes independent of human consciousness, the structure of reality. The denial of agency and a neglect of temporality are at the core of essentialism.

When one studies conflicts in the Caucasus, one cannot avoid coming into contact with other approaches that are just as irritating as such *ethnos*-related conceptions. Most often, one argues against essentialism on the basis of social constructivism, that all human knowledge is socially constructed. But some such approaches argue the agency of ›homo oeconomicus‹ to such a degree that it becomes itself an unquestioned form of essentialism. Human knowledge is culturally constructed, that can hardly be disputed, but the processes leading to these constructions are manifold and many of them are beyond the grasp of classical political economic or rational choice approaches. Latter are synchronic and which for the most part ignore the historical emergence of the social field. The reasons for conflicts are here only found on the political level, that is, ethnic conflicts are explained as being driven by political and economic interests, by power interests or the control of resources. The essence of this essentialism is the rationality of the market. Culture in these theories is only a disposable quantity that serves the political claims of individual actors; it is described as stone quarry, as material for use for the construction of houses. It is a kind of raw material that people can dispose of freely to found their claims. But to ignore policy and economics in explaining conflicts would be just as naïve as to reduce culture to a tool to be used indiscriminately.

Research on conflict in the Caucasus has to go beyond these essentialisms. The two mentioned perspectives rule one another out, when applied in their extreme forms, i.e. the persistence of some specific core group traits and the concept that the latter are irrelevant in economic and political decision-making. Interestingly, and this will play a role in the following, both approaches rule out the dimension of time.

Essentialism I: ethnos et al.

The ›*ethnos* theory‹ was developed by Yulian Bromley (1921-1990) in the late 1960s (Mutschler 2011). His first major publication on this topic was ›Ethnos and Ethnography‹ (Bromlej 1977 [1973]). The notion of *ethnos* has remained popular in scholarship and has even left its mark in the non-academic discourse. Helene Mutschler shows how this central concept in Soviet ethnography developed in the post-Soviet period to become even more primordialist than it was originally intended to be. She sees the problem in the fact that the Marxist basis was suddenly ignored, which led to a more radical conception of *ethnos* (2011: 256).

Ethnos was defined as »a historically formed community of people characterized by common, relatively stable cultural features, certain distinctive psychological traits, and the consciousness of their unity as distinguished from other similar communities« (Bromley 1974: 66), an equivalent to people (*Volk*), clan, nationality or nation (1977 [1973]: 28) with characteristic (unique) ›ethnic markers‹ or culture (which includes language), a specific ›psyche‹ and an awareness of this unity also in respect to other similar forms (1977 [1973]: 37). The cultural unity of the members of one *ethnos* goes hand in hand with their specific ›psyche‹ (1977 [1973]: 32), or ›system of impulses‹. The latter affects the totality of the needs, interests, values, beliefs or ideals of the members of the *ethnos*.

Bromley continues that even after settlement, the people and their descendants will maintain their distinct ›ethnic markers‹ (the most stable of them being part of the *ethnos*), despite the corrosive effects of migration on other parts of the culture (1977 [1973]: 35-36). The Ukrainians in the Soviet Union and the Ukrainians in Canada have, so Bromley, not only the same denomination but other common markers of culture and the conception of a common origin (1977 [1973]: 37).

The origins of *ethnos* are apparently irrelevant, Bromley even warns against this ›fruitless quest‹ (1977 [1973]: 19).[8] But he writes that the majority of ethnic groups emerged out of the intermixture of ethnically different autochthonous and non-native groups. The self-awareness of the new group tends to ignore the original groups and the conceptions people have about their origins generally reveal a great deal of imaginativeness (1977 [1973]: 97).

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[8] For a discussion of *ethnos* theory see also Dragadze 1978, 1980, 2011, Shimkin 1982.

The role a politicised *ethnos* plays today is discussed by **Ilgam Abbasov** in this volume. He describes some continuities of Soviet political practice in today's Azerbaijan when it comes to the relationship between ethnic groups. In the Soviet Union, ethno-national belonging was held fast in Soviet passports. In post-Soviet Azerbaijan, these ethno-national groups can still be found, ethnicity is recorded, for example, in birth certificates. Relations between members of these ethnic groups in the Soviet period were presented as ›friendship of the peoples‹, a principle that is continued in Azerbaijan under the motto of the ›tolerance of the Azerbaijani people‹, a clear identification of existing power structures. Abbasov shows how contemporary Azerbaijani scholars – by continuously referring to *ethnos* theory – reproduce old concepts of potential conflicts between different *ethnoses*.[9] He shows how ethnic boundaries are constantly reconstructed and supported in national and academic discourse. **Sergey Rumyansev** and **Sevil Huseynova** also address the widely found concept of ›incompatible *ethnoses*‹ in Azerbaijani-Armenian relations as found in the speeches of politicians as well as in scholarly writing.

For Bromley, *ethnos* persists across generations, it has a stable core which is nevertheless affected and moulded by the economic and political environment. *Ethnos* as a social phenomenon is always in motion and contains elements of the past and presages of the future. When the economic and political environment changes, such as in the course of some form of migration, the ›ethnic character‹ would also change (1977 [1973]: 80). *Ethnos* is not as radically primordialist as frequently interpreted today. As such, it reflects the inconsistent policies towards nationalities in the Soviet Union, i.e. the dualism between primordial conceptions of (ethnic) groups and the Marxist belief of the constructed nature of nations and the possibility to overcome them (Mutschler 2011: 263).

The same inconsistencies can be found in post-Soviet Georgia, where, when discussing historical continuities with local scholars, *ethnos* often becomes quite flexible (although some argue the exact opposite). Georgian ethnography has a long history of intensive research, beginning with the ›complex-intensive method‹ of Giorgi Chitaia (1890-1986), the founder of the Georgian ethnological school, the purpose of which was to reveal the unity of basic and secondary elements in a given place (Khutsishvili 2009). In Soviet Georgia it was the main tool for ethnographic research: a group

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[9] On the use of the concept of *ethnos* in the Russian Federation see Mutschler 2011: 250-251, on *ethnos* in Soviet anthropology see Dragadze 2011.

of ethnographers would work intensively in a small region and complete a
›complex historic, prehistoric, and contemporary study‹ (Dragadze 2011: 6).
Nana Meladze describes the complex-intensive method as »intensive stud-
ies of separate small or larger social units (family, gens, community, village
etc.). The ethnographic reality of every *ethnos* is considered to be made up
of a unity of practices with complicated contradictions, and by taking notes
of ethnographic material it is regarded as necessary to make objective and
qualitative descriptions. The ›complexity‹ of this method lies in the fact that
during the research it is important to rely on different parts of life simulta-
neously: material, social, and spiritual – although different, they are deeply
connected to one another« (2004 [2003]: 222-223, emphasis added).

But it would be wrong to say that ethnology in Georgia functions on the
ideal of an unchangeable cultural core that some call *ethnos* and others ›men-
tality‹ – maybe to avoid the Soviet terminology. In discussions with Geor-
gian scholars, it quickly becomes clear that this ›mentality‹ – whatever it is
exactly – is far from stable. And despite possible irritations which often
emerge because of the use of terms such as ›cultural markers‹ or ›survivals‹
at its core, the research in Georgia is not as essentialist as it might appear.
Distant parallels to Pierre Bourdieu's dialectical relation between social field
and habitus (1972) can be identified; and the local scholarly use of mentality
is reminiscent of some ideas common to cognitive anthropology (in relation
to conflict see e.g. Orywal 2002).

My colleagues **Natia Jalabadze** and **Lavrenti Janiashvili** are two such
Georgian scholars who, based on their extensive research, look to describe
contemporary cultural complexities without neglecting continuities in ›men-
talities‹. In their study of the difficult integration process in Kvemo Kartli
(Georgia), the people they spoke to told them that in the Soviet period the
situation had been different to what it was like now. There was more inter-
ethnic contact, and weddings between members of different ethnic groups
were not unusual. The situation changed considerably with the collapse of
the Soviet Union. But the problems had emerged a few years earlier, when
many Georgians were resettled into this region, the result of natural disas-
ters in other parts of the country and the political desire to shift the ethnic
balance towards the Georgian side.

Humanities research in Georgia always had a political dimension (in rela-
tion to traditional law cf. Janiashvili 2012). The interrelation of Georgian
tradition and identity was a recurrent topic ever since the publications of
the writer Ilia Chavchavadze (1837-1907). Even today, it is important for
many Georgian scholars to carve out what is Georgian in the complex re-
gion of the Caucasus, where ethnic groups and what they consider to be

›their‹ culture and ›their‹ place of origin is contested (see also Dragadze 2011: 26-27). But deconstructing these narratives and labelling them essentialist without looking at the context in which they were produced is all too easy. Eric Gable et al. (1992: 802) wrote that the ›tools of deconstruction‹ have all too often been directed towards ›minority cultures‹ that were »using for their own ends the grammar and vocabulary of the main-stream« in order to present their political claims on the basis of tradition. But Western scholars are not immune to the temptations they accuse minority scholars of succumbing to. Those doing the deconstructing should beware of the constructed nature of their own approach.

Essentialism II: the primacy of the economic

In his discussion of the civil wars in Georgia and the reasons for the so-called ›Tbilisi War‹ (20 December 1991-6 January 1992), in which the supporters of the acting president Zviad Gamsakhurdia (1939-1993, presidency 1991-1992) fought with opposition forces, but also the conflicts in South-Ossetia (1991-1992) and Abkhazia (1992-1993), Pavel Baev (2003) concludes that ethnic grievances, past injustices and the Communist legacy were insignificant factors in the outbreak of violence. Baev finds it unnecessary to embed his approach in local history, arguing that »there is neither space nor, presumably, need to provide here detailed information on Georgia's history, geography and demography« (2003: 128). The title of the chapter from which this citation is taken is ›Background: it is the stupid economy!‹, and a reference to Bill Clinton's 1992 presidential campaign. For Baev, the reasons for the civil wars were to be sought solely in the ›all-penetrating shadow economy and corruption‹.

Baev's text is a chapter in a book edited by Jan Koehler and Christoph Zürcher (2003b). All three experts with a profound knowledge of the Caucasus have co-edited a volume on the reasons for conflict and violence in the Caucasus (Baev et al. 2002) and – at least at that time – share the same conceptual approach to the problem. Like Baev, Koehler and Zürcher are crystal clear in regard to where the reasons for violence are not to be found: »Among the most often quoted are such factors as cultural differences; a history of mutual grievances and ancient hatreds; group cohesion and the strength of group identity; patterns of settlement and ethnic demography; defendable borders and rough terrain; the degree of state violence and group discrimination; external support and access to weapons« (2003a: 11). These factors are of only minor relevance when compared to the simple fact that violence emerges when the »relative costs of violence are smaller

than the relative costs of non-violence« (2003a: 11). Factors that are being considered in this calculation are the relative weakness of the state and its capability to maintain its monopoly of violence.[10]

The intellectual father of this rational choice approach to violence is the anthropologist Georg Elwert and his ›markets of violence‹ »understood as economic fields dominated by civil wars, warlords or robbery, in which a self-perpetuating system emerges which links non-violent commodity markets with the violent acquisition of goods. It is the profit implied in the entwined violent and non-violent forms of appropriation and exchange which is the guiding principle of action« (1999: 86). These markets of violence emerge in ›violence open areas‹ in which there are no longer fixed rules for the use of violence, like a state which cannot impose its monopoly of violence. For Elwert, the dialectic between free market economy and violence open areas is vital because economic interactions on the continuum between theft and trade are tied together in such a way that there emerges a conflictual but self-stabilising system of violence and trade. Elwert argues strongly against ›culturalist‹ approaches of violence and emphasises that the driving forces are not ethnic groups or clans but economic interests. In civil wars, culture and religion form a mere ›curtain‹ behind which the real actors and their real motives are hidden (1997).

The anthropologist Günther Schlee (2006) also tends this direction. Strongly influenced by rational choice theory, he underlines the importance of cost-benefit equations in processes of ethnic identification. His entire book is, he writes, an attempt to contradict the usual argument that ethnic belonging or religious differences are the roots of conflict. These are not the reasons but rather the consequences or concomitants of conflict. Ethnic differences are for Schlee the ›raw material of political rhetoric‹ that ethnic entrepreneurs – the ›virtuosi of the manipulation of identity‹ – make use of for their own purposes (2006: 22, 37). Schlee appears to be more moderate than Elwert, explicitly criticising the predominance of economics in Elwert's definition of markets of violence (2006: 67-73), the latter ruling

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[10] Barbara Christophe (2005) argues against describing Georgia under Eduard Shevardnaze (1995-2003) a weak state. She writes, for example, how the government and the administration created laws that were impossible to maintain on purpose. The transgression of state law had to be paid to members of the state administration in the form of bribes. The state cannot be defined as weak on the basis of rampant corruption when it consciously and purposely creates the structures of corruption in which it is also a major benefactor.

out sociological explanations from the start – in fact, even before doing research on the ground. For Schlee, markets do not emerge out of natural human dispositions but are, in general, precisely regulated. Schlee also criticises Elwert's explicit dissociation from what he called ›culturalist‹ approaches that he fails to define more closely. Schlee in turn simply asks who specifically Elwert was accusing of being culturalist? Elwert constructs, so Schlee, ›imaginary ignorants‹ especially considering that most recent literature on ethnicity generally ruled out that ›culture‹ is a reason for conflict.

Rogers Brubaker et al. write that academic reasoning has for a quarter-century been dominated by constructivist approaches of ethnicity and nation. This theoretical perspective was very successful and many important contributions were made: »Once a bracing challenge to the conventional wisdom, it has become the conventional wisdom; once an insurgent idiom, it has become the epitome of academic respectability« (2006: 7). For anthropology, it is a form of etiquette to start articles on ethnicity or nationalism with an academic creed, citing Fredrik Barth (1970 [1969]) or Benedict Anderson (1992 [1983]). Mantra-like, one describes identities as »multiple, unstable, contingent, contested, fragmented, constructed, negotiated, and so on« (Brubaker et al. 2006: 7). The thing is, as Brubaker puts it, that there is basically nothing wrong with this approach, but it is »too obviously right« and »too readily taken for granted«. It has become perfectly clear that ethnicities are something constructed, Brubaker continues, but »how they are constructed is seldom specified in detail« (2006: 7).

Mkhitar Gabrielyan and **Artak Dabaghyan** argue in their review essay on border studies in anthropology that despite the widely used metaphor of ›boundaries‹ introduced by Barth and a ›sense of intangibility of culture‹, the opposite seems to be the case for conceptualising borders themselves, for which the authors see an increasing ›sense of tangibility of borders‹. The deconstructivist approach used for cultures, ethnic groups or nations is not applied equally to the borders between them. Their text is a form of prequel to their research on economic transborder relations in the Georgian-Armenian border zone (Dabaghyan/Gabrielyan 2011).

The problem is that the above mentioned rational choice and constructivist approaches only focus on the contemporary political economy, neglecting the category of time. For **Tea Kamushadze**, for example, the historic dimension is crucial in order to understand present conceptions of history in the conflictual present. Her article is about Rustavi, a city not far from Tbilisi that was built almost out of nothing in the years 1944-1948. Rustavi consists mainly of high-rise residential blocks to which recently was added some colour. Kamushadze writes how the metallurgical industrial city –

though completely new – was embedded in Georgian history and how the new city was provided some historical appeal, both in the Soviet era and today. Based on a case study of school history competition she analyses contemporary forms of historical place-making in Rustavi.

The population in the Caucasus is socialised in a historical-cultural environment and to neglect these basic conditions, constantly enacted by the people affected by them, would be a gross simplification. In the Caucasus, the present ethnic boundaries were built over decades. Even if during the Soviet period, for example, the categories ›Abkhazians‹ and ›Georgians‹ – however contested in their content – were continuously enacted, they were still constructed categories, but they nevertheless structured the social field. Ethnic entrepreneurs may today use such categories for their individual political goals, but they cannot – as the propagators of rational choice approaches often argue – completely reinvent an ethnic group merely to serve their individual political goals. The ethnic entrepreneurs are just as much part of the social field of the Caucasus and they are socialised in this milieu.

Accordingly, **Sascha Roth** demonstrates in his contribution to this volume that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the IDP-issue in Azerbaijan are part of national identity construction and that this construction process is embedded in a specific historical-cultural framework. The conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh is interwoven with public, national and private discourses and Roth discusses these relations on the empirical level by comparing Azerbaijani IDPs and refugees. Roth describes the concept of the Azerbaijani house from an ethnographical point of view and how it is related to the betwixt and between status of the IDPs. Even though the state is instrumentalising IDPs for territorial claims, Roth argues that such reductionist interpretations of the conflict neglect its wider sociocultural and symbolic meanings in contemporary social and political processes in the country.

Rogers Brubaker did research on the use of ethnic categories in the Romanian town of Cluj and came to similar conclusions. For him, the ›everyday ethnicities‹ are important, how ethnic categories reveal themselves in everyday life, in »practical categories, common sense knowledge, cultural idioms, cognitive schemas, mental maps, interactional cues, discursive frames, organisational routines, social networks, and institutional forms« (2006: 6-7). The region in which Brubaker and his team conducted research is characterised by stable, deeply rooted ethnic identifications that are intensely politicised and have led to many ethnopolitical conflicts since the regime change. All these ethnic categories, continuously present and enacted in political life, seem to resist constructivist analyses. Brubaker asks:

»Talk about the fluidity, contingency, and perpetual negotiation and renegotiation of identities can appear frivolous or naïve in this context, and the critique of groupism might seem misplaced. If ethnic and national boundaries are harder, more durable, and more constraining in Eastern Europe than in the United States, it might be asked, then why *shouldn't* one take ethnic and national groups as units of analysis?« (2006: 9, emphasis in original)

This is exactly what **Nino Aivazishvili-Gehne** has done in her research among the Ingiloy – a in some form Georgian group in Azerbaijan. By ›in some form‹ I mean that the Ingiloy seem to escape ethnic categorisation, which is not often the case in the Caucasus, where people are generally very active in identifying themselves with one or the other ethnic group. Ascriptions and self-definitions of being Ingiloys are complex. They define themselves not as Azerbaijani and not as Georgian. It appears impossible to give them a name: even the often used term Ingiloy is of limited functionality and rarely used by the locals. Religion and language appear to be the most important aspects for these self-definitions and ascriptions.

Moving beyond essentialism

Essentialism has been critiqued over and over again. There is nothing new to add. Earlier I wrote above that approaches labelled as primordialist are not as monolithic in their conception of culture as often presented. Even ›Western‹ authors criticised for their essentialist theorising, like Clifford Geertz in ›Islam Observed‹ (1968), are – so Philip Salzman (2009) – not as essentialist as their critics might want us to believe. For Maximilian Forte (2007) the critique of essentialism is, consequently, a ›critique of nothing‹ and only makes sense in abstract philosophy. My own call to go beyond essentialism is much simpler. It is a call to return to ethnography, to research on the ground and theorising that stands to it in a dialectical interrelationship. Apriori theoretical assumptions like in the case of *ethnos* theory or in the predominance of economics in social processes should be avoided.

Furthermore, as Brubaker suggests, taking ethnic and national groups as units of analysis, essentialist positions themselves might even be used as starting points for analyses. Anne Philipps writes in ›What's wrong with essentialism?‹ that »there is not much point rubbishing [essentialist constructs] as analytically wrong, because once in existence, they become part of our social reality« (2010: 3). She refers to the research by Gerd Baumann (1996) on immigrants in West-London. The population in Southall was

reduced in public discourse to the seriously misleading five religious-ethnic categories Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims, African Caribbeans, and Whites. These categories are – as easily imaginable – a gross falsification of the real complexity, but, they were still often referred to by local politicians and policy makers. These categories also entered social life, despite the fact that people are far more complex in imagining and practicing their cultural identities. It would be, however, inappropriate to ignore these ›folk reifications‹ only because they are constructs of a primordialist character: »Once they have entered into people's self-definitions, they assume a life of their own« (Phillips 2010: 4).

Labelling someone ›essentialist‹ is generally an accusation of being an adept of primordialist conceptions of culture, like *ethnos* or similar approaches. Essentialism is generally conceived to be a bad thing (Phillips 2010: 3), it is a ›slur word‹ used ›to put down the opposition‹ (Hacking 1999: 17). Innumerable are the times I met ›Western‹ researchers in the halls of conferences – and our conference in November 2011 was no exception – who complained about ›stubborn survivors of Soviet primordialism‹. Elwert's (1997) critique of ›culturalist‹ approaches was directed at Eastern and Southeastern European scholars (Schlee 2006: 203, on Elwert in endnote no. 25). But local scholars accused of being culturalists in turn ignore the foreign experts because – not being locals – ›they‹ do not ›really‹ know what is going on. One could add another divide, that is, between the local scholars trained in academic institutions in the Caucasus and those often much younger scholars who have had the benefit of having studied at Western universities. This younger generation, trained in what is considered to be a good constructivist scientific approach and with a clear conception of where primordialist threats are located, return to the Caucasus – assuming they do not find a job abroad – and are then caught in a generational conflict with their ›essentialist‹ elders, who often still holders of influential academic positions.

I would argue that the only way to overcome these exclusionist arguments – labelling someone as primordialist or essentialist – is to conduct research in which we all work together on the same level. In my own research project on the contemporary relevance of traditional law in the Georgian lowlands, I made the important experience of working together intensively with local scholars. The project was founded by the Volkswagen Foundation (Hanover, Germany) and from the start, local partners had to be included in the project. My colleagues and I eventually agreed on a joint conceptual approach, but we had to be constantly aware of our very different theoretical and methodological approaches, products of our respective

and very different academic socialisation. The local knowledge and expertise based on many years of field research could be complemented by our – for the Georgians – alternative understanding of the issue of traditional law. It was never the purpose to convince each other that one's own approach was better than the other. We each had many positions that the other did not understand, but we found a level of communication that was acceptable to all of us.

Our conference in November 2011 was organised in the same spirit. The participants were not invited because of being adepts of one or the other specific theory but because we thought that they reflected the wide range of scientific discourse on conflict in the Caucasus.

Anthropologically informed perspectives on conflictual relations in the Caucasus are manifold. The conference witnessed numerous innovative approaches to them. Present at the conference were Lale Yalçın-Heckmann (2012) and some members of her former research group ›Caucasian Boundaries and Citizenship from Below‹ from the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle/Germany (Baghdasaryan 2011, Materadze 2011). They discussed alternatives on how to cope with the complex social setting in the Caucasus without reproducing, for example, usual ethnic categories. They introduced citizenship as formal category of belonging to the debate and describe the role it plays for the people in the South Caucasus. Based on intensive field research on the relationships between the citizen and the state, they presented different social, historical and even ethnic dimensions of citizenship.

Philipp Naucke examines the Georgian ›Rose Revolution‹ of 2003 from a more general perspective and the role of Gene Sharp, the intellectual father of the so-called ›colour revolutions‹, in the development of nonviolent political protest. Sharp's work had a great impact on the study of power relations but, as Naucke, the anthropologist, points out, without including the local cultural and social perspective. But Sharp is not only a scholar but equally a political activist, promoting his philosophy of nonviolent protest to overthrow governments. Naucke describes the influence of Sharp's ideas on the activists of the Georgian Rose Revolution and underlines a central problem: Gene Sharp himself forms the empiric reality that he then analysed on the basis of his theory.

In a paper published in 1990, Levon Abrahamian discusses the protest rallies in Yerevan preceding the Nagorno-Karabakh War in 1988, the year Armenia declared its independence. He describes the Karabakh Movement, a mass popular movement between 1988 and 1991 that demanded the unification of Armenia with Nagorno-Karabakh, as ritual and festival on the

basis of the writings of Mikhail Bakhtin, how through the protest rallies the cosmos of everyday life is turned into festive chaos. In this volume **Levon Abrahamian** and **Gayane Shagoyan** recall this interpretation. While they are well aware of the political nature of the rallies and how they were politically instrumentalised, they focus on the ritual side of these events. They begin with a description of the rallies as a carnivalesque Armenian ›urfestival‹ and compare them with the mass rallies in 2008. These latter rallies began after the contested presidential election win by Serzh Sargsyan. His opponent, Levon Ter-Petrosyan, who was already president between 1991 and 1998, reintroduced some festival elements from 1988 in order to create the same feeling in his 2008 comeback campaign. But this time the government responded more vehemently so as to avoid a festival of similar dimensions.

Recalling the past is also important for residents of Baku. **Melanie Krebs** discusses how cosmopolitanism is negotiated and conceived in the city. In the self-definition of people from Baku, cosmopolitanism is an important part nourished by the history of the city since its emergence as an urban centre in the late 19th century. Baku is a projection screen for a number of different local perceptions of cosmopolitanism. The question here is often one of who is cosmopolitan and, further, who should live in the city. It is about how individuals position themselves. Krebs concludes that Baku is today far from being cosmopolitan, but it has a strong memory of being so.

Sevil Huseynova examines the same city as a site of permanent Armenian-Azerbaijani contact, from bloody clashes to mixed marriages and friendships based on a shared memory of socialisation. Even today, in a time when the Nagorno-Karabakh discourse of violence and enmity dominates official political and ideological discourse, academic studies, and Azerbaijani and Armenian media, there continues to be an alternative dimension to Armenian-Azerbaijani contact that cannot be reduced to pogroms and violence alone. Huseynova describes the historical development of these multifaceted relationships and the external and internal factors that have contributed to them. Understanding the specificities of the ›imagined community‹ (Anderson 1992 [1983]) of Armenians in Baku is only possible in the context of approaches that take account of the dynamics and often radical changes in the boundaries of the community and the social status of its members (or the status of Armenian ethnic identification). She demonstrates that despite tragic clashes (1918-1920), Muslims and Armenians have continued to live within the space of one and the same city and that Armenian-Azerbaijani contact has not ceased. She describes how some Muslims have managed to survive only because of their acquaintances with Armeni-

ans. The problem in writing about Armenian-Azerbaijani contact is that both Azerbaijani and Armenian scholars (historians, anthropologists etc.) have become ideologists, arguing that today's conflict is rooted in a long and incessant enmity. Huseynova argues that the failure of historians and social scientists to ignore such cases of peaceful relations only contributes to the essentialisation of this form of inter-ethnic enmity.

One of the most innovative studies in the recent past on the results of conflict in the Caucasus has been conducted by **Sergey Rumyansev**, **Sevil Huseynova** and **Arsen Hakobyan**.[11] This Armenian-Azerbaijani research team studied village exchanges (swap) between Armenians and Azerbaijanis during the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Azerbaijnis living in Nagorno-Karabakh resettled into Armenian village in Azerbaijan and the Armenians resettle to the former Azerbaijani villages. Rumyansev and Huseynova show that despite the full-fledged war in Nagorno-Karabakh, alternative discourses existed on the local level. The villagers agreed, for example, to take care of each other's cemeteries. The authors show that today's pessimistic approach to interethnic contact is based, as already mentioned above, on essentialist perceptions of ›incompatible *ethnoses*‹. The village exchanges reveal another, more complex side. The war could even have been more violent with more victims if there would not have been such a long experience of reciprocal assistance and cooperation. In his chapter, Arsen Hakobyan, discusses the social and cultural transformations that took place after the villages were exchanged. Despite the conflict, it was a very pragmatic and well planned process. Hakobyan describes how not only the village were exchanged but how whole village economies changed, the villagers continuing their economic activities in their new homes. But while houses and economies were transformed, specific sites, such as sanctuaries or cemeteries were preserved.

Yulia Antonyan in her chapter describes memorials in the newly founded villages of Armenian IDPs who left their homes because of the Nagorno-Karabakh war as ›realms of memory‹ (Nora 1998 [1984]). Here the focus lies especially on *khachkar*, Armenian cross-stones, which form the majority of these monuments. She presents the *khachkar* in a new Armenian village as part of the process of the domestication of the landscape, not only a memorial of the war. Since the IDPs in the new village often came from a variety of different place, the memorials provide the villagers a possibility to

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[11] The Armenian-Azerbaijani project was supported by the South Caucasus branch of the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung (Germany), cf. Huseynova et al. 2008.

bring together the separate memories of their respective communities under one shared social roof. The memorials thus function not only as a forum for looking back but also for looking forward, they are ›instruments‹ for the development of a common community life in the IDP villages.

Dialogue with students

Our symposium was special in the sense that we invited, in addition to the scholars presenting papers, 27 students from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Germany to discuss in small groups on the conflicts in the Caucasus. **Giorgi Cheishvili** and **Natalie Wahnsiedler** report here on how they experienced these discussions. At the beginning of the symposium the five student groups were drawn in a lottery that ensured that at least one student from each of the four participating nations were part of each group. These groups then discussed over four days in a manner of their own choosing one of the conflicts in the region, in Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh (these were also drawn by lot). The members of the teams were to debate both the contemporary situation and possible outcomes of the conflict. We asked them to be innovative and not to think along the usual political lines adopted by their home countries. A German graduate scholar (i.e. someone outside of the conflict region in question), observed and where needed moderated the group process.

The goal of this experiment was not necessarily to develop new ideas on possible ways out of the respective conflicts but (in meeting with the DAAD funding initiative) to open a dialogue among students who for the most part were not only participating for the first time in such a major international conference but who had often never meet or spoken intensively with anyone from any of their neighbouring countries.

Initially the group dynamic proved difficult because many participants found it difficult to look beyond their own positions on the conflicts, or those that dominated the discourse in their home countries. But after a while the students stopped to argue about which conflict party was ›right‹ and started to speak about possible solutions. At the end of the conference the five groups had to present the results of their discussions. These presentations were in many ways one of the highlights of the conference. One student presenter argued that ›we‹ have enough of always getting the same point of view on the conflict in the region, directing this statement at the scholars present. More student meetings like this would surely promote the development of alternative points of view on the conflicts in question.

The students used the forum and made programmatic statements. Local politicians were denied the ability to find solutions in the conflict resolution processes. With social networks and the internet in general, the youth ›we‹ argued that they might find alternative ways to overcome the contemporary problems in Caucasus. Some were so euphoric to claim that a resolution of the conflicts could only be achieved when the ›old generation‹ and the Soviet remnants in their blood had passed and faded away. The ›older generation‹ listened attentively and some did argue in response that the students were equally biased, essentialist and radical in their position. – And there we have them again, the essentialisms, that during the conference were identified between different groups of scholars and – as so it seems – also between generations.

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Mkhitar Gabrielyan and Artak Dabaghyan

At Borders as in Islands
Steps of Anthropology into the Field[1]

Anthropological research in the vicinity of international borders has become an anthropological sub-discipline comparable to ›urban anthropology‹, ›rural anthropology‹, the ›anthropology of migration‹ and other such vaguely defined fields, which partake in even vaguer ›urban studies‹, ›peasant studies‹, ›migration studies‹ and so on. Not unlike them, but faster – in few decades – the anthropology of borders, still unwilling to take a position vis-á-vis ›border studies‹, has come to fill many long shelves. The flood of reports, working papers and articles from around a far from borderless world continues. In the last years, two voluminous research companions on border studies have been published (Wastl-Walter 2011, Wilson/Donnan 2012), including dozens of neatly collected contributions, among them many ethnographically informed and anthropologically minded chapters. Two other recent volumes are dedicated to the similar issues in Africa, where ›border studies‹ have a long tradition, comparable in many regards to the tradition in Europe (Abisoja 2011, 1993). Anthropologists Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan, seasoned editors of many collections of essays, have rightly characterised the current state of increased academic interest in borders as a ›scholarly fascination‹ (Wilson/Donnan 2009: 8, 2012: 2).

This is not an exaggeration, and therefore is cause for suspicion: based if not on the true numbers of anthropological papers and monographs about

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the borderland/er/s, then on the logic and on certain ›logistics‹ of this ›fascination‹.[2] Equally within and beyond the border studies, taken in general, the anthropology of borders is linked with real or putative global systemic changes (as the fall of the colonial empires, the disappearance of the Iron Curtain, globalisation, ›clash of civilizations‹, the ›end of nation-state‹) the assumption that border anthropology may be part and parcel of these same developments has to date evaded any serious discussion. Sidney Mintz's brief remark probably points in this direction: »people, capital, goods and ideas (including ideas about people, capital and goods and the media for the transmission of such ideas) now move with greater frequency and velocity across political boundaries than ever before in history. Among many more important consequences, this change has profoundly affected traditional classifications or typologies of human societies. By blurring the boundaries once thought to separate these societies from each other and by calling into question all of the familiar criteria of social classification, this change has emptied such categories as ›Western/non-Western‹, ›developed/under-developed‹, ›primitive/civilized‹, and like polarities of even their residual meaning« (2000: 169).

Here we will necessarily skip the lengthy discussion on the relationship these late modern border studies have with earlier scholarly attempts to understand human diversity. The links provided to genealogy of ›border studies‹ by Henk van Houtum (2000), Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly (2010), Malcolm Anderson and others are more related to the respective parent disciplines – geography, history and political science – and list only few now forgotten diffusionists among their forerunners (Anderson 2010: 233, Nattel 2005). Frederick Jackson Turner with his theory of the frontier in American history is an indisputable authority; later theories and works based on studies of the US-Mexican border have been used in the analysis of the borderlands worldwide, often to the neglect of differences in so many details that any commonalities become barely credible (Stoddard 1986, Alvarez 1995, Asiwaju 1993, Blatter/Norris 2000, Wilson/Donnan 2012). These and other recently invented and penned genealogies of modern ›border studies‹ only add to the reduction of anthropology to the rank-and-file status of an ›auxiliary‹ research.

[2] The momentum is put no less emotionally by Henk van Houtum: »The desire to open the border, to seize the spirit of the fall of the Berlin Wall and to escape topological thinking seems even further removed from us than at the beginning of the 1990s« (2012: 406).

What really matters for our purposes is that the emerging ›border studies‹ in sociocultural anthropology may very well be a belated, and, hence, a dubious reaction to globalisation, a placebo for earlier academic or simply human quests. Wilson and Donnan described their emerging interest in international borders (the first one was the Irish-Irish or British-Irish?) since »it was widely asserted in certain academic circles, associated with what has become known variously in scholarship as postmodernism, cultural studies and globalization, that the world had become smaller, time and space had been compressed, there had been a speeding up in global movement of almost everything significant, and the preeminent institutions of modernity were no longer as powerful and unassailable as they once were« (2012: 4). But they retreat a few pages later to familiar postulations, an attempt to reconstruct the disappearing residual meanings of the changed and still changing ontological stuff that we still hesitatingly and far from unanimously call ›culture‹ (cf. Brightman 1995, Wolf 2001: 307-318). Why do we study the ›international‹ borders? Why do we choose to be so thin in decision of our research destination, when there are so many divides in our societies much more visible and conveniently traceable? What is an anthropology of borders to anthropologists, beyond personal fascination and hesitation, beyond the romanticism of the distant? These questions will not all be answered here, and if so, only allegorically.

Trapped in a hallmark?

One of the more recent features of anthropological writing on borders and borderlands is that the initial lamentations about the number and quality of case studies available for comparative study, particularly in the European context, have substantially decreased. Although many parts of world have not yet, or cannot yet be sufficiently studied, anthropological publications depicting people and their lives at international borders have increased manifold. On the other hand, like other recently invented fields of research, the ›anthropology of borders‹ is still more a genre of writing, trapped between deconstructivist efforts of the dominating postmodern anthropology and the pressures and often misleading contexts engulfing border studies. In a word, here we are dealing with a classic case of a discipline trapped

between other disciplines.[3] This is, in part, a result of our infamous domestic affairs (e.g. Englund/Leach 2000: 238-239, Paasi 2011: 12, Agnew 2009: 23), but also a result of infusions from our ›parent‹ disciplines, such as human geography, where the essentialist ideal of the ›border‹ dominates *jus solis*. Especially the latter has become important, underpinning the otherwise weak theoretical temptations of anthropology to claim new terrain.

Today, international borders are a marker that unifies diverse disciplines and academic traditions. The results of their cross-fertilization, we argue, must be treated with caution.[4] While some anthropologists would claim that the »dynamism of life and work at borders and among border peoples, and the changing dimensions of global political economy have pushed border studies to challenge disciplinary compartmentalization« (Wilson/Donnan 2012: 12), others have tried to look at the contribution anthropologists have made to the ›Journal of Borderland Studies‹, published since 1986 (Brunet-Jailly 2010). This contribution is calculated to be about five percent, roughly the same as ›history‹, while economics, political science, sociology and geography contribute two to four times more often. And as may be expected, the US-Mexico and EU borders have attracted significantly more scholarly attention than other regions.

The impact of anthropologists, however, is acknowledged in the ›parent‹ disciplines of border studies, and visible in the frequent citation of ethnographic accounts (Elden 2010, Johnson 2011, Paasi 2011), as well as in an

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[3] Paraphrasing Eric Wolf's description of anthropology as ›a discipline between disciplines‹ and John Agnew's repeatedly cited ›territorial trap‹ inherent to essentialist state-territory models (Agnew 2009:22).

[4] »Another factor that makes the search for trends and strands in this field of science problematic is its feasibility to encompass many different kinds of meanings of borders. For instance, borders can be interpreted in terms of territory, ethnicity, real/imagined, virtual/real, objects/subjects, identity, and gender to name but a few examples. It may therefore be difficult to define the borders of the interpretation of borders. What is more, it may be equally difficult to define the borders of the disciplines and approaches dealing with borders. […] Many border scholars specifically demand a multi-, inter-, or transdisciplinary approach, making a mono-disciplinary search for studies on borders and border regions almost inadequate. Nevertheless, the plea for fertilization between disciplines is still far ahead of its realization« (Houtum 2000, 58-59). Donnan and Wilson see it similarly: »by the mid-1990s borders had become such a buzzword that it was difficult to imagine a field or an experience to which the word could not be or was not being applied. It was truly in danger of being both everywhere and nowhere.« (1999: xiv).

›anthropologisation‹ of European border studies (Houtum 2000: 67-72, 2010, 2011, 2012, Donnan/Wilson 1999, Wilson/Donnan 2010, 2012). The latter trend is especially important because it reflects an expanding presence of ethnography in the methodological toolkit of many social sciences (Comaroff 2010: 525-528, Montsion 2010) traditionally perceived to be less distinct in their views on human beings than geography. In addition, anthropologists' writings may often simply be misread in such ›chthonic‹ disciplines as geography and political sciences, not to mention the practitioners, who today influence international border regimes the most, and apply border anthropology correspondingly. It will suffice to notice how common references to anthropological reports from borderlands in the contemporary nationalism studies have become, how we are no more surprised when used by »geographers […] using GIS, cartography, ethnography, and Participatory Action Research to study borders« (Johnson et al 2011: 65) or how »literature on the nation, on attachment to homeland, and identity politics, for instance, can profitably be read from a territorial perspective« (Elden 2010:811).

Many representatives of the more established disciplines in border studies point at the same time to the inter-disciplinary nature of modern border studies and its general ineffability also assumed responsible for non-existence of any unifying ›border theory‹ (Agnew 2008, Anderson 2010, Brunet-Jailly 2005, Houtum 2000, Johnson et al 2011, Kearney 2004, Kolossov 2004, Newman 2003). The sporadic pleas for such a ›border theory‹ are significant as they reveal at least two important moments:

1) that the surge in multidisciplinary border studies has taken the sub-discipline very close to producing a recognisable ideology (but not a theory).
2) that border studies are themselves caught up in attempts to buttress boundaries in the social sciences that are purportedly eroding (Wallerstain 2003).

Commenting on Immanuel Wallerstein's some earlier statements about the outdated nature of concepts like ›society‹ and ›culture‹ as central units of investigation (cf. for example Wolf 2001: 307-412, Brightman 1995), Thomas Hylland Eriksen has linked this scepticism to a changed academic focus, granting priority to »process and unpredictability instead of structure and regularity« (1993: 134). John Comaroff has highlighted this change in anthropological theory work more radically, stating that current anthropology does not share a single episteme or a unified search for a ›theory‹. He

suggests instead »Methodology, upper case: the principled practice by which theory and the concrete world are both constituted and brought into discursive relationship with one another. And they are epistemic in that they entail an orientation to the nature of knowledge itself, its philosophical underpinnings and its notions of truth, fact, value. None of them is new, none of them absent from anthropologies past. Together, they underscore the point that our topical horizons ought to be configured by our praxis, not the other way around« (Comaroff 2010: 528-530).

In the search for answers, anthropologists encounter, experience and sense borders as working conditions for themselves and as living conditions for the people out there, but also as B/Order, the both upper case, as a cultural challenge to reason, and as a field of research, all in one. This is one of ways to explain the ostensibly disproportionate intellectual efforts international land borders attract as territorial, geographical, civilisational, postcolonial or other residues of the Roman Limes or of the Treaty of Westphalia (Agnew 2002, cf. Conversi 1999, Wert 2008, Wolf 2001: 353-370). The intellectual space allotted to ›border anthropology‹ in the form of ›border studies‹ as well as in sociocultural anthropology in general, and the amount of physical inhabited space that is commonly defined as ›borderland‹, ›frontier‹ or ›marchland‹, easily recalls to our mind the modest ratio of islands, if compared with vast spaces of continents, and a very strange statement in an early article of Thomas Hylland Erikson: »Trobriand archipelago, ... in many ways is to anthropology what the Galapagos islands are to biology.« (1993:134).[5]

The difficulties of border anthropology

What do anthropologists and ethnographers actually do in modern border studies? Without overdue reference to specific borderland studies, including our own work in Armenian borderlands (one specific site among many specific sites), we will describe some of our recent personal impressions on the rapid increase of contemporary literature on borders. By their very nature incomplete (as are anthropological studies of border(land)s *per se*), these critical notes will hopefully contribute to the realisation that a multidisciplinary ›border theory‹ may quite possibly even be »undesirable, for two rea-

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[5] Drawing this association further ironically, we must add, that the Galapagos archipelago, and the evolutionism from out there have played no less important role in the early history of anthropology.

sons. First, individual state borders are historically contingent and characterized by contextual features and power relations. There can hardly be one grand theory that would be valid for all borders. *Such a theory is not problematic because the borders are unique, but rather because of the complexity of borders and bordering.* Borders manifest themselves in innumerable ways in daily lives and state related practices and in institutions such as language, culture, myths, heritage, politics, legislation and economy. These practices condense in the contested idea of citizenship that brings together state, power, control, social responsibilities and possibilities. *This implies that borders can be theorized reasonably only as part of wider production and reproduction of territoriality/territory, state power, and agency*« (see Paasi in Johnson et al. 2011: 62, emphasis added).

Simply, this is one of the possibilities, how anthropology is being invited into intellectual tackling around the borders. Before answering such invitations, we need again to recall the case of the US-Mexican ›hyperborder‹, as it is sometimes termed quite deservedly. This one border between only two nation-states – there cannot be less – has already been divided, by means of ›border segmentation‹ (Stoddard 1991: 9-13) to facilitate description and analysis. Twenty years later, the number of segments along this and other borders has multiplied while anthropology continues to laps »into straightforward description of the region and how it might develop economically, with researchers constantly pulled toward the specific, the unique (sometimes the folkloric), and the problematic […] and thus continuing to eschew comparison for a focus on more local and immediate concerns« (Wilson/Donnan 2012:8).

Arguably, the picture may be presented as more coloured when we look through the borders and mentally unite them with another ›unanalysed given‹, that is, the state (Nagengast 1994: 116). Among geographers this is a common trend, but it has taken a postmodernist turn and is perceived as a »broader, more imaginative and ›neo-Foucaultian‹ study of borders through the discourses linking identities, immigration, mobility, social networks and other spatial themes« (Anderson 2010:242). This ostensibly contributes to the debate, allowing many previously discipline-bound discourses of hyphen-states (a term we have thankfully borrowed from Comaroff/Comaroff 2008) to be perpetuated at any given international border. This is actually the second, larger shift in the postmodern anthropology of borders in its role as an auxiliary, even applied (sub)discipline representing people on borderlands as cut loose from any other means of nationhood, or even humanity, except as living at the margins of nations and trumpeting their citizenships. Ansi Paasi has recently concluded that »it is not difficult to understand how much emotional bordering is into national celebrations,

flag days, independence days, military parades, selective national landscapes and other elements of national iconographies« (2011: 22). What a strange cast of residual light on the today *pro forma* ›imagined communities‹, governmentality, state, sovereignty and nationalism, all together!

Clifford Geertz spoke of this expanding literature in sociocultural anthropology as ›leviathan‹ studies (2004: 580). We are not sure what role Laura Nadel's call to ›study up‹ in the 1970s may have played in this trend, which, as exemplified in modern border anthropology, has arrived at its terrestrial margins, establishing such a close alliance with geography that the anthropological gaze on the border as a »space between centralized governments with national territorial claims, where encounters between individuals and state power are most visible« (Trouillot 2001: 125) becomes virtually indistinguishable. Trouillot continues: »Yet millions of encounters of the same kind also occur within national or regional boundaries: a car owner facing state emission laws in California, a family facing school language in Catalonia, India, or Belize, a couple dealing with a new pregnancy in China, a homeless person deciding where to sleep in San-Francisco, Rio de Janeiro, or New York, a Palestinian in the Occupied Territories having to decide which line to cross and when, or a citizen of Singapore or Malaysia having to conform to prescribed behaviour in a public building« (Trouillot 2001: 125). Recent border studies, regardless of their disciplinary origins, are saturated by observations not or no longer exclusive to borders, neither technically, considering the latest improvements in transport and surveillance (Johnson et al 2011) nor metaphorically, the interplay of borders and boundaries having become virtually universal (Balibar 1998, 2004, Barth 2000, Houtum 2010, 2011, 2012). These approaches often misrepresent borders and borderland populations, underplaying differences between centre and periphery, consciously de-territorialising borders for the sake of spatialisation; value and hierarchy are (routinely) added discursively. Yet it is true that »technologies of space-time compression […] have effected a sea-change in patterns and rates of global flow – of the concrete and the virtual, of humans, objects, signs, currencies, communications« (Comaroff/Comaroff 2008). Borderlands, airports and seaports are not only facilities of these flows, but also their destinations. State borders in these flows, are, more often than not, less important than any geographically measurable distance from point A to point B, where »it has become entirely impossible to tell centers and peripheries apart« (Hannerz 1997: 6). The latter statement does not sound that convincing considering anthropological analyses comparing the loosely controlled marchlands of states with their heartlands, or when putting together the ›stuff‹ with its unspecified core. Peripheries

have changed, by and large in tune with other changes, emerging in centres as well. But is the solution ›spatiotempralization‹? John Comaroff thinks not, because this »situating [of] almost anything in its broader context« is a process that has »as often as not, been banalized by reduction to the language of the local-and-the-global; just as the historicization of almost everything tends to be translated into the argot of the epochal, into framing terms like *colonialism, empire, modernity, postcoloniality*, and *neoliberalism*« (2010: 531, emphasis in original). Do the millions of square miles of often sparsely populated borderlands warrant comparison with each other, as Wilson and Donnan argue (2012: 7-8), at the cost of comparison with adjoining or distant, often overpopulated urban and industrial heartlands and hinterlands merely to find out which of these fictional and, hence, culturally (albeit not always ethnically) ›homogenous‹ units give or take on change here, now, and compared with the past, all the while perpetuating the eternal centre/periphery distinction? ›Periphery‹ is, indeed, an epiphenomenon of the glorious Other, or, at least, one of its fellow creatures. And if in this way borders continue to construe relativity, dignifying otherness, how can we ever hope to undermine the polarity of ›us‹ and ›them‹ embedded deep in border studies?

The image of ›intermittent‹ border is a common theme in border studies. It utilizes a functional perspective on international borders as ruling or regulating the people, commodities and information that cross them, providing them a ›gatekeeper function‹. Again the discourse of the state prevails. Although ›gate‹ and ›border‹ are not the same, even less so allegorically, in conventional wisdom borders are constantly being crossed. In this respect Donnan and Wilson write: »when we look at borders in the terms of their supposed decline as barriers to movement, we must balance this expectation that many borders continue to act as gates, sometimes« open, sometimes closed.« (2010b: 5). Geopolitical or even technical exceptions (not all states are in amicable relations, and not the entire length of a border can be equipped with passes, gates, personnel or with the respective furnishings, such as walls, barbed wire and militia) do not negate the rule. In their essential permeability the borders remain natural, although the ›natural border‹ is just as much an invented concept (Sahlins 1990, Agnew 2002). To put it another way: constructed, and, hence, cultural is the border's very impermeability, be it historical or simply functional. In fact, the unnatural, socially constructed, invented, or simply self-imposed nature of borders is its very undeniable essence, constraining the no less natural human desire to cross borders or to overcome enclosures.

The functional, or, to be more precise, bi-functional representation of the border is not merely another late positivist generalization (omitting its well-known Malinowskian prerequisites), aimed at transforming a cultural product of history into a natural given. Descriptions of transforming and of being transformed border/lands‹ can be found in many ethnographies (i.e. Hann/Beller-Hann 1998, Pelkmans 2012). But with any turn to rationalisation, usually entailed within a linguistic turn, the border's discursiveness suffers. When Donnan and Wilson identify the conflicting nature of the border's political and economic functions, and attribute their closure to politics and their opening to economics (2010b: 5-7), they fail to realise how both economy and politics, at least in the border setting, act ›hand in glove‹ (e.g.: Agnew 2009: 143-202). Adding only a little historical perspective, any reviewer of such generalisations can argue against functionalist approaches as half-truths, noting, for example, how economic concerns are often behind security arguments (guest labour vs. local employment, weapons production, etc.) or how political activities have unified Europe after the World War II).

Fredrik Barth at the gates

Border studies in anthropology, probably because of their contemporaneousness to the current postmodern era in the discipline, often impress readers with inadvertently allegorized ›stuff‹. Tsvetan Todorov wrote that allegory implies the existence of at least two meanings for the same word and that any one of the meanings can disappear (cited in Clifford 1986: 98). The potential disappearance of at least one meaning of border is a virtual constant in descriptions of all concerned disciplines, revealing the context-dependent perusal of the word and its many correlates. For example, today it would be difficult to find ›natural borders‹ used without quotation marks in any informed scholarly publication in the social sciences when used to describe populated terrain, even in late modern human geography. The dominant functionalist approach in border studies has triggered experiments with synonyms – ›limits‹, ›margins‹, ›edge‹ – and the purposeful use of descriptive adjectives – ›soft‹, ›uncontrolled‹, ›permeable‹, ›smart‹, ›porous‹, ›invisible‹ and so on.[6] Other cases and contexts call to mind the exact opposites. Some authors prefer reverting to older terms, like ›frontier‹, or

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[6] ›International‹ is of course also such an adjective.

suggest metaphors, referring, for example, to bounded entities as ›baloons‹, ›teabags‹, ›spheres‹ and ›filters‹.

This case and context dependency of borders, which we are not arguing is a reason for the dominant theoretical unease in border studies, has roots in the anthropological thought of the 1960s, namely in constructed and open cultural (ethnic, transactional) boundaries formulated most succinctly by Fredrik Barth in his programmatic introduction to ethnic groups and boundaries (1969). Theoretical breakthroughs like that of constructivism in anthropology are impossible without solid grounds and the willing acceptance of contemporaries. This was the last great anthropological theory to have universalist aspirations, metaphorising boundaries between ›cultures‹, still perceived as distinct assemblages of certain ›stuff‹. Its ›paradigmatic‹ value for border studies today is appreciated by Wilson and Donnan, for whom these »ideas on ethnic boundaries… [revealed] their relational nature as socially constructed boundaries, marking affective and identificatory, as well as structural, organizational and sometimes territorial disjunctures« (2012: 6). They saw in Barth's boundary concept the root of anthropology's interest in international borders (1998:4), and hence, the birth of what we observe today.

But references to Fredrick Barth alone are not the root of constructivism in late modern sociocultural anthropology. A neo-Boasian epistemology can also be identified as such: »cultural boundaries are not made irrelevant by globalization (Barth 1969: 10), since they do not depend on the absence of interaction across them. It is thus wrong to depict the concept of bounded culture as irreconcilable with translocal connections« (Bashkow 2004: 453). Translating Barth's dated analytical lexicon into modern ›anthrospeak‹, Comaroff characterises his theoretical breakthrough as virtually all embracing: »Reversing received truths, Barth argued that there is no one-to-one relationship between ethnicity-as-experienced and the sociology of difference (1969:14). It is the act of drawing boundaries populations, not their inherent ›cultural stuff‹, that constructs ethno-identities. The implication? That ethnicity is less a thing than a virtual relationship whose objectification is rooted in a dialectic of identification and contrast (Barth 1969:15); that the cultural content of ethnic consciousness may be a product, rather than the constitutive basis, of ›ethnic group organization‹ (Barth 1969:11); that, by extension, the concept of identity itself is a *historically sedimented abstraction* with no ontological substance of its own. And the general point? That *mapping process of being-and-becoming is a vital element not merely in our theory work, but also in the antiessentializing sensibility of a critical anthropology*« (2010:531, emphases added).

We may think that Barth and his early followers were not fully aware of the consequences of such a radical attempt to save or extend the life of ›culture‹ as an analytical category by means of their constructivist approach. A little over a decade later, the issue of invention (= ›constructivism‹, ›instrumentalism‹, ›circumstantialism‹, cf. Wimmer 2008a: 270-72) caught anthropology unawares in yet another passing of the endless funeral procession of the concept of ›culture‹, despite attempts at reincarnation and primordialist (essentialist) resistance (Brightman 1995, Wolf 2001: 307-318). The ease with which it opened breaches in contemporary sociocultural anthropology, the ensuing waves of repudiation, modifying the form and depth of these breaches, reveal the naivety, even the impossibility of the constructivist attempt to save ›culture‹ from the wreckage or to rework it in the name of conceptual ›instrumentalisation‹. The latter operation began already in the early post-colonial age and accelerated with globalisation, all the way under cool eyes of Fredrik Barth himself (Barth 2000, 2002, 2007). As the decades since the ›discovery‹ of the constructed nature of culture testify, constructivism has itself been instrumental in the description and understanding as well as the maintenance and creation of boundaries, international borders included. Without going too deeply into the critical assessment of its consequences in the polarisation of theoretical positions in modern anthropology (many very nuanced and all associated with a string of late modern discourses), we will note alone that constructivist thinking in anthropology was possibly a logical response to the accumulated knowledge on the complexity of what at first appeared quite simple. Anthropology's inflationary use of the ›border‹ metaphor (and Barth's ›boundary‹ was just that) has spread far beyond ›cultural‹ markers, to become the shoreline of cultural islands (Eriksen 1993).

On possibilities of (anti)essentialisation

The challenge of ›antiessentialisation‹ given to modern anthropology by Fredrik Barth encourages us to compare islands – natural creations – with far from natural (or simply human) and far less essential(ist) borders. Attempts to meet the challenge vacillate between the innate anthropological thirst for the exotic, and its opposite – methodological claustrophobia. Looked at from a historical perspective, we see that the tangibility of borders, acquired in the course of the de-naturalization or cultural appropriation of natural landscapes, has grown with the increasing intangibility of cultures.

Thomas Hylland Eriksen's short article on Mauritius (1993) provides a necessary reference point if treated as a sample micro-history (in terms of size and content) of anthropology's experience in one of the favourite destinations of its practitioners: in a tropical island. This article attenuates early postmodernist and other now reshuffled theoretical concerns with analytical clarity based on definitions postulated in the previous monograph (Eriksen 1992).

A look at island anthropology, the expectations put in it and the literature and theory that emerged are worth considering in today's anthropological quest on borders and in borderlands. Populated islands, many of them only put on the map in the early modern period, have experienced enormous change since the earliest visits of anthropologists. For decades, anthropologists were often the only social scientists interested in them, the other Europeans were sailors, traders, missionaries, travellers and naturalists. Islands were formidable for anthropology in many ways, but also transformed many of our undisciplined ancestors into true anthropologists. In some way it was only in then limited space of on islands with their micro-populations that anthropology as we define it today could emerge. The links between international borders and the ›encircled stuff‹ – that is the rest of humanity warrant a more responsible anthropology than what we find today.

We have already noted that the extension of border studies to more places and the comparison of bordering cases that Wilson and Donnan urge results in often inadequate analysis of questions posed by the very existence of the modern(ising) borders. International borders may be treated as the most visible in the hierarchy of human disjunctions, each having their own history of coming into being, their repertoire of legitimacy and change. Unfortunately, the short period of anthropology's interest in at borders has only permitted a short chronological analysis of any one border regime. We can only search for similarities and differences between international borders, between the boundaries within the societies that they hold encircled and, indeed, between these varieties of ›bordering‹. This recent and rapidly expanding understanding continues across disciplines, fuelling border studies and hardening what some scholars call ›topological‹ thinking.

Acknowledging that islands are »metaphors, which in the heyday of functionalism and cultural relativism produced strong images of isolated and self-sustaining societies, […] have today been dismissed as misleading and potentially harmful by many anthropologists«, Eriksen (1993: 133) nonetheless mobilises in his short essay material from Mauritius to ask in what sense do ›cultural islands‹ exist in our age of globalisation, how insularity survives intensified communications in the densely populated tropical is-

land-state and whether insularity matters in globalisation. His other texts (Eriksen 1992, 2007) depict his work as an experiment, applying the ›island‹ metaphor to real islands. Our interest in Eriksen's essay is as a precedent for tackling boundaries at real borders. The existence of thousands of nautical miles of ocean around Mauritius has given Eriksen a pretext to view it less in the context of ›globalisation‹[7] than as a place of constructivist culture generation. Nationhood and ethnicity have been his main concerns in this exercise: »In many other respects, groups [Creole French, Hindu, Muslim: all post-1715 immigrants] are approaching each other in terms of shared culture, due to the spread of uniform education, wage work, nationalist ideology and international mass media, among other factors. Despite such changes, the flow of personnel between ethnic groups is very low, as well as the intermarriage rate, and ethnically distinguishing symbols are proudly protected and displayed. Why, then, do these groups remain entropy-resistant as ethnic categories, or as ›socio-cultural islands‹, if one prefers?« (Eriksen 1993: 141). Then the author continues exploiting the metaphor up to extending Mauritian realities to the entire globe: »At a certain level (such as that of the ecological crisis), the entire globe can be regarded as one's island. At a much lower level, a dyadic pair, such as a couple deeply in love, may perceive itself as a social island« (1993: 143). This observation, strangely – or expectedly – mirrors another one, namely that »the imperative geophilosophical question of our time is how and why we create a just border for ourselves and thereby for others. In this sense we all have become borderlanders« (Houtum 2011: 60).

Boundary: from metaphor to buzzword

Put together, these remarks describe the grey zone where the real and the metaphorical meet in anthropological thought and language, what may be called the ›unexpected territorialisation‹ of the anthropological endeavour, a focus on things, a new rapprochement of geography and anthropology. This reunion of ancient partners raises certain concerns with earlier anthropological praxis and questions its linear understanding (cf. Barth 2000:20-21, 34). Eriksen's is just one attempt to push the ›island‹ metaphor to its

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[7] Eriksen is rather critical to this concept: »If the rapid ascent of the term ›globalisation‹ has been something of a succès de scandale, making it a password in some milieux and a four-letter word in others, the explanation is partly that it is a promiscuous and unfaithful word engaging in a bewildering variety of relationships, most of which would be better off using more accurate concepts« (2003: 4).

extremes in order to reveal the interior of presumably vanishing ›cultural boundaries‹. Many other anthropologists do the same. »They divide and subdivide, and call it Anthropology« – was the title of Eric Wolf's article in ›New York Times‹ in November 1980 (2001: 307-318). What interests us is Eriksen's subtle disappointment with the premature departure of anthropology from diffusionism, leaving sociocultural anthropology without means to tame the recurrent surge for more and more effects of ›globalisation‹, and the passive stance that his contemporaries, nonetheless, have noticed and correctly termed the ›violence of abstraction‹ (Comaroff/Comaroff 2003) or ›nomothetic abstraction‹, of which, in the opinion of Eric Wolf, anthropologists have always been professionally suspicious (2001: 79). Eriksen suspects that »the use of the island metaphor in relation to societies or cultures […] has proved to be unfortunate« (2003: 144).

We are prompted by Eriksen's, and not his alone, expressed devotion to the constructivist paradigm. Its ubiquity became more visible with the anthropological turn in border studies, which again highlighted why universalities like islands and borders have been deployed and maintained for decades as mirroring the diversity of humanity. Many scholars of by now quite tangible borders unanimously declare that even the allegedly hardest possible barriers – the international borders – have integrative functions as well. A reasonable response is that it is a matter of scale as well as of cognition. But also of time. Before anthropology became engaged in border studies in Europe, there was no lack of borders, including one of the hardest ever created by humans: the Iron Curtain. At that time the realities at the US-Mexican ›hyperborder‹ were the focus of scholarly attention, and it was there that the first concerns about the ›alchemic‹ transformations of the ›boundary‹ and the inward turn of the disjunctions detected at that border were expressed by anthropologists in the early 1990s (Stoddard 1991, Lamont/Molnar 2002) The border was found to have at least two meanings: literal and a-literal (Alvarez 1995: 449).

When in 2004 Michael Kearney returned to the issue of the cultural impact of the formal geopolitical border of the United States in view of ›pure‹ cultural and social boundaries inside that country, the ›border‹ was already a standing buzzword (Lamont/Molnar 2002). The same is true on the other side of Atlantic: Etienne Balibar, writing on issues of European integration, suggested a world-systemic interpretation of Europe as borderland (1998, 2004). All symbolic boundaries, national borders inclusive, figure in Michele Lamont and Virag Molnar's review as demanding further academic analysis to develop a common understanding (2002: 186-188). This ›fascination‹

with borders and boundaries could prove just as unfortunate as the case of the ›island‹ metaphor.

We argue that it is possible to observe a mutual enforcement of states' borderwork and academics' gridwork, especially explicit in geographers' assessments of the global scale ›neo-territorialisation‹ (Johnson et al 2011, Newman/Paasi 1998, Agnew 2009: 143-202). This discipline, like the study of international relations, has greatly expanded our knowledge of state-maintained hindrances between people and groups and about various types of ›solid‹ and ›diffuse‹ boundaries on the ground, treated rather indiscriminately, in a postmodernist vein, but almost always with the western or nationalist vision at the top of the perceived hierarchy of borders. Taken as isolated social sciences, (human) geography and (sociocultural) anthropology visibly dovetail in their recent excursions to the boundaries and in their gridwork. This casts some light on how the situational decisions of states are followed by similarly situational strategies in the academy, and how, for instance, the discourse of borders' dual functionalism was prioritised over many other traits discernable at borders. Many scholars uncritically follow the same situational logics through abstract categories, as witnessed in discussions about territorialisation and de-territorialisation (Newman/Paasi 1998, Conversi 1999, Paasi 2011) globalisation and localisation in the *longue durée,* and the centre/periphery divide. Each have uneven, seldom recognised, grey, but at the same time thick zones in between.[8] The discussions on these issues give rise to the fear that the border will be exploited in a similar manner, as fodder for piecemeal experiments and interpretations.

[8] John and Jean Comaroff have tried to specify the centre/periphery divide in the global scale: »it is arguable that European colonial regimes managed the political and economic contradictions inherent in early liberal capitalist modernity by means of a politics of spatial separation. The segregation of metropole and colony not only obscured their material and cultural interdependence; it also served to keep well apart the humanitarian, modernizing, rule-governed, freedom-seeking impetus of liberal democracy from the exclusionary, divisive, violently-secured forms of subjection and extraction that were its underside. Colonial societies were zones of occupation, sites in which the civilizing mission was countered by the immediate dictates of control and profit – and by the need to secure the contested frontiers held to separate order from chaos. Defending those boundaries in the name of ›progress‹ often warranted the suspension of enlightened ways and means, even in the face of resistance and humanitarian outrage« (Comaroff/Comaroff 2008, cf. Agnew 2009: 22-24).

Anthropology long felt ill at ease with Barth's hypothesis of ›ethnic boundaries‹ or constructed identities vis-à-vis static cultures and traditions (cf. Wolf 2001: 382).[9] ›Boundaries everywhere‹ or ›We all are borderlanders‹ have become catchphrases, more emotional, than rational. But like other scattered scholarly tropes, it has been always there, embryonic, in the socio-anthropological reconstruction (depiction) of societies. It was present, when the ›segmentary lineage‹ was invented, or concepts of ›ethnicity‹ and ›identity‹. The boundaries were everywhere before they were taken explicit note of, when typologising societies, or in describing their inner and outer relations and affairs. The only thing that Barth's ubiquitous concept of boundaries has added was its higher regard for the insularities produced by them and the sensitivity toward the size and scale of these insularities.[10] This alone is the root of Barth's extraordinary relevance in various contexts, but, more importantly, also the serious unease in the articulation of his main theoretical input, labelled variously as ›constructivist‹ (Wimmer 2008a: 971), ›relationalist‹ (Allen/Eade 1999: 24-28) or ›transactionalist‹ (Erikson/Murphy 2008: 166-168).

On the other hand, it is impossible to leave unnoticed that Barth's theoretical input only really came to the fore in the 1990s, with the same systemic changes that are the *raison d'être* of the anthropological turn towards international borders. Although Fredrik Barth's main pre-1969 fieldwork took place, after a brief stint in Norway, on the borders between Iraq and Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan and in Darfur (Barth 2007), his work was at the time not perceived as related to borderlands or conflict areas as we know them today. On the other hand, the ›paradigmatic‹ value of ›cultural boundaries‹ has successfully survived the period of about half a century not because of the changed and changing rigidity of borders or of the related circumstances and technologies of bordering (neighbouring), but simply because it proved to be an effective methodology of academic gridwork, suggesting if not explanations, size and scale sensitive descriptions of ›process and unpredictability‹, even if the grids were invented in the age of ›structure and regularity‹. Most importantly, this gridwork consolidated the

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[9] Sherry Ortner ignored in 1984 Barth's in her discussion of major directions of anthropological thought in the United States in the 1960-1980, simply because he was more cultural than sociocultural.

[10] This latter feature, perhaps, has certain relation to an alter-neo-Marxist paradigm shift of the 1960s, explicitly pointed in recent auto-biographical essay of Barth (2007:8).

social sciences, effectively vacillating in different directions, allowing for the criss-crossing, merging and duplicating of their disciplinary lenses.

This observation in no means suggests unanimity among anthropologists in regard to Barth's main theses (cf. Eade and Allen 1999). »The concept of boundaries is important and versatile, but often unclear and even quite mystifying in contemporary anthropological thought« (Barth 2000:17). Today it seems not only natural, but even fashionable (in a postmodernist way) to demonstrate that this routine, but irregular, and, alas, still unpredictable vacillation of boundaries or grids, has not yielded discernible image of the content, producing instead a gallery of malleable boundaries with thin and contracting spaces in between. Fredrik Barth has an important share in this failure as the sole minter of the phrase ›cultural stuff‹: a metaphor for the elements of culture momentarily indescribable in their social significance. To be fair, he has never surrendered to temptations to take apart an unfortunate ›cultural island‹ (cf. Conversi 1999, for an attempt in the cause of the theory of nationalism). The presence of the ›border‹ metaphor, with which Fredrik Barth has been associated for soon half a century, has, in certain sense, become the *fortune* of anthropology (cf. Barth 2000, Hannerz 2010).

Borders on the land, islands in the sea

We have now described the differences between borders and islands, and are prepared to do without the pious hope that the social sciences may give up using such metaphors or opposing them to one another. In one of his later publications on the boundary concept, Fredrik Barth recalled the Norwegian peasant family on its farmstead as an appropriate metaphor for describing both the essential nature of boundaries and their occidental roots (2000). In a certain sense, this family is a natural extension of ›a couple deeply in love‹, reminiscent of Eriksen's lowest level to which the ›island‹ metaphor can be applied (1993:143). Boundaries hallow what they enclose: »It is this that requires boundaries: by imposing the conceptual construct of a boundary line around the land you disengage it from its surroundings, and can appropriate it to yourself … This elementary figure of a farmer and his family, on the land they possess, bounded and separated from adjoining territories, can readily be projected as a figure of homeland-and-country, with national boundaries demarcating it, and defining the European concept of nation. Metaphorically, we then can project its image to other, non-territorial groups as having ›social boundaries«« (Barth 2000: 22-23, cf. Conversi 1999).

Moving beyond these elementary individual figures, we notice that as far as their metaphoric deployment is necessary for depiction of the uncertain contents of boundaries, the natural phenomena stubbornly break through the anthropological assumption of a border. This has also to do with the perceived qualitative turn in anthropology, which Wilson and Donnan, for example, link to Barth's main theses (1999:19-20). The move from the times, when »anthropologists were interested in boundaries chiefly as a device to define and delimit the edges of their subject matter« and when that subject was perceived as »a functioning organic whole«, has never been as decisive as it was depicted in later critical analyses. The recent surge of border anthropology, that is, anthropological work on or near international borders – its coherence is not questioned here – is not much different from the work done, when »boundaries were of interest only in so far as they enabled ›closure‹ of the research population; what was of real interest was not the boundary itself or relations across it, but the practices, beliefs and institutions of those it encompass.« (Wilson/Donnan 1999:20).

What has changed, then, in the last few decades? Neither the number of bounded entities, nor the total length of their borders is important. Rather, it is the accumulation of geographical, historical and other knowledge related to one of few constants of our time – international borders – that is important. As is the fact that ever more people and commodities – in number and in form – meet at these international borders, creating a critical social demand for comprehensive border studies. So what has changed are both the subjects of enquiry and our increased understanding of their complexity. This understanding has moved a step further, but border anthropology hardly warrants the distinction granted to it by some practitioners. We have already mentioned some of these expectations and the ensuing disappointments, which may tentatively be explained as a result of the conceptual residues in the minds of anthropologists. Notwithstanding its universalist aspirations, the ›boundary‹ concept after Barth has barely moved from its pre-constructivist function as a means of ›enclosure‹.

Scholars of borders, anthropologists among them, are far from alone in their search for tangible categories. For instance, Christian Depraetere, an island scholar, writes: »islands not only deserve to be ›studied in their own terms‹, they also become the *deus ex machina* of the holistic understanding of the world archipelago and its ongoing globalization« (2008:3, emphasis in original, cf. the theoretical discussions in the ›Journal of Island Studies‹, Hay 2006, Stratford et al 2011). Despite the increased tangibility of borders in the course of history, or maybe because of it, anthropologists easily hallow Barth's boundaries for the same purpose, as *deus ex machina*, one anthropo-

logical versions of which, as we have found, has its roots in the Norwegian countryside. It is our conviction that giving metaphorical value to the boundaries and, correspondingly, to islands, often detaches them from their environment, cultural or natural. But we often forget about the accompanying cartographic grammar of allegories we imply, or about the inventiveness of geographers and relationships between the many common subjects of modern social sciences.

Islands and borders are in irreversible opposition in terms of their limits of metaphorical applicability. We see these limits in their etymology, in the comparison of literal borders with literal islands. Even metaphorically, borders cannot nest each other without social or cultural flash. A border's etymology is its function, albeit the academic rhetoric often thoroughly codifies this essential feature. Borders can rise up and collapse, inwards or outwards, but their Euclidean mono-linear understanding – altogether dominant in the modern understanding of borders – leaves no space for nesting a line into another without giving preference to one or the other. The anthropological eye, its inherent gaze from outside is alone in a position to see this ›border studies‹ phenomenon. Ethnographic techniques have not without reason been adopted by neighbouring disciplines recently, adding much to our understanding of the ›cultural boundary‹ as an analytical term.

The island, or the ›cultural island‹ described as unfortunate by Eriksen in 1993 has its own limits, which partially explain its misfortune. In geology and geography, islands that are too small may even fail to be named as such. As land masses they are elevated summits of shelf ridges underneath the seas. Some of them (e.g. Vanuatu, the Marshall Atolls) exist under the constant threat of their disappearance. The ease with which their natural isolation is transformed into a nationalist transformation is witnessed by proportion of island-states among the recently invented nation-states (about a quarter of the whole: Anckar 2006). Their position on periphery of the world places them at safe distance from the gridwork of the continents, underlining their inapplicability as isolates vis-à-vis the vast, ›bar-coded‹ continents. In addition, »*an island as a visible entity does not go without the surrounding sea surface*« (Depraetere 2008:4), which of course negates its metaphoric status as an isolated space. In short, there are more than enough arguments against the metaphorisation of ›islands‹ for the ›stuff‹ enclosed within boundaries. But what to do, if we cannot rely any more to that magic word ›culture‹, our beloved delusion?

Eriksen's precedential research experiment, his search for a ›cultural island‹ within a real one, is thus greatly appreciated, especially since he has resisted the temptation to overexploit the limited metaphorical resources of

the ›island‹ (1992, 1993). Applying Comaroff's translation of Barth's thesis to modern ›anthrospeak‹, Mauritius becomes, for better or for worse, a model for how identity, as a ›historically sedimented abstraction with no ontological substance of its own‹, essentialises different bounded interiors, and more importantly, how the boundaries acquire their changeable, but still material essence. Land versus sea is here the grand opposition that even Fredrik Barth was compelled to refer to his vision of what the boundaries finally separate (2000: 17-18). Ulf Hannerz's (1997) lengthy discussion of ›flows‹ and ›boundaries‹ is another attempt to solve the same problem, but actively looking for how the diffuse elements of culture can be interpreted in strings of elements, accommodating them and changing their very nature, he loses his way in connecting the dots.

The problem of place given to boundaries in anthropological theory, their situation somewhere between *unspecified* external and internal spheres in order to *specify* them, or their incessant embodiment via metaphorisation, are all the stigmata of boundary-making in anthropology. The knowledge of the boundary's metaphoric nature has long permitted attempts to annihilate its very existence by painting it in the colours of their original natural and cultural environments. This is misfortune of ›island‹ and ›border‹ metaphors (cf. the garden fence between two conversing English neighbours in Barth 2000:28, and imagine the same without interlocutors) in the grand anti-essentialising narrative of modern anthropology.

Conclusions

Anthropology has unwittingly and with little initiative of its own had an anthropology of borders thrust upon it. Any attempt to cite empirical case studies here would have contributed little beyond what has been published since the mid-1990s (Wilson/Donnan 1998, 2012). Our overall impression is that anthropology has not quite comprehended its arrival at the spatial margins of power in the age of the globalised nation-state, which Wimmer has argued »has changed the terminology that we use today, differentiating Herder's ›peoples‹ into ›nations‹ if statehood was achieved and ›ethnic groups‹ if it was not« (Wimmer 2009:246). This unease has different sources, from the ideologically motivated leftist rhetoric of the decline of the nation-state in waves of globalization to anthropology's humanist traditions, which are always at odds with political reality. Fredrik Barth's idea of ›ethnic boundaries‹ is familiar to the majority of anthropologists; with the assistance of a less familiar ›island‹ metaphor we have shown its metaphorical nature. Barth never denied the metaphorical nature of his concept, just

as we also do not deny his contribution in contemporary sociocultural anthropology and the social sciences in general. But for us it is important to stress that it is instrumental in the late modern concept of culture, and continues to be used in postmodernist/deconstructivist social sciences (Wimmer 2008b; 2009).

›Nation‹, ›nation-state‹, ›Staatsvolk‹ or ›mainstream nation‹ are terms in kind, studied by theorists of nationalism and by border scholars, who not only explore them at their geopolitical limits but in their smooth transition from international borders to boundaries within post-national societies. Anthropologists are in a position to describe the developments in the opposite direction as well: boundaries between people and individuals gaining in rigidity, becoming formalised. Finally, anthropology is destined to describe the link and networks between the relevant actors. These shifts in the permeability of borders are the quintessence of European statecraft. At the same time, the state, to whom we assign responsibility for borders, as a »frame for producing visibility, …that motivates differences as it inscribes boundaries, […] that entails a relentless press toward homogeneity, which is simultaneously a process of exclusion« (Verdery 1993:42-43), can hardly be described as another heir of culture in conceptual terms; its discursive dominance in the modern social sciences has inspired rather emotional opposition among several prominent anthropologists (cf. Geertz 1998, 2002, 2004, Sahlins 1999, 2000).

Banal nationalism and statecraft are not working alone in boundary making. We have called the mirroring of this process in the social sciences ›gridwork‹; and we are far from casting doubt on the reality of the growing number and kinds of boundaries. But their invention has begun to threaten the critical perspective of the social sciences on state or socially motivated hindrances or strategies of enclosure.

This explains why we refrain in this essay to use the increasingly nuanced apparatus of terms and synonyms of borders/boundaries (cf. Agnew 2002, Barth 2000, Kearney 2004), aimed to distinguish them as dynamic substances between other substances they are called to demarcate. Our position is close to that of Daniele Conversi who urges the words ›border‹ and ›boundary‹ as interchangible. But anthropological research illustrates that the exclusion of *frontier*, or *borderlands*, or *periphery*, by which Conversi (1999: 564-565) probably attempts to confront the fluidity, zonality or aggressiveness of these border areas, simultaneously denying their substance as populated or navigable places, seems to overlook that the tangibility of national borders/boundaries is, in fact, a relatively recent feature, acquired only after the spread of cartography. The technological forms that borders

have acquired in addition to their paper form (for post-GIS changes in the geography of borders see: Johnson et al 2011) far extend the imagination of average social scientists. In this, and not in the known to us Barthian sense the restoration of quasi-differences between borders and boundaries is a Sisyphus act.

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Levon Abrahamian and Gayane Shagoyan

Rallies as Festival and the Festival as a Model for Rallies

Protest Events in late and post-Soviet Armenia

In 1983, one of the authors of this article attempted to reconstruct the most archaic festival – the ›Ur-festival‹ of human kind, using mainly Australian Aboriginal material (Abramian 1983). In 1988, during the stormy mass rallies in Yerevan on the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh, the autonomous oblast in the Azerbaijani SSR with its Armenian majority, and its attempt to unite with the Armenian SSR,[1] the author suddenly found himself in the thick of that very same proto-festival that he once attempted to reconstruct (Abrahamian 1990a).

   Some people in Yerevan today, after the devaluation of the ideas of democracy in general and the images of the original spontaneous democrats in particular, would say that they were sceptical from the very first days of the rallies and attended meetings in the Theatre Square in the centre of Yerevan just for the sake of curiosity. Some would say that those days were something special and that ›We, the Armenians‹, had lost those precious moments of solidarity, while others would add that the people had been deceived by their once leaders, who managed to transform Armenia into today's miserable state. We will not discuss the degree of truth of these opinions here, but will try to show that their existence in this form as an indicator for the fact that at least typologically, the rallies were a kind of a festival.

1988 — ›Festival‹ in the Square

These rallies and related activities that became known as the ›Karabakh Movement‹ were a result of democratisation, glasnost and perestroika as

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[1] On the Nagorno-Karabakh issue cf. Libaridian 1988.

declared by Mikhail Gorbachev in the mid-1980s. These were not a set of wise economic and social reforms, but the hectic deeds of an ambiguous political figure who actually declared a ›festival‹ in all spheres of Soviet life, including economics (cf. Abrahamian 2006: 194-198, 219, Abramian 2010: 58-62). And their initiator was taken aback when instead of reasonable and moderate reforms in the sphere of economics, he got a bunch of bloody national and ethnic conflicts, both long hidden and newly-created.

The first mass meetings in February 1988 in Yerevan were in a sense a ball of yarn in which all the future trends, both realised and unrealised, were already present. Each ›thread‹ waited to be pulled out of this ball. Here one could find nationalism in its various degrees and forms, the ecological movement, shadow economics, organised crime, communist and anti-communist ideologies, embryonic economic and military conflicts and civil and authoritarian societies. Each of these ›threads‹ were pulled out, were cut or hopelessly knotted in the process of being withdrawn (Abrahamian 2001). Such an analysis is a synergetic approach to the Yerevan rallies, a kind of a ›chaosological‹ study of the people in the square (Abramian/Shagoyan 2002, Prigogine/Stengers 1984). Here we will discuss only one ›thread‹ representing the social pole of the Karabakh Movement. This component of the mingled ball of yarn was civil society – albeit a very unusual and virtual one, born and shaped step by step before our eyes, right in the streets and squares of Yerevan (Abrahamian 2001). Here we will briefly outline the context of the festive square since this strange form of civil society was of festive origin and can be understood only in the festival context of the political events marking the collapse of the Soviet empire.

During their first few days, these meetings had a very political colouring and would hardly have attracted a social anthropologist's attention, even if the roots of the movement were of an ethnic origin. The movement in Yerevan began on 19 February 1988, when several thousand people gathered in the Theatre Square to support the Armenians of Karabakh, who had come out to protest in Stepanakert (capital of Nagorno-Karabakh) and demanding they be united to Armenia. We shall not inquire here the historical and political backgrounds of the movement since we are more interested here in tracing the ›thread of civil society‹ that was pulled from the mingled ball of yarn during the ›festive chaos‹ in the square.

The first demonstrations were mainly composed of students and representatives of the intelligentsia, but very soon the situation changed and the meetings attracted all social groups. On 22 February the initial political and ›elite‹ manifestations became a mass rally. In the evening, when approximately half a million people gathered before the building of the Central

Committee of the Communist Party of Armenia demanding the calling of an extraordinary session of the Supreme Soviet (in order to consider the petition of the Karabakhians), a large number of workers had already joined the procession. From the 25 to 27 February, people from the countryside arrived in the city and joined the demonstrations, giving it a universal character and leading to an unprecedented outburst of national self-consciousness (fig. 1). What is important here is that a special situation was created in which the people were joined in a kind of united body, much like that of the medieval European carnival keenly characterised by Mikhail Bakhtin (1968). This immense body, which probably amounted to a million people at the peak of the demonstrations (and this is in a city with a population of a million), was not created mechanically. It had a united spirit, a common ideal and, finally, a common sense of national self-consciousness. According to the statements of many participants, they had a wonderful feeling of being present everywhere, in every place occupied by that huge body of people.

Fig. 1: Theatre Square, 1988 (photo by Gagik Harutyunyan).

Both the aforementioned reconstruction of proto-festival (Ur-festival) at the dawn of humankind (Abramian 1983) and the analysis of its recent counterpart at a Yerevan Square (Abrahamian 1990a, 1990b) were based on Bakhtin's analysis of the carnival. One principal trait of the archaic festival

is the inversion, blurring and, in general, the elimination of the main structural oppositions of society. During the medieval European carnival, the highest and the lowest, the king and the jester would exchange places and social positions. And during a primitive festival in societies with a binary organisation, the two halves would exchange places – together with a set of oppositions such as right/left, high/low and masculine/feminine. These inversions weaken the oppositions and can even result in their disappearance during the chaotic festival.

It should be said that when studying festivals and similar events, one is ›doomed‹ to use binary oppositions, since the object of observation itself is operating with such structures, thus ›inviting‹ a structuralist approach (Abrahamian 2006: 133-134, 160-164). That was why Bakhtin's 1940 study of European medieval carnival (2008: 11-505) became a forerunner of structuralism.[2] Paradoxically, he could also be considered a forerunner of post-structuralism based on his earlier (1929) study of the polyphonic texts of Dostoevsky (2000: 5-175).

In accordance with the principle of inversion, blurring and elimination, during the ›festival‹ in the Theatre Square, important polarisations in Yerevan society disappeared, in particular the divisions between townsman/villager, man/woman, adult/youth and Armenian language/Russian language. The opposition of town and village is one of the most important for Yerevan, because its existence is the result of a very strong urbanisation process (cf. e.g. Arutyunyan/Karapetyan 1986). In those February days, villagers were greeted by local citizens with great enthusiasm; each new column of villagers entering the square breathed fresh energy into the huge body of people. There were other indicators, too, showing that this opposition between villagers and townspeople had been blurred and even eliminated. The second opposition in the list above (men/women) disappeared because young men could suddenly freely address any woman, which normally would have been regarded as a violation of ethical norms. For instance, a small demonstration of young women was given heart by a youth: »Girls, don't be afraid!«, he cried to them, referring to the soldiers who had appeared near the women. Normally, a young man would not have tried to talk to them, or he would have done so with a certain asocial aim in mind. A joke from the same year underlines these essential changes in the men/women opposition: A mother reprimands her son for not marrying.

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[2] The first version of his work on François Rabelais dates back to 1940, even though it was first published in 1965 (for the English translation see Bakhtin 1968).

»Can't you find a good girl to marry?« The son replies: »Where can I find one? Don't you know that by now we are all brothers and sisters?« During a festival in Central Australia, the Warramunga men violate traditional norms regarding the accepted ways of addressing women in a similar way (Spencer/Gillen 1904: 378-380, Abramian 1983: 40).

In the described case of the youth addressing women, the addresser was also of a lower class than the addressees as identified in his manners, speech and dress. That is, the polarisation of social statuses was also eliminated. The same happened with the polarisation of Armenian-Russian bilingualism (Abrahamian 2006: 88-89). Even such less important oppositions as healthy/disabled were done away with. One could see the blind and the deaf coming to the square in groups, together with their interpreters, a rather unusual scene for Yerevan, where the handicapped were (and still are) ›invisible‹. On one occasion a man who had lost both of his legs arrived from a remote district in a primitive cart (the medieval predecessor of the modern wheelchair) and asked to make a speech. Out of respect the people in the square squatted to be on the same level with him. It was as if they had gotten rid of their legs to dissolve the opposition between them. Even secondary oppositions of a modern city, for example, that of drivers/pedestrians suddenly lost its usual tension. In short, a specific chaotic festival structure was created: the orderly cosmos of everyday life turned into a kind of festive chaos (fig. 2).

The connection of the events in the Theatre Square with the archaic proto-festival is not limited to these structural similarities. There were a number of parallel codes verifying this typological comparison, from etymological (relating glasnost with the Armenian word for square) to spatial (the choice of the places for the rallies) and ritual (Abrahamian 2006: 217-235). For example, the archaic question-and-answer model was used during many improvised rituals. Even the ordinary protest demonstrations acquired this question-and-answer construction, though their aim, as the word suggests, was to demonstrate something. But the Yerevan demonstrations very often demanded an immediate answer to their demands and/or questions, thus giving them a direct ›dialogic‹ trend in the Bakhtinian sense. Curiously enough, the authorities against whom the demonstrations were directed sometimes became involved in the dialogue by giving an answer, thereby reinforcing the ancient question-and-answer archetype. And, importantly for our comparison, the question-and-answer form is characteristic of the most ancient rituals, especially those dealing with a border situation (e.g. the New Year ritual), when the world has fallen into chaos must gain a new cosmos. The semantic code adds yet another festive colouring to the situa-

tion. Thus the word ›democratisation‹, a twin concept to Gorbachev's glasnost, implies a process, a movement of essential mass character. ›Democratisation‹ is often opposed to the concept of democracy (in the way that glasnost is opposed to the liberty of the word/speech), but for our festive approach this is just the word (concept) with an ›archaic‹ touch that inspired the spirit of the proto-festival in the event.

Fig. 2: Theatre Square, 1988 (painting by Hakob Hakobian, 2000, reproduced by kind permission of the artist).

There was another essential feature of the February meetings which revealed their connection with the festival. This was the deep feeling of solidarity, unity and mutual love that is unlikely to be forgotten by those who experienced this emotional state. This unique feeling alone makes the par-

ticipants remember the February meetings with nostalgia and pride, in contrast to the present situation of dissociation and mutual distrust. Generally speaking, a mass display of solidarity was a rather rare thing in the USSR – perhaps, the last large-scale manifestation of this phenomenon took place during World War II. That was perhaps also the reason why the mutual consideration, strict discipline and the distribution of free food during the February meetings were qualified by the Moscow authorities and Gorbachev personally as the work of sinister forces. This idea was discussed in a notorious article entitled ›Emotions and Reason‹ published in the newspaper ›Pravda‹ (21 March 1988). From that day on, the emotion/reason opposition became a key-phrase, something like a ritual incantation for any official interpreter of the Karabakh Movement – be it a provincial reporter or the future President of the USSR. With its help – that is, by calling for the suppression of emotions – attempts were made to resolve all the problems that had been raised.

Generally, emotions play an important role in the structure of the festival. It is emotional tension that makes the proto-festival proceed according to its specific rules. Contrary to the destructive actions of a furious mob, which are also a result of emotions, the proto-festival (and its descendants as represented in the events on the Theatre Square in February) gives birth to principally positive emotions. As the Nyakyusa of Africa point out, a rite will be ineffective, even fatal for society, if its participants keep »anger in their hearts« (Wilson 1957: 8). But during such mass meetings, the emotional factor does not stand alone and does not govern other factors. It does not subdue reason. Rather, it creates a new consciousness directed inwards, to the roots of the community. The archaic festival provides by means of such solidarity an effective mechanism allowing its participants to communicate with their sacred history. And everyone who was involved in the events we discuss here remembers the sudden awakening of ethnic self-consciousness and the keen awareness of history – the content analysis of the speeches would provide enough evidence of this focus on national history.

Another feature of the archaic festival – its theatricality (Abrahamian 1990a: 77, 1990b) is already evident in the name of the square where the ›festival‹ occurred – the Theatre Square (presently unofficially renamed into ›Freedom Square‹), which owed its name to the Opera and Ballet Theatre built by the architect Alexander Tamanian (1878-1936) at this spot. The architect, it is said, was quite sure that in the remote past there stood a temple of ›Song and Love‹ on the very same spot where he erected his Theatre. Even if the theatrical past of the Theatre Square does not go back that far,

during the nine months of rallies, from February to November 1988, it was a stage where real dramas were performed. The scenic qualities of the square and the universal license that is characteristic of the theatre were all too apparent to photographers, for example, when they would not be allowed to photograph a particular political action outside of the square, while the same people within the precincts of the square not only did not object to being photographed, but even endeavoured to attract the photographers' attention. All the hunger strikes, the clothing of some of the hunger strikers, the interior and exterior configuration of the place where the feasts occurred, were organised on a theatrical principle. In the form of a tent, the scene of the hunger strikes made this improvised ›stage‹ even more reminiscent of typical festival outgrowths – the carnival booths. During one of the meetings in May 1988 a mock trial of the authorities on the ›stage‹ of the Theatre Square was planned, and on 7 and 8 July this same ›stage‹ bore witness to a genuine drama, when the funeral of a student shot during the picketing of the airport came to a theatrical conclusion here, with an honour guard ritual performed by the demonstrators before the slain youth's photograph. At first glance, the tragedy and grief that the square witnessed have nothing to do with festivals. Nevertheless, this tragic aspect is one which brings the Theatre Square phenomenon close to the proto-festival. The fact remains that the archaic festival, as a rule, unites within its limits laughter and tears, joy and sadness, birth and death – be it a real death (for example, the finale of funeral ceremonies among Australian Aborigines) or a symbolic one, performed during initiation rites (Abramian 1983). The already mentioned spatial code adds one more bit of ›evidence‹ in favour of our comparison: the circular shape of the Theatre Square demarcates a space where communication becomes easy and spontaneous. It is as if the circle creates a shapeless, movable structure inside its area. The chaotic character of the traditional people's festivals is, in a way, nurtured by the circular shape of the central ›square‹ of a town.

Thus, many invisible threads tie the present-day square to the archaic festival. This specific connection with the proto-festival was especially characteristic of the Armenian situation. Of course, some proto-festival features were present in all national movements in the former USSR, but one would hardly find the complete set of these features elsewhere.

The peak of this archaic festival was marked by a very constitutional, but an absolutely carnivalesque session of the local Supreme Soviet, which was summoned to meet in the Opera Theatre on this festive square on 24 November 1988. One can say that on this day the thread of civil society, after successfully untying many tangled knots, was finally pulled out in full from

the ball of yarn. However, it was carnival civil society, and, like everything produced in a festival, it was also doomed to vanish. A real civil society must be constructed in a Parliament brick upon brick, as a result of every-day, routine work, and not in the square, as the euphoric result of a festival's short-lived feeling of justice and solidarity.

Fig. 3: Freedom (Theatre) Square, 2008 (photo by Gayane Shagoyan).

While this situation in the square exhibited a whole range of attributes common to the chaotic proto-festival, in actuality, a peculiar ritual drama was being played out, plunging the cosmos into ritual chaos. But, like any drama, it could not last forever. The chaos created during the festival was pregnant with a new cosmos, and it was possible to divine this anticipated new condition, using the form and peculiarities of the ritual drama as a key.

According to N. Ross Crumrine (1970), there exist two types of societies based on the way in which their main ritual drama is performed. In the first type, the ritual drama demolishes structural oppositions to then restore them – sometimes in an even more rigid form. In the second type of society, the ritual drama implies a structural transformation with lasting consequences for the social and cultural sphere. In the first case, the ritual drama,

in fact, provides society with a mechanism for withstanding transformations of any kind. In the second, by contrast, it provokes society to change its structure. Therefore, by observing how a society emerges out of the chaotic festival-state, one can establish the type it is drawn toward and, in turn, anticipate its future development. In our case, most binary oppositions were restored in one way or another (Abrahamian 2006: 235-243).

Fig. 4: Night dancing at the Freedom (Theatre) Square, 2008 (photo by Gayane Shagoyan).

However, some oppositions did not return exactly to their pre-festival state. For example, the opposition between the young and the old never returned to its original authoritarian, patriarchal state. Opinions vary on the effects of the youth of the post-festival leaders,[3] but the carnival inversion of the aged/young opposition (an equivalent of the typical carnival father/son and king/jester ones) survived the ›festival‹ event. This inversion of ages may be

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[3] On the youth of the Karabakh Committee members (with one specific exception) and their social status see Abrahamian 2001: 120-121.

an indicator that we are dealing with a revolution and not merely a political festival. The term ›revolution‹ here is not used in the metaphorical manner of many other authors when describing the events of late 1980s, but, as Harutyun Marutyan (2009: 276-278, 281) argued, as a socio-political category. One may assume that Soviet authorities and Gorbachev himself were thinking in the same way. In any case, the young leaders of the Karabakh Movement were accused of attempting to seize power, were arrested in late 1988 and imprisoned in Moscow until May 1989, when they took part in the elections born in the ›festival‹ (Abrahamian/Shagoyan 2011/12). These were not, as many Western political actors think, imported from the civilised West. Following Crumrine's model, this institution was one of the products (or, maybe, by-products) of the political festival that marked post-festival society.

Here we need to address an important issue. Revolutions have a festive touch. Even more: a revolution is doomed to festival status, its goal being the permanent inversion of the existing power hierarchy, while the festival is based just on such inversions (cf. Abramian 1983). This might be construed as a chicken and egg debate, but our ball of yarn model serves as a solution. Our metaphoric ball of yarn undoubtedly contains revolutionary ›threads‹, and ›threads‹ representing conspiracy theories – the latter some of the most popular ›threads‹ during any such critical social situations threatening or resulting in social changes. It also contained the ›thread‹ of independence, from the beginning in February 1988 represented by the nationalist dissident Paruyr Hayrikyan and his followers. This group (and trend) was present during the rallies and could be easily spotted spatially: close to the wall of the Opera Theatre that they chose for hanging their posters (Abrahamian 2009: XV). However, the discourse on independence only became topical in October 1988, when conditions became favourable for its withdrawal from the ball of yarn. In this sense the revolution, as Marutyan defined it would have been pulled from the ball of yarn in due time and not been the result of well-organised agitation as the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 was.[4] As important as the emotional moment was for the 1988 rallies, the synergetic ball of yarn shows that the emotional ›festival‹ in the square did not develop into a kind of ›revolution‹ described by Abner Cohen (1992) for the case of the Notting Hill London Carnival.

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[4] Our synergetic ball of yarn model could provide for some surprises should it be applied to the history of the often one-sidedly deterministic reconstructions of the 1917 revolution.

Fig. 5: A ›political promenade‹ on Northern Avenue, 2008 (photo by Levon Abrahamian).

To conclude, the metaphoric ball of yarn that manifested the synergetic restructuring in the square in 1988, which we compared typologically with an archaic festival, left a nostalgic impression among the participants that they had experienced a national consolidation and a ›real‹ civil society in the square. On the other hand, as a result of this ›festival‹ a real change of power took place, whether the result of purposeful fight or a thread pulled from the ball of yarn. No wonder that twenty years later, in the next attempt at revolution, it was the model of the festival that was taken as an instrument to realise such change.

2008 — Festival as an instrument

In this section we will discuss another product of the 1988 experience[5] – subsequent protest marches and gatherings. In the autumn of 2007, Levon

[5] Although the Karabakh Movement and rallies continued until 1990, the 1988 experience was closest to the ›festival‹ motif.

Ter-Petrosyan, the first President of Armenia who resigned from his position in 1998, declared his renewed candidacy for President. He managed to amass quite significant support during rallies on the Theatre Square, now renamed Freedom Square (fig. 3), there where he and his fellow members of the Karabakh Committee had rallied in 1988.

Fig. 6: HIMA! tent with a picture showing activists dancing (an ›invitation‹ to dance), Freedom Square, 2008 (photo by Gayane Shagoyan).

This was a rather unconventional situation, taking into account his much reduced popularity after the presidential elections of 1996, which were considered unfair by his opponent and former comrade-in-arms. The elections in 1996 were followed by a huge protest demonstration that ended with seizure of the Parliament Building and other violent actions, causing a state of emergency and the first confrontation of the people with the national interior forces – previously it had been ›foreign‹ (Soviet) forces that opposed the people. We cannot discuss here the reasons of the first President's success after ten years of silence except to note that the memory of the unfair 1996 elections and especially of the difficult early 1990s, a period

often dubbed the ›dark and cold years‹ in reference to the then prevalent energy crisis and the war in Karabakh, kept many people from joining his rallies. The people in the square in late 2007 and early 2008 thus did not comprise the ›whole nation‹ as it did in 1988. This was an important difference between the rallies of 1988 and those that took place twenty years later, even if many people joined the rallies of the Ter-Petrosyan supporters especially after the 19 February election, which they also considered manipulated. Some people joined the supporters of the first President to express their general protest against the violation of their civil rights by the current regime. One such young protester explained why he supported Ter-Petrosyan during his electoral campaign in 2008: »I am going to elect him in order to depose him later«.

After the 19 February presidential election, Levon Ter-Petrosyan's supporters began on-going protest rallies on the Freedom Square. The date of the election and of the following rallies is remarkable in itself – coinciding so closely with the rallies of the Karabakh Movement twenty years earlier, in February 1988. This coincidence led to the perception of the rallies as a repetition, an echo or a replica of those in 1988. This refers both to participants and the organisers of rallies, Ter-Petrosyan at the forefront, using this coincidence as an instrument. Judging from the first rallies of 2007 and the later ones of 2008, Ter-Petrosyan himself recall nostalgically those unforgettable days, and he addressed those gathered as if they were the same people. Much of the audience actually was composed of the same people who had gathered in the square twenty years ago. We found ourselves not thinking about people of the ›1988 type‹, only twenty years older, but meeting concrete people happy to be seeing familiar faces at the same spot. The younger generation was initially represented by the children of the veterans of 1988 and curious onlookers. A new wave of civil rights activists was also there, like the young man mentioned above, but they were not yet visible. Whatever similarities there might have been between the two rallies, the former President began his first rally with the national anthem, which he had approved soon after independence, and not with the signature tune of the 1988 rallies, as many had anticipated. Many appreciated this politically correct choice. Notably, his later rallies in 2009 were accompanied by another signature tune, a fusion of the improvised and arranged 1988 music, other melodies, national rhythms, the President's words, and the crowd's chanting, marking the later rallies as organised from above, while the 1988 rallies were essentially driven from below, even when they were organised from above.
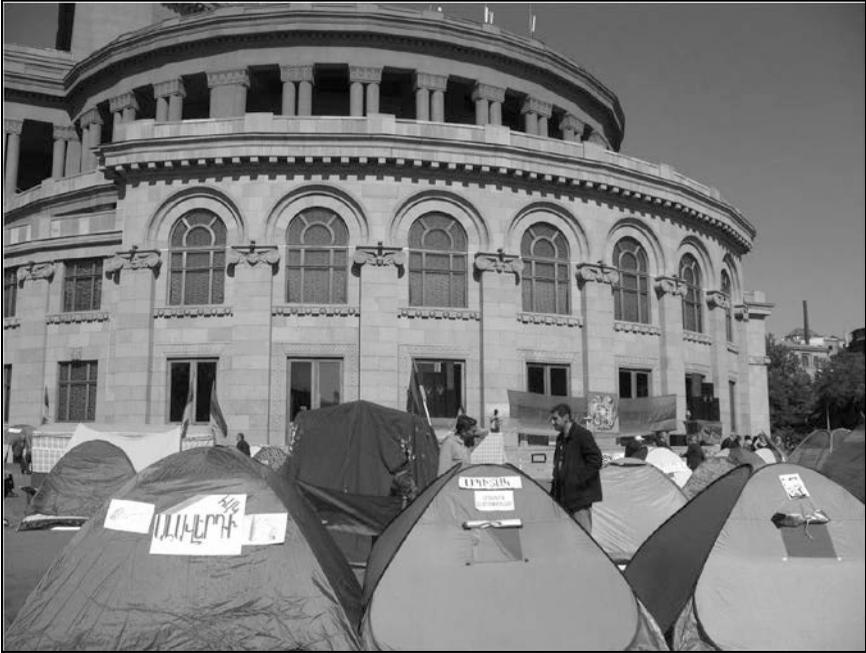
Fig. 7: ›Warning‹ protest action at Freedom Square, 2011 (photo by Gayane Shago-yan).

The February 2008 post-electoral rallies resembled the 1988 insofar as they both lasted days and nights. During the 2008 rallies, some festival elements were actively used by both organisers and participants, including dancing. One might have thought that the festival model of the political rally was being reactivated. However, the festival atmosphere during the 2008 rallies felt more like a constructed (albeit essential) element, and not its basic structure. Participants in 2008 did not comprise a unified group – a principal characteristic of the 1988 ›festival‹ (Abrahamian 1990a: 76). Many joined the former President only to use him, following his own proposal ›to use him as an instrument‹. As for the dancing, participants and organisers often danced just to get warm in the frigid February air and not because of any inherent ›festival‹ structure. The dancing itself called forth a festive mood (fig. 4) – quite in accordance with the Durkheimian statement that people do not cry because they feel fear, they feel fear because they cry.

The role of the instrumentalist discourse is interesting in this context. We ended the last section arguing that the festival phenomenon of the 1988 rallies was used as an instrument for realising a kind of revolution. We also

mentioned the first President's call to use him as an instrument for realising social change (he said this during the first electoral meeting in 2007). On the other hand, his activities and he himself were interpreted as an instrument used by foreign anti-Armenian forces.

Fig. 8: Tent with 1988 picture-citations, Freedom Square, 2008 (photo by Gayane Shagoyan).

The on-going post-electoral rallies were discussed in the context of the colour revolutions.[6] A rough comparison between the opinions of Levon Ter-Petrosyan's opponents in Yerevan and in Los Angeles[7] showed that the conspiracy theories, particularly a Jewish conspiracy version involving Ter-Petrosyan's Jewish wife were more popular among the ›anti-Levonians‹ in

[6] See for example Mikaelyan 2008 for references to other cases of foreigners seeking traces of the ›color revolutions‹.
[7] Levon Abrahamian was in Los Angeles from January to April 2008 and had the opportunity to study the reaction of diaspora Armenians to the events in Armenia. Gayane Shagoyan carried out participant observation in Yerevan.

the diaspora. In Armenia, most ›anti-Levonians‹ based their antipathy on memories of the ›dark and cold years‹, while their conspiracy theories had a much broader geography. Although one could find a Jewish version here too, it had its origins among ›authoritative diaspora sources‹, was an import from the diaspora[8] rather than a local form of Armenian anti-Semitism. However, there were also local ›confirmations‹ of the Jewish plot version, for example, a much-discussed ›YouTube‹ video showing Ter-Petrosyan under the Israeli flag on Freedom Square during the February rallies.[9]

The idea that this might be a ›colour revolution‹ was so prominent, that the authors received letters from foreign colleagues and friends asking whether this was really a ›colour revolution‹ unfolding in Yerevan. It was enough to search the keywords ›colour revolution‹ and ›Armenia‹ to find residues of ›expert‹ information on this topic on the Internet. However, in Yerevan the people on all sides noted with disappointment that powerful foreign countries were so disinterested in Armenia that they did not care to organise a colour revolution there. Ter-Petrosyan's opponents would add that this was because of his tarnished past. In any case, during the rallies there were no visible (NGO-linked) signs of colour revolutions – only one of the many tents carried a ›NGO NOVA‹ label. The rest were the tents of participants who spent their nights on watch in tents in the square. Many of our interlocutors, including active rally participants, considered NGO activities foreign and as discredited. Some were waiting for (rather than searching for) a specific mode of struggle and victory, although none of them had a clear vision. Interestingly, one opposition leader mentioned later, in 2009, a specifically Armenian mode of struggle, unfortunately without specifying its nature. Levon Ter-Petrosyan, perhaps aware of the colour revolution motif, said jokingly in a speech during the on-going rallies of 2008 that they

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[8] Communication between diaspora and homeland was significant: for example, posters and slogans present at a mass demonstration in North Hollywood on 2 March 2008 in response to the dramatic events of the previous day in Yerevan were all obviously ›imported‹ from Yerevan.

[9] We could not locate witnesses of Ter-Petrosyan's ›Jewish‹ type dance under the Israeli flag as presented in the video. Many of Ter-Petrosyan's supporters consider this video a fake, the result of a well-chosen perspective. There could have been an Israeli flag along with the Georgian, Belarusian, European Union, and other foreign flags in the square. The music could have been easily added, while the former President's vague style of dancing could fit any national tradition.

would accomplish not a colour, but a ›dance revolution‹ in reference to the dancing during the rallies.

The ›unlimited‹, on-going protests turned out to have limits: early in the morning of 1 March, interior forces cleared the square. Ter-Petrosyan was taken to his residence with no guarantee of safety if he left his house. This was classified as house arrest by the opposition. People from the square and many new protesters moved to the square near the Myasnikyan Monument, constructing barricades and staying until late into the night. That night, ten people were killed, including two policemen, but the circumstances remain unclear and those responsible have never been identified. A state of emergency was imposed for twenty days as of 1 March, meetings and demonstrations were forbidden. A few days before this period ended, on 17 March 2008, following a proposal by the government, an extraordinary session of Parliament adopted a series of amendments to the ›Law on Conducting Meetings, Assemblies, Rallies and Demonstrations‹ that »considerably limit the right of freedom of assembly and give great discretionary powers to the authorities to prohibit political rallies and demonstrations« (About Us 2008). The ›festival instrument‹ failed to realise ›revolution‹. More than that, the authorities took measures to prevent political ›festivals‹ and their potential developments. However, some festive features could be easily seen in the protest actions that followed the repressive measures.[10] But they were of another quality and displayed other festive characteristics, mainly based on play.[11] These protest actions were born ›from below‹ and became known as ›political promenades‹ (fig. 5) (Abrahamian/Shagoyan 2011-12: 39-40, Abrahamian 2012: 264-265).

We will not discuss them in detail here, since they were not modelled on the 1988 ›festive‹ rallies. The festival model nevertheless became once again visible when the Freedom Square was re-conquered by the opposition in March 2011 after a long ban and obstruction of the Square during the construction of an underground parking garage.

How were the 1988 rallies reflected – implicitly or explicitly – twenty years later and to the present day? Are they still an instrument for achieving revolutionary goals or a suitable model for organising the space and agenda of modern rallies? Or are rallies always ›invented‹ anew on the basis of uni-

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[10] More than one hundred Ter-Petrosyan supporters were arrested in the course of the rally or after. They were later released. The last of them after the amnesty declared in June 2009.

[11] On the play aspects of the 1988 rallies cf. Tadevosyan 1999.

versal ritual (festive) characteristics? Understanding that the discussion of these questions requires another format and much more space, we will focus briefly on some initial points that have drawn our attention when comparing more recent rallies with the ›festival‹ precedent of 1988.

Fig. 9: A 1988 picture-citation on a tent, Freedom Square, 2008 (photo by Gayane Shagoyan).

As already noted, the participants of the 2008 rallies did not form a cohesive body, as during the 1988 rallies, but a dispersed ›unity,‹ within which one could spot diverse groups. One such group was founded in April 2008 under the name ›HIMA!‹ (›Now!‹ in Armenian). It was composed of high school students, college students, graduates and postgraduates, as well as young university professors and other youth of diverse backgrounds. Their website explained: »HIMA! […] is a youth initiative in Yerevan, Armenia, advocating democracy and civil rights against the oppression of the authoritarian regime of Armenia's former President Robert Kocharyan and his hand-picked successor, Serge Sargsyan« (About Us 2008). In this and other programmatic statements one

can see some obvious characteristics of a group fighting for civil society,[12] this time for a real, and not carnivalesque or illusionary one as was founded in the same square twenty years ago.

Fig. 10: Picture-citation of a 1988 hunger strike, Freedom Square, 2008 (photo by Gayane Shagoyan).

Although ›HIMA!‹ was born spontaneously during the protests in the Freedom Square, the protests were initiated as a concrete, socially-oriented challenge of the announced election results and not as an all-national feeling of injustice. The name of this initiative was also born spontaneously in the square – the chant ›HI-MA! HI-MA! HI-MA!‹ signalling the intentions of the demonstrators to continue their protest NOW!, i.e. without further delay (fig. 6). We see that the civic and political demands of this group were not initiated by a 1988 type ›festival‹, but actually preceded it – festival-like elements and moods were actually ›instrumentalised‹ during

[12] On the processes of civil society construction in post-Soviet Armenia cf. Ishkanian 2008.

the day-and-night protest rallies that began after the birth of HIMA! (About Us 2008). Without delving into a detailed comparison between the 2008 and 1988 rallies, we can conclude that while the 1988 rallies could be classified as a festival within which a carnival civil society was born, the 2008 rallies actually gave birth to an embryonic, but real civil society.
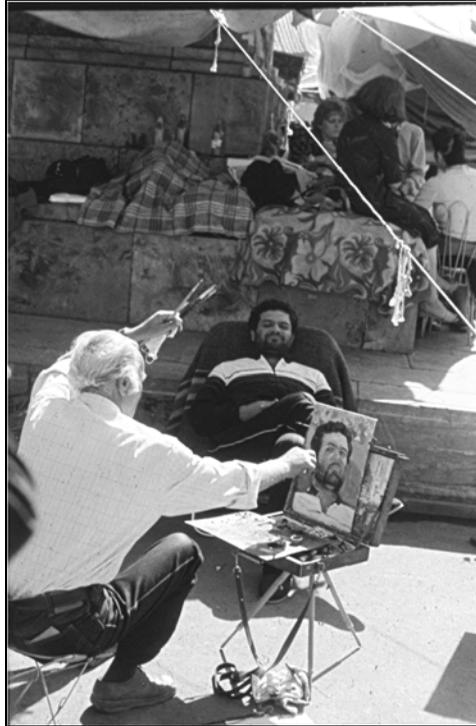
Fig. 11: Hunger strike in the Theatre Square, 1988
(photo by Levon Abrahamian).

The development of the protest movement also shows that we already had some elements of a ›grassroots‹ civil society: the protest actions were not a result of NGO or other initiatives, although their members could be found among the protesters, including the ›HIMA!‹ initiative. Rather, they were improvised and participated in by different types of people, many of whom

wanted, albeit passively, to express their attitude towards the repression of their civil rights.[13]

It is interesting that the festival features of the 1988 rallies sometimes manifested themselves from below in the later rallies and sometimes were constructed from above. Thus, during the 2007-2008 meetings in support of Levon Ter-Petrosyan, one could spot banners and posters indicating this or another region of Armenia and often reading, as this was the case in 1988, that this concrete region ›is together‹ with the people in the square (fig. 3). One could also spot the names of the Yerevan city quarters in such posters – something that was not present in 1988, when the city residents began the rallies, and people from the regions came to join them. In 2009, during Levon Ter-Petrosyan's mayoral election campaign, such visual confirmations of the city quarters' support would have been understandable. But such visual manifestations also have an irrational archaic background, which was well expressed during the ›festival‹ of 1988.

This was, albeit unconscious, a manifestation of the fact that all the parts (regions) of the whole (Armenia) were present at this great festive event. Such a trend to fully represent the system (in our case – the Armenian nation) is an important and archaic feature of the key ritual events in the life of a society.[14] This trend to represent the whole nation was quite understandable during the ›festival‹ of 1988 with a number of such uniting manifestations (in slogans, posters, ›all-national‹ strikes, pan-Armenian movement, etc.), while in 2007-2008 the ›whole nation‹ was obviously not present in the square, as this was imagined in 1988, although people joining the rallies nevertheless were following this trend, as their posters reading ›X is with you‹ revealed (fig. 3). In October 2011, during the week-long ›warning‹ protest action in the Freedom Square, the opposition actually constructed this total presence by labelling the tents that occupied the square with the names of different administrative provinces and geogra-

[13] For an illustration see the description of the 21 March 2008 protest event (Abrahamian/Shagoyan 2011-12: 38-39) and the discussion of attempts to organize first flash-mobs in Armenia.

[14] Cf. Panspermia in the Ancient World and its probable modern replica in the traditional Armenian New Year ritual dishes requiring all kinds of cereals and legumes, panterria in Paleolithic art, family and tribal reunions during important ritual events and other examples of gathering together to present a full/whole system when facing critical situations – cf. Abramian 1983: 90, 185-186, Bogaevski 1916: 192-229.

phical spots in Armenia (fig. 7), but this time these were the representatives of the parties that comprised the opposition (Armenian National Congress). The unity of the people in the square was constructed and not spontaneous.

Fig. 12: Hunger strike in the Theatre Square, 2011 (photo by Levon Abrahamian).

Another visible presence of the 1988 experience during the 2008 protest actions were photo-citations – photographs of the ›glorious precedent‹. They were placed on the tents where protesters rested between the day-and-night actions (fig. 8 and 9). So the ›festival‹ of 1988 was used as a form of didactical material for the on-going event. Interestingly, one of these photo-citations presented the location of the protest event, the Freedom Square, during the period of one of the hunger strikes in 1988 (fig. 10). One can see the attitude toward such extreme protest at that time: the hunger strikes were organised and accepted as the core of the general protest event, with a touch of theatricality (fig. 11), which is one of the features of a festival. While it is characteristic that in 2011, when a Member of Parliament and famous political figure sat for a 15-day-long hunger strike in the same square, it was perceived, as the square's visual presentation of those days reveal (fig. 12), as a local event in the general ›multicultural‹ picture of the square. This means that to realise solidarity in the square (not

to mention the developments, concrete products or by-products that could have been expected as a result of such solidarity), its historical experience had to be instrumentalized by the organisers of new rallies.

Fig. 13: an Internet poster calling to a meeting on October 28, 2011. The inscription reads: ›On October 28 as in 1988!‹ (web address unknown).

The ebb and flow of the festive mood is directly related to the number of festival participants. The waning of numbers affects its festival features and consequently, its revolutionary outflow – if we follow the festival to revolution development discussed earlier. This was reflected in the anxiety of the opposition supporters that they would have too few people at the demonstrations, and the concerns of the authorities that large numbers would turn out. At all events of the opposition today and in the recent past, the transportation of people from the regions and the outskirts of Yerevan were prevented. An interesting reflection of these anxieties could serve the two estimates that ›Radio Liberty‹ gave of the number of participants at the rally and subsequent march of the opposition on 1 May 2009. A police chief observing the protest estimated 5,000 participants at the meeting and 2,500 at the march, while the respective figures of the rally coordinator were 50,000 and 70,000 respectively. Our own estimates of this and subsequent marches yielded figures comparable to the police estimate. The nature of these estimates, imagined and real numbers, as well as ›magic‹ numbers (of participants, victims, etc.), especially in relation to the mass ›all-national‹ rallies of 1988 cannot be discussed further here. We will only say that the shrinking of the rallies is perceived as an alarm signal by the

organisers of protest actions, and they were looking to mobilise support based on the the ›all-national‹ rallies of 1988.

A telling episode reflecting this discourse on numbers and figures took place in November 2008 during an informal discussion on the political situation in Armenia. A young man close to the HIMA!-initiative responded to a 1988 veteran's comment about the small number of civil rights fighters with claims that perhaps this number should be small. He noted that it was time to stop comparing today's protesters with those of 1988: »Thank you for 1988, but stop looking back to those days«.

There is not better closing remark for the themes presented in this article than an Internet poster informing about an opposition meeting (to be held on 28 October 2011). It shows the figure of a trumpeter before a rally and reads: ›On 28 October as in 1988!‹ (fig. 13). Rallies today continue to refer to the ›precedent‹, recalling the trumpet call that every participant of the 1988 rallies keeps in their heart.

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Philipp Naucke

Gene Sharp: Nonviolent Action and the Rose Revolution
On the Confusion of Political and Scholarly Success[1]

In academic research on resistance and protest, it is at the moment impossible to read or write anything without finding or making a reference to the ideas of the political scientist Gene Sharp.[2] The importance attributed to Gene Sharp is usually justified by the fact that his theoretical considerations have triggered such resonance in the field of political science over the past twenty years (e.g. Dudouet 2008: 9). Not only in relation to the ›Arab Spring‹ is Gene Sharp referenced as an inspiration for modern revolutionaries worldwide, also during the ›colour revolutions‹ in Eastern Europe, including the ›Rose Revolution‹ in Georgia, were the approaches of the ›Clausewitz of nonviolent warfare‹ (Memmott 2011) classified as a source of inspiration for the actions of protesters (e.g. Jakopovich 2007: 215).

With these two introductory remarks, the context of the following article has been provided. In the following, I will trace the influence of Gene Sharp's theories, both in scholarly debate as well as their impact on political reality, in this case Georgia. To this end, I will start by presenting the theoretical concepts of Gene Sharp and then describe how these were applied in the Rose Revolution. Then I will address the interface of scholarship and politics before I end with a conclusion that will raise more questions than it will be able to answer.

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[1] Many thanks to David Wagner for his input during the preparation of this article.
[2] Even in the process of publishing an anthropological article on forms of resistance, which has little in common with the protest movements addressed by Gene Sharp, I had to justify in the peer review process of the journal, why I am not going to discuss his ideas

Sharp's theory of power and politics of nonviolent action

Gene Sharp was born in 1928 and studied sociology at Ohio State University. In 1968 he received his Doctor of Philosophy in political theory from Oxford University and has taught political science at the University of Massachusetts since 1972. He has held research appointments at Harvard University's Center for International Affairs since 1965 (cf. AEI a).

In 1973, Gene Sharp published his main work, ›The Politics of Nonviolent Action‹ (1973a), which was at the same time declared a classic of civil disobedience (e.g. Bruyn 1974, Kriesberg 1975, Nieburg 1974) but then ignored for a long time, at least within the scientific community (e.g. Martin 1989: 213). Inspired by Henry D. Thoreau and Mahatma Gandhi, Sharp develops his theory of power and nonviolent action over almost 1,000 pages and three volumes.

In the first volume, Sharp elaborates a theory of power as a framework for understanding how nonviolent action works. His actor-focused theory could be summarised as follows: First he divides the people of a society into rulers and subjects and shows, second, that the power of the rulers derives from the consent of the subjects (Sharp 1973b). The key elements are the ruler-subject division and the consent. The ruling group is not elaborated on in detail; it includes the »chief executives but also ruling groups and all bodies in command of the State structure« (Sharp cited in Martin 1989: 214). All other members of society are the subjects. With the idea of consent, Sharp provides an alternative to the common idea that power lies in the person or position of a ruler. Power derives, according to Sharp, from sources of power like authority, human resources and knowledge, but the basis of these sources is the consent or obedience of the subjects (Sharp 1973b: 11-12). Nonviolent action, in turn, »constitutes a refusal by subjects to obey« (Martin 1989: 214). It is a process of withdrawing consent and, in that sense, a way to challenge dictatorship and oppression.

In the second volume, Sharp classifies methods of nonviolent action and lists almost two hundred different techniques along with an array of historical examples. This classification organises the experiences of and the literature on nonviolent action into three main categories. The first category ›Protest and Persuasion‹ contains 54 different techniques of nonviolent action. The second main category ›Non-Cooperation‹ is divided into three subcategories called ›social, economic and political non-cooperation‹ and includes 103 techniques. Last but not least, the third main category ›Nonviolent Intervention‹ contains 41 techniques (Sharp 1973c; cf. AEI b).

Reading the list of techniques, one could easily come to the conclusion that »anything that is neither exclusively verbal nor directly harmful to others seems to be a method« (Garver 1974: 267). Rude gestures (no. 30), singing (no. 37) or silence (no. 52) are listed as techniques. Later, techniques such as ›action by government‹ are introduced (cf. AEI b). Considering his ruler-subject division, Sharp fails to explicate why or in what situation a government could be part of the powerless subject class. And supposing that there could be such a situation, it remains unclear, why a domestic embargo (method no. 92) should be a technique of nonviolent action while taxation, for example, is not (cf. Garver 1974: 267). In this case there is actually no distinction between techniques of nonviolent action and normal institutional actions of the state.

In the third volume, Sharp turns to the dynamics of nonviolent action. This part appears much like a list of all the factors that might influence what happens when nonviolent action is used (Sharp 1973d). He constantly affirms that the success of nonviolent action is not guaranteed and that the outcome might be very different in different cases (cf. Martin 1989: 218). Because he refuses to analyse the political situation in which nonviolent action could happen, »he has no criteria for identifying success or failure, or the factors on which they depend« (Garver 1974: 267). His book is, thus, relatively weak in terms of explanatory power.

In 1973 some reviewers of his work would not even admit that Sharp had formulated a theory of power. It was argued that his view of power was not that original (Friedrich 1974: 465) – and indeed, Hanna Arendt had just published in 1970 her famous essay ›On Violence‹, where she distinguishes power from strength by arguing that the former derives from the consent of a community while the latter could be an individual capacity (Arendt 1970). It was also argued that Sharp's understanding of violence was limited to a narrow sense of physical violence that did not include, for example, the destruction of buildings or machinery (Friedrich 1974: 466), not to mention phenomena like symbolic or structural violence (Bourdieu 2001, Galtung 1990).[3] Garver, for example, criticised that Sharp wrote about nonviolent action as a set of strategic techniques apart from any particular purpose or user. By ignoring the political circumstances in which these techniques

[3] What is defined as violence has of course changed since 1973. But reading his considerations, it is not surprising that it was not Sharp who uncovered the phenomena of symbolic and cultural violence.

ought to be applied, the book stopped having anything to do with politics (Garver 1974).

The book was initially ignored in the academic world. One explanation for this could be that his power theory was indeed too simplistic to attract the attention of political scientists in a time in which thinkers like Gramsci and Foucault were being widely discussed. Another reason might be that his studies of nonviolent action take historical examples out of their context to prove a point and thus are not convincing for historical scholarship. Until the 1990s, most scholars who adopted Sharp's ideas criticised his focus on consent as too individualistic and voluntaristic. For them, such an actor-oriented theory of power leaves out much of the social complexity and structural conditions needed to understand power relations (e.g. Martin 1989: 213-220).

Apart from ›The Politics of Nonviolent Action‹, Gene Sharp wrote several essays that were collected in two books – ›Gandhi as a Political Strategist‹ (1979) and ›Social Power and Political Freedom‹ (1980) – neither of which gained much attention. In the 1990s nonviolent action was a virtual non-issue in the academic world.

That changed in the year 2000, when academic works on nonviolent action experienced a sudden revitalisation. This revitalisation is closely linked to the name of Peter Ackerman, a lawyer and student of Gene Sharp who received his PhD in international relations. With books like ›A Force More Powerful‹ (Ackerman/DuVall 2000) or papers like ›The Strategic Dimension of Civil Resistance‹ (Ackerman/Rodal 2008), he stimulated a number of new works on the issue. In this period Gene Sharp published another book called ›Waging Nonviolent Struggle‹ (2005). What all these works have in common is that their content seems to point to just one end, and that is to show that nonviolent action does work in real life.

In a theoretical sense there is nothing new in these works. They are based on the same simplistic theory of power, focus on the same techniques and still do not explain the factors that might lead to the success of nonviolent action. But this renaissance of publications on nonviolent action has created an academic predisposition that complicates publishing on issues like protest or resistance without referring to Sharp's approach, not to mention the incorporation of new theoretical approaches that might help to systematically explain these phenomena.

Sharp and Ackerman, like many other influential studies of resistance can be accused of what Ortner calls ›cultural thinning‹ (1995: 180), that is, cultural and social factors like religion, cosmology or value-systems are not taken into account in the analysis of historical examples of political protest

or in descriptions of methods of nonviolent action. Nonviolent action appears like a universal toolkit that suits every imaginable form of protest, independent of the cultural and social circumstances in which the protest takes place.

Sharp's ideas and the Rose Revolution

What does the work of Gene Sharp have to do with the Rose Revolution in Georgia? Where is the link between his ideas and the events that took place in Tbilisi in November 2003?

Gene Sharp founded a non-profit organisation in 1983 called the Albert Einstein Institution, dedicated, so its mission statement (cf. AEI c), to advancing the study and use of strategic nonviolent action in conflicts throughout the world. It is committed to the defence of freedom, democracy, and the reduction of political violence through the use of nonviolent action: »To further its mission, the Institution […] actively consults with resistance and pro-democracy groups […] and worked to publicize the power and potential of nonviolent struggle around the world through educational materials, analysis, translations, workshops, and media visibility« (AEI d).

As part of the educational material of the Albert Einstein Institution, Sharp published a small book called ›From Dictatorship to Democracy‹ (2003 [1993]). It pretends to be a conceptual framework for liberation and is a kind of popular summery of ›The Politics of Nonviolent Action‹. It was translated into 35 languages and it is said that it has inspired political activists around the world to take action against oppressive regimes.

After receiving his PhD, Peter Ackerman worked from 1978 to 1990 as the director of international capital markets at an investment bank called ›Drexel Burnham Lambert‹, becoming a multimillionaire in the process (Businessweek 2012). In 2002 he founded the ›International Center on Nonviolent Conflict‹, which, according to its website, »promote[s] the history and ideas of nonviolent conflict […], encourage[s] international institutions and decision makers to facilitate the activity of civilian-based, nonviolent movements […] [and] provides support for […] activists and citizens who are considering civilian-based, nonviolent action as a way to seek democracy, justice, or human rights« (ICNC 2009).

Until 2009, Peter Ackerman also chaired the organization ›Freedom House‹, an international non-governmental organization based in Washington D.C. that conducts research and advocacy on democracy, political freedom and human rights. Its leading members of Freedom House »agree that

the promotion of democracy and human rights abroad is vital to America's interests abroad« (Freedom House [n.d.]).

The events that took place in November 2003 in Tbilisi were reported on by the international media especially for their nonviolent character. Aliyev argued that considering »Georgia's turbulent history and lack of strong democratic traditions, the non-violent character of the revolution was by no means self-evident« (2005: 3). The Rose Revolution began with protests against the falsification of the parliamentary election in November 2003 and ended in the storming of the Georgian Parliament and the resignation of President Eduard Shevardnadze (Aliyev 2005). Massive demonstrations were held in Tbilisi where tens of thousands of people participated in a nonviolent way.

How was it that these protests took place nonviolently? Looking for reasons, one can find two main actors that seem to play a crucial role in keeping the protest nonviolent, namely the ›Liberty Institute‹ and the student movement ›Kmara!‹ (Anable 2006: 18). The Liberty Institute is a non-profit and independent foundation in Tbilisi that promotes liberal civil society, civil rights, public accountability, the rule of law, transparency and a free market economy in public life, politics, legislation and public institutions in Georgia through civic campaigns, debates, surveys and training (cf. InfoRapid Wissensportal). Kmara!, on the other hand emerged out of the Georgian student movement, a political organisation of students, who had organised mass demonstrations in October and November 2001, calling for the preservation of press freedom. During the November 2003 events, Kmara! applied the philosophy of non-violence to the Georgian revolution (Aliyev 2005: 54-58).

These two national actors were supported by an international network of organisations like George Soros' ›Open Society Institute‹, Freedom House, which is associated with Peter Ackerman and a number of consultants from other organisations (Flottau et al. 2005: 188, Jakopovich 2007: 214). The activists of the Kmara!-movement were trained in nonviolent action techniques by the Serbian organisation ›Otpor‹ (cf. Anable 2006: 11). The German political magazine ›Spiegel‹ wrote in November 2005 that the Liberty Institute and the Kmara-movement received their funding from the Open Society Institute and Freedom House and that organisations like the International Center on Nonviolent Conflict of Peter Ackerman advised them in nonviolent action techniques with materials from the ›Albert Einstein Institution‹ like the book ›From Dictatorship to Democracy‹ (Flottau et al. 2005).

This organisational setting of two national actors, a research institution and a movement of political activists, financed and trained by a network of international organisations is reminiscent of other nonviolent revolutions that took place in that decade in Serbia (2000), the Ukraine (2004) and Kyrgyzstan (2005) (cf. Nikolayenko 2007). It has also been claimed that the influence of this international network of organisations was not just limited to the training of nonviolent action, but that they influenced the political direction of the demands of the protest movements as well (Jakopovich 2007).

My argument in the following is independent of the veracity of these claims or the purported influence of the American government in these revolutions. What is central to my argumentation is the fact that political activists of the Rose Revolution and the other ›colour revolutions‹ in Eastern Europe were actively trained in techniques of nonviolent action. That is to say that the form or mode in which the activists expressed their political claims were actively shaped by promotional material of the Albert Einstein Institute, made exactly for this purpose, and through organisations and persons, who were closely linked to the study of nonviolent action.

On the confusion of two professional fields

At this point, it is important to look at the activities of Gene Sharp and some of his students from a broader perspective. On the one hand, he is a political scientist who has published on nonviolent action. His writing was almost neglected in the academic world until the late 1990s, as mentioned above. Since the year 2000 a revitalisation of academic work on nonviolent action has taken place and Gene Sharp became a prominent figure in the area of research on political protest. On the other hand, Gene Sharp and some of his students have founded different organisations with the purpose of promoting nonviolent action around the world. They have published promotional material like the conceptual guide ›From Dictatorship to Democracy‹ and were actively involved in the training of political activists around the globe.

Gene Sharp is thus also a political activist, which is as such neither morally objectionable nor often enough quite legitimate. I can imagine a lot of situations, where scholars should be even more active politically.

But, and this is the point I want to make, this particular form of political activism practiced by Gene Sharp contains something akin to a ›friendly backlash‹ for the academic work of Gene Sharp. The way in which he promotes his techniques of nonviolent action shape the empirical reality in

which his theoretical considerations are based. With every nonviolent revolution that takes place in the world, his scientific reputation seems to increase, despite the fact that his theoretical contributions have not in any substantial way been developed further.

Academic publications on nonviolent action published since 2000 have been almost exclusively written by authors, who are in some way involved with the International Center on Nonviolent Conflict, and they all point in the same direction. They are all trying to prove that nonviolent action works. This leads to summaries of different kinds of protest presented in a statistical manner (cf. Stephan/Chenoweth 2008: 21-23). But apart from the numbers, there is nothing new about the theory of nonviolent action. These works are all based on the same simplistic theory of power, they list the same techniques of nonviolent action and they still cannot explain the factors that determine the success or failure of nonviolent protest.

Turning to recent cases of political protest in the Arab world, it would not be surprising if the researchers of the International Center on Nonviolent Conflict were right now updating their statistics with cases from Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt. Peter Ackerman and Gene Sharp may right now are preparing their next publication called something like Why Nonviolent Action Works in the Arab World as well. They will probably ignore why nonviolent action did not work in Iran or Libya, or why it is not working in Syria.

Apart from the numbers, it is worthwhile to remember that the form or the mode of political protest is just one dimension of such phenomena and that there are other dimensions like the goals, the targets, the level of coordination (e.g. Hollander/Einwohner 2004) and of course the cultural, social and structural circumstances, which all require study in order to understand how political protest works. There are a lot of things happening in political protests that Gene Sharp and his students ignore.

Conclusion

Gene Sharp is a political scientist and political activist. Some would call this a good example of applied social science. So far so good, but Gene Sharp's outstanding scientific reputation is based in an empirical reality that he is actively shaping with his political activism. What we are facing here is not a problem of applied science or one of how to separate the two professional fields of scholarship and political activism or if these fields should be separated at all. What we are facing is the confusion about what it means to be

successful in scholarship, in political activism, and why success in one does not automatically imply success in the other.

Thus the question becomes one of what the criteria might be to measure the success of someone who is acting in both fields? Martin gives us at least an idea what could be a criteria for political activism: »If the aim is to provide some insights which can be used by activists, [which can motivate people to take action for their own interests and which can lead to the end of oppressive regimes], then a simple, straightforward, easy-to-apply theory is far superior. By this criterion, Sharp's theory is highly successful« (Martin 1989: 219).

Paraphrasing Martin, I would like to suggest the following criteria for defining success in scholarship: If the aim is to advance the knowledge and understanding of political protest, the dimensions and the sociocultural factors that influence political protest, and the role of human action in it, by investigating protest but preferring to avoid active participation, then a complex theory seems necessary.[4] Judging by this criterion, Sharp's theory fails to be successful.

It appears that separating what it means to be successful in these two professional fields is not that difficult. Which begs the question, why is it not done? There appears to be an academic automatism in effect that someone is frequently cited just because they are already cited elsewhere. Instead of citing for citation's sake, I would propose refocusing on the explanatory content of a particular work. Does it further our knowledge about a phenomenon? Does it explain the phenomenon in a new or innovative manner? Does it offer insights worth elaborating on? If not, why propagate it?

It is of course possible to read this argument the other way around: publish a simple idea and then engage in political activism – and become famous in doing so.

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[4] Authors like Abu-Lughod 1990, Comaroff 1985, Hollander/Einwohner 2004, O'Brien 1996, Ortner 1995 and Scott 1987, among others, have considered protest and resistance in this manner, that is as a complex political, social and cultural phenomenon.

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Sergey Rumyansev and Sevil Huseynova

Peaceful Interethnic Cooperation during the Nagorno-Karabakh Crisis
A Criticism of Attempts to Essentialise Conflicts

> »We all used to be good friends here,
> said Serdar Bey as if he was giving away a secret.«
> Orhan Pamuk, *Snow*

In 1998, Rogers Brubaker described the existing, bleakly pessimistic approach to Eastern European nationalism that assumes an overdrawn, if not downright caricatural contrast between the nationalisms of Western and Eastern Europe as seeing, »the entire region as a seething cauldron of ethnic conflict, on the verge of boiling over into ethnic and nationalist violence, or, in another metaphorical idiom, as a tinderbox that a single careless spark could ignite into a catastrophic ethnonational inferno« (Brubaker 1998: 281). Certainly, it is impossible to deny that »the violence in the region – in the former Yugoslavia, in Transcaucasia and the North Caucasus, in parts of Soviet Central Asia – has indeed been appalling. But the undifferentiated image of the region as a hotbed of ubiquitous, explosive, violent or at least potentially violent ethnic and national conflict is quite misleading« (Brubaker 1998: 281).

This ›delusion‹ makes it possible to ignore certain events, such as a population exchange (village swap) carried out by two rural communities in the spring and summer of 1989, during the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.[1] The swap took place between the Azerbaijani community of the village of Ky-

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zyl-Shafag (›Red Dawn‹), which during Soviet times was located in Armenia's Kalininsky District (currently Lori Province), and the Armenian community of the village of Kerkendzh (Azerbaijan's Shamakhi District). It included a civil agreement between the two communities that ensured, primarily, that the cemeteries and other places of memory of the respective emigrant communities would be preserved.

Although this article is devoted to a specific village swap during the conflict (see also Hakobyan in this volume), we will develop a wider analysis of the specificities of the collective and individual experience of interethnic interaction between Azerbaijanis and Armenians.[2] We will proceed from the premise that peaceful interethnic interaction and reciprocal assistance in certain crisis (conflict) situations and peaceful neighbourly contacts were once a habitual norm in relations between Azerbaijanis and Armenians. Such peaceful relations were longer and more frequent than conflicts, the latest of which (the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict) caused an almost complete division of Azerbaijanis and Armenians who had long lived in a common Southern Caucasus space. In the context of the proposed analysis we will also look at how the Azerbaijani community settled in the socially and physically new space of the village of Kerkendzh, and at the »perceptions and attributions [of] ... ordinary people who experience place (and act on those understandings)« (Gieryn 2000: 468). This aspect is especially important as it makes it possible to observe how peaceful daily interethnic cooperation was possible both when the conflict began and during the process of the forced collective village swap.

The central thesis of this article is that the increasingly popular, bleakly pessimistic idea of incessant conflict is largely based on a reduced image of interethnic contacts and relationships in the region. This essentialism is based in an exclusive focus on political history and the description of acute

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[2] We use terms like ›ethnicity‹ and ›ethnic‹ based on the definition proposed by Walker Connor as »identity with one's ethnic group« (Connor 1994: 100). But the special significance of Soviet national policy should also be considered. As Rogers Brubaker put it, in the Soviet Union, »ethnic nationality (*natsional'nost'*) was not only a statistical category, a fundamental unit of social accounting, employed in censuses and other social surveys. It was, more distinctively, an obligatory and mainly ascriptive legal category, a key element of an individual's legal status« (Brubaker 2000: 31). This vision of ethnicity, as the most important characteristic of every person, was passed from generation to generation and was widespread among informants in the case being described here.

conflicts between representatives of two ›incompatible ethnoses‹ as inevitable.[3]

The ideology of the ›inevitability of conflict‹ is constructed in the service of revanchism and an important mobilising resource for maintaining and strengthening the political regimes of both post-Soviet Armenia and Azerbaijan. The logic behind this ideology is the simple and convenient idea that in the face of an invariably united ›historical enemy‹, ›we‹ – the nation – should also act as a monolithic front under the leadership of the incumbent authorities.[4] In this constant state of external conflict, internal political disagreements are harmful and inopportune. On the contrary, this is a time to unite around the incumbent authorities. Any opponents of the ruling political regime are often described as a ›fifth column‹ challenging ›our‹ unity.

At the same time, the history of peaceful ethnic relations between Azerbaijanis and Armenians and their local specificities are completely and, presumably, often deliberately, ignored. An in-depth analysis, based on methods of oral history, biographical interviews and analysis of the collective memory of local specificities of daily contacts, reveals the complex dynamics of relationships in which cooperation and peaceful ethnic contacts were the norm and makes it possible to write a history of interethnic relations and cooperation between the rural Azerbaijani and Armenian communities. It makes it possible to deconstruct the myth of the ›incompatibility of ethnoses‹ and the conspiracy behind claims of a centuries-long enmity with an invariably united, monolithic, insidious and cruel ›historical enemy‹.[5]

[3] In a speech by former Armenian President Robert Kocharyan (1998-2008) made in January 2003 during his official visit to Moscow he talked about the incompatibility of the Azerbaijani and Armenian ›ethnoses‹.

[4] Craig Calhoun writes that »while it is important to emphasize the domestic roots of the discourse of nationalism, nothing calls forth more compelling nationalist discourse and commitments than international conflicts, wars« (1997: 125).

[5] These myths of Armenian-Azerbaijani animosity are popular in both societies. Textbooks on Azerbaijani and Armenian history developed in the post-Soviet period contain constructs of ›historical enemies‹ and of an Armenian-Azerbaijani confrontation that has lasted for millennia (cf. Shnirelman 2003, Abbasov/ Rumyansev 2008, Rumyansev 2005, 2008, 2010).

Methodology

The study was conducted using the methods of participant observation and biographical interviews. In three stages over forty days, the researchers lived in the respective villages and kept observation diaries. The first (preliminary) stage was a visit to the village to identify the contacts needed and where they lived. The second (main) stage was a thirty day period of participant observation. During this period, twenty biographical interviews were conducted. The informants were directly involved in the process of the implementation of the collective village swap, i.e. middle and old age, considering the fact that by the time the study was conducted (2006-2008), it had been nearly twenty years since the exchange had taken place. After the interviews were transcribed, the material collected was analysed and the preliminary results of the research were discussed with colleagues. Additional information (participant observation and additional interviews) was collected in a third period of fieldwork. It should be noted that given that the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict has not yet been resolved, it was only possible for the researchers involved in the project to work in the villages located in the republics of which they are citizens.

Conflicts and traditions of interethnic cooperation and interaction

The village swap implemented in the spring and summer of 1989 was only possible because it was based on a lengthy (at least one hundred-year-old) tradition of peaceful coexistence and peaceful conflict resolution. Our material does not verify the conflictual relationship between Azerbaijani and Armenian communities that is often and increasingly maintained in post-Soviet academic and media texts that reduce a complex situation of diversity to one of conflicts.[6] Thus, the overwhelming majority of analytical and research work on the present Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is focused only on a description of the purported causes and results of pogroms, armed

[6] This situation is by no means unique. Valery Tishkov notes that »many scientists preferred to study war, forays, and conflicts but not friendship or affection and not societies at peace. This disposition has changed only very recently. A number of projects have been carried out at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Germany and confirm my old observation that the state of peace and cooperation is a norm for inter-group and inter-personal relations based in ethnicity« (2003: 127).

clashes, conflicts and deportations (cf. Mosesova 1998, Yunusov 2000, Arutyunyan 2003). As a result, from the perspective of the latest and still unresolved Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (1988-1994),[7] an ideology of an incessant Armenian-Azeri confrontation is constructed.[8] Without denying

[7] This conflict reflects to the full the political principle of nationalism, »which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent« (Gellner 1983: 1). The tensions that resulted in full-scale war emerged in 1987 when »Armenians for the first time openly raised the dangerous Karabakh problem again. The first petition to this effect, signed by hundreds of thousands of Armenians, was sent to Mikhail Gorbachev in August 1987« (Shnirelman 2003: 114). The predominantly Armenian-populated Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region (NKAO) was part of the Azerbaijani SSR. On 20 February 1988, the Council of People's Deputies of NKAO passed a resolution that suggest secession from the Azerbaijani SSR and a subsequent accession into the Armenian SSR. Mass deportations and pogroms, in, among other places, Sumgait (February 1988) and Baku (January 1990) followed. After the collapse of the USSR in 1991 the conflict turned into a full-scale war between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Armenian troops occupied five districts completely and two in part. The refugees in Azerbaijan were joined by hundreds of thousands of IDPs. It was not until May 1994 that a cease-fire was agreed upon in Bishkek. However, a peace treaty has never been concluded. It should be noted that this conflict has been the bloodiest of the many conflicts that have broken out in the South Caucasus after the collapse of the USSR (Mukomel' 1997).

[8] Since the late 1980s, Armenian and Azerbaijani historians, political scientists and sociologists (i.e. in a broad sense, intellectuals from both sides) have been constructing the concept of incessant conflict. Richard G. Hovannisian argues, for example, that already in the early 20th century »hostility between Armenians and Azerbaijanis was deep-seated and widespread. Racial, religious and cultural differences were only the backdrop to the bitter territorial feuds« (1997: 317). Arguments about the origins of this conflict vary. For specialist from Armenia, the conflict is most often part of a larger confrontation with the Turks, who are described as a ›traditional enemy‹ (1997: 376). For Azerbaijani intellectuals, the origins of the conflict always go back to the early 19th century, when large numbers of Armenians from the Persian and Ottoman empires were resettled in the region by the Russian Empire. The conflict is often traced back into the Middle Ages (cf. Dadaian 2006, Nadjafov 1993, 1994, Agaiantz 1997, Asadov 1999, Khalilov 2000, Avetisian 1997, Demoian 2006, Mahmudov 2008, 2010, Niftaliev 2010). The events of 1905-06 and 1918-20, when bloody Armenian-Azerbaijani conflicts took place, also play key roles (cf. Dadaian 2007: 105, 127, Nadjafov 1994: 66, 111). These kinds of texts are often based on the manipulation of numbers of victims of armed clashes, the use of selected cases etc. As mentioned above, memories of cases of reciprocal help and cooperation in conflict situations that might make it

that bloody clashes did and do take place, we argue that this focus reduces the understanding of process in the conflict.

This also applies to the analysis of the acute and bloody Armenian-Azeri conflicts in 1905-1906 and 1918-1920 (cf. Swietochowski 1985: 112-119, 135-139, Altstadt 1992: 41-49, Suny 1993: 38-43, 72-76). It is often argued that the current conflict has its roots in these conflicts, that is, when imperial control was weakened: »The old Azeri-Armenian conflict, hidden for almost seventy years of Soviet rule, erupted again with a fury during February 1988, when the Armenian SSR formally voiced its claims to Nagorno-Karabagh« (Swietochowski 1985: 194).[9]

This trend in the description of the Armenian-Azeri conflict should be viewed in the context of a general focus on conflict in the 1990s, not only under the impression of the collapse of the USSR and Yugoslavia. As Brubaker and Laitin have noted, it was just in the 1990s that »the bloody dissolution of Yugoslavia, intermittently violent ethnonational conflicts on the southern periphery of the former Soviet Union, the ghastly butchery in Rwanda, and Hindu-Muslim riots in parts of India, among other dispiriting events, have focused renewed public attention in recent years on ethnic and nationalist violence as a striking symptom of the ›new world disorder«« (Brubaker/Laitin 1998: 423-24).

James Fearon and David Laitin also note that »among existing theories of ethnic conflict, accounts focusing on past tensions between groups that are memorialized in narratives of blame and threat tend to dramatic over prediction of violence. Such narratives are almost always present, but large-scale interethnic violence is extremely rare« (Fearon/Laitin 1996: 715). Analysing the situation in Africa and in the post-Soviet world, Fearon and Laitin argue that »interethnic violence« is the exception rather than the rule« (1996: 716).

possible to question the construct of hereditary enmity are ignored (cf. Banin 2006: 117).

[9] For ›Western‹ specialists, the starting point of the conflict is normally the events of 1905, when Armenian pogroms took place in Baku: »In February 1905, violence erupted in the city of Baku on a scale unimaginable, even for citizens used to lawlessness and murder. With increasing intensity during a period of four days, the perpetrators set fires, looted, and killed. The clashes continued in various parts of the South Caucasus through 1905 and 1906. [...] ›Witnesses‹ gave conflicting accounts about who attacked whom first in particular clashes, which was reported in the media or conveyed in rumors, and led to increased anxiety and mistrust between Armenians and Azerbaijanis. Between 3,100 and 10,000 people are believed to have died during this period« (Sargent 2010: 144).

At the same time, they note that »there are only two cases of sustained communal violence between non-Russian minorities and titulars (Ossetians in Georgia and Armenians in Azerbaijan)« (1996: 716). The authors do not mention the ›sustained communal violence‹ also on the other side of the border, i.e. with Azerbaijanis in Armenia, but it is part of the same conflict in any case.

On the whole, we share Fearon, Laitin and Brubaker's position and here we would like make a new contribution to the discussion on the conflict potential in ›problem regions‹ and the often cruel violence that takes place. We argue that the violence that broke out in the late 1980s could have been even more tragic if it had not been for the existence of long traditions of reciprocal assistance and cooperation between Armenians and Azerbaijanis. In this sense, this conflict is not an exception, as Fearon and Laitin argue. Again following Fearon and Laitin also »argue that decentralized, nonstate institutional mechanisms may often arise to mitigate problems of opportunism in interactions between individuals from different ethnic groups« (1996: 715), but we go further and also point out that such mechanisms are capable of resolving conflicts not only at an individual but also at collective levels. This approach to the analysis of the conflict focuses on local and decentralized mechanisms – or, rephrasing these authors, on local-level interethnic cooperation.

The Azeri community of Kyzyl-Shafag established ties and cooperated with the Armenian community of the neighbouring village of Shakhnazar. Ideas about the Armenian community as something united and homogenous (along the lines of ›they are always enemies‹ or ›friends‹) were of no functional significance for the Azerbaijanis of Kyzyl-Shafag. Such relations took different shape in different ways and contexts at both individual and collective levels. For example, the Armenians in Shakhnazar were perceived as friendly towards the Kyzyl-Shafag villagers while for example there could be clashes with young people from the nearest district centre Stepanavan in the 1960s-70s.

In both cases (in conflict and cooperation) some kind of ›equilibrium‹ (Fearon/Laitin) was maintained that allowed the Azerbaijanis and the Armenians to feel fairly comfortable and not feel the need to flee. However, even as refugees, the people of Kyzyl-Shafag and Kerkendzh managed to use the potential of interethnic cooperation to organise the population exchange. What follows is the story of how this ›equilibrium‹ was maintained given that the conflict was escalating and about the conditions under which interethnic cooperation took place.

The official version of events

First, we will describe the course of the conflict. A tradition has emerged in Azerbaijan as a result of the conflict to describe the territory of the present-day Republic of Armenia as West Azerbaijan (Bayramov 2002, Mahmudov 2006, Mahmudov 2010). One of the first major works to do so is titled ›The Historical Geography of West Azerbaijan‹ and was published following President Heydar Aliyev's decree of 26 March 1998 ›On the Genocide of Azerbaijanis‹. This book is about all the Azerbaijani villages located in present-day Armenia, among them Kyzyl-Shafag: »Kyzyl-Shafag (formerly Cucakand) is an Azeri village. [...] Within a week in 1988, groups of Armenian chauvinist bandits took away all property from the population of the village and banished the people from their homes. The survivors were settled in different districts in Georgia and Azerbaijan« (Asadov/Budagov 1998: 388).

This description does not reflect actual events. Azerbaijanis were indeed forced to leave the village because of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. However, owing to the ancient traditions of cooperation with the neighbouring Armenian community of the village of Shakhnazar and the establishment of peaceful reciprocally beneficial relations with the village of Kerkendzh, where the Azerbaijanis resettled, the people of Kyzyl-Shafag managed to avoid the horrors of deportation. But this does not agree with the need for descriptions of conflict between Azerbaijanis and Armenians using categories of hereditary enmity. This suggests that a certain body of narratives has formed that mirrors the citation above.[10]

We should again stress that we do not deny that ethnic cleansing and deportation of the Azeri population of Armenia or of the Armenian population of Azerbaijan took place. As noted above, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was one of the cruellest and bloodiest to take place in post-Soviet space. However, this conflict was also a period of active cooperation and reciprocal assistance between Azerbaijanis and Armenians. The above-

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[10] Most intellectuals in Armenia are also involved in the construction of myths in the context of which the confrontation is described as hereditary. For example, there has so far been no attempt to study the active involvement of ethnic Azerbaijanis in saving Armenians during the pogroms in Baku in January 1990. Of interest are only the horrors of the pogroms (Mosesova 1998). There is no doubt that those horrors were real. However, it was cooperation at the individual level saved many lives.

mentioned (erroneous) description of events of the conflict does little more than facilitate the formation and maintenance of constructs about ›ethnic incompatibility‹ and myths about ›historical enemies‹.

Memory of the events of the early 20th century

The material we have collected shows that a certain system of reciprocally beneficial cooperation between different local rural communities existed already in the early 20th century. Representatives of the Armenian village of Shakhnazar (the *aksakal*, i.e. the most respected elderly members of the community) could ask residents of the Azerbaijani village of Kyzyl-Shafag (Cucakand) for help. The people of Kyzyl-Shafag remember how an Ottoman military unit appeared in the area in 1918 in search of, as villagers believe now, an armed Armenian group led by Andranik.[11]

»This Shakhnazar is a large village, with a population of 8,000. [...] They arrived there [i.e. in the northern part of present-day Armenia] [...] in 1823. They started to live there. [...] In 1918 [...] they [Andranik's bandits] came to a village and killed one man and his daughter-in-law. Turkish troops arrived after him. There is the village of Karagila, up there. You can see everything from there. The Turkish pasha, say the commander, ok, stayed there. When the Shakhnazar people learnt about this, their *aksakal* came to us, our village [Kyzyl-Shafag]. They asked our *aksakal* to ask [the Turkish pasha] to keep Turkish troops from entering our village [Shakhnazar] and killing our people. Three people, including my grandfather – three of the elderly [from Cucakand] went there. They met the Turkish pasha, the Turkish commander. They asked him not to touch [the Armenians of Shakhnazar] [...] they always help us. [...] He [the pasha] said go and bring their representatives here. The next day they went there, to the Turkish pasha, together with our old men, the *aksakal*. [...] They begged him and cried. He said: don't cry, don't beg. [...] If you are in a good relationship with that neighbouring village – do not be afraid [!], I will not let one single soldier come to you« (Bayram, 72).

The people of Kyzyl-Shafag acted as mediators between the Turkish (Ottoman) military and the Armenian community of the neighbouring village

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[11] Azerbaijani historiography and public discourse view Andranik as the cruel and merciless leader of Armenian bandits attacking the civilian Muslim/Turkic population of the region (Nadjafov 1992: 94, 105-106, Mustafazadeh 2006: 200-209). Armenian historiography describes Andranik as a national hero (Agayintz 1997).

of Shakhnazar, with whom they had established close, mutually beneficial relations long before the events of 1918. Everyone in Kyzyl-Shafag knows this story passed on from generation to generation.

The socio-political context of that time was not yet defined and far from the situation in the USSR where the population could be categorised into ›titular nations‹ and ›ethnic minorities‹. The state borders of the South Caucasus republics, which declared independence in May 1918, were still disputed. Kyzyl-Shafag and Kerkendzh are located in a mountainous area and are remote from urban centres. Given the poor state of the roads of the time, the people of Kyzyl-Shafag had more contact to the Armenians of Shakhnazar than to Azerbaijanis of other villages.[12]

In this situation the Armenians and the Azerbaijanis were equal in terms of their status; relationships were defined by the specifics of the two communities. The residents of the village of Shakhnazar worked as labourers for the generally wealthier people of Kyzyl-Shafag. Contact was frequent and intensive but generally limited to the economic sphere. Intensive individual or family contacts were rare. If anything divided the two communities it was religion.[13] However, the concomitant behavioural restrictions and taboos (eating certain types of food, etc.) were not insurmountable obstacles to establishing mutually beneficial relations.

In 1988 this old story acquired an unexpected topicality again. When the deportation of Azerbaijanis from Armenia started, the residents of Kyzyl-Shafag decided it was time to remind people about the support they gave to their neighbours in 1918: »So … in [19]88 [!][...] I sent our representatives, three people, to Shakhnazar [...]. They went there and said: remember, in

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[12] Except the Azerbaijani village Irganchay located in the immediate vicinity of Kyzyl-Shafag (about five to six kilometre away) but in what is today Georgia.

[13] According to Jörg Baberowski, before the implementation of the Soviet national project, »there were few passable roads in the rural districts of the Caucasus and whole regions were actually left cut off from ›civilization‹. Teachers and doctors lived, in the best case, in provincial centres. Villages and nomadic auls knew that the outside world existed only owing to forays by bandit gangs and visits by Russian researchers. The narrow local sense of identity remained in the Turkic villages: the boundaries of a village coincided with the boundaries of the world. Here, perhaps only disagreements between the Sunnis and the Shi'ites, the Christians and the Muslims, and the nomadic and the settled residents were topical. The rural residents did not have any ideas about nations as it were. Surrounded by a hostile world, which was very distant from the state authorities, the peasants felt like members of a family, a clan or a religious community« (Baberowski 2004: 352).

[19]18 – you are still talking about it … our old men defended you, did not let the Turkish soldiers come to you. Now you owe us! Well, they, too, I should tell you! There, at the edge of the village, from where a road runs to us, at the edge of the village, it was there [...]. One day [...] bearded men – [this is how] we called the Dashnaks – were coming from the district centre [...] to us, to our village in order to kill people. The Armenians [residents of Shakhnazar] did not let them do so! They did not let them! This is how it happened« (Bayram, 72).

A certain experience of support and mutual help existed for many years, and fairly intensive contacts between representatives of the two communities added to them. Passing from generation to generation, the memory of these events became a tradition of neighbourly relations. The world was not strictly divided into friends and enemies on ethnic or religious grounds. In the Soviet period these relations often became friendly on the level of individual contacts as well.

The Soviet national project and the intensification of interethnic conflicts

In 1920-21, the South Caucasus was again incorporated into a larger empire. The Soviet national project was implemented already in the first years after it was formed. Yuri Slezkin fairly notes: »The world's first state of workers and peasants was the world's first state to institutionalize ethnoterritorial federalism, classify all citizens according to their biological nationalities and formally prescribe preferential treatment of certain ethnically defined population« (1996: 204). Moreover, in Soviet policy, »national territories belonged to those nationalities whose names they bore« (1996: 211).

Certainly, the status-based ranking of groups based on ethnicity did not take root at once. Ronald Suny (like Baberowski 2004) notes the »weakness of identity with the nation in the grand sense among the peoples of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union in the early decades of the century, the limits of national consciousness largely within an urban intelligentsia« (2000: 249-250).

Francine Hirsch writes that »during the All-Union Census of 1926, the ethnographer – consultants reported that the inhabitants of nonurban regions continued to identify themselves primarily in terms of clan, tribe, religion, or place of origin, while local elites attempted to manipulate the registration of nationality to advance their own agendas« (2005: 145).

However, Hirsch argues that by the early 1930s, ethnicity had become a fundamental marker of identity, i.e. the Soviet national project was being

realised. Within the shortest period of time possible, the issue of the borders of the future Union republics was also resolved, effectively in parallel with the establishment of Soviet power in the region. As a result of the establishment of the republics' borders, the residents of Kyzyl-Shafag and Kerkendzh found themselves for the first time in their history on different sides of a border. This position determined the specificities of their inclusion or exclusion from projects implemented within the framework of Soviet national policy. For example, »the sociocultural, economic, and political sectors and cadres of each national territory« (Kaiser 1994: 124-125) were indigenised, a process from which these communities were largely excluded due to the status of ethnic minority status ascribed to them.

The Azerbaijanis in Armenia and Armenians in Azerbaijan found themselves, so Mark Saroyan, in a situation where »the hegemony of the titular nationality was reflected not only in the cultural practices of the dominant nationality but also in the cultural institutions and practices of ethnic minorities, that is, the non-dominant national communities of each republic. Ethnic cultural institutions for the so-called ›non indigenous‹ nationalcommunities are weak, unlike in their home republic. While there national language school, newspapers, and dramatic and literary associations forming the nucleus of the cultural life for non-titular ethnic communities, these cultural institutions are few and operate with limited resources« (1996: 407).

This assessment is, no doubt, fair, on the whole. However, it does not take into account local specificities. Certainly, the changes were large-scale. For example, »in each national territory, the language of the titular nationality was to be established as the official state language« (Terry 2001: 73). This event had special topicality since mass (and universal) secondary education was only provided in the language of the titular nation.

»We received all the newspapers from Azerbaijan. There was ›Molodezh Azerbaydzhana‹, we read that newspaper. Armenians got newspapers from Armenian, Georgians got them from Georgia. We read them in our mother tongue. Everything was in Azerbaijani« (Veysal, 78).

The ascription of a new status (›ethnic minority‹) did not change much in the daily routine of the Azerbaijanis of Kyzyl-Shafag, which was still limited to the confines of a village in which they were not an ›ethnic minority‹. Naturally, only Azerbaijani could be heard spoken. Customs and traditions remained largely the same (although within the limits of Soviet national and religious policy). The outside world was still limited to the village of Shakhnazar. Although Armenians were suddenly the ›titular nation‹, the people of Shakhnazar continued to go to Kyzyl-Shafag to work up until 1989. Arme-

nian and Azerbaijani remained the daily languages of communication with the neighbours from Shakhnazar in the late Soviet period as well.[14]

However, it would be a mistake to underestimate the scale of the changes that were taking place. Every new generation in Kyzyl-Shafag became increasingly more active in life outside the village. With each new generation, more and more people left the village. The first time the village population remember feeling the powerful influence of global events was during World War II.

Beginning in the 1960s, more and more young people from Kyzyl-Shafag left to get college or university educations. In the 1980s, a major part of the adult male population joined the *shabash* networks (seasonal labour migration). In this situation, changes that were taking place in the outside world started to have a more serious impact on life in the community. In addition, outside media (newspapers, radio and TV) began to play an ever more important role.

The year 1965 plays an important role in the memory of the people of Kyzyl-Shafag when they reflect on their status in an Armenian ethnic republic. That was the year that ›Soviet-Turkish relations improved‹. One of the results of these improved relations was ›unusual manifestations of Armenian nationalism‹. Gerard Lebaridian notes that »in 1965 the official commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Genocide was interrupted by violent outburst of young demonstrations in Yerevan. They demanded action ›to recover their lands‹ rather than ceremonies to honor the victims« (2004: 29).

This ›new nationalism‹ in Armenia (cf. Suny 1993: 185-191, 1997: 374-378), is clearly remembered, and while not ›a turning point‹ for Azerbaijanis living in the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic, (cf. Panossian 2006: 320-323 on the Armenian perspective), there did emerge a sense of the possible dangers that Azerbaijanis might face in Armenia. It was not dangerous to go to Shakhnazar, but many Azerbaijanis preferred not to travel to the dis-

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[14] Certainly there were people who spoke Russian, but it was not the language of daily communication. Many residents of these villages (especially men) had a much better command of the language of their respective neighbours than of Russian. Russian was more widespread in the towns than in the countryside. Even in 1979, only 29.5 per cent of Azerbaijanis and 38.6 per cent of Armenians were fluent in Russian (Laitin/Petersen/Slocum 1992: 141).

trict centre on 24 April. Since the 1960s, conflicts between teenagers and young people increased as well.[15]

»Since then ... we were always ... called Turks [...]. Even teachers called us so; they would get angry, saying you are a Turk, and then hit us on the head. There was a bus station over there [in the nearby town of Stepanavan]. We met at the bus station. We [Azeri students] always met there to fight them [...]. Everyone went back home all covered in blood, with their heads bruised by belts made of telephone cables, and whips made for the fights« (Nasib, 45).[16]

However, these conflicts were still resolvable and co-existed with peaceful friendly and neighbourly relations. Most of the time people were friends and did not fight, paid reciprocal visits and did not weave telephone cables. The same informant recalls: »We had friends... from Shakhnazar and ate together. We often visited each other. They arrived and we, say, made *khangal* [a local dish made with dough and chopped meat]. They loved this meal very much. They visited especially to eat *khangal*. We visited them« (Nasib, 45).

Differences in customs and daily behavioural and cultural codes were not an obstacle to contact; on the contrary, they made them interesting. The important thing was that the conflicts were resolved not so much owing to the existence of a single Soviet power but to permanent daily contact between Armenians and Azerbaijanis and through reciprocal interests. Ethnic

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[15] A ›new‹ separatist movement emerged starts to develop among the Karabakh (and not only) Armenians. Dina Zisserman-Brodsky notes: »The question of Nagorno-Karabakh is the main focus of modern Armenian nationalism. One of the earliest available samizdat documents, the Letter to Khrushchev, signed by 2,500 Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh and other areas of Azerbaijan SSR, appeared in 1963« (Zisserman-Brodsky 2003: 119).

[16] This likening of Azerbaijanis to Turks acquired special topicality with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, when in February 1988 Armenian pogroms took place in the town of Sumgait near Baku. Marina Kurkchiyan notes: »The Sumgait attacks were presented in Armenia as a ›Pan-Turkish threat to the whole nation‹ or as ›the Turkish model of behavior when dealing with Christian Armenians. In the Armenian perception, the identification of Soviet Azerbaijan with Ottoman Turkey was quickly made – however misleading« (Kurkchiyan 2005: 154). This description is still popular: »A week after the start of the Karabakh movement, developments took place in Sumgait when barbarian, one can say, Turkish methods of the genocide of Armenians of the early 20th century were used to kill three dozen, and may be even more, Azerbaijani citizens of Armenian ethnicity« (Marutunian 2006: 238).

boundaries, especially in the countryside, however, remained largely impenetrable. The stability of these boundaries can be seen well in the small number of inter-ethnic marriages.[17] However, despite these boundaries, contact between the Azerbaijanis and the Armenians were quite intensive and very often friendly. Constant daily contacts allowed people to see in each other someone they could often come to agreement with. This ability to resolve conflicts and build friendly or neighbourly relations became an important social resource that allowed the people of Kyzyl-Shafaq to find a solution to the difficult situation they were in.

The beginning of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict

Tensions started to grow in the region long before the people of Kyzyl-Shafaq realised the inevitability of their having to leave their home village and before the idea about swap emerged. An informant recalled that while travelling through the Armenian village of Shakhnazar in early 1988,[18] he heard the following from his fellow traveller, an Armenian: »Aren't you afraid of visiting the district?« In the first months, nobody thought that the situation would become so complicated that living in Armenia would become impossible. Naturally, recollections of the first months of the conflict do not provide a unified picture of how the confrontation developed. More often than not, memory paints a sudden clash with an unexpectedly changing situation.

For the people of Kyzyl-Shafaq, two events were a turning point: the pogroms in Sumgait[19] and the killing of an old Azeri man in the Kalininsky

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[17] Soviet statistics recorded the lowest number of interethnic marriages in the Azerbaijani and Armenian ASSRs. According to the census of 1989, these republics occupied the last two places among the fifteen Soviet republics USSR (Kaiser 1994: 298-299).

[18] According to the director of the Kyzyl-Shafaq *sovkhoz*, Bayram Allazov, mass rallies demanding the incorporation of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region (NKAO) into the Armenian ASSR started in the Kalininsky District in late October-early November 1988.

[19] According to official figures, 31 people were killed in the pogroms in Sumgait. In one of his earliest articles published at the high point of the conflict, Suny argues that: »The reasons for Sumgait riots remain unclear. [...] Whatever the reality behind the rumors, the dimensions of the hatred had only been vaguely sensed before Sumgait. [...] With Sumgait the first phase of the Karabakh crisis came to an end. The situation in Transcaucasia had been radically altered. The possibility of a

district centre (i.e. in the immediate vicinity of the village) on 23 November 1988. As long as relations with immediate neighbours saw no noticeable changes and the USSR existed, hope was maintained that the conflict would be resolved in some way.

However, these events showed that could guarantee the security of Azerbaijanis in Armenia. It was at this moment that the Kyzyl-Shafaq people started talking about the inevitability of their departure. Tensions grew, the feeling of danger grew, also due to the lack of reliable information. Nobody was sure what was happening. But the villagers saw refugees from other Azerbaijani villages: »People from Agbab and other villages walked through our village to Azerbaijan. I said to myself, where are they running to? Where are they going while I am pasturing sheep in the field. Then I see them carrying a wardrobe, a table and other things« (Veysal, 78).

Organisation of self-defence

The issue of self-defence became topical at that time. Everyone, including the informal leaders of the community, was involved in the decision-making, although state farm (*sovkhoz*) leaders assumed primary responsibility for the organisation of self-defence: »The village *aksakal* and clever people of the village gathered. What if they attack our village, let's organise a defence. We closed the road from the Armenian village to our village. We put machines right across to prevent vehicles moving and organised a night guard, around-the-clock« (Bayram, 72).

Later, the authorities sent a small unit of Interior Ministry cadets to the village to guard it. However, the Azerbaijanis did not trust them and the people of Kyzyl-Shafaq continued to stand guard near the post organised by the military. But the situation was far from being resolved; a permanent solution was sought.

peaceful transfer of Karabakh to Armenia now became remote, and attitudes on both sides hardened. The idea that the mediated settlement satisfactory to both parties might be reached was now utopian« (1992: 492-493). Audrey Altstadt writes: »Sumgait was built by Azerbaijani Turkish refugees who had been forced out of their villages in Armenia in the late 1940s. In 1988 refugees fleeing from NKAO and Armenia (in early 1988, there were nearly 200,000 Azerbaijani Turks in Armenia) also settled in Sumgait. Some of the recent refugees joined relatives; those without family ties, who often had no jobs, proper housing, or medical care, sometimes struck out at local Armenians« (1992: 197). Unfortunately, the author fails to cite specific sources on the make-up of the population of the town.

Deciding on a village swap

By the end of 1988, the people of Kyzyl-Shafaq had understood that relocation was inevitable. A decision was made: »Yes, the entire village made the decision. Everyone agreed to the swap. People gathered at the club and decided so« (Avdi, 69). Participation in such joint discussions, when more or less common (collective) positions had to be developed, was a common occurrence in such rural communities. These do not necessarily have to be gatherings of community members specifically to discuss some problem. Villagers habitually get together on the occasion of significant events, such as weddings or funerals and discuss such issues there. At the same time, the very gravity of this specific situation made everyone mobilise. The more often the authorities demonstrated their inability to influence developments, the more significance the initiative of the villagers themselves acquired. The unity of their rural community needed to be preserved, or so the post hoc description of the tenor of these discussions.

The search for an exchange partner

The search for a partner village interested in exchanging villages was based in kin and friendship networks, as Jeremy Hein notes: »Refugees ... use kin and friendship networks to navigate their passage to a host society« (1993: 49). During the Soviet period, quite a large number of natives of Kyzyl-Shafaq moved to Baku and other towns in the Azerbaijani SSR. The director of the state farm, Bayram, learnt from his son, who lived in Baku, that the people of Kerkendzh were also interested in an exchange: »I found that village. [...] I had an Armenian acquaintance. At that moment, our people decided to find a suitable village for the exchange. [...] I knew that his parents lived in some Armenian village. So I asked him about their village. He said, come to Khutor [a quarter of Baku], let's talk there. In Kerkendzh, mainly elderly people lived, while their children lived in Baku. Many Kerkendzh people lived in Khutor then. So, I arrived at Khutor, we had agreed to meet by [...] the power station. I arrive there and saw a crowd waiting for me there. About a hundred people. Well, I told them: What kind of village, in what district, the distance from the village to the district centre, what kinds of farms we have, that we all have almost new houses, I explained it all. I explained that our people want to exchange with an Armenian village. They were happy, but decided to have a look at Kyzyl-Shafaq first. This is how it started. They arrived, five people, to have a look at our village and

our people went to have a look at Kerkendzh. This is how we swapped«
(Madar, ca. 40).

Agreement between the Azeri community of Kyzyl-Shafaq and the Armenian community of Kerkendzh

After a village in Azerbaijan was found, representatives of the two communities concluded an agreement on the swap. The core points of the agreement were on the ›inviolability‹ of memorial places, the most important of them the respective cemeteries. »They guard our graves there and we guard theirs here« (Nasib, 45).

The agreement was concluded with a ›rite of Ehsan‹ (literal translation from Azerbaijani: ›funeral repast‹). This tradition of remembering the deceased can also serve to confirm the spirit of such an agreement. In Kyzyl-Shafaq, the director of the state farm ›slaughtered a well-fattened cow‹ especially for the rite of Ehsan and a collective meal was served at the cemetery: »The Armenians also took part in this funeral repast. Those that were originally from here [i.e. the Armenians from the village of Kerkendzh] [...] promised that if they would not touch [...] our cemetery; we would also preserve their cemetery. They are preserving it, and so are we. [...] We even decided on which month of the year we can visit ours to check on our ancestors, and when they can come here« (Bayram, 72). The individual exchanges of property were finally registered at the local cadastre office. The reasons for the transfer of property given in the documentation, if any, did not reflect the actual reasons.

Collective swap as a process

The actual exchange dragged on for several months and included a period during which Armenians and Azerbaijanis in both villages lived and worked together: »When I arrived [to Kerkendzh], half the villagers here were Armenians. Straight away I found a job in a Madrasah, in a neighbouring village [which was also Armenian-populated]. [...] The director of the collective farm here was an Armenian and all superiors in the village were Armenians« (Nasib, 45).

In Kyzyl-Shafaq, the arriving Armenians were met by the director of the state farm, an Azerbaijani called Bayram: »When they [her husband's family] arrived, an elderly Armenian woman was still living here. They lived together [in the same house] for a long time. Almost two months. Until she left. They helped her pack and sent her off« (Irina, 41).

These permanent daily contacts were no exception and lasted until 1989: »When we moved here [to Kerkendzh], an Armenian family was living here. We lived with them in the same house for twelve days. We lived as friends. Before their departure I slaughtered a lamb for them. We had managed to bring only two sheep with us. One of them I slaughtered in their honour and the other we decided to keep for Qurban Bayram.[20] And then my son saw them off and came back home. [...] We gave the Armenian additional money because we had not had enough time to complete the construction of the house there. My son calculated together with him how much money was needed to complete it« (Zakariya, 81).

Most memories relating to this short period of cohabitation are about friendly relations with the Armenians that had not left yet. Even now, after the war and years of confrontation, none of our informants recall this period of cohabitation as an exceptional event in their lives. They do not describe the reciprocal support as some special gesture now either. It was ›normal‹ and ›natural‹ to support each other in a situation that affected them all.

After the swap

The swap was a forced and dramatic and thus the people of Kyzyl-Shafaq are not ordinary migrants but refugees. »Refugees permanently resettled abroad usually cannot return to their homeland, a definitive difference from immigrants« (Hein 1993: 49). The very impossibility of returning ›home‹ is constantly present in their narrations. And it is still difficult for the time being, especially for the older generation, to talk about »naturalizing ... links between people and place«, which is »routinely conceived in specifically botanical metaphors. That is, people are often thought of, and think of themselves as being rooted in place and as deriving their identity from that rootedness« (Malkki 1992: 27).

In the narrations of the elderly and middle-aged, the memory of the ›small motherland‹ (as the village of origin is called) is superimposed on recollections about different (and, certainly, better) living standards in the USSR. The motherland they left is also a memory of higher salaries and pensions and lower prices. It is also a memory of their youth. Even more:

[20] One of the most important holidays for Muslims that was even celebrated in Kyzyl-Shafaq during Soviet times.

everything in Kerkendzh – a different landscape with a different climate, low salaries and pensions – are a routine reminder of their loss.

An important daily reminder of the village of origin are the two cemeteries in the village. After their resettlement, the Muslim Azerbaijanis allocated an area close to the Armenian graveyard for a new cemetery. However, the ›new‹ cemetery has to date not acquired the status of ›our‹ cemetery. This ›new cemetery‹ remains a forced substitute for ›our true cemetery‹ left in ›our‹ village in Armenia. In the hierarchy of the status of these burial places, the cemetery left in the village of origin continues to occupy a level higher than the current ›new‹ one: »Our cemetery is now the only living thing that has remained here in Armenia. We do not touch theirs; theirs is also a living one. [...] They do not touch ours there either« (Mammad, 68).

It is in the village of origin where ›our true living‹ cemetery (*jivoe kladbishe*) remains. Here, in Kerkendzh, the Armenian graveyard remains the ›true living‹ cemetery.

Conclusions

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is most often described as an inevitable one that re-emerged at a moment when the central authorities in Moscow weakened. Brubaker describes this as »the ›return of the repressed‹ view. The gist of this account is that national identities and national conflicts were deeply rooted in the procommunist history of Eastern Europe, but then frozen or repressed by ruthlessly anti-national communist regimes. With the collapse of communism, on this account, these pre-communist national identities and nationalist conflicts have returned with redoubled force« (Brubaker 1998: 285).

This vision presumes that the conflict that began in February 1905 has continued with a varying degrees of intensity for more than a century now. In our view this myth is widespread because most narratives describe only the political history of conflicts and clashes and pay very little (if any) attention to the complex specificities of daily contacts and relations between ordinary people. The histories are retrospective, viewing the past from the perspective of the current conflict.

At the same time, very little attention is paid to the comparative analysis of political relations. No doubt, the conflict a century ago was largely much more tragic than the latest Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. However, it did not result in the complete separation of Armenian and Azerbaijani communities. Following the events in Baku in March and September 1918, representatives of different Armenian nationalist parties remained in the Parlia-

ment of the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic; Armenians continued to live in Baku. The situation is now hard to imagine. Many representatives of the Armenian and Azeri elites strove to settle conflicts by talks and compromise. In the 1990s, a permanent Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and an almost complete spatial separation of Armenian and Azerbaijani communities and an extreme nationalism among intellectuals on both sides have created increasingly more narratives of the impossibility of cohabitation. The many years of diverse and complex relationships have been reduced to a history of bloody conflicts, clashes and wars; an entire history of peaceful contact and inter-ethnic cooperation has been thoroughly forgotten. This approach serves the essentialisation of the conflict and an increasing popularisation of myths about ›historical enemies‹ and ›incompatible ethnoses‹.

In the early 1990s, when war between sovereign Armenia and Azerbaijan was at a high point, Stephen Griffiths said that »the prospects for a peaceful resolution to the conflict are practically nil; even if one side manages to achieve a decisive victory, instability will continue in the region for decades« (Griffiths 1993: 79).

Two decades later, experts' assessments are becoming increasingly more pessimistic. In one his latest analytical works, Thomas de Waal says that »for one chief reason, the conflict can be said to be ›thawing‹. This is that the ›losing‹ side is growing more confident and more impatient to change the situation in its favour. The fact that, on top of the disputed region of NK itself, seven districts of Azerbaijan are wholly or partially occupied by Armenian forces is a source of continuing pain to Azerbaijanis and makes the situation unsustainable in the long run« (de Waal 2009: 2).

Experts from the International Crisis Group, in turn, note the danger of a resumption of the conflict (Armenia and Azerbaijan 2011: 1). This worsening in the situation and reduced chances for a peaceful solution to the conflict are to a considerable extent caused by an increase in militarist and revanchist sentiments in both societies. The conflict is increasingly being described as a historical one and as one inevitably leading to another war, while the future is increasingly more often being described as a ›relaxed stroll‹. In our view, the study of Armenian-Azerbaijani relations in the 20th century should ask to what extent present-day nationalism can be extrapolated on events of the early 20th century? Can one seriously argue that we are dealing with a return of nationalism? To what degree is it legitimate to interpret all events of the late 20th century a priori as a consistent and logical development of the situation at the beginning of the century.

The work of a number of specialists (not regional ones, normally) describes the nationalist ideology of the early 20th century as exclusive to only

a small group of intellectuals and as almost unknown to most of the rural population. However, even these works normally do not focus on a comparative analysis of the nationalisms of the early and late 20th century. In our view, the ›new nationalists‹ interpreted to a considerable extent in a new manner the ideas of the nationalists of the early 20th century. This was and is largely a new ideology. It was only after the collapse of the USSR and in the course of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict that the history of a centuries-long Armenian-Azerbaijani confrontation was constructed, which in turn feeds bellicose sentiments in both societies. And in the present-day world of universal mass education, radio, cinema and TV, the authorities have a far wider range to promote these kinds of ideological constructs.

Another side of the Soviet legacy was the intensification of daily contacts between Azerbaijanis and Armenians among other things in the situation of accelerated urbanisation and a reduction in the significance of religious rules and norms in daily life. It is difficult not to be sceptical about the Soviet ideology of ›friendship of peoples‹. However, contacts based on personal friendship and on neighbourhood, work and even kinship between ethnic Azerbaijanis and Armenians were quite widespread in Soviet daily life.

Only in the study of these specificities of daily relations is it possible to observe the complex web of very different contacts in which there was room not only for conflict but also for its resolution, for cooperation and mutual help. A view from this perspective allows researchers to go beyond the frame of reduced conflict-based theories of relations between Azerbaijanis and Armenians and break the reign of essentialism

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Arsen Hakobyan

New Life in a New Space:
the Appropriation of ›Alien‹ Space
Armenian Refugees in the Village of Dzyunashogh

Until 1988 and the beginning of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the village of Kerkendzh (Shamakhi District, Azerbaijani SSR), was Armenian. In early 1989 the whole population was forced to move to Armenia, to the Azerbaijani village of Kyzyl-Shafag (which was later renamed Dzyunashogh) in the Kalinin District (Armenian SSR). The Azerbaijani population of Kyzyl-Shafag in turn resettled to Kerkendzh. In the conflict situation the communities agreed on an exchange of settlements (see Rumyansev and Huseynova in this volume).[1]

The aim of this article is to describe the transformation of the social and physical environment of the village after resettlement and identify patterns of cultural ›adaptation‹ to the new environment. My goal is to present some aspects of cultural representation in the context of resettlement processes – how it is produced and how does it change?

My field data shows that about 241 people reside in the village of Dzyunashogh in eighty households. Of these more than ten families are from Kerkendzh. The people of Kerkendzh live in large families. The local Armenians ›compete‹ with these refugees from Kerkendzh, with people who have settled here from the nearby Armenian village of Metsavan for social and economic reasons, with Armenian refugees from Baku and from other

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villages of the Shamakhy district. In addition, here there are also Armenian immigrants from Yerevan and Georgia.

After the resettlement of the Armenians of Kerkendzh in the village of Kyzyl-Shafag, adaptation became an important issue. The immigrants found themselves in Armenia – their ethnic homeland, but also in a former Azerbaijani village. But this was not by choice. In the context of Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh they had reluctantly organised a peaceful exchange with the Azerbaijanis of Kyzyl-Shafag. This all influenced the transformation of the social and cultural environment after resettlement.

The life in a new place, in the village of Kyzyl-Shafag, smoothed out gradually for the Armenians of Kerkendzh and other communities of Azerbaijan. Considering that »the physical environment is a social construction and projection of social environment, social structure in the objectified state, […] objectification and naturalisation of the past and present social relations« (Bourdieu 2007: 53) an interesting situation emerged in the village of Kyzyl-Shafag after resettlement that allowed at the local level a transformation process of the social and physical environment.

From the exchange of villages to the exchange of experience: Armenians and Azerbaijanis in Kyzyl-Shafag

Since the resettlement did not occur at the same time but lasted several months, from May until September 1989, resettled Armenians and Azerbaijanis lived together in Kyzyl-Shafag. In May 1989 the first Armenian families from Kerkendzh appeared in the village of Kyzyl-Shafag; by September, the last Azerbaijanis had left. The Azerbaijanis quit their positions in the state farm and its director recruited people from Kerkendzh, more or less in similar positions to the work they had in Kyzyl-Shafag.

One of the leaders and organisers of the exchange, Rafik Martirosyan was among the first people from Kerkendzh to settle in the village and get a job on the farm. Considering that work had to continue on the farm despite any political upheaval, even the district authorities encouraged that the resettlement took place quickly. Even before negotiations were complete, the district authorities had offered him the job on the farm, although in the neighbouring village of Mikhaylovka where the Azerbaijanis had already started to leave. A representative of the district executive committee came up to him at the hotel and said, »We've heard that you've arrived. Come to

Mikhailovka, take the farm. We will provide a car. Your things will be transported«.[2] He did not take the offer because living with his fellow villagers was more important. In fact, it was not by chance that one of the leaders and organisers of the village swap took over responsibility for the farm in Kyzyl-Shafag, which was the main and primary economic unit of the village. In the course of the village exchange the sides also agreed on the distribution of responsibility for the state enterprises (farm, winery), technical equipment and so on. And one of the leaders and first immigrants took the responsibility for the farm in Kyzyl-Shafag.

To the surprise of many of my informants, the houses of Azerbaijanis were empty. They had long since taken their belongings to the nearby Azerbaijani village of Irganchay in Georgia. »I came to stay in a house. I see a place is being prepared for me to sleep while they have no bed for themselves. All had been moved to the villages of Georgia«, recalls an informant, who moved to Kyzyl-Shafag in May 1989.

As mentioned, until September 1989, Azerbaijanis and the resettled Armenians lived together in the village. One informant (male, age 80), who was among the first Armenians from Kerkendzh to settle in Kyzyl-Shafag, recalls this period: »The Turks[3] were saying that I was a good elder. For example, when I moved, the shop-woman was a Turk. Her father-in-law was […] an elder [and negotiator in the village swap]. The first time she saw me, she asked, ›If I come to your village, they'll kill me, huh?‹ Her father-in-law told her, ›Do not say silly things‹. Then, when I went to the shop [the children had not yet arrived], even if there were 1,000 people there, she said, ›Dai [uncle], what do you want? You just go. Say what you want, I'll send it to the house. Like this.«

Other families from Kerkendzh, who resettled to Kyzyl-Shafag had lived in Baku or in Central Asia previously. These families were often of mixed origin, the husband being from Kerkendzh while his wife came from somewhere else.

The transition was often complicated; there were cases when people had to go back to pick up pension documents. For example, the elderly wife of one of my informants remained in Kerkendzh after her husband moved to Kyzyl-Shafag because she was a school teacher and had to finish the academic year. She introduced the new Azerbaijani owners of their house to

[2] Field notes, Dzyunashogh, 2006-2007. Unless noted otherwise, the field notes refer to 2006-2007, Dzyunashogh, Republic of Armenia.
[3] In Armenian everyday language, Azerbaijanis are called ›Turks‹. My informants also call the Azerbaijanis in this way.

the ›right‹ people in the town of Shamakhi, i.e. with those to whom it is necessary to turn to, for example, if the TV would not work, she told them where to buy the necessary products and supplies. Thus, the old social network was transferred to the new residents. This was one of many strategies that worked at the individual for adapting to the new social conditions.

Other more mundane difficulties arose for the people of Kerkendzh who settled in Kyzyl-Shafag. Suddenly they were expected to breed cattle, where their main household activity in Kerkendzh had been viticulture. Live in the new situation thus began as an active process of learning and adjusting to the new economic conditions often with the help of the Azerbaijanis left in the village. Generally, advice was received from those with whom the Armenians exchanged houses. One of my informants recalls: »When we got resettled, it was summer, they had already planted potatoes, they [the Azerbaijanis] showed and taught us how to cultivate them. In the following year the people of Metsavan [the neighbouring Armenian village] taught us more. We learned a lot from them, like how to sow wheat.«

Many women, mainly former residents of Baku, did not know how to milk a cow: »Together with the Turks I milked the cows with tears in my eyes.« Another informant said: »Well, we also knew how to make butter, we did it differently, but their method is more efficient, better butter is obtained. We made butter in pots that we rolled on the floor from side to side while their vessel hung from the ceiling like a swing.«[4]

Another informant »milked cows with the Turks, we milked together. I learned from the Turk how to make cheese.« And the people of Kerkendzh in turn gave advice on growing wine. But, as noted by our informants, the Azerbaijanis could not master the subtleties of wine-growing, destroying the vines and planting wheat in their place.

The new authorities

After resettlement, issues of forming a new local government in Kyzyl-Shafag became a priority. Here the initiative and self-organisation of the people of Kerkendzh also became apparent. For example, they rejected the candidacy of a man for the office of the head of the state farm despite the fact that he had the support help of the district authorities.

The village was governed by the Armenian refugees. The district authorities did not intervene in the electoral process and other problems, and all

[4] Both ways of making butter are known in traditional Armenian culture and throughout the region. cf. Abrahamian/Sweezy 2001: 113-125.

the personnel issues were left to the discretion of the villagers. For example, Mr. Davtyan, who was one of the elders of the village, became the chairman of the village council, and Avag Vardanyan was elected to the post of the governor three times. Vardanyan (*1950) was an authority not only in the village but also throughout the region. Informants described him as the ›defender‹ of the village who fought for its future. He was also the ›guarantor‹ of the Azerbaijani cemetery in the village and maintained communication with them. As a leader, his persona was highlighted in the anxious days of 1988-1989 when he personally participated in the self-organisation and self-defence of the community, and he was one of the organisers of the village exchange, all this despite his young age.

Avag Vardanyan was already a de facto leader when he became the de jure leader and took over formal responsibility. However, this responsibility had another meaning as well, namely responsibility for ›memory ‹ and the ›present‹, and Vardanyan perfectly fulfilled this ›mission‹. Vardanyan embodied the traditions, memories and the present of Kerkendzh and its people. In 2005, he died tragically in a car accident.

In the interim period between Vardanyan's death and the election of his successor, the former's brother took on the role of acting head of the village. And the new formal head was a woman. As the suitable candidate was not registered in the village, living in the district centre, it was agreed that formally, his wife would be elected and he would govern. The young wife had a residence permit in the village. She was from a Baku family with roots in Kerkendzh. Her husband also had roots in Kerkendzh but he was born in Baku. This marked a new era for the village, when natives from the village were replaced by their descendants born elsewhere‹.

The old and new village

Place-making processes include a geographical location, material form and investment with meaning and value: »the making of places – identifying, designating, designing, building, using, interpreting, remembering processes« (Gyerin 2000: 463-465, 468).

On the pages of the district press in the early autumn of 1989 there appeared notes and articles about the life of Armenian refugees in the former Azerbaijani villages of the district. Kyzyl-Shafag was also referred to.

On the pages of the ›Arevatsag‹ district newspaper, D. Davtyan, acting chairman of the executive committee of the village council describers the situation in Kyzyl-Shafag as follows: About seven hundred people came to the village. The leaders of the village and the state farm did not do anything

to solve many everyday problems. The roads were bad and there were only three telephones in the village. There were problems with finding enough labour for the state farm. He noted that among the people of Kyzyl-Shafag there were 180 retirees that the Armenians from Baku who had settled in Kyzyl-Shafag worked in the factories of Kalinin (district centre) and Metsavan. He emphasised that two hundred tons of coal and 150 cubic metre of wood were distributed to the villagers but that an additional two hundred tons of coal were still required. Few private farms kept livestock, and the village school needed teachers for Armenian and chemistry. Problems with fuel and building materials, as the district authorities explained, were associated with the blockade by Azerbaijan.[5]

The trend of transformation of the cultural space could be seen in material and symbolic goods that people of Kerkendzh brought with them, marking their unity, memory and history. They brought with them the kitchen utensils that were used during collective events such as funerals and weddings. These are communal property, have a collective value and are still used today.

Another such item was the bust of Simon Zakyan, whic stood in the village school. Born in Kerkendzh, Simon Zakyan was the first commander of the Armenian 89th (Taman) Division and lost his life during World War II. The war hero is the pride of the people of Kerkendzh.

If the dishes and utensils brought with them materially characterised the community and continuation of the tradition, Zakyan's bust had important symbolic value and was part of the construction of a new reality in Kerkendzh. One of the most important elements of the transformation was the renaming of the village.

Renaming towns, villages and buildings is a common feature of the appropriation of place: »Without naming, identification, or representation by ordinary people, a place is not a place. Places are doubly constructed: most are built or in some way physically carved out. They are also interpreted, narrated, perceived, felt, understood, and imagined« (Gyerin 2000: 465).

Immediately after moving to Kyzyl-Shafag, the preservation of their native village's memory became topical for the people of Kerkendzh. As a first step, they suggested that the village should be renamed Kerkendzh. As one of my informants said, even a sign was prepared to plant on the road to the village. But the district authorities rejected the suggestion because they did not understand what the word ›Kerkendzh‹ meant; they did not think it

[5] ›Arevatsag‹, official newspaper of Kalinin district Communist Party committee of Armenia and the Council of People's Deputies, 1989, Nr. 136 (in Armenian).

was an Armenian word. The folk etymology of Kerkendzh explains the word as a settlement of firm and resolute people.

A discussion started already in 1989 on the pages of the district press about renaming the district (Kalinin) and a number of localities that had Soviet or Turkic-Azeri names (e.g. Kalinin, Kyzyl-Shafag etc.). It was proposed that Kyzyl-Shafag should also be renamed, for instance, Karmir Arshaluys (›Red Dawn‹), that is, the Armenian translation of the Azerbaijani name Kyzyl-Shafag. Initially the village of Kyzyl-Shafag had been named ›Jujakyandom‹. In a newspaper articles it was said that in 1950s the Soviet farm had been renamed ›Karmir Arshaluys‹, but since it was difficult to pronounce as for the Azerbaijani residents of the village, it was translated as Kyzyl-Shafag (Arevatsag 1989, Nr. 116).

Other options were also proposed: ›Talvorik‹, in memory of the settlement in Western Armenia (Arevatsag 1989, Nr. 112),[6] ›Noramut‹ and ›Noravan‹ (›New Settlement‹, Arevatsag 1989, Nr. 116), and ›New Vardashen‹, in memory of Vardashen district, Azerbaijani SSR, where the Armenians had lived (Arevatsag 1989, Nr. 127). These names were suggested by local inhabitants of the district, by executive committee officials, teachers and workers in the knitting factory in Kalinin.

The people of Kerkendzh proposed in a letter to the newspaper to rename the village to ›Zakyan‹, in honour of Simon Zakyan, their World War II. They argue that »we were forced to leave our village and are now on our native land. [...] Most people in Kyzyl-Shafag have moved from the village of Kerkendzh, Shamakhy District, Azerbaijan SSR. On the pages of your newspaper there were different proposals on renaming the village. But we want to name it Zakyan in memory of Colonel Simon Zakyan who was born in the village of Kerkendzh. In 1918, Zakyan participated in the defence of the Baku Commune, and then actively fought for the establishment of Soviet power in Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia. Then, having received a military education, he was the first commander of the 89th Armenian Division. In early 1942 he was appointed commander of the 390th Armenian Rifle Division formed in the Crimea and joined in battle against the enemy in Kerch. He died of severe injuries in an unequal battle. He is buried in Kirov Park in Yerevan, where a monument dedicated to him is

[6] Western Armenia is the western part of historical Armenia with a tradition going back to the Ottoman Empire and Byzantium. The term is used to refer to eastern regions of present-day Turkey that were inhabited by Armenians in 1915. The Armenians of Kalinin district are migrants from Western Armenia, having settled in the district primarily in the 19th century.

located. He was posthumously awarded the Order of Lenin.« The people of Kerkendzh write that they want to perpetuate the cherished memory of their war hero by naming the village after him. The letter was signed: »A group of residents of the village of Kyzyl-Shafag« (Arevatsag, 1989, Nr. 127).

The district authorities did not support this proposal either. As one of my informants noted, the district official hinted that at present, the times were changeable. Who could say what would happen in the future. A meeting was convened on these issues in the village that was also attended by the representatives of the district authorities. The people of Kerkendzh proposed to name the village school after Zakyan, but this idea was not supported either. According to the village administration, there are now only 48 students at the school.

A short time later, the village of Kyzyl-Shafag was renamed ›Dzyunashogh‹ (›Shining Snow‹). There were no public debates on this change. This renaming of the village from communist ›Red Dawn‹ (Kyzyl-Shafag) to post-communist ›Shining Snow‹ (Dzyunashogh) marks not only the change of ›owners‹ of the village but also a change of epoch.

When the land reforms and privatisation of agriculture began in Armenia (1991), the people of Dzyunashogh were also involved, privatising cattle, fields and pastures. State and collective farms were replaced by private enterprises, and these changes affected everyone.

Beginning in 1993, the people of Kerkendzh have begun to actively migrate from the village. This emigration was connected to economic and social problems, with the energy and food crisis in Armenia in those years. The people of Kerkendzh settled mainly in Georgiyevsk, Stavropol District, Russian Federation, where relatives and friends lived. These families from Kerkendzh had settled in Georgiyevsk in the Soviet period, since 1988. Today the greatest number of former residents of Kerkendzh lives in Georgiyevsk, but also in Dnepropetrovsk (Ukraine) and in France.

The people of Kerkendzh were not alone in Dzyunashogh and in the surrounding villages. Armenians from Baku, a few families from the neighbouring village of Madras and the like also settled there. In the early years, as my informants said, there were quarrels, for instance, with the ›Karabakh‹ Armenians, i.e. Armenians from Baku who had been born in Karabakh, for example on how to organise a wedding, funeral, whose traditions to follow.

Transforming ›other‹ to ›own‹ houses

Adaptation to the new place occurred not only at communal-collective level but also at the individual level. The Armenian families settled in the houses of Azerbaijanis. The first thing they changed was the colours of the walls. The old colours were called ›Turk‹ colours; it was ›typical‹ for Azerbaijanis to use bright colours – dark blue, green, red for the houses' interior finish. The immigrants found these colours tasteless and depressive and tried to hide them – some people re-repainted the walls, others plastered them with whatever they could.

They also had to ›cleanse‹ the house of the ›Turk smell‹, a procedure that should not be underestimated in its ritual or cultural value (cf. e.g. Vaynshteyn 2010). All this was characteristic and has been describe for other Armenian refugees who settled in the former Azerbaijani villages in Armenia (Kharatyan 2008: 137-139).

Armenians who moved into the village from other places (from Metsavan or from Georgia) symbolically sanctified the houses before moving into them. Before moving into the Azerbaijanis' houses in Dzyunashogh, they lit candles, invited the priest to perform the ritual of consecration of the house. They also often changed the facade of the house as well. Verandas were characteristic for Azerbaijani houses, but the Armenians often closed them. The Azerbaijanis had also built bake ovens, which they shared with five to six families. The whole village had several of them. This culture of communal baking was replaced by the Armenian tradition of baking in their own *tonir* (cylindrical clay ovens). When they settled in the village, they built their own *tonir*: »We could not adapt to their baking tradition, the next year we built our own *tonir*«, an informant said. The building of a *tonir* has its secrets and subtleties but the older women of the village still knew them.

Old and new monuments

In the physical space of the village, cemeteries have a special place and they allow one to trace the transformation of the cultural landscape. One of the extraordinary conditions of the exchange between Kyzyl-Shafag and Kerkendzh was the preservation of the cemeteries. Each side agreed to preserve the cemetery of the other. The Azerbaijani cemetery is even today a central part of Dzyunashogh. Not only is the cemetery preserved, the gates, hedges and trees are maintained as well. While they do not us it themselves, the people of Kerkendzh are well aware that the preservation of the cemeteries of the people of Kyzyl-Shafag guarantees the preservation of the

cemeteries in Kerkendzh, despite the fact that they have little opportunity to visit their own cemetery in Kerkendzh. The Azerbaijanis of Kyzyl-Shafag have fewer problems visiting the border village of Dzyunashogh. The Azerbaijani cemetery in Dzyunashogh is a reminder of the cemetery in Kerkendzh, of the history of exchange and of Kerkendzh itself. Consequently, it's maintenance is an active way to maintain that memory.

Narratives about the cemetery form the mechanism for transferring the ›conditions of preserving it‹. According to a young informant, he learned about it while growing up, people talked about it and it ›settled‹ in his mind; now he knew why it was necessary to preserve the cemetery. A few years ago, a local Armenian, not knowing about the arrangement, wanted to cut down a tree in the cemetery, but the people of Kerkendzh did not allow it.

Preserving cemetery takes little effort because the local Armenians are tolerant of it. The cemeteries also associate the people of Kyzyl-Shafag and Kerkendzh because the pay visits to the graves of their relatives. Thus, at the individual level it becomes possible to maintain and support the arrangement. My informants time and again met and accompanied their Azerbaijani friends to the cemetery and to their former houses.

Since Dzyunashogh is located near the border, and since the Armenian authorities have a normal attitude to Azerbaijani visits, they can visit their cemetery quite often. It is more difficult the other way around, also because Kerkendzh lies deep in Azerbaijani territory. Thus, the main source of information about the former village and the cemetery is an 11-year-old videotape[7] and communication with Azerbaijani visitors to the people of Kyzyl-Shafag and Irganchay.[8] The cemetery is a common topic. The people of Kerkendzh know that, for example, an Azerbaijani who knocked down the metal fence of a sanctuary in the cemetery died almost immediately thereafter and that the fence had been replaced. The Armenian cemetery of Dzyunashogh is located in close vicinity to the Azerbaijani cemetery.

Another important monument in the village is the sanctuary – a chapel that the local people call a *vank*.[9] The history of this building provides an

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[7] At the request of the people of Kerkendzh, the Azerbaijanis videotaped the village and the Armenian cemetery in 1996.

[8] The Azerbaijanis of Kyzyl-Shafag have many relatives and friends in the village of Irganchay in Georgia. Since communication between Irganchay and Dzyunashogh is very intensive, this is one way to learn about events in Kerkendzh.

[9] The informants called the sanctuary a *vank*, which is actually a term for a monastery. It is a simple, small, rectangular building characteristic of national Christian

opportunity to trace the development and transformation of the monument in the physical and cultural sense, as well as the process of adaptation in the post-resettlement period. A sanctuary-stone has been located on the hill at the entrance to the village since ›ancient‹ times.[10] This sanctuary was revered by the Azerbaijanis of Kyzyl-Shafag, the neighbouring village of Irganchay, as well as by the Armenians of Metsavan and Kalinin. The ruins of the ›mullah's house‹ which was sometimes called a ›mosque‹, were on the hill just below the stone.

After the exchange a small chapel – the *vank* – was built on the hill near the sacred stone, but the symbolic and meaningful ›axis‹ for this construction was always the stone. The man who built the chapel has died in the meantime. He was an Armenian from the neighbouring village of Metsavan. Late in life he married an Armenian widow from Baku who after her daughters were married was left alone. She explains: »My girls got married and I was alone ... I then met my husband. He was *frank*[11] by the way ... and moved here to live. He had been living in Metsavan but he liked this village ...«

She recalled that in 1993, 1994 and 1996, people from Irganchay and Metsavan visited the sacred stone and performed rituals – lit candles, made sacrifices etc. Even Azerbaijanis from Irganchay came, saying it was a very powerful sanctuary: ›Is it true or not?‹ she asked her husband. He answered, yes: ›long, long ago‹ there was a *vank* here, then it was destroyed, even before the Soviet era, and this ›piece‹, i.e. the sacred stone, was all that remained. She then suggested that her husband build a *vank* on this site. At first he hesitated, but then he was burning with desire. He talked to a fellow mason but, more importantly, he turned to the priest for advice, telling him the legend. Then, together (there were even Azerbaijanis from Irganchay with them) they searched the area and below, near the ruins of a building, the ›mullah's home‹, he found the stone with the cross, ›so, the legend is true!‹

The construction began, the villagers using the old stones lying downhill because it was thought that these were the stones of the old church. First they worked like in the old days without cement with clay, but they eventually had to use cement.

religiousness in Armenia. The establishment of such sanctuaries is usually associated with prophetic dreams or vows.
[10] When negotiations on the village exchange were held between the leaders of Kerkendzh and Kyzyl-Shafag, the feast of the elders were held there.
[11] Armenians who adopted Catholicism are called *frank*.

The chapel was consecrated in September 1997. It is noteworthy that this event was attended by Azerbaijani musicians from the neighbouring village of Irganchay.

According to another informant the stones from the ruins of the church that stood on the hill were used to build the ›mullah's house‹, which in turn form the walls of the chapel. The chapel gradually acquired symbolic importance and a functional significance; young couples from Dzyunashogh began to get married there.

The chapel signifies that Armenians inhabited this region in the ›old days‹, a history that fits in the sense that the chapel shows the Armenian past and the efforts of the Armenian immigrants to restore this past, connecting the later in a common history.

The *vank* was consecrated as St Gevorg (George). It is notable that the father's name of the initiator of the construction was also named Gevorg, and the villagers sometimes joke that he built the *vank* to atone for his sins.

The chapel gradually became a cultural centre of the village, one of the events that was organised there being the Armenian traditional holiday *vardavar*. It was initiated by the former village elder Vardanyan. Before the resettlement the people of Kerkendzh, they did not celebrate this holiday. But after moving to Kyzyl-Shafag, they were ›drawn‹ into the celebration of *vardavar*; it was celebrated in the neighbouring village Metsavan and many people from Dzyunashogh took part. As one informant said: »the youth habitually goes to Metsavan on this day, but not the adults.« Another elderly informant from Kerkendzh nevertheless said that he enjoyed participating in this festival in Metsavan. After Vardanyan's death they stopped celebrating *vardavar* and the people of Dzyunashogh returned to going to the village of Metsavan to participate there in the event.

It is noteworthy that the joint celebrations and other events generally offered a means for overcoming the alienation between the local population and refugees,[12] in this case this mechanism working from below.

Another popular religious holiday that the people of Kerkendzh began to celebrate in Armenia is *terendez* (*tiarundaraj*), which is celebrated in February. This celebration was also initiated by Vardanyan, but as opposed to *vardavar*, the young people of Kerkendzh are trying to maintain the new tradition.

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[12] Cf. ›Cultural dialogue in the name of harmonious co-existence‹ NGOC/UNHCR project (1998; project supervisor G. Petrosyan) and Marutyan ›The role of collective and historical memory in the dialogue of cultures: Opportunity or obstacle?‹ (unpublished manuscript).

Prior to their resettlement, the people of Kerkendzh celebrated Easter not on the day stipulated in the Armenian Apostolic Church calendar but on 2 May. It was a popular holiday: »On this day a big celebration used to be held in our village, all gathered from different parts, it was obligatory to visit the cemetery.« But they abandoned the custom of painting eggs on 2 May: »that's changed here; once your neighbour *frank* paints eggs on this day [Easter Day], then you are forced to adapt.« The custom to visit the cemetery on 2 May remains.

The neighbours

The large village of Metsavan (formerly Shahnazar) is situated on the road to the district centre. Initially, relations were conflictual, the people of Metsavan calling the people of Dzyunashogh ›newcomers‹. Sometimes, in conflict situations, they even called them ›Turks‹ which is a major insult to the people of Kerkendzh. As an informant from Kerkendzh said, in the Metsavan dialect the word ›newcomer‹ sounds rude but it was not meant offensively.

Conflicts in the here and now often acquired a historical dimension, and considering that many people from Metsavan were Catholic, they took on a religious dimension as well. Thus the past was always a part of the present.

In response to arguments that the people of Dzyunashogh were ›newcomers‹, the people of Kerkendzh would say that the people of Metsavan were themselves ›newcomers‹, that is, their ancestors had migrated from Western Armenia: »they themselves say that they've moved here from Turkey.«

Accusations of being *frank* is a usual response of the people of Kerkendzh to accusations of not being Armenian: the people of Metsavan themselves are not Armenians but *frank*. It should be noted that neither the people of Metsavan nor the people of Kerkendzh have a clear understand the meaning of the words *frank*, ›Catholic‹, etc. beyond legends and stories.

These conflicts and reservations have lessened in recent years. One reason is that since the village of Dzyunashogh has vast pastures and more favourable conditions for cattle-breeding, many people from Metsavan bought homes and settled there. The perception of the immigrants has become differentiated: there are bad people among them who call them ›Turks‹, ›outsiders‹, but good ones as well who live in their village and have earned their trust: »Even if once a year they call us ›Turks‹, it is a hard blow for us. They call us Turks, forgetting that they are *frank*, they do not even know what that means, do not know their history, where they come from.

We only know that they are Catholics.« The new headman is *frank* and all the villagers spoke well of him.

Initially these relations were more difficult. The people of Kerkendzh were reluctant to marry their girls to the men of Metsavan. One informant explained that »if they do not agree to marry off the girl, they steal the bride, it is their usual practice, but for us this is the worst villainy […] this sort of thing is wild for us; it is difficult to get used to such things.« The people of Kerkendzh have become used to the custom of ›bride stealing‹, and they themselves have begun to steal brides from the people of Metsavan. Marriages between the people of the two villages have gradually become the norm: »In our village there are almost no girls. My son is to return from the army soon; whom to take as daughter-in-law? Like it or not, we'll have to choose a bride from the neighbouring *frank* village.«

Contact is maintained with the former residents of the neighbouring Armenian villages of Azerbaijan (Madras, Kalakhan) who live scattered across Armenia.

Both the people of Metsavan and those of Kerkendzh have their own specific and distinct dialect: It is argued that: »the non-Armenian‹ character of the people of Metsavan is also expressed by their reluctance to speak literary Armenian, they even want to lessons at school to be in their dialect. They know much less Armenian than we do, though they have lived in Armenia.« Another informant explained: »Our dialect has undergone great changes in the direction of literary Armenian […] I can speak their dialect well, but I won't! Let them speak ours, in our village we are a majority, let them learn our dialect.« According to an informant, there are many Turkish words in the dialect of the people of Metsavan.

The Russian-speaking immigrants of Dzyunashogh, mostly residents of Baku, reproach the people of Metsavan for not speaking Russian properly: »They do not speak Russian at all. They cannot pronounce even a single word in Russian. Surely they could learn a few words.« Most of the adults from Kerkendzh can speak Azerbaijani and use the language with the Azerbaijanis of the neighbouring village of Irganchay in Georgia. This is the second village with which the immigrants maintain active relations. Today they trade actively with this neighbouring border village. But before establishing these ties there had been critical situations. For example, in the first years after the resettlement they feared attacks from Irganchay. These were not unfounded one immigrant, Aramais Grigoryan, who had gone to that village with a friend died of his wounds after being attacked.

The relations with the people of Irganchay began to improve as a result of haymaking. Dzyunashogh has vast pastures while the people of Ir-

ganchay do not. The latter nevertheless engage in cattle-breeding. Mutually beneficial relations were thus established. As more and more families left the village of Dzyunashogh the lack of labour for making hay became acute. They agreed that the people of Irganchay would come to make hay and take half as payment. To cross the border they need the authorisation of the district head and the border guards.

Many people from Kerkendzh maintain personal relations with the Azerbaijanis of Irganchay, invite one another to visit and attend ritual events. Crossing the border on foot is not difficult both because of the proximity of the villages and due to the fact that the border guards understand the inhabitants of border villages.

As mentioned, many families have in the meantime left Dzyunashogh - especially in the economically difficult times between 1992-1994 – and the population has shrunk, so the village administration, to a mere 241 people. These include Armenians from Kerkendzh and Baku, families from Georgia, from the neighbouring village of Metsavan and from Yerevan. The abandoned houses are most often bought for building material; their new owners demolishing them and selling the material.

Despite this fact, the traditions and ideas that were laid down during the ›exchange‹ – its ›spirit‹ – still exist.

Memory: the lost and new homeland

After more than two decades since the village exchange, the people of Kerkendzh continue to see it in positive terms; it gave them a chance – without material and human losses - to resettle in a critical situation. The very fact of the exchange allowed them to resolve a difficult situation with dignity. According to one of our informants, they did not just leave the village but defended it and only then organised the exchange. The exchange also means that they transferred their village and houses to the new owners and have not just left them. The ›transfer‹ of the village is supported by the fact that the Armenians of Kerkendzh gave the new owners their village, thus emphasising the new owner, with whom they had been negotiating for several months, got acquainted and exchanged houses, legitimacy. The exchange also ensured the preservation of the cemeteries which is evaluated positively by the Armenians of Kerkendzh.

But in a broader context they suffer acutely from the loss of Kerkendzh – their ›small‹ homeland. They were forced to leave, lost the world that had been created by them and their ancestors. According to an informant, »there is nothing worse than eviction,« from the village, the environment,

and the places of memory – the cemetery, the monument to the fallen soldiers of Kerkendzh during the Great Patriotic War: »we have built a monument, and then left it to the Turks«.

This sense of loss intensifies with time. None of the people of Kerkendzh have been able to visit the village or the cemetery, despite the fact that the parties had agreed on mutual visits. The general context of Armenian-Azerbaijani relations over the past two decades (the war, the unresolved conflict, etc.) exacerbates this sense of loss.

The exchange process, forced displacement and life in the new village had an impact on the perception of the homeland, on new forms and manifestations of memory. A song about Kerkendzh gives voice to these feelings. Interestingly, it was written by people from Kerkendzh who today live in Russia, in Georgiyevsk. It is sung during various feasts, such as weddings.

The song is about home-sickness, memory and loss, about the fact that now the people of Kerkendzh are in Armenia and in Russia but that they dream of Kerkendzh, which was left to ›Turks‹. It is interesting that despite the fact that at the present the people of Kerkendzh mostly live in Russia, Armenia in the song is perceived as the main place of residence, where they live in large families. Armenia, in their view, is their birthplace, native environment, a country where they live, the country of their home-family (*gerdastan*). Armenia is thus identified with the family. Russia is not perceived by them as native, as homeland or as a place where they live permanently. In the song the people of Kerkendzh live in Armenia; but the other massage of the song is that the Armenians, the people of Kerkendzh should now live in Armenia. Thus the song creates an ideal reality – the people of Kerkendzh should live in Armenia, in the native environment where their families live.

The nostalgia and love for Kerkendzh, the ›small‹ homeland is the leitmotif of the song; it describes the village, the region – the Mandakhuna spring, Mount Alpud and the grapes and wine, the latter emerging as a core symbol of the small homeland, of local identity.

Another image of the small homeland is house, in perfect condition, surrounded by gardens, flowers and trees. But these perfect houses are lost - to the ›Turks‹.

Finally, the desire to return to Kerkendzh is voiced.

Over the last two decades, my informants have come to terms with what has happened – the resettlement, life in a new environment and so on. The perception of Armenia as an ethnic and political homeland has also contributed to this process. As one of them says, »now you know that you are in homeland«. The ›native land‹ should be understood as a political envi-

ronment and in this context, it is not opposed to Kerkendzh; the small homeland is opposed to Azerbaijan, i.e. the country where they used to live.

One of my informants said he sees the village of Kerkendzh in his dreams, but has never dreamed about the new village of Dzyunashogh. Other informants also talked of dreams and recollections of Kerkendzh. These are not only dreams but reflections of global transformations as they manifest themselves locally.

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Ilham Abbasov

From ›Friendship of Peoples‹ to a Discourse of ›Tolerance‹
Constructing Ethnic Boundaries in Post-Soviet Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan's Sovietisation, which started in April 1920 with the arrival in the region of the 11th Red Army, is an epoch of ›friendship of peoples‹ (Mel'nikov 1967, Swietochowski 2004: 165-190).[1] According to the official narrative, the acutest local political conflict of the time, the Armenian-Tatar (Azerbaijani) conflict, was settled in the context of the implementation of Soviet national policy (Baberowski 2003: 77-83, 163-183, Swietochowski 2004: 38-46, 112-119, 135-139, Sargent 2010).[2] Other, no less acute conflicts which took place between local populations and Russian or, for example, German colonists were also resolved in this way (Baberowski 2003: 316-348, 655-661).

The implementation of the programme of Soviet national policy implied not only the resolution of political and/or inter-group conflicts. The Soviet authorities went further and, among other things, institutionalised personal ethno-national identities (*natsional'nost'*) and national territories belonging to ›titular nationalities‹. According to Rogers Brubaker: »The Soviet institutions of territorial nationhood and personal nationality constituted a pervasive system of social classification, an organizing the ›principle of vision and division‹ of the social world […], a standardized scheme of social accounting, an interpretative grid for public discussion; a set of boundary-markers,

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[1] The concept of ›friendship of peoples‹ was formed and became commonly accepted in the late 1920s/early 1930s (for details see Suny 2012: 26-29) in the context of Bolshevik internationalism promoted long before they came to power.
[2] For specific features of this policy, including its application in Azerbaijan, cf. Slezkine 1996, Martin 2001: 1-28, Baberowski 2003: 316-348, 55-661.

a legitimate form for public and private identities; and, when political space expanded under Gorbachev, a readymade template for claims to sovereignty« (1997: 86).

In Azerbaijan, the status of ›titular nationality‹ (of dominant group) was ascribed to the Azerbaijani (Turks).[3] Each citizen of the Azerbaijani SSR received their own ›obligatory ascribed status‹ – a personal ethno-national designation recorded in a number of official documents, including the well-known ›fifth column‹ in Soviet passports (Kostirchenko 2009: 217, Baiburin 2012). After the quasi-independent Soviet republics obtained sovereignty, a certain need arose to form a new (different from Soviet) national policy. But did they manage to transform the Soviet legacy in the field of national policy into a qualitatively new approach conforming to the declared objective of democratising political and public life?

Has there been transformation of ›national policy‹?

The need for change was not only a result of the declared rejection of the ›Soviet past‹ and public criticism of the Soviet legacy in the field of nation-building. Together with the change of the status of the Soviet republics from ›quasi‹ into formally independent nation-states, a transformation took place in the status of the ethno-national groups. A new stage in the nationalisation of post-Soviet states began under the slogan of transformation from a totalitarian-authoritarian Soviet system into a democratic one. All these events required a review of previous schemes, relations and statuses.

A question that should be brought forward two decades after the collapse of the USSR can be worded as follows: Does it make sense to argue that a considerable transformation has taken place in Azerbaijan in the field of regulating (ethnic) intergroup relations and concepts of ethnicity/national identity, both at the level of personal daily experience and at the level of academic and political discourse?

The answer I offer here is that there have indeed been changes. However, they have not affected basic ideas about personal ethno-national identity and have had very little impact on principles of organisation of society in the field of the status-based ranking of ethnic groups that were accepted and institutionalised in the context of the implementation of Soviet national policy. Personal ethno-national identity – one could say ›biological identity‹ – continues to remain the essential characteristic of any person residing in

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[3] The term ›Azerbaijani‹ is used equally to the term ›Azeri‹.

Azerbaijan. Like in the past, the republic does not belong to all of its citizens. It is primarily »the state of and for a particular nation« (Brubaker 2000: 27). In the opinion of Vladimir Malakhov, »the ›ascribed ethnicity‹ was internalised by the people and gradually became part of (self-) identity. This generated a feature of [...] political thinking like *methodological ethnocentrism* – a vision of society as a conglomerate of *ethnoses* (›peoples‹). This type of thinking is present today both among the masses and among a considerable part of the intellectual and political elites. It is hard to explain to a former Soviet citizen that his or her nationality is not something inborn« (2007: 50, emphasis in the original).

This type of thinking described by Malakhov is also widespread in post-Soviet Azerbaijan. However, certain changes should also be mentioned. Although a consensus can be observed on ideas about personal ethnic identity and a ›fair‹ ethno-national system in society on the levels of both daily and political and academic discourses, some divergences in views can also be observed on a number of other aspects. For example, public debates about ›national ideology‹, or, to be exact, about the content of post-Soviet nationalism, have become possible again. These are debates about what kind of nationalism this should be – exclusive or inclusive, ethnic or civil, there were not possible in the Soviet period. And it is in these debates that we can see a reproduction – in a new context – of a quasi-Soviet civil model when Soviet ethno-nations (or peoples) were discursively united into an extra-national ›Soviet people‹.

A number of scholars and politicians construct the idea of an ›Azerbaijani people‹ as a community based on the co-citizenship of all residents of the country in the same way, that is, on the basis of the preservation of compulsory structural statuses and boundaries according to the principle of ›titular group‹ and ›minorities‹ and on personal ethno-national identity recorded in documents. Sergey Rumyantsev describes this process in the following way: »The ›fifth column‹, which indicated the ethnicity of every Soviet citizen, has been removed from the chief civil document – the passport – in line with the requirements of the Council of Europe. If you judge the situation in the country based on passports alone, then all citizens of Azerbaijan are Azeris. […] However, individual ethnicity is still recorded in a host of other state documents. For example, birth certificates, which are issued when a baby is born, still indicate the ethnicity of both parents. What is more, a simple verbal indication of the identity of the baby's parents is not sufficient, and relevant documents need to be presented to the registrar's office, i.e. birth certificates that these parents had received a long time ago. The need to present them to the registrar's office arose exactly when

the fifth column in the passport was abolished. Considering the fact that it has only been two decades since the USSR collapsed, one can bravely argue that most parents today received their birth certificates from the Soviet authorities« (2011: 84).

The rejection of one particular and symbolically significant practice does not imply a review of the system of ideas altogether. The national discourse did of course experience symbolic chances. If ›inter-ethnic relations‹ were previously described in the context of a policy of ›friendship of peoples‹, today it is a discourse ›Azerbaijani tolerance‹ is dominant. I argue that the post-Soviet discourse of ›tolerance‹ is a continuation of the Soviet concept of ›titular nations‹ and ›Soviet people‹ brought to its logical end. The state, following Soviet tradition, is thought of as belonging to one dominant (›titular‹) group – ethnic Azerbaijanis (or Azerbaijani Turks). The status of all other ethnic groups (›minorities‹) may be debated. But common to all models is that all of those who are not ethnic Azerbaijani have a right of citizenship primarily by virtue of the tolerance of the dominant group. For their part, they are obliged to demonstrate their ›gratitude‹ and loyalty to the tolerant dominant group. This official discourse of tolerance runs counter to the state law on citizenship. Follow the spirit and the letter of this law: »The rights, freedoms and obligations of the citizens of the Azerbaijan Republic shall be equal regardless of their origin, social and property status, race and nationality, sex, educational background, language, religious views, political and other convictions, type and nature of employment, place of residence and time lived in such place of residence, as well as of other factors«.[4]

But this official legislation does not reflect actual sentiments and the system of relationships that has taken shape in post-Soviet Azerbaijan. The law on citizenship is a fine example of modern liberal legislation, but the discourse of tolerance, which has become widespread and popular, is, I argue, a bright sample of traditions of authoritarianism[5] and essentialism in

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[4] For details, cf. The Law of the Azerbaijani Republic: on Citizenship of the Azerbaijani Republic (2005).

[5] Representatives of the expert and academic community have long debated the specifics of political power in Azerbaijan. Altstadt (1994) sees the process of democratisation in Azerbaijan in 1988-1993 in the context of decolonisation and says changes are inevitable. Goltz (1999: 65) writes of a ›personality cult‹ when evaluating the style of rule of President Heydar Aliyev (1993-2003). Ottaway argues that a hybrid style of management has taken shape in Azerbaijan that combines features of democracy and authoritarianism. She proposes describing these kinds of political

the definition of nations and ethnicity.[6] In the context of this discourse, Azerbaijani Turks are tolerant by virtue of nature, ›ethnic genetics‹ and ›blood‹. Such ›genetically inborn tolerance‹ is a guarantor of conflictless co-existence in Azerbaijan of various ethno-national groups. In the context of this discourse, all conflicts that took place in the past (including the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict) are interpreted using various kinds of ›conspiracy theories‹ and essentialist myths about ›historical enemies‹. In these explanatory models, Azerbaijanis remain invariably tolerant (there is no way to change genetics) in all kinds of situations and under all kinds of circumstances. Conflicts are invariably the result of the intolerance of other groups.

I argue that in this given case we are dealing with a modified Soviet discourse of ›friendship of peoples‹ in which the ›Soviet people‹ are described as invariably peaceful and friendly, especially towards one another. The same essentialist features are also ascribed to the Azerbaijani nation. But while in the context of the discourse of ›friendship of peoples‹, all Soviet nations were – even if only nominally – equal, the higher status of the dominant group (the one that ›owns the state‹) is identified in a far more consistent manner in the post-Soviet political discourse of tolerance. Ideas about such status have their source in the Soviet invention of ›titular na-

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systems as ›semi-authoritarian‹ (2003: 51-70). Many independent domestic observers and experts describe the style of management that has taken shape in Azerbaijan in the post-Soviet period as authoritarian or point out serious shortcomings and errors in the development of democratic institutions in the country (Yunusov 2007: 165-174, Abdulaev 2009: 9-18, Guliev 2011: 83-90). The most severe criticism of the current political system has been voiced, for example, by A. Abbasov, who claims that »an Eastern version of a modified Soviet political system emerged in Azerbaijan. As before, the Central Committee of the Communist Party exists de facto, but now it is called the President's administration. In the provinces, all power is concentrated in the hands of heads of executive bodies, appointed by the President. The cabinet of ministers, as well as the parliament do not play an important role in the country's life« (Abbasov 2011: 108). This continuity between Soviet and post-Soviet political regimes is an important factor in my argument about continuities in the field of ›national policy‹ and discourses.

[6] I should stress that this case is one of the few where discourses are actively constructed both by representatives of the authorities and by opposition political forces. One can observe a rare public consensus among representatives of the dominant group (Azeri) and among ethnic entrepreneurs loyal to the official regime, who claims the status of representative of different minority groups.

tions‹ and serve as a basis for the differentiation of status for the various groups of the population of the country today.

Such modified Soviet national discourses and national policies are a serious obstacle for the resolution of possible conflicts. In addition, the preservation of practices of recording ethno-national identity and the status-based ranking of ethnic groups fortifies inter-group boundaries and undermines the idea of nation as co-citizenship.

Methodological and theoretical approach

In the following I will first discuss the content and specifics of the national discourse and post-Soviet nationalism to then address specifically the role politicians and scholars play in the construction of this discourse.

I will illustrate this argument on the basis of participant observation among and biographical interviews with representatives of various ethnic groups conducted in 2008-2009 and 2012 and applying a method of critical discourse analysis (Fairclough et al. 2007). The project was supported by the Caucasus Resource Research Center (CRRC).

Restricted by the framework of this article, I have only chosen for my analysis those interviews that were done with Talysh and Lezgian peoples (ten interviews in each group).[7] The informants included both ethnic activists (including community leaders) and those who do not consider themselves to be activists. Lezgian and Talysh ethnic organisations are practically non-functional. They do not have permanent premises nor do they carry out any kind of regular activities (monthly meetings, consistent celebrations on specific dates etc.). However, some collective events are organised, such as concerts with of ›national music‹ or ›national dances‹, or meetings of poets, writers, etc.

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[7] The Lezgians are one of the biggest ethnic groups of the North Caucasian language family (official population in Azerbaijan is 178,000) and live in the north of the country on the border to the Russian Federation (Gusar and other districts). The border with Russia divides the Lezgians into two unequal parts (the bulk of them live in the Russian Federation). Most Lezgians are Sunni Muslims. The Talysh speak a language that belongs to the Iranian language family (official number is 76.000). They live in the southern part of the country on the border to Iran (Masally, Lankaran and other districts). Like the Lezgians, the Talysh might be considered a divided ethnic group. Most Talysh live in Iran. The Talysh are, like the majority of Azerbaijanis, Shiite Muslims.

Before switching to the analysis of the field material I need to briefly describe my theoretical position on nations and ethnicity. Following Benedict Anderson I consider a nation as an ›imagined community‹ (1998: 5-7). Above, I have used the notion of ›group‹ (dominant group and minorities) when describing the focus of my research and the analytical framework, but I should stress that I share the ›groupism‹ criticism developed by Brubaker, who argues that »somehow, when we talk about ethnicity, and even more so when we talk about ethnic conflict, we almost automatically find ourselves talking about ethnic groups. […] Ethnicity […] should be conceptualized not as substances or things or entities or organisms […] but rather in relational, processual, dynamic, eventful and disaggregated terms. […] It means thinking of *ethnicization* […] as political, social, cultural and psychological processes. And it means taking as a basic category not the ›group‹ as an entity but *groupness* as a contextually fluctuating conceptual variable« (2002: 165-168, emphasis in the original).

As for the phenomenon of ethnicity, I diverge from the Soviet tradition in which the central figure was Yulian Bromley – »one of the most well-known Soviet anthropologists outside the Union« (Banks 2003: 17-24). The ›*ethnos* theory‹ and ethnicity concepts developed by Bromley remain widely in use as a theoretical framework among Azerbaijani ethnographers, sociologists, historians and political scientists (for a short introduction to Bromley's *ethnos* theory see Voell in this volume). I prefer to argue with Richard Jenkins, who points out that »ethnicity is no more fixed than the culture of which it is a component, or the situations in which it is produced and reproduced; ethnicity is both collective and individual, externalized in social interaction and internalized in personal self-identification« (1997: 165).

Self-identification is important, as are social categories, which can be rejected or reified, making »ethnic identification […] a dialectical process of mutually implicated internal and external definition« (Jenkins 1997: 166). Following Jenkins, I also believe that: »the collective cannot be real without the individual. […] Entering into ethnic identification during childhood is definitively a matter of categorization: we learn who we are because, in the first instance, other people – whether they be co-members or Others – tell us. Socialization *is* categorization. […] What is more, categorization continuous to contribute in a significant fashion to individual identification throughout adult life […]. Without categorization, there are no socialized individuals« (1997: 166, emphasis in the original).

In the case presented in the following the context of socialisation in the post-Soviet area includes essentialist categories of ›groupism‹ and personal ethnic identity. The specifics of ideas about categories of ethnicity and na-

tionality and the practices of recording them imply a high degree of significance for the residents of post-Soviet Azerbaijan. These categories of practice have a major impact on the structuring both of daily life political decision-making.

Ethnic groups in post-Soviet political science and ethnography: discourses of danger

The case of the Talysh and Lezgians (as ›ethnic minorities‹) and the Azerbaijanis (as the dominant group) makes it possible to observe the blurriness of ›inter-group‹ boundaries and identities. At the same time, we can observe the specifics of political and cultural process of ›ethnicisation‹ both among those whom researchers describe as representatives of these three ›ethnic groups‹ and in the context of the impact of academic and political communities on this process.

Rasim Musabayov, a political analyst in Azerbaijan (and a Member of Parliament), offers the following description:[8] »The Lezgians are the largest of the Dagestani-speaking *ethnos* in Azerbaijan. According to a Soviet census, the population of the Lezgians constantly decreased from 3.5 per cent (111,000) in 1939 to 2.4 per cent in 1989 (171,000). With the decrease in their relative size we can see an increase in their absolute numbers. Therefore, although assimilation processes did take place, they are not that intensive« (2009: 41, emphasis added).

This passage is a sample of the ethnic/national discourse that is widespread in the post-Soviet world. The Lezgians are not only (and not so much) citizens of Azerbaijan but an *ethnos* different from Azerbaijani Turks. Discourses like this one that describe the population of a country as divided into various *ethnoses* are widespread while it is impossible to find a discourse that forms an idea about a single national community in terms of ›co-citizenship‹. The main identifier of an *ethnos* is language. It follows from this

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[8] Originally this article was part of a collection edited by D. Furman and titled ›Rossiya i Azerbajdzhan: Obshestva i Gosudarstva‹, published in Moscow in 2001. Then, it was reprinted in Baku in 2009 in a collection of articles which offered a description of all ethnic groups (*ethnoses*) in Azerbaijan. I cite this reprinted version. I should stress that for an in-depth analysis, I chose precisely this article not only because of its thematic topicality but also because it continues to be an important contribution, as witnessed by its reprinting in 2009. The analytical framework offered by the author and the discourse of danger he constructs remain in use among the academic and expert community in Azerbaijan.

discourse that some common features of daily life or religion can lead to the increase permeability of the boundaries between various *ethnoses* in a country. But this circumstance only implies two options for the development of events: either the Lezgians assimilate with the group that ›owns the country‹ (i.e. the *ethnos* of the Azerbaijani Turks) or maintain their loyalty towards the dominant group.

The reasons for maintaining loyalty are not co-citizenship (common state/civil values, equality before the law, equal representation in administrative bodies and/or equal participation in political life). Musabayov mentions that »many of them[9] [i.e. Lezgians] settled in Baku and other towns of the country. […] the common faith and the proximity of their culture and daily life were prerequisites for the high degree of integration of these *ethnoses* into the Azerbaijani environment. Historically, the fate of the Dagestani peoples was closely intertwined with the Azerbaijani Turks. […] The overwhelming majority of Dagestani-speaking *ethnoses* regard the Azerbaijani state as their own and have a fluent command of the Azerbaijani language. Mixed marriages with Azeris are widespread. Many representatives of the Dagestani peoples played a considerable role in the fight for Azerbaijani independence in 1918-20, and actively participated in the national liberation movement of 1989-91. They left a noticeable trace in the development of Azerbaijani literature and arts, in science and education« (2009: 41, emphasis added).

Here we encounter a shining example of ›ethnicisation‹ and groupism normally manifested in attempts to analyse the relationship between the Lezgians and the Azerbaijanis. In this argument, every ethnic group/*ethnos* has an invariable set of characteristics that make them different from others. These characteristics can be similar – in some aspects – to those that are ascribed to the dominant group/*ethnos* and signify ›a high degree of integration‹ with the dominant group. Of importance is also the common ›historical fate‹ (i.e. something fatal that can no longer be changed). This is not about a common historical myth but a myth of loyalty that a small *ethnos* displayed towards the state-forming dominant *ethnos* at some key historical point.[10]

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[9] Musabayov writes of ›Dagestani-speaking *ethnoses*‹ and also mentions the Tsakhur, Avar, Khinaloug, Buduq and Kriz. These groups are far more often referred to as representatives of the North Caucasus language family.

[10] Understandably, the set of these ›key historical points‹ would have been completely different even less than thirty years ago, i.e. during Soviet times. Periods of a

In his article Musabayov is looking for explanations for passed and possible ethnic conflict. Musabayov's political analysis is based on the fundamental premise that the very fact of the presence within the borders of one country of different *ethnoses* (they are different by definition, i.e. a greater importance is discursively attached to differences than to unifying qualities) implies serious conflict potential. The analysis that follows is a search for explanations not only as to why an ethnic conflict took place but also why it was possible to avoid one.

In this context, the Lezgians, as ›a Dagestani-speaking *ethnos*‹ different from the Azerbaijani Turks, are considered an unstable ›risk group‹. They can be, for example, ›a tool‹ in the hands of ill-disposed foreign forces. Especially if due to circumstances they happen to be an *ethnos* divided by a border. We are thus dealing with a ›discourse of danger‹ that comes from ›small *ethnoses*‹ for the territorial unity of the country that belongs to ›the state-forming *ethnos*‹: »In some Russian government circles the temptation arose to take advantage of the discontented Lezgian population […] to kindle separatist anti-Azerbaijani political sentiments and use them as a means of pressuring Azerbaijan. The Russian Ministry of Justice registered the Lezgian nationalist organisation Sadval as an international organisation. Shortly afterwards its activists set up their own militarised groups on the border with Azerbaijan and sent emissaries to provoke conflicts. […] Terrorist attacks were organised. However, on the whole, [this] did not produce any effect. The Russian authorities realised the danger of Lezgian nationalism to the stability of the Russian Federation's Republic of Dagestan […]. Owing to joint efforts [of Azerbaijan and Russia], the situation on both banks of the Samur [river through which the border runs] has become quieter and currently there is no threat of uncontrollable developments« (Musabekov 2009: 41-42).

The leading role in the emergence or overcoming of a conflict, which in principle is possible when two and more different *ethnoses* live in close proximity, is given to large *ethnoses*, i.e. state groups. If there was no conflict, this is a success attributed to the policy of this large group. Common religion, ›age-old traditions of neighbourliness‹, widespread bilingualism among the Lezgians and mixed marriages are only of secondary importance. Attention should be paid to the role that the discourse of danger attaches to ›small *ethnoses*‹. They (as a group or a collective actor) are either manipulated, being pushed into a conflict, or ›pacified‹ when dominant groups are not interest-

›struggle for independence‹ are important from the perspective of a post-Soviet historian.

ed in conflict. They are ›pacified‹ using both ›positive measures‹ – offering primary education in their ›mother tongue‹, jobs in local administration and seats in Parliament, etc. – or using tough political measures: by banning nationalist organisations, halting the policy of motivating radicalism etc. These were all those privileges and punishments developed in the context of Soviet national policy.

From the perspective of groupism (in particular, if the author is also a representative of the dominant group) we observe an approach under which an ethnic group/›small *ethnos*‹ is discursively described as a collective actor that is easily manipulable politically by ›large *ethnoses*‹ that own adjoining states or the country of residence. ›Small *ethnoses*‹ are generally ›risk groups‹, obstacles (greater or smaller) to the cultural, linguistic and territorial homogenisation and stabilisation of a country. This ›risk‹ increases if this *ethnos* populates border areas and even more if the ›small *ethnoses*‹ are divided by a state border.

A number of significant parallels between the Lezgians and the Talysh can be observed in this argument. The latter populate the southern border districts of Azerbaijan, whereas the Lezgians populate northern ones. Both are described in a discourse of danger as an *ethnos* divided by a border: »The Talysh populate south-eastern Azerbaijan, predominantly Lankaran, Astara and partly Masalli and Lerik districts. Many of them live in Baku and Sumgait today. […] The Talysh are deeply integrated into the Azerbaijani nation. The traditions, culture and daily life of the Talysh are not very different. The Talysh go to Azerbaijani schools and have a perfect command of the Azerbaijani language, using Talysh in daily life (certainly, more so in the countryside than in urban areas). Talysh language classes have now been introduced in schools located in Talysh-populated areas. Today, the newspaper Talyshi Sado is printed and radio programmes in the Talysh language are broadcast. […] Historically, no ethnic clashes have been observed between the Azerbaijani and Talysh. However, the restoration of Talysh identity [in the process of the collapse of the USSR] against the backdrop of growing Turkic nationalism in the period of the struggle for the independence of the Azerbaijani Republic created certain grounds for tension in this part of the country. […] Colonel Aliakram Humbatov declared in August 1993 […] the establishment of the Talysh-Mugan Republic (TMR) within Azerbaijan. […] The bulk of the population and local elites backed the central authorities. Failing to find support with the Talysh or the Azerbaijanis, Humbatov's movement disintegrated immediately after their first clash with pro-government forces, while the initiator himself and his closes supporters were arrested shortly afterwards and sentenced to lengthy prison

terms. […] Currently, despite the grave socio-economic situation, things are quite stable in southern Azerbaijan and are under full control of the authorities. Granted, one can see the aspiration of Iran – in whose adjoining territory over 100,000 Talysh live – to use zealous Shi'ism and the linguistic proximity of the Talysh to step up its influence on Azerbaijan. […] however, they have failed to achieve any visible results« (Musabayov 2009: 43-44).[11]

In this discourse of danger one can clearly see a status-based ranking of groups. We will not hear the voices of representatives of the smaller ethnic group in the context of groupism. It is always a macro-analysis in which a group is a collective body, despite the possible acknowledgment of the actual blurriness of boundaries (i.e. inter-ethnic marriages). A work by Rauf Huseynov, an Azerbaijani historian, is one of the most interesting examples of the status-based ranking of *ethnoses* into which Azerbaijani population is discursively divided. He argues that »the Azerbaijani Republic is a poly-ethnic state whose people are represented by a titular *ethnos*[12] – Azerbaijani and indigenous national minorities – Udis, Ingiloys [see Aivazishvili in this volume], Kriz, Khinalug, Buduqs, Tats, Talysh and Lezgians, who have other motherlands but historically live in Azerbaijan and are therefore entitled to being regarded together with the Azerbaijani as representatives of the one poly-ethnic nation Azerbaijani. Apart from them, the republic is populated by Russians and Ukrainians, Belarusians and Avars, Kurds and Tsakhur, Jews and Armenians, Greeks and Neo-Assyrians, Germans, Tats and Akhiska, who have, each of them respectively, their own historical motherland and can therefore be described as autochthonous national minorities on Azerbaijani land«[13] (Huseynov 2003: 3-4).

This status-based structure of an ›Azerbaijani people‹ emerging out of its ›poly-ethnic condition‹, is another sample of the continuation and reconstruction of the Soviet national discourse. The discursive order: ›titular

[11] Another example of construction of these kinds of discourses and analytical schemes is the work of another well-known political analyst and historian in Azerbaijan, Arif Yunusov (2007: 148-169), see also Mammadli 2008, 2011.
[12] The Soviet status-based group category ›titular nation/*ethnos*‹ continues – as we can see – to be used today. Yunusov, for his part, uses the notion of ›titular people/nation‹ and argues, for example, that »Azeris have truly become the titular nation in the country« etc. (2007: 165-169).
[13] For Huseynov, the idea of a ›historical Azerbaijan‹ implies the land of both Northern and Southern Azerbaijan (i.e. north-western Iran) with a total area of more than 300,000 km².

ethnos‹ (owner of the state) – ethnic minorities – duration of habitation in one or another area – ›historical motherland‹ – was developed in detail in Soviet period texts (Rumyantsev 2010: 432-451). The chief novelty is that there is no longer a need to refer to some imaginary civil community (a ›Soviet people‹). One can also see the decisive loss of status of the Russians and Ukrainians. It is also important to consider the fact that talk is not of a united nation but of a country's population that consists of different groups/*ethnoses* that are only united by the framework of the state.

Such constructions are complemented by ethnographic studies, which political analysts and historians use to develop their ideas about different *ethnoses* that populate the country. Ethnographers collect information about different languages, types of houses, ways of cooking food, national costumes, dances, continuing to record thoroughly the ethnographic boundaries that distinguish one *ethnos* from another. However, an important trend is emerging. Azerbaijan was the first post-Soviet state where an edition was prepared in which minorities were recognised in a different manner. In ›Azerbaijanis: a Historical and Ethnographic Essay‹ (Abbasov 1998), a separate chapter (albeit a small one, compared to the entire volume of the work) on ›national and ethnic minorities in Azerbaijan‹ was included. In line with the ideology of ›Azerbaijanism‹ being developed, the authors of this work argue that despite belonging to various linguistic groups and ›specific features‹, common values (›Azerbaijani land‹ as a common motherland, the Azerbaijani language as a means of ›inter-group communication and a culture of inter-ethnic co-existence‹) are the basis for unity that the authors describe as ›the people of Azerbaijan‹.

More recent, three-volume ethnographic work by authors from the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography was published under the editorship of Timur Bunyadov (2007). The focus is on traditions and particularities of daily life and day-to-day relations in the spirit of a classical ethnographic study. However, this text does not contain any mention of ethnic groups. The book ›is dedicated to national leader Heydar Aliyev‹, who is also considered to be the main author of the ideology of ›Azerbaijanism‹. The work consistently describes the population as Azerbaijani, while ›specific features‹ are regional, not ethnic, peculiarities. At the same time, the text does not make it clear whether it only means the Azerbaijani Turks or the whole population of the country. As a result, it is hard to argue anything certain about attempts at a discursive homogenisation of the population, especially since the tradition of recording ethnic boundaries continues and remains widely represented, for example, in the works of one of the country's most prominent ethnographers, Qamarsakh Cavadov (2000, 2004).

Post-Soviet nationalism

Programmes for a post-Soviet nationalisation of the state have been implemented in Azerbaijan for almost two decades now. During this period of time, these kinds of programmes have often seen major changes, but since the mid-1990s and definitely since the early 2000s, they have been closely linked to the ideology of post-Soviet nationalism – ›Azerbaijanism‹ (*Azərbaycançılıq*). This ideology is fairly controversial and has so far been presented only in several dozen texts. The former President, Heydar Aliyev (1993-2003), under whom it received official status, is believed to be its main author. The authors of a number of texts that attempt at interpreting this ideological doctrine in different ways or develop it are officials of different ranks and politicians, scholars, journalists, writers or poets (cf. Sardarov 2008, Abaskulieva 2010, Godja 2010).

The main postulates of ›Azerbaijanism‹ can be worded as follows: Azerbaijanis are ›a people with an ancient history‹, ›with national individuality‹, ›having made a valuable contribution to global civilisation‹, and a state-forming, dominant group. The political regime that has ruled Azerbaijan since 1993 – i.e. since Heydar Aliyev's rise to power – is the only guarantor of stability in the country. According to the main author of this ideology: »Our national identity, historical roots, national-spiritual values, and our national culture – literature, arts, music, poetry, songs, customs and traditions of our people – unite us. […] It is these factors that unite us all. The idea of Azerbaijanism unites us all, it makes us united. After Azerbaijan gained state independence, Azerbaijanism, as the leading idea, became the main idea for Azerbaijanis living both in Azerbaijan and across the world. We must unite around this idea. Azerbaijanism means preserving our national identity, preserving our national-spiritual values and at the same time enriching them with a synthesis and integration with human values, and also providing for the development of every person« (Aliyev 2001).

This speech by President Heydar Aliyev, which he made at the ›First Congress of Azerbaijanis of the World‹ in November 2011, is considered to be the basis for the concept of ›Azerbaijanism‹. The President was addressing all ethnic Azerbaijani regardless of their citizenship, but not the citizens of the Azerbaijani Republic. However, in subsequent interpretations attempts at introducing into the ideology of ›Azerbaijanism‹ some ideas of civic nationalism can be identified. However, all such attempts return to the essentialist idea of the tolerance of the Azerbaijani *ethnos* and predominant attention to the description of the population of Azerbaijan as poly-ethnic and divided into different groups – *ethnoses* (e.g. in Abaskulieva 2010).

Lezgians in Azerbaijan: practices of recording boundaries

In the context of the idea of tolerance the ethno-nationalisms of ›small *ethnoses*‹ are either ignored or are not regarded as independent. These nationalisms are the result of political manipulation of the ›small *ethnoses*‹, which in the discourse of danger are regarded a real threat to the ›young Azerbaijani statehood‹. As a result, the authorities strive to control the activities of ethnic organisations, which lead to their weakening. Their very existence, which is only possible if they are recognized by the state, is meant to demonstrate the tolerance of the authorities, and therefore, of the Azerbaijani nation. For example, the official Lezgian organisation was registered in the early 1990s. But the community is poorly structured and has always united only a small group of activists. Thus, Sair Hasanov (former member of the Supreme Council of the Azerbaijani SSR) and present-day chairman of the Lezgian national centre ›Samur‹ argued that »this society promotes the culture, folk customs, folklore – songs and stories, and, to some extent, certainly, preserves the Lezgian language. […] [This is] a non-government organisation, there are five of us. We publish the newspaper Samur. Our editor is the honourable cultural figure Sadaqat Karimova. She edits the newspaper and leads a folklore ensemble called Suvar – which means holiday in Lezgian. On 5 May […] [2008] a concert was held at the Azerbaijani Drama Theatre on the occasion of Heydar Aliyev's 85th birthday. It was a very interesting one. Full house, free entry, lots of people. Dancing, singing. They are actually similar to Azerbaijani but this was a folk-dance performance, and it was described as a Lezgian wedding« (age 74).

The existence of ethnic organisations is also called upon to demonstrate the tolerance of ›small *ethnoses*‹ towards the dominant *ethnos*. As a result, we can observe the idea of tolerance being implemented in reality through the formation of a discourse and structure of ethnic organisations. In the context of this policy, the preservation and recording of ethnic boundaries plays a major role because the tolerance of the dominant *ethnos* is only possible when there exist a certain number of ›small *ethnoses*‹.

As a result, the discursive reproduction and maintaining of ethnic boundaries is an important component part of official (state) policy. And even if the authorities are not allocating any actual administrative, financial or organisational resources to maintain them, ethnic activists get the resources they need from the official discourse of tolerance: the symbolic resource is of greater importance than financial or any other resource.

In this approach, a Lezgian must always remain a Lezgian. To stay Lezgian means to maintain ethnic boundaries in some way. For example, through maintaining and reproducing ›folk culture‹. The boundaries are only marked within the space of the zones of contact (mixed habitation), that is, primarily, the Azerbaijani capital, the city of Baku. Considering the acute shortage of financial and administrative resources available to ethnic organisations, the maintaining of boundaries has a symbolic nature and includes Lezgian celebrations or concerts that are held several times a year. Here, boundaries are preserved where they most often do not play a significant role and run the risk of disappearing. As one informant (age 34) put it, »I do not actually like to divide. Maybe, there should be divisions – that this is an Azerbaijani, this is a Lezgian, a Russian, or a Japanese, or something else. Well, we are all just humans. A person, people, if they are that attached to a nation or religion – every religion says that we are humans first of all. And this was like this from the beginning. Well, I would wish very much there would not be such talk of nations […] No, no, I am not saying that these holidays, some traditions, should not be backed. No, for God's sake. Every nation has something beautiful, something nice, national. I am against division.«

In other words, the activities of ethnic entrepreneurs and authorities would be even less noticeable where there is no risk for the preservation of the boundaries (for example, in areas populated by Lezgians alone). Another informant (age 32) put it this way: »Others [non-Lezgians] will just not get along […] here [in the village]. There are a couple of people. For example, a man got married somewhere else, and brought a Russian woman. Or married a Talysh woman, brought the Talysh. But they [the wives] have already adopted the language, they speak Lezgian. I myself was surprised – these Talysh and Russian women speak fluent Talysh and have adopted our customs. This is the way it should be. […] Well, our customs, this is what happens in the village, yes, she goes to bring water, bakes bread, does what is customarily done in the village.«

Thus the authorities maintain ethnic boundaries simply by investing in the discourse. But my interview material shows that despite numerous mixed marriages, the lack of any greater interest in the reconstruction and reproduction of ›folk customs‹, the boundaries maintain their topicality. The reasons that they do so can be found in the Soviet practices that have preserved their significance, namely in the compulsory recording of ethnicity and the associated ethnic boundaries. The authorities do not actually need to channel any serious resources into their activities in this area. They

only need to reconstruct and support several modified practices institutionalized in the Soviet period.

Azerbaijan's Talysh community

A similar situation can be observed in the case of the Talysh. The boundaries between the Talysh and the Azerbaijani Turks are far less clear than in the case of the Lezgian. According to the official narrative, the ›Centre of Talysh History, Culture and Ethnography‹, which is headed by Barat Qasimov, is based in the Talysh town of Lankaran. This centre (which exists nominally more than in reality) and a small group of ethnic activists represent the tolerant attitude of the political authorities towards the Talysh and in this way maintains the existence of the boundaries between the Talysh and the Azerbaijani Turks in a situation where it is very hard to identify these boundaries even in areas populated by them. »In the village, in the region there are now villages that are considered genuine, indigenous Talysh«, said one of my informants (age 32). »But there are some villages that are known for their population being more or less mixed. Here, N., my father's village – it is known for having a mixed population and there are even historical neighbourhoods that are called *turk oba*. That is to say, that it is a neighbourhood historically inhabited by strangers. And even when they are speaking Talysh they have an accent that is not typical. They are recognized by their accent, which does not sound quite Talysh. There are villages that are located north of Lankaran. Closer, say, to Masalli, closer to the border, they are different for being more mixed. The more south you go, the greater, so to speak, the Talysh percentage of the population. Closer to Lerik, in the mountain regions, there is believed to be a less mixed population«.

In a situation of long co-habitation, when even ethnic activists have difficulty telling the ›Talysh component‹ from ›non-Talysh‹, the discourse of danger plays the important instrumental role of reconstructing eroded ethnic boundaries: »Azerbaijan was always the dominant language for my mother's relatives,« said another informant (age 47). Because it was considered to be the language of the educated, a more elite language, the language of education, and this was believed to be trendy. Elite families preferred to speak Azerbaijan and neglected Talysh. My mother's family was considered one of the elite families in the village. Her father did not like to mix the languages and made them speak one language, and that was Azerbaijan. Well, because of this they all went to university, received an education and so on. Neighbours, say, common folk, they spoke Talysh. I remember that

in my childhood my grandmother's neighbours often spoke Talysh amongst one another, but their speech was, again, mixed«.

A considerable part of the Talysh does not tend to actualise ethnic boundaries by constructing differences in the customs or traditions of daily life. Some differences are normally not interpreted as deep or impenetrable ones. Rather, they are understood as being superficial, as a 38 year old informant made clear: »Today people go and make a marriage proposal and tomorrow they make *kabin* [a religious marriage], so they can see the girl, so that things are all legal, in order to have the right to hold each other by the hand. Otherwise, there is no difference in the roots of the customs. The only thing is that on the *novruz* holiday [a spring holiday celebrated as New Year] there must be seven meals on the table. There is no such thing in Baku. There has to be fish on the table, while it does not have to be so in Baku.«

These are all the differences that one or another informant can identify. But in the official discourse of tolerance, the Talysh are described in the same way as the Lezgians, i.e. as an *ethnos* different from the Azerbaijani Turks. The more important thing is that the discourse of danger, it is the Talysh that are considered a group, whose loyalty towards the ›dominant *ethnos*‹ is in doubt. Here the need arises to record the size of the group and its boundaries so as to indicate the ›scale‹ of a possible/imaginary problem. This is today what ethnographers and, to a large extent, political analysts do.

Conclusion

The political authorities in post-Soviet Azerbaijan strive to maintain ethnic boundaries and personal ethnic identities. This policy is realised using two approaches. One of them we can identify as the ›hard line‹ of control over ›small *ethnoses*‹ so as to prevent the spread of real or, more often, imaginary ideas about separatism and the manifestation of disloyalty to the ruling authorities. The discourse of danger is constructed in this context. ›Small *ethnoses*‹ are regarded as different from the ›dominant‹ *ethnos* of Azerbaijani Turks and as representing, to a certain extent, a potential danger for the unity of the country. Direct pressure, such as banning ethnic organisations or the arrest of ethnic activists is also part of this form of control.

The other approach might be described as the ›soft line‹. Support is provided for ethnic activists and organisations that are ready to demonstrate their loyalty to the political authorities and to the ›dominant *ethnos*‹. In this approach, the authorities describe themselves as tolerant while ethnic activ-

ists as invariably loyal and ›grateful‹ to the regime and to the ›dominant *ethnos*‹ for the tolerance they demonstrate. It should be stressed that of greater importance is not the difference between these approaches but the fact that in both cases the authorities maintain and (re-)construct ethnic boundaries and identities, even where they have stopped being topical.

The central tools in this process of maintaining ethnic boundaries are the same as those institutionalised in the context of Soviet national policy. The actors in the process include, beside the politicians, scholars and journalists.

The realisation of this policy of strengthening ethnic boundaries and identities involves their politicisation and the maintenance (but not reduction) of a certain conflict potential in the country. The conflict discourse is produced by ruling politicians, scholars, and media and only secondarily by ethno-nationalists. It is rooted both in the very discursive division, held over since Soviet times, of the country's population into ethnic groups – *ethnoses* – that are different from one another and in the essentialist discourse of the tolerance of the ›dominant *ethnos*‹.

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Sascha Roth

The Making of Home, the Making of Nation
Cultural Notions of Conflict and Displacement in Post-Soviet Azerbaijan

Today, most Western and Russian scholars, politicians and media describe the Caucasus primarily as a hot-spot of ethnic, territorial or economic conflicts (Auch 2008, Halbach/Kappeler 1995, Peimani 2009, Stadelbauer 1995, Yamskov 1991). Nagorno-Karabakh, Chechnya, Abkhazia and South Ossetia are only a few examples associated with violent struggles. The high number and durability of armed conflicts in the Caucasus have created stereotypes of violence and further have led to a generalised, hardly differentiated perception of the region. As Tsypylma Darieva and Viktor Voronkov notice, »today, the Caucasus, both North and South, has come to be associated with armed violence, brutality, clanishness, tribalism, ethnic conflicts, and local wars« (2010: 22).

The academic literature presents a kaleidoscope of causes for the conflicts in the Caucasus. These include a complex ethnic composition, struggles for economic resources, calls for the independence of ethnic minorities or the legacy of Soviet nationality policy, border-making and deportations (Auch 2008, Coene 2010, Yamskov 1991). A certain ›Caucasian mentality‹ is also referred to in political discourse, media and everyday conversation (Karpenko 2010). But any attempt to find a common origin for these conflicts is doomed to be too simplistic; each needs to be set in its local context, specific dynamics and processes.

In this article I will focus on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, its role and its meaning in Azerbaijan.[1] The conflict serves as an outstanding example

[1] This article is based on fieldwork in Azerbaijan conducted for my MA thesis, mainly in Baku, from August 2008 to March 2009.

for studying the above mentioned issues for several reasons: As one of the earliest conflicts that emerged on the eve of the demise of the Soviet Union, it played a major role in the process of independence and transition of both Armenia and Azerbaijan. After the Nagorno-Karabakh war from 1992 to 1994 and the displacement of over one million Armenians and Azerbaijanis,[2] a ceasefire agreement between the countries was arranged. The conflict acquired the status of a ›frozen conflict‹ – a status quo that since then remains unchanged. Thus the question is: why have all efforts for a peaceful solution of the conflict by various international organs, mediators and scholars failed so far? Most suggestions in peace-negotiating processes seem rather unrealistic if one seriously considers local perceptions on the conflict. I argue that the main reason for this shortcoming is that the Caucasus, and particularly Azerbaijan, still remains a *terra incognita* (Darieva/Kaschuba 2007: 13) for Westerners. The majority of models for conflict resolution draw on top-down theories that hinder a deeper understanding of actual local processes, ideas, values and practices of the actors involved. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is not just a territorial or ethnic conflict between two recently independent states but first and foremost an issue of contested identification. As Tarja Väyrynen remarks correctly: »At the centre of the question ›why violent ethnic identification takes place‹ is the question ›why some identities become securitised‹, i.e. perceived to be threatened in such manner that the way to maintain – or, rather, to ›construct‹ – the identity becomes to be seen as an issue of survival« (1998: 8).

I agree that in the case of Armenia and Azerbaijan, this is basically an issue of rivalling identification processes in which a ›we-group‹ constructs itself in sharp distinction to others. But instead of asking why such forms of identifications are created, I find it more fruitful to pose the question of how they are produced and reproduced. So the two broader questions of this article are: What kind of images and metaphors are applied by the actors to endow a sense of relatedness within the respective groups to achieve collective interests? Which values, norms and ideas are powerful enough to establish relations between groups, their territory, their nation and their elites? The actual practices of negotiations and representations of national and cultural identities, i.e. through rituals, symbols, celebrations, commemorations (Binder et al. 2001: 8) should therefore be studied first with a focus on emic categories. Only then we can try to classify these by using existing scientific approaches.

[2] ›Azerbaijanis‹ and ›Azeris‹ are used synonymously in the literature.

To deal with this issue analytically I draw on Roland Hardenberg (2009) and Frank Heidemann (2006) who, with reference to Rodney Needham (1973), distinguish three levels for the analytical examination of culture and look at their mutual interrelationships: (1) empirical pragmatic action, (2) norms and rules and (3) value-ideas. Value-ideas here refer to cultural notions, that is, principles associated with certain contents (Heidemann 2006: 38). Cultural values and ideas transcend anthropological domains such as kinship, economy, nation or state. They permeate these artificial boundaries and can serve as a fruitful approach to the comparative analysis of interrelations.

I will begin here with an ethnographic description of two examples of displacement, their respective contexts, differences and the experiences of my interviewees that will serve as the basis of my argument. The central feature here is the possibility of the exchange of houses between displaced persons, which provided important advantages for life after displacement. It will further become clear that very distinct state strategies in dealing with different groups of displaced persons exist, as do legal classifications, and both have a major impact on their current everyday-lives. In the next section I will concentrate on the local concept of house as a major characteristic of familial and cultural identification. Applying Janet Carsten's theory of relatedness (1995, 2000, 2004), I show how the house represents and emphasises continuity and cultural notions of human relationships in local ideas of family, marriage, kinship and the associated obligations. These concepts cannot be treated separately but are constituted as an interrelated set of ideas that impact on local perceptions of nation, state and politics as well as conflict-management and issues relevant to Internally Displaced Persons (IDP).

In the subsequent section I discuss the implications of my argument with regard to the sphere of national identification and state actors. First, I will give some examples of the cultural impacts on the legal framework of IDP-policy and the IDPs' official status. After a critical reflection of legal categories and international definitions of displacement, I will illustrate that the IDPs play an important role within the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and its importance in Azerbaijan. Finally I conclude that for understanding this present situation, one has to reflect on the importance of Nagorno-Karabakh, the IDPs and especially former president Heydar Aliev as inter-related symbolic actors and central aspects of national identification. In the context of cultural values, they represent relatedness within the nation in the same way the concepts of house and home represent relatedness on the social level.

With respect to the anthropological study of conflicts, my argument will demonstrate that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict cannot only be seen as a conflict *between* states. Instead, I ask to what extend it has now become a conflict *within* states, emphasising the multidimensional character of the conflict. And further, how do the aspects I discuss hinder actual peace-negotiating processes? I attempt to show that a cultural approach focusing on tangible norms and value-ideas such as family, gender or personhood can serve as a useful tool to understand internal dynamics of external conflict situations not only in actor's everyday-lives but on the national level as well.

Experiences of displacement and
legal categories as markers of difference

Azer Mammadov's (45) ancestors had lived for several generations in Tokhludzha (today Drakhtik), a small town located in today's Gegharkunik Province (Armenia) on the north-eastern shores of Lake Sevan, close to the Azerbaijani border. His wife Farida was born in the same town. The whole region had an ethnic Azerbaijani majority. Life for the Mammadovs became more and more difficult as interethnic relations between Armenians and Azerbaijanis were exacerbated, especially after the Sumgait pogrom on 27 February 1988, which marked a first climax in the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh. According to Azer, fear among the Azerbaijani population increased, but initially, the Soviet government did not allow them to migrate to Azerbaijan because officials feared an intensification of the conflict. But finally, on 28 November 1988, they left their home and went to Baku to find refuge in the house of Azer's uncle. One of the biggest challenges in this respect was leaving behind all their immovable property without having any certainty about their future accommodations. Azer then applied a strategy that I also recorded among several other Azerbaijanis who found themselves in the same situation: »Many Azeris from Armenia tried to exchange their house or accommodation with Armenians living in Azerbaijan who left Azerbaijan at the same time. So, many of us went to the Armenian quarters in Baku – me too. I met there with an Armenian. He and his family had to move to Armenia, we had to move to Azerbaijan. Together with him I went to Armenia where I showed him my house. That's it. We simply exchanged our houses and the necessary documents. Those who did not have the option of house exchange were worse-off, of course. A house or a flat in Baku is expensive. To afford it one has to work twenty or thirty

years. But if you have a house you can live, you can work and you can earn money« (Interview 30 October 2008).

It will become clear that the practice of house exchange represents not only a material advantage but has further implications for a successful reintegration into society. Life in Baku was not easy directly after emigration. Beside the problem of finding work, it was a time of chaotic political and societal change. According to Azer it was an extremely hard period because beside the ethnic tension between Armenians and Azerbaijanis and the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, it was the beginning of the Azerbaijani independence movement and increasing Soviet military presence.

After a period of two years, Azer decided to move with his wife and two sons to the city of Khabarovsk in Eastern Siberia near the Chinese border. His younger brother Sultan went there in 1985 when he served in the Soviet Army. Later he worked as a policeman. He was given a house, could afford a good life and finally married. From 1991 until 1999, Azer lived there with his family before they returned to Baku. He revealed: »Because it was so difficult to find work in Baku in those days I decided to move to Khabarovsk. I worked there as a businessman and regularly sent money to my mother and my siblings who stayed in Baku. My brothers and sisters were still going to school. They needed the money to afford a good life. Together with my brother Sultan and his wife we had our family business. We worked hard. I slept neither day nor night and sold goods and cars in the city. After some time I bought a two-room apartment there and when I returned to Baku in 1999, my younger brother Jamaladdin moved there. We helped each other then and now« (Interview 26 October 2008).

The narrative of Ali Bakhramov (42) paints another picture of the experience of displacement some years later. Ali lived with his brother Anar (50), his two sisters and his parents in the city of Fizuli, the capital of Fizuli District in the southwest of Azerbaijan and bordering on Nagorno-Karabakh. In the Nagorno-Karabakh war, Armenian troops conquered the city in August 1993 and the family had to flee, leaving behind all their belongings. Ali remembers: »Before the war I served the Soviet Army in Moscow. When I came back to Fizuli I worked for a short time in the construction sector. After the invasion my family and I lived for eight years in a tent camp near the town Imishli before we finally moved to Baku in 2002. Life in the camp was impossible! My parents both got ill and died because medical care and necessary facilities just did not exist. After they died we brought them by car to Fizuli District and buried them in a cemetery in the town Akhmedbeyli, which is located in the eastern part of Fizuli District. Every year I visit this place. When we arrived in Baku we first moved to a

settlement called Bilajari. There my brother and I lived in a rented room and paid a lot of money that we had difficulty earning. At that time we could barely afford it, today everything is getting more and more expensive. In 2005 we finally moved to this place. My brother went to an official accommodation office that helps displaced people find a place to live. My brother told them that we could not continue living like this in the place. So they gave us this small room« (Interview 29 December 2008).

Since then, the two brothers share a scantily furnished room without windows in an old vocational school where nineteen families from the districts of Fizuli, Agdam and Zangilan that were displaced during the war are housed. In general, the building is in bad condition and lacks basic infrastructure, like in most settlements for the displaced in Baku. According to Ali »it is difficult to breathe in here. That's why I made this small window [that is, a hole in the wall] so you can breathe at night when sleeping. You see […] we live like pigs! How can a man live under such conditions?« (Interview 8 January 2009)

Ali earns little extra money working odd jobs to supplement the poor state subsidies for displaced people. His brother Anar works as a guard in a nature-reserve in the Lankaran District in southern Azerbaijan, where he spends most of the year. His two sisters are both married and live with their husbands in the suburban districts of Baku. Ali and his brother are not married and have little perspective to do so considering their scarce material resources and their age. Ali explains: »My relatives and friends often tell me that I am getting old without founding a family. Believe me, I want to marry but it is not that easy. I don't have money to found a family and I don't earn enough to buy an apartment. Here, without money you are nothing. What should I do? When you find work the money you earn is barely enough to live on. Most of us are in the same situation. No money, no house […] how can we help each other? No matter whether you are my relative or not. If I worked some years in Germany, I could earn enough money to buy a house here. In our culture it's the man's responsibility to provide a home. The wife should live with the husband because she is part of his family« (Interview 8 January 2009).

These two contrasting accounts exemplify two different temporal, spatial, socio-cultural and legal contexts of displacement.

Before independence, about 160,000 Azerbaijanis were registered as citizens of the Armenian SSR (Halbach 2009: 26). Because of growing political tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan at the end of the 1980s, virtually

all Azerbaijanis decided to leave their homes for their titular states, as exemplified in the case of Azer's family.[3] At the same time about 180,000 Armenians mostly living in Baku, the capital of the Azerbaijan SSR, migrated to Armenia. The Azerbaijanis that arrived in Azerbaijan were later given the official status of *qaçqınlar* (refugees).[4] The Soviet Union collapsed between this unoffical population exchange and the outbreak of the Nagorno-Karabakh war in 1992; the former Soviet Republics gained independence. Thus, the situation for Ali's family has to be seen in a quite different context. During the Nagorno-Karabakh war 1992-94 altogether 590,000 Azerbaijanis from Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan's border regions fled. Property and personal belongings were lost. Because the displaced persons in this period did not cross official state borders they have the legal status of *məcburi köçkünlər* (IDPs).[5]

Since then both – the status of the Nagorno-Karabakh region and the IDPs – have not changed and remain in a state of liminality. According to various reports on the situation of the IDPs in Azerbaijan, for the majority, material resources are scarce and access to work or private property is limited and restricted by law. Ali's case further shows that interaction and mutual cooperation within kinship networks has been weakened as a result of

[3] The heterogeneous process of displacement of Azerbaijanis from Armenia still needs further research. My interviewees also mentioned that collective evacuations were organised by the Soviet state, an issue that in the future needs to be examined further.

[4] In article 1 of the 1951 ›Refugee Convention‹ the category is defined as follows: »the term ›refugee‹ shall apply to any person who [...] owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it« (UNHCR 2010: 16).

[5] In the ›Guiding Principles for Internal Displacement‹, IDPs are defined as follows: »For the purposes of these Principles, internally displaced persons are persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border.« In: http://www.idpguidingprinciples.org, accessed 23.10.2008.

displacement.[6] The government of Azerbaijan constantly assures hopes and expectations of imminent return with repeated reports about a solution of the conflict in the near future. Official plans for the repatriation of IDPs are subsumed under the title the ›Great Return‹[7] and can be understood as part of an official state policy towards the Karabakh question and the issue of resettlement of IDPs in the region that not only raises high expectations among IDPs but among large parts of society.

In contrast, the situation of the refugees is very diverse. After their escape many could establish a new livelihood, often facilitated by the option of house exchange. A return to regions of origin was long considered politically out of question and the fact that they could start a new life without permanent minority status made life much more endurable. The status of Azerbaijani refugees was suspended officially in 1998. Since then they are considered Azerbaijani citizens. They enjoy full rights and duties and are considered largely integrated (UNHCR 2003: 22).

One must be aware of the special meaning of Nagorno-Karabakh and the conflict with Armenia in public, private and national discourses. For Azerbaijan, the conflict is an important resource in political matters as it is considered a catalyst in the search for national identity as well as for mass mobilisation after independence (Auch 2008: 117). When considering the situation of IDPs today, one has to keep these wider implications in mind.

In the following I want to concentrate my argument on the practice of house exchange that I recorded in my interviews – an opportunity that later IDPs never had. I will show that their not having a house of their own implicates further potential for conflicts in terms of cultural ideas about family, marriage and personal identity. I argue that the lack of houses has a deep impact on the IDPs marginalised social status as well as on their concept of the self that for almost two decades generates conflicts of identification in everyday-life.

House and family as cultural value and expression of relatedness

In Azerbaijan, the category *ev* (house, home) describes various notions of relatedness. It not only constitutes the economic and social basis for founding a family (*ailə*); it also expresses metaphorically the obligation to guarantee its reproduction and continuity. This view »relies on a notion of per-

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[6] For further information on the situation of IDPs cf. USCR 2005, IDMC 2008.
[7] ›Program Great Return is ready‹. In: http://www.azerbaijanfoundation.az/eng/migdestiny/490-program-great-return-is-ready.html, accessed 10.01.2011.

sonhood that prioritises kin relations rather than one that is based on Western ideals of a bounded and independent self« (Goluboff 2008: 82). Under certain circumstances, such as displacement or other biographical ruptures, living these ideas becomes a challenging and difficult task. Conflicts may arise in the gap between ideas and reality, as becomes evident when comparing the everyday lives of Azerbaijani refugees and IDPs.

In Azerbaijani society, the classification of specific family members as *nəsil* is of central importance because it formally emphasises relationships within that group of relatives that are based on agnatic kinship ties. The concept underlines the cultural notion of patrilinear descent that plays a major normative role in everyday life. According to Ingrid Pfluger-Schindlbeck (2005: 11) the concept characterises agnatic kin, i.e. all relatives of the paternal line and descendants of a forefather remembered four or five generations back in time. This kin relation can only be passed on in the male line. This definition of *nəsil* includes three central ideas about a person's identification: (1) the high importance of ancestors and their worship, (2) the category of the father (*ata*) as the only one who can guarantee the transmission and continuity of the *nəsil* identity and (3) local conceptions of gender and reproduction.

For my interviewees the terms family, house, or marriage were often used in the same context. The comparison of refugees and IDPs points at the cultural meaning and symbolic value of the house as real and imaginative device. The loss of their houses due to displacement created for the IDPs a gap that remains empty until today – a fact that, perceived by many IDPs, threatens the continuity and ability to express one's familial and cultural identity. Such a hypothesis of the multifaceted importance of houses is further supported by the strategy of house exchange between Armenian and Azerbaijani refugees. One of the most remarkable strategies recorded in this context was the exchange not only of individual houses but of whole villages between Armenians and Azerbaijanis (Huseynova et al. 2008, see also Rumyansev and Huseynova or Hakobyan in this volume). Their documentation of the case, however could gain even more relevance when taking into account theoretical works on the relatedness between houses and their dwellers.

Theoretical foundations of the house as anthropological category

In ›About the House – Lévi-Strauss and Beyond‹ (1995) the editors Janet Carsten and Stephen Hugh-Jones emphasise the holistic dimension of houses – their architectural, social and symbolic meanings (1995: 2). The

contributions aim to investigate the interrelationship of houses, people and ideas and try to analyse the meaning of houses embedded in local contexts and expressions. It is important here to note that Carsten (1995, 2000, 2004) developed the concept of ›relatedness‹ in several publications that she contrasts to the classical, structure-focused notion of the anthropological concept of ›kinship‹, its definitions and implicit assumptions. Instead she emphasises a processual understanding of kinship and asks for local conceptions of belonging that are expressed in metaphorical ways in certain tropes. Their meanings often transcend the boundaries of former notions of kinship and open the way for wider comparison: »Conceived in its broadest sense, relatedness (or kinship) is simply about the ways in which people« create similarity or difference between themselves and others« (Carsten 2004: 82).

With this in mind one has to make clear the rather trivial fact that houses as buildings as well as places of ›simple‹ everyday activities are often denied close analysis but nevertheless convey meanings that, I would argue, allow alternative ways of analysing processes of displacement that are often characterised by ruptures of such everyday categories. The articles in the mentioned volume demonstrate the continuous interaction between houses, bodies and minds and show that houses »are the loci for dense webs of signification and affect and serve as basic cognitive models used to structure, think and experience the world« (Carsten/Hugh-Jones 1995: 3). In this symbolic and constructivist approach they emphasise two main aspects of the house: (1) the *objectification* of people, groups and relationships in the house and (2) the *personification* of the house itself (Carsten/Hugh-Jones 1995: 46). On this basis I argue that a focus on the local ideas of houses can help us to understand processes of displacement in which the house embodies socio-cultural meanings and relationships. For Azerbaijani refugees and IDPs the house is a resource after displacement that serves well in creating a feeling of integration, continuity and identification.

The local concept of *ev*

In Azerbaijan the noun *ev* primarily stands for ›house‹ or ›home‹. Metaphorically it also means ›family‹.[8] Additionally it is a strong reference to concep-

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[8] The Armenian anthropologist Levon Abrahamian shows that the same notions of family and home are central ideas for social and national identification in Armenia (2007). I will return to this point later. But further comparative studies might reveal

tions of marriage. The verb *evlənmək*[9] (to marry) derives from the noun *ev*. It means literally ›to become domestic‹ or ›create a house‹. Analogously, *evli* (›married‹) means ›with house‹ and denotes the status of a person has having their own family (*ailə*) and usually their own house. In this context it is important to note that in Azerbaijan it can be considered the norm for children to live with their parents until they marry and found their own family. So terminologically, *ev* cannot be treated separately from other aspects like family, marriage or kinship as they constitute »the social processes in which houses are involved« (Carsten 2004: 43).

For most IDPs, escape meant to leave the house as a material and physical structure. In almost twenty years of displacement it has become an idealised, nostalgic memory and a place of romanticised homeland that is constructed by the actors in sharp contrast to actual everyday life. As the IDP Eldar summarises: »We had a wonderful life there [in the Zangilan District]. We had magnificent homes, beautiful gardens and forests, good work and good pay. We lived very well and happy. With the occupation during the war we have lost everything. Twenty years, thirty years I have built my own house for that I have worked my whole life – we lost it all at once. Now we think permanently of our homeland where we were born and we want to return soon. Man cannot forget! The place where he was born is for him the most beautiful. With both feet we want to stand on our native ground where we have been living and dying for generations. But we hope! Without that hope life is not possible. And then we shall build houses again. There will be weddings, children will be born and grow up. It will be a warm life!« (Interview 30 October 2008)

In joint discussions, personal memories of the time before the flight are concentrated and expressed in the category of the house and thus make the house implicitly a ›structure for remembering‹ (Fox 1993: 22-23). In Eldar's account one gets the impression that »the remembered house is a small-scale cosmology symbolically restoring the integrity of a shattered geography« (Bahloul 1996: 28). Memories that are dressed in the past image of ›magnificent homes‹ and a ›wonderful life‹ seem necessary for actors that perceive their actual situation merely as transitional because such memories

similarities in this respect that could positively influence future conflict negotiation processes.
[9] This term is used exclusively for the husband when marrying his wife. When women marry, the expression used is *ərə getmək* (go to the husband). Thus, from a female perspective the act of marriage has a different connotation and points to the cultural norm of virilocality.

have the power to preserve personal hopes and expectations. Eldar's statement that ›without that hope life is not possible‹, can be interpreted as a practice of nostalgic remembrance generating a sense of stability within the context of inner conflicts.

In contrast to IDPs, refugees who exchanged houses with Armenians had the opportunity to preserve the practical and ideological qualities of the house and could in doing so facilitate life after displacement. They were able to create a feeling of continuity and to integrate themselves in the new environment. As it became clear in the contrasting accounts of Azer and Ali, a house allows accumulating material resources that can be reinvested in the future of the children. When living in Azerbaijan, marriage and founding a family plays a major role in the everyday-lives of young Azerbaijanis and their parents. The family is considered the ›foundation of society‹ (Demirdirek 1993: 88).

Parents are highly engaged in the marriage of their children as this act represents the continuity of the *nəsil* and is usually linked to culturally legitimated norms and rules that are objectified in relation within the house. Daughters will leave their parental home to live with her husband. This makes sense according the norm of patrilinear descent when considering their offspring will belong to the husband's *nəsil*. Further, it is considered the youngest son's obligation to take care for his parents in old age, which means that after his marriage, he is expected to live with his wife and children in his parents' house. He is then the one who inherits the house when the parents die. Elder sons usually move out of their parental home and it is not considered their individual duty to guarantee accommodation for their family, but first and foremost the joint duty of them and their parents.

At the time of my fieldwork, Azer and his wife Farida had two sons living with them, Ruslan (22) and Xatai (21). When talking about the future marriage of his sons, Azer explained: »After he marries, Xatai and his family will live here together with us. That is why we still have this old furniture. When Xatai marries we will get new furniture, carpets and so on from his wife's family. Why should we spend a lot of money on it now? When Ruslan marries, he has to move out and live with his family elsewhere. That's why I bought a flat not far away from here several years ago where they can move in« (Interview 2 August 2008).

It becomes clear that marrying includes long-term planning in advance. On a symbolic level the creation of a house and family through marriage is further expressed by the ritual gift-exchange between the families of the couple. It shows that »the link between marriage and the house is often materially expressed« (Carsten 2004: 43). But the gifts are not only material

necessities; they stand symbolically for the ritually affirmed relatedness of two families.

According to local norms, the husband's family is obliged to provide the young family with a house or a flat. Furthermore they are supposed to pay for the rings, bridal jewellery and the wedding dress for the bride. They provide her with material and symbolic wealth and thereby emphasise the relatedness of the bride to her new family. The bride's family, however, is responsible for the entire interior of the new home. This includes furniture, carpets, household appliances, technical equipment, porcelain, chandeliers etc. In my conversations, the material resources to pay for these gifts can exceed several tens of thousands of dollars for each family. Financing a marriage thus often requires the mobilisation of an extended kinship network.

The important role of the house for the lifecycle ritual of marriage is thus highly valued in practical and symbolic spheres. *Evlənmək* in this respect connotes the image of ›becoming a house/home‹, ›receiving a house‹ but also ›founding a family‹. It can neither be reduced to its emphasis of family nor of house because in its cultural meaning it encloses both aspects at the same time. With the entry into the state of being married, the young family is given a house and home for this is considered the basis for the foundation of the *ailə* and a symbol of continuity of the husband's *nəsil*. The objects exchanged by the two parties reflect gender-specific conceptions of men's and women's roles and commitments. The gifts given by the family of the wife reveal other aspects of the relationship. They emphasise the women's role in the new house and family. Only with these things is a house in its physical structure also a comfortable home. The house as the personification of the *ailə* objectifies cultural notions of human relationships.

While many refugee families exchanged their houses and were thus able to establish a sense of integrity and continuity of self and identity according to local cultural ideas, for IDPs the lack of houses and material resources have further implications. As was shown, marriage and founding a family are interrelated with the house as a material and symbolic resource that embodies actual relationships. When deprived of houses, the people concerned are often unable to live their life according cultural norms and values, as demonstrated in the case of Ali. The result may be social marginalisation and personal crises arising out of the discrepancy of ideas and practice.

IDPs and the state: securitising national identity

In the following I will discuss the relevance of the categories of IDPs and the ›house‹ on the national level. So far I have shown that cultural norms, ideas and practices can serve as a possibility or as a limitation for life after displacement. Now I will give some examples for the cultural impact on IDP-policy to describe their role in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Again, the house and its qualities to objectify and to personalise actual and ideal relationships play an important role.

The cultural norm of patrilinearity as well as the important category of the father or gender values exemplified above shape the legal status of IDPs. In my interview with a representative of the ›State Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Deals of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons‹ [sic!] it was said that the IDP-status is hereditary. An IDP-status is passed on from the parents, and their children's official place of residence is that of their parent's place of residence. This is officially considered their former place of residence in Nagorno-Karabakh or in the regions that are controlled by Armenia today: »When I lived in Shusha [a town in Nagorno-Karabakh], my children are also from Shusha, no matter where they were actually born – they are also considered IDPs. For those who are living in Baku right now, legally it is just their ›temporary residence«« (Interview 19 February 2009 with State Committee representative)

This inheritance of an IDP-status is based on cultural notions of substance and gender. It is only passed on via the father, as it is the case with the *nəsil*-identity, where the same blood is supposed to be shared only with one's father's *nəsil*. If an IDP from Karabakh marries a local woman, their children are IDPs from Karabakh: »But if a woman after displacement marries a man from Baku, their children cannot be IDPs because they are automatically considered to be from Baku. When a woman marries a man from another region, according to law she has to sign out from her former place of residence, live with her spouse and register there« (Interview 19 February 2009 with State Committee representative).

This culturally-based gender asymmetry does not remain uncontested. One Azerbaijani NGO-chairman I talked to said: »We have been advocating for a change in this situation because it is discrimination against women. The man is considered head of the household and the woman not. They refer to mentality, which no one can describe what it is and what the content of it should be« (Interview 6 December 2008).

When I asked the representative of the State Committee if the inheritance of the IDP-status does not lead to an increasing number of IDPs, the an-

swer was: »No, beside birth rates you also have to consider mortality rates – so it is kept in balance« (Interview 19 February 2009). This answer can be interpreted in different ways but it suggests that IDP-numbers de facto increase within the next generation.

The legal status of Azerbaijani refugees from Armenia was, on the other hand, repealed in 1998, since they »have largely integrated into Azerbaijan, are eligible for citizenship under the 1998 Citizenship Law, and face no threat of forced repatriation or expulsion from Azerbaijan. By the end of 2001, UNHCR estimated that most eligible Azeris [...] were believed to have naturalized or be in the process of doing so« (UNHCR 2003: 22). However, in practice the situation seems much more complicated »because the Government has not been able to provide statistics on persons who have naturalised, the U.S. Committee for Refugees counts them as persons in refugee-like circumstances« (UNHCR 2003: 22). My host family serves as a good example. Ruslan is officially a refugee – in contrast to his younger brother and sister, who were born in Baku after 1988. Children who were born after 1988 are not ascribed with refugee-status. Even if the refugee-status of his parents, Azer and Farida, ended in 1998, Ruslan maintained that status and was freed of fees at Baku State University. That the situation is not clear is exemplified in the words of the already cited state official: »Refugee-status expires when they get our citizenship. Refugees from Armenia acquired Azerbaijani citizenship in 1998 but in a political sense they still have that status. In the legal sense they do not« (Interview 19.02.2009 with State Committee representative).

If one takes the emic perspective of the people that experienced displacement, the very definition and differences according international law become of secondary importance. In everyday language, Azerbaijanis rarely differentiate between *qaçqınlar* (refugees) or *məcburi köçkünlər* (IDPs), generally calling them all *qaçqınlar*. Some of my interviewees were unsure about the differences except the fact that one group comes from Armenia and the other from Nagorno-Karabakh or the border regions. From an anthropological perspective the international differentiation between refugees and IDPs is highly questionable and the underlying assumptions have to be reflected critically. In Azerbaijan it seems that these legal categories are implemented in an arbitrary way. When ethnic Azerbaijanis migrated to their titular nation within the Soviet context one could argue that their naturalisation was merely a formal act. As refugees, they crossed a nominally existing state border that was hardly perceived as such during Soviet times but became an iron curtain after independence. From an Azerbaijani perspective the homeland of Azerbaijanis who lived in Armenia is perceived by

many as Western Azerbaijan (Interview 6 December 2008). In this sense their naturalisation can be interpreted as an act of fraternal loyalty and for many of them it might not have meant life in an unknown foreign culture but instead the end of an Azerbaijani minority in Armenia.

IDPs on the other hand still have this legal status. According to Article 14 of the ›Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on IDP and Refugee Status‹, IDP status will cease when they »return to the previous place of residence or receive other living space in the same region in established order without compensation« or »if this is impossible, on provision with appropriate living space based on special government decision« (Interview 6 December 2008).

Analogous to the unsettled Nagorno-Karabakh conflict they are thus by law defined as a group in transition that is expected to return to a region of origin that for almost twenty years has been inaccessible for any Azerbaijani citizen. Even though they are Azerbaijani citizens, their status means a curtailment of their rights to land ownership, housing and mobility and the exacerbation of social and spatial marginalization. The official discourse of repatriation and their legal discrimination makes them virtual exiles within their own nation. From a bottom-up perspective, both groups can be regarded as refugees in a broader sense, namely as »people who have undergone a violent ›rite‹ of separation and unless or until they are ›incorporated‹ as citizens into their host state (or returned to their state of origin) find themselves in ›transition‹, or in a state of ›liminality‹. This ›betwixt and between‹ (Turner 1969) status may be not only legal and psychological, but social and economic as well« (Harrell-Bond/Voutira 1992: 7).

Common ground for both contexts of displacement is the ›violent rite of separation‹ and the ›state of liminality‹. For the concerned themselves, it is not of primary importance if they crossed state borders or not. But in a political sense the conventional legal categories are more often than not involved in territorial issues. In Azerbaijan, the IDPs – but not the refugees – play an important role in this process, because their status as persons is dependent on the status of the territory under question – so it is a highly politicised issue. Both the displaced people and the territory they came from can be said to exist ›betwixt and between‹. One of my interviewees, head of an NGO and himself an IDP, remarked: »IDP status was given automatically to all displaced Azerbaijanis from the occupied regions. Unlike IDPs who applied for this status they had no choice. They cannot lose this status, even if they had ten cars and ten houses. They lose the privileges and benefits they receive from the government but not the status. It is a principle of the government to prevent the integration of IDPs. If you integrate IDPs then you do not have IDPs. If you do not have IDPs, in the

long run you do not have any claim on the land under occupation« (Interview 6 December 2008).

The European Union has sharply criticised this instrumentalisation of IDPs in territorial claims (IDMC 2008: 14). Without denying this political dimension, I argue that the cultural meaning behind these processes is not adequately taken into account. It is not enough to see such policies simply as a political strategy or as an instrument of power elites but instead to interpret them in the context of specific cultural ideas. There is no plausible reason for the widespread but arbitrary separation of power elites, governments or national leaders from the backgrounds of their cultures and societies they are actually a part of.[10]

Dimensions of spatial relatedness:
the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict as a conflict of belonging?

> »The plight of the citizens, expelled from the occupied areas, who have now become refugees and immigrants, is the number one problem for us and a personal priority for me« (Heydar Aliev).[11]

The existence of independent Azerbaijan is marked by the uncertain territorial status of Nagorno-Karabakh and the conflict with neighbouring Armenia. For Azerbaijan, its territorial integrity is of utmost importance. The regaining of Nagorno-Karabakh and estimated 14 per cent of Azerbaijan's state territory (de Waal 2004: 3) enjoys the highest political priority. This position was formulated by the former president Heydar Aliev and passed on to his son and current president. President Ilham Aliev declared: »Azerbaijani territorial integrity has never been and will not be subject to negotiation« and added that Azerbaijan will never give up its principled position on

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[10] This question resulted in lively debate in the discussion that followed the presentation of this paper. Why do we tend to implicitly differentiate between the people and society we study on the one hand and the politicians, power elites, government, state and so forth on the other?

[11] This formulation by Heydar Aliev is a slogan that is written in golden letters in the waiting room of the ›State Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Deals of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons‹. It is also placed prominently on the official website: http://www.refugees-idps-committee.gov.az/en/eservice/6.html, accessed 20.03.2012.

Nagorno-Karabakh.[12] In scholarly, official and public discourse, Nagorno-Karabakh is constructed as an inherent part of Azerbaijan's national identity. According to de Waal, the »cultural and symbolic meaning of Nagorny Karabakh for both peoples cannot be overstated. [...] Azerbaijanis talk of it as a cradle, nursery, or conservatoire, the birthplace of their musicians and poets [...]; geographically and economically, Azerbaijan is not fully viable without Nagorny Karabakh« (2004: 3).

By emphasising their historical and cultural roots in the disputed territories, both Armenian and Azerbaijani politicians and scholars are claiming the region to be part of their nation: »Armenians invoke sacred images of the primordial homeland and ancestral graves. Azerbaijanis present Karabagh as integral to their territorial integrity, and by extension, to their very identity as a nation. [...] Through public commemorations, ceremonies, school textbooks, scholarly and popular publications, biographies, museums, and monuments, these legitimating histories are converted into shared memories of a continuous national past« (Dudwick 1993: 80–81).

Consequently, media and politics in both states contribute to the continuation of the conflict, of identity politics and the image of a common national enemy in public discourse. My own experience is that these issues are constantly reproduced in schools, universities and mass media – the conflict has become part of everyday-life in Azerbaijani society. Why is such a central meaning ascribed to the relatedness of Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan? One has to consider the fact that independent Azerbaijan has never existed in its own claimed borders, let alone *without* the related conflict. It thus suggests itself that both function as pillars of an independent Azerbaijan in terms of national and cultural identification. The consolidation and stabilisation of post-Soviet Azerbaijan in regard to national history and identity as well as politically and economically has been part of a process related to the Karabakh issue. Until today, the threat presented by a common enemy occupying state territory serves as legitimacy for the government to sanction non-loyal behaviour of citizens.[13]

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[12] Ilham Aliyev: ›Azerbaijani territorial integrity has never been and will not be subject to negotiation‹. In: http://vestnikkavkaza.net/news/politics/19221.html, accessed 19.03.2012.

[13] After the Eurovision Song Contest in 2009 a »number of people in Azerbaijan who voted for a song by neighbouring Armenia in the Eurovision Song Contest have been questioned by the police. One man told the BBC he was accused of being unpatriotic and a ›potential security threat‹, after he sent a text backing Ar-

The person mostly associated with the Azerbaijani nation is Heydar Aliev, who was president from 1993 to 2003 and is frequently called Heydar Baba (Grandfather Heydar). He had considerable influence on the construction of national identity (Sidikov 2008: 52). Monuments, official institutions, schools, universities, public places as well as mass media and history books keep this image alive, creating a national myth around his person comparable to Kemal Atatürk in Turkey or Jozip Broz Tito in Ex-Yugoslavia. The celebration of his birthday on the 10 May 2010 was announced by state television as marking a »day of appreciation for the Great Father, National Saviour, and founder of the modern Azerbaijani state – Heydar Aliev.«[14]

When Heydar Aliev was appointed First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan in 1969, he brought with him a political acumen gained as chairman of the Soviet Committee for State Security (KGB). Within five years, Aliev replaced previous elites with his own associates and created a dense patronage network whose members were mostly from Aliev's own region of origin, the Nakhichevan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (Willerton 1992: 191−222). In 1982 he was appointed First Deputy Premier of the Soviet Union and left the political stage in Baku for Moscow. At the end of the 1980s, when the collapse of the Soviet Union became immanent and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict escalated, Aliev's successors were not able to deal with this situation. The Nagorno-Karabakh war in 1992–94 meant severe human and territorial losses for Azerbaijan. This was a great shock for the Azerbaijani society that forced former presidents, first Ayaz Mutallibov then Albulfaz Elchibey to leave the political stage (Swietochowski 1995: 176). In June 1993, Heydar Aliev took over power in Baku and re-established the political system with former loyaltists. Shortly after he took power, a ceasefire with Armenia was arranged in May 1994. In the same year, Aliev signed the ›contract of the century‹ that must be regarded as a ›milestone in Azerbaijan's history‹ (Cornell 2011: 219) and opened the door for investments by major oil companies to exploit Azerbaijan's vast oil and gas resources. This became the country's most important economic sector, and the Azerbaijani GDP constitutes one of the most rapidly growing GDP of all post-Soviet republics (ICG 2004: 4). Aliev became a hero in post-Soviet Azerbaijan because he stopped the war, brought an economic boom and, most importantly, he

menia's song, Jan Jan.« In: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8205907.stm, accessed 19.01.2010.
[14] In: http://www.rferl.org/content/A_Million_Flowers_For_Heydar_Aliyev/ 2037899.html, accessed 12.10.2010.

made the Nagorno-Karabakh question, the unchallenged territorial integrity and the return of half a million IDPs the most important issues to be solved by giving them political priority. When Heydar Aliev died in 2003, his son Ilham Aliev became president and took over the power, politics and promises of his father.

Even today, Heydar Baba is omnipresent in daily life. The personality cult of Heydar Aliev became an integral part of Azerbaijan's national myth – an image that is strongly mediated and sustained in media and public discourse: »The last 30-year history of Azerbaijan is connected with the name of Heydar Aliev with unbreakable ties. In this period the revival in all the spheres of socio-political, economic and cultural life of the nation is connected with his name. In the said period [...] he always worked for the progress of his native country, he was proud of its culture, past long history, he thought of the fate of the future generations, made Azerbaijan stand the hard and severe tests of the time as a state. [...] The people welcomed the return of Heydar Aliev to power with great hopes, and the day of his return entered the history of Azerbaijan as the Day of the National Salvation.«[15]

This passage can be read as a summary of the moral commitments of the Azerbaijani nation in times of constant conflict that have not only an impact on ordinary people's everyday-lives but also on political decision-making.

How does all this mirror the cases of individual IDPs? In my master's thesis (Roth 2011) I showed in detail how processes of national identification draw on values, ideas and metaphors of kinship. I discussed the creation of relatedness between people, places and ideologies by applying notions of kinship on the national level. Here, I want to pick up only a few relevant aspects to exemplify my interpretation of the relationship between IDPs, Nagorno-Karabakh, Heydar Aliev and the current conflict situation.

I have shown the impact of cultural values and ideas on the current situation of refugees and IDPs above. Local concepts of ›house‹ and ›home‹ serve as metaphors that personify and objectify social relationships. These include not only living persons but ancestors, places and ideologies. If we apply this argument on the national level, I argue that IDPs, Nagorno-Karabakh and Heydar Aliev become interwoven symbolic actors and serve as an objectification and personification of national relations. Since the independence of Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh has existed merely as a virtual image, an idea of the nation that is *de-jure* considered part of Azerbai-

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[15] ›Heydar Aliev's Heritage‹ International Online Library. In: http://library.aliyev-heritage.org/en/2169646.html, accessed 04.10.2010.

jan but have not yet become *de-facto* reality. Just as the house objectifies and personifies ideas and actual relations, the IDPs fulfil the same task as the physical and perceivable representation of Nagorno-Karabakh. Their presence in Azerbaijan's socio-political life and in the media gives the conflict a visible dimension. As they personify the disputed territories, they remind the ›national family ›of their commitments to restore national integrity and to continue the task for which the martyrs sacrificed their blood. Analogously, Nagorno-Karabakh is presented as the cradle of Azerbaijani culture and home of the Karabakh-Khans, which are said to be the genealogical ancestors of the Azerbaijani nation (Yamskov 1991: 650). It has become a symbol that represents central aspects of national identification and commitments. The liminal status and current situation of both Nagorno-Karabakh and the IDPs serves as a way of legitimising the respective official positions on both issues. As long as the territory is occupied, IDPs will have to keep their status, and as long as they keep it, Azerbaijan has an internationally recognised claim to the territories concerned. Both exemplify important notions of post-Soviet national identification processes that were defined, in particular, by Heydar Aliev. His role can be interpreted as the personification of national values and the task of highest priority – the return of Azerbaijani territorial integrity and the return displaced persons from the regions.

Focusing on cultural notions of personhood and family I have argued that it is the father who transmits the *nəsil* identity of the ancestors and thus guarantees its continuity, a process that is mirrored in the idea of the house. We see that the house and the family are metaphors that are also applied on the national level and constitute the nation as a national family. In her inspiring and insightful thesis on dimensions of identification in Baku shortly after independence, Hülya Demirdirek states that »the family is seen as a natural entity for human life and the ›foundation of society‹ (*cemiyetin temeli*)« and that »the ›family‹ is used as a metaphor for the nation and the ›family house‹ for the land« (1993: 88). Heydar ›Baba‹ Aliev's son Ilham Aliev was elected as a successor to continue his father's aims. Analogous to the domain of the family, he inherited his power and influence but also his national promises and principles – most importantly the resolution of the Karabakh-question and the return of the IDPs. Because these issues are so central to the national status quo, president Ilham Aliev's possibilities for negotiation and options for a peaceful resolution of the conflict are rather limited and make his presidency also appear *betwixt and between*. As my argument about the important meaning of cultural values and ideas for studying conflict situations shows with respect on internal dynamics, the out-

come of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the IDP-issue is not only a watershed for the power of Ilham Aliev but also for the national self-identification of independent Azerbaijan.

Summary and outlook

I have illustrated how relatedness between actors, values and ideas is created during times of conflict. The frozen status of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict for almost two decades has generated a multitude of subtle dimensions of conflict that have become in many ways part of everyday life. In contrast to the rather static outcomes of international peace-negotiation processes, the perpetual status of the conflict points to various internal dynamics that we can grasp empirically and interpreted to gain a better understanding of conflict situations in general. By focussing on cultural notions and local concepts of relatedness, I gave some examples of their strong impact on actor's everyday-lives as well as on the spheres of politics, rights, law and national identification. House and home (*ev*) play a central role for identification, family (*ailə*, *nəsil*) and continuity as they objectify and personify concrete relationships. The ideas of family and house also play a major role on the national level. Nagorno-Karabakh can be interpreted as relevant for the Azerbaijani nation and its continuity as the house is for the *nəsil*. Thus it is an obligatory task of Ilham Aliev, as father of the national family, to reintegrate people and land. He continues the policy of Heydar ›Baba,‹ even if it leaves him few options for compromise. IDPs and their status are important in this context because they are an internationally acknowledged legitimation for claiming the territories as well as a personification of the sacred land of the ancestors. I conclude that the present issues, IDPs and Nagorno-Karabakh, form the basis of the power Aliev inherited from his father. Constructive approaches to conflict resolution have thus to take into account these cultural ideas and values.

Although I am aware that my argument poses more questions than it provides answers, I nevertheless think that it is an important step towards a more engaged awareness of local conflict dynamics. My aim is to stimulate further research on concepts such as ›house‹ and ›home‹, personhood, family and nation in the Caucasus as well as to tackle concrete questions in the context of conflict and displacement. What will other accounts on house exchanges reveal? How was legal ownership of houses transferred between Armenians and Azerbaijanis? How houses were materially evaluated to become appropriate objects of exchange? What about the relationship between houses, marriage and family in Soviet times, when housing was first

and foremost regulated by the state? How have values, norms and practices that are perceived today as markers of cultural or national identity changed since Soviet times?

To deal with these questions and to get an idea of the respective practices to deal with similar issues but in a way related to different ideological, political and historic contexts affords close cooperation between local and foreign scholars. If we want to understand local processes we must not fade out other approaches and paradigms but instead deal with them as well. Local and foreign scholars are still in difficult process of learning and understanding the other's academic language and implicit ways of thought. We should therefore be optimistic in the long run that the essentialisms (cf. Voell in this volume) of our own scientific contexts can be overcome.

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Yulia Antonyan

Reminiscences of the Future
The Social Life of Monuments in Refugee-Villages

The Nagorno-Karabakh war has changed people's lives and destinies.[1] It affected their cultural models, starting from their world-view and mentality and ending with their everyday life and practices. It also brought about new cultural phenomena that became a part of people's vital space, new mentalities and new identities.

The mass displacement of people during the Nagorno-Karabakh war resulted in the establishment of new settlements where refugees from different villages came together. These villages provide a unique opportunity to trace processes of ›acculturation‹, the domestication of the landscape and the mechanics of the process of building a new ›homeland‹. The memorials that have been constructed to perpetuate memories of the war and its devastating results have come to be important tools, each in its own way, for the social and cultural restructuring and re-integration of these refugee communities.

Studies of memory and nationhood provide us with the cornerstones of how and why landscapes/spaces are memorialised. Pierre Nora argued that the three aspects of realms of memory (*lieux de mémoire*) namely material, symbolic and functional always co-exist (1999: 40). In our case, monuments though being places of memory by definition, do not only have the function of memorialising something, but they are actively involved into the various types of everyday practices (religious rituals, public activities, as

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[1] This research was completed within the framework of the project ›Historical and Cultural Study of the Khachenaget River Valley (Tigranakert of Artsakh and adjacent Territories‹ (supervisor Dr. H. Petrosyan), funded by the State Committee of Science and Technologies of the Republic of Armenia. Some of the ethnographic materials used here were gathered together with the folklorist Tamar Hayrapetyan.

landmarks etc.) and are benchmarking levels of social memory. Nora also argues that the need for memory is the need for history. In cases as I will describe here, in refugee villages, these sites do not trace the past but mark a point of departure, a point where everything started. Maurice Halbwachs highlighted the systemic character of collective memories, that is, that some memories allow the reconstruction of others (1992: 53). The places of memory are systemic indeed because they represent clusters of social realities to be memorialised in order so as to be remembered later. Remembering one thing, you remember the other; in remembering war, people also remember solidarity, unanimity, mutual support and readiness to survive at any price. They might also remember things like the treachery, cowardliness or egoism of concrete persons. That makes a memorial a quintessential embodiment of memories of communal life, even though most social memories might be of individual nature. That is what makes a community a community. It is true in cases where the refugees lived as one community in the past though in different social, economic, historical and even national contexts. It is also the case when people have only now come to form a community. In this case, the memorial gathers individual memories of each community member into one collective, accumulative, shared social memory, helping the individuals to feel like a community sharing a similar fate and similar memories. In this case, constructing a memorial turns the landscape into a ›socioscape‹ in analogy to Anthony Smith's ›ethnoscapes‹, a phenomenon that can also be found at work here (1999: 150).[2] The memorial provides not only the feeling of the ethnic or national continuity of the particular terrain but also that of the social continuity, though invented and highly symbolic, of the community.

Thus the goal of the following is to demonstrate that the memorials of the Nagorno-Karabakh war are not just memorials of the historical event

[2] ›Ethnoscape‹ as a term was suggested simultaneously by Smith and Appadurai, though with the different meanings and contexts. Appadurai's ethnoscape is »the landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest workers, and other moving groups and individuals constitute an essential feature of the world and appear to affect the politics of (and between) nations to a hitherto unprecedented degree« (2002: 50). Smith considers ›ethnoscape‹ a terrain that covers a wider extent of land, presents a tradition of continuity and is held to constitute an ethnic unity because the terrain is invested with collective significance and felt to be integral to the ethnic community (1999:150). Here I use this term in Smith's meaning.

that affected the lives and fates of the people but also a vital instrument for shaping and contextualising their new life and social reality. This is manifested in different ways. The monuments are embedded in a cluster of different political, religious, historical, social and kinship dimensions. In the following we see how this affects the social situation in the newly-established villages.

The article is based on fieldwork done in the Martakert region of the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh in 2009 and 2011 in three villages: Nor-Aygestan, Nor-Seysulan and Hovtashen, all three of them founded by refugees from the Armenian-Azerbaijani war of 1991-1994. The inhabitants of Nor-Aygestan fled from the Armenian-populated village of Chaylu/Aygestan in Azerbaijan. The population of the village of Seysulan moved from the village of Seysulan, which is currently under Karabakh jurisdiction but located in no-man's-land between the Armenian and Azerbaijani fronts and therefore unfit for settlement. The third village, Hovtashen has a mixed population consisting of refugees from different parts of Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh and few recent migrants from Armenia.

Memorials as part of the new social situation in Artsakh

Traveling through the Republic of Artsakh or Nagorno-Karabakh, one cannot help but notice that in every village and town the central and visually most prominent site is marked by a monument erected to memorialise the Nagorno-Karabakh war, the slain soldiers, the innocent victims of massacres or key events, like surrender or re-conquering of villages, cites or territories. Their erection began immediately after the war and continues to date. The process of construction of such monuments is usually concomitant to the establishment of new forms of citizenship, new systems of authority and new cultural and social frameworks in the communities. They create imagined boundaries between old and new spaces, old and new natural and cultural landscapes. Monuments evoke specific cultural and social meanings intrinsic for the particular terrain and can be conceptualised as a specific ›Nagorno-Karabakh war monument culture‹.

My observations have shown that the earliest monuments were little more than tombstones built where the victims of the war were buried. Later, they were built elsewhere or moved to sites also traditionally used as cemeteries (Marutyan 2006a), the tops of hills, crossroads or the centres of settlements. But, relocated, they acquired new functions similar to the memorials devoted to the Soviet soldiers and thus inheriting some of the sym-

bolic and ideological characteristics of the Soviet epoch (Marutyan 2006a: 172-173).[3]

It should be mentioned that the overwhelming majority of monuments or their constituents are built in the form of *khachkar* (cross-stone). *Khachkar* is a multi-functional stone stele with a cross carved on it. It is a very specific component of medieval Armenian culture and has survived to take on new roles and functions in the global Armenian community, including the Republic of Armenia, Nagorno-Karabakh and the Armenian diaspora. It has been considered an important element of Armenian identity through the centuries and has gained in meaning in the recent past.[4] The *khachkar* can be used in different contexts and situations as a religious or secular object of worship, as a memorial or as a simple identity marker (cf. Petrosyan 2008). In Armenia and Karabakh, *khachkar* is a ubiquitous form for monuments. Even in cases when a particular monument has another form, it is often accompanied with one or two *khachkar* of smaller dimension. In most towns they have become symbolic centres of public space, if they have not physically replacing old Soviet monuments, for example to the unknown soldier. These new monuments, like the old ones, play a strong organising role as the spatial and ideological centre of public life. During holidays they become a ›mythic site‹ where history returns and is revitalised. These monuments abound in symbols and images embodying ideas of ethnicity, nation, nation-state and faith, drawing on well-known symbols of Armenia and Artsakh, like Mount Ararat, traditional ornaments or symbols of Christianity or *tatik u papik* (grandmother and grandfather), an image based on the sculpture of an old couple located near the capital city of Stepanakert. But even secularised as a monument, *khachkar* never lose their religious connotations and often become places of religious worship. These religious connotations do not eliminate or negate other perceptions and attitudes. In fact, within the structure of a particular monument, the sacred *khachkar* can function as a memorial and the memorial as a *khachkar*. Some functions of these monuments are employed on an everyday basis; others are only drawn upon during holidays or days of mourning. In the following I will

[3] Removing Soviet monuments or replacing them with new monuments is a separate topic, especially considering that the villages at issue here were only founded after 1991 and do not have a physical memory of the Soviet past.
[4] For a detailed analysis of the origins, functions and semantics of *khachkar* cf. Petrosyan 2008.

discuss particular examples of such village monuments and show how they function and what particular social meanings they bear.

Three villages and three monuments

The people of all three villages central to this study still divide their life into three periods: life before the war, the war and their flight, and, thirdly, life in the new village. Everyone's personal traumatic experience combines into a huge collective memorial text, parts of which resound everywhere, in every event and conversation. Recently, another memorial text has emerged to augment the war stories. It is a settlement history of each village.

While these share this tripartite model of experience, the details vary. All three villages are new settlements, officially founded in 1994 (though populated several years later) by Armenian refugees in or near villages that were abandoned by Azerbaijanis and destroyed during the war. The people express their feelings of loss and tragedy in various ways; here I will focus only on the phenomenon of monuments devoted to the Nagorno-Karabakh war that exist in each of these villages. Each has its specific construction story and social ›biography‹.

Nor-Aygestan

The great majority (90-95%) of the population of the village of Nor-Aygestan fled from the village of Chaylu, which is currently located in Azerbaijan. Right before the war the village was renamed ›Aygestan‹, and this last name was used for the new settlement (with the addition of ›Nor‹=new). In day-to-day speech, people keep calling their new village ›Chaylu‹. Other refugees from Chalyu are scattered all around the world, but mostly in Russia.

The Armenians left old Chaylu/Aygestan on 16 June 1991, when Azerbaijani troops stormed the village. This day is thus memorialised as a mourning day for the villagers of Nor-Aygestan. The majority of the village population moved to the site of the current village in 2001, that is, ten years later after they fled from their original village, and ever more new families have moved to the village in the years that followed. The monument was built in 2008, at which time the village had reached its current population rate and was actively developing as a lived community. People in the new village maintained contact with friends and relatives from old Chaylu/Aygestan living elsewhere. They confess that it was very difficult to get accustomed to the idea that they would never return to their old village.

Fig. 1: Nor-Aygestan (photo by the author).

The new generation born in Nor-Aygestan is actually binding their parents to this land. This process of adaptation is well illustrated in the history of the cemetery of Nor-Aygestan. There was no cemetery in the village when the first settlers came. The first person to die was buried outside the village, although in a lower place than the village itself. »This is not the right place for the cemetery. Cemeteries are usually set on hills« said the head of the village. The cemetery was established much later, in 2008, when the monument was built. This is not a coincidence. These two events are vivid markers of the process of community-building and the establishment of social structures that reveal the acceptance of this new space as ›home‹. The erection of the monument was sponsored by one of the villagers from old Chaylu/Aygestan who was now living in Yerevan, which is also in itself remarkable. He invested money into the social and cultural domestication of a space in which he has never lived, but clearly cared about, as if recognising it as his own new home village.

The monument has three parts: a *khachkar* in the centre, and two stone steles with words of remembrance on both sides. From the very beginning it was supposed to have at least a double function, that of memorial and

that of a place of worship place. Old Chaylu/Aygestan did not have its own place of worship, no church or chapel; although there were a couple of shrines and church ruins in the vicinity used for worship by the locals. The monument is set on the small hill at the crossroads marking the spatial centre of the village. The monument has a fence with an open gate as well as a small metal table for lighting candles. Every day, people passing by will light a candle or cross themselves in front of the *khachkar*. They say this is simultaneously a religious and a memorial act. Sacrifices (*matagh*) have also been made at the foot of the *khachkar*. While the monument meets the needs of everyday religiosity, for more important events (baptisms, weddings etc.) people attend provisional churches in nearby Martakert or Gandzasar. The monument functions more like a shrine, which in Armenia easily replace churches for everyday religious purposes. Interestingly, a century ago the Armenian ethnographer Lisitsyan described the widespread tradition of worshipping at the shrines of so called *nahataks* or ›martyrs‹, which includes people killed in protecting the faith and soldiers killed in war (Lisitsyan 1992: 145). These contemporary monuments perpetuate the memory of the victims of the Nagorno-Karabakh war and are very reminiscent of these shrines. They seem to be embodiments of a religious collective memory (Halbwachs 1992:84).

The monument was dedicated on 1 May 2008. This day is celebrated annually but not in the Soviet sense as Labour Day, one of the most important holidays in the official Soviet list of holidays, but to commemorate the dedication of the memorial. This day was chosen for the celebration because it was used to celebrate the so called ›May Victories‹, the triple *yerraton*: ›World War II Victory Day‹, ›Day of the Re-conquering of Shusha‹, and ›Formation of the Artsakh National Army‹. The other local event memorialised at the foot of the monument is 16 June, the day of exodus from old Chaylu/Aygestan villagers.

Nor-Seysulan

The houses in Nor-Seysulan were built at the very beginning of the Nagorno-Karabakh war, when the government of Azerbaijan decided to artificially increase the Azerbaijani population in the region. But events developed differently than they might have expected and this village was settled by Armenian refugees from the old village of Seysulan. In the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh, the village of Seysulan is in the no-man's-land between the Armenian and Azerbaijani fronts and completely unfit for settlement. Like many other villages, it was destroyed during the war. When re-

population of the region began, the inhabitants of old Seysulan were offered to choose a place for their new village and they agreed on this one. They liked the landscape, they said. Until recently, the people were able to visit the cemetery in old Seysulan, but the situation worsened, skirmishes became more frequent and this became too dangerous. Nor-Seysulan is the only newly-established village in the region that celebrates the day of the reconquering the original village as a holiday despite the fact that they do not have access to it. This creates a very ambiguous situation of simultaneous senses of loss and hope of a final return to the homeland. The latter is gradually fading, not only because of the current impossibility of return but also due to processes of social, economic and cultural adaptation to the new space. But this ambiguity nevertheless entails a doubling of monuments and a differentiation of functions described for the previous case of Nor-Aygestan.

Fig. 2: Nor-Seysulan (photo by the author).

Unlike old Chaylu/Aygestan, old Seysulan abounded in local shrines and sanctuaries. Three of them were of great significance for the religious life of the village. Two were so called ›home sanctuaries‹ (relics belonging to par-

ticular families) and the third was located outside the village, a shrine composed of a sacred oak tree surrounded by several stones, reportedly parts of an old *khachkar*. We failed to get any information on what happened to other home saints, but the third one (Yarimja's, or the Galustants Saint) has had a destiny similar to that of most its worshippers.

The shrine to the saint of Yarimja, or Galustants, was rededicated in Nor-Seysulan. One of my informants, herself one of the first settlers of Nor-Seysulan had a dream in which »the saints told me to set up a shrine under the mulberry tree near our new house«. She told the villagers about her dream and the men went to the old village to get two of the old stones. One of these was a part of the Galustants shrine, the other was a part of the local house of celebration built in the Soviet period on the foundation of a destroyed church. People said that some of the ruins of the church were used to build the house of celebration. The particular stone that the men got bears the hardly discernible inscription of the word ›Artsakh‹. These two stones were put under the mulberry tree and enclosed in a small shrine-like construction. The shrine with relics from the original village is perceived as a ›continuation of the old tradition‹, a link with the past helps people to adapt in the new village. It has become a place of worship for the village. Almost monthly, somebody does a sacrifice (*matagh*) here. However, the shrine has not been given the name of a predecessor. In fact, it has no particular name, and people just call it *surb* (holy).

The second monument, a memorial devoted to the villagers killed during wars and to the Nagorno-Karabakh war in particular is located on a hill outside the village, near the main road. It consists of a *khachkar* and a tomb-stone with names of those killed inscribed on it. The monument was established on 9 May, a day that is also considered a Monument Day in addition to the already mentioned *yerraton* celebrated elsewhere in Nagorno-Karabakh. The monument was sponsored by a villager of from old Seysul-an currently living in Echmiadzin in the Republic of Armenia. He was also said to be the sponsor of the *khachkar* ornament. However, the monument looks abandoned, overgrown with grass, as not having been visited since the last official event in May (I visited it in July). The only witnesses of the past celebration were artificial flowers put in the pot at the foot of the stone. The *khachkar* evidently does not function as a sacred object, nobody lights candles here or comes for religious purposes. The head of the village explained that there are plans to reconstruct the monument, to make it look more solemn and more functional. Everything is ready, he said, the work will start soon, financed by the local Union of Veterans. The main motivation to renovate the monument for the head of the village appears to be an

unofficial competition between the heads of the villages. In these terms, the monuments might be viewed as symbol and tool of power. The monument in Nor-Seysulan looks less representative than its counterparts in the neighbouring villages of Nor-Aygestan and Hovtashen, and is perceived as a challenge to Nor-Seysulan's village head. But the planned renovation of the monument might also be considered a first sign of the complete adaptation of the villagers to their new home; that they have given up on returning to their old village.

Fig. 3: Hovtashen, with a villager visiting the monument (photo by the author)

Hovtashen

The third village, Hovtashen, has a mixed population of refugees from different parts of Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia. They have different life stories, different origins, and motivations that shaped their identities in the past and these differences sometimes hamper the shaping of a new, common identity. The head of the village is a woman, which is unusual for male-dominated Armenian society. Naira Kafyan was a teacher in the local school and decided to run for mayor because, as she said, she wanted »to

do something for the village, which has not changed positively for years«. The political situation was favourable, probably because she was originally from Nagorno-Karabakh and she was elected. She inherited a very problematic economic, social, and cultural situation. One of the first things Naira Kafyan did as mayor was to erect a monument. As she said, »on 9 May, when we were going to celebrate the holiday, we realised that we didn't have a place for celebrations except for a piece of a broken *khachkar*«. The inhabitants of the village did not have a shared history of loss or shared memories. Therefore the monument had to be more abstract, bound to a more general narrative of the Nagorno-Karabakh war, its victims and the victory. The site chosen for the new monument – a hill near the village – was carefully considered: Immediately after the war, someone brought there a piece of a *khachkar* from Gandzasar in memory of the victory. The *khachkar* had become a place of worship for the settlers. It was decided not to disturb the *khachkar* and erect the monument right next to it. The monument is a stone stele with a cross carved on it, however, not in the manner of a traditional *khachkar* but as an ordinary tomb-stone. The process of construction of the monument is remarkable because it was conceived as a community-building exercise for the villagers. Naira Kafyan held a meeting where she shared her plans and asked people to make a financial contribution. Some did, some did not. She got the rest of the money from the local Union of Veterans and contributed her own money as well. A group of villagers also contributed in kind with labour. In a group interview with people participating in this project it became clear how creative the process was, and how enthusiastic they all were about it. The opening ceremony was very solemn, with an orchestra and visits by government officials. »It was a great event for us«, said one villager, »we never had an orchestra here in the village before. People from the government, the National Assembly came to the village. But we were hurt because some people, even those who had contributed to the monument project did not come to celebrate with us. Less than 70% of the village population came.«

Notwithstanding, the monument was not a failed community-building process. On the contrary, it is a step in the formation of a community social structure, with links and hierarchies, a phase in the establishment and confirmation of power, a kind of symbol of future developments and plans. It has contributed to the external image of the village, become a ›visiting card‹ for Hovtashen, something that differentiates it from other villages of the region, something the villagers can be proud of. Built beside the *khachkar*, the monument also functions as a place of worship and religious centre for the community.

Conclusion

The three monuments that have just been discussed, similar, even standard-ised at first glance, represent three different narratives of erection, function-ing and cultural significance. In the first case, it served more to accelerate and alleviate adaptation process and became an organic and coherent part of the ideological, sacred and social adaptation and utilisation of space. The second monument has no everyday functionality. It remains a cenotaph with mostly ideological connotations, and is used exclusively during official celebrations. Religious, memorial and social functions were assumed by the shrine tied directly to the old village. In the third case, the memorial was constructed with clear community-building purposes in mind and as a sym-bol of the power of the new mayor, a woman in a male-dominated society. In all three cases, the memorial functions of the monuments were not pri-mary. Instead, they serve other vital cultural and social needs that are just emerging and will influence future social and cultural developments. This is so, in particular, because the memory of the Nagorno-Karabakh war, both collective and individual, is a common background for current realities in the region, the common ›cultural‹ language understood by all the people and a shared value on which foundation future social and cultural integrity are being built.

While the memorials represent a recollection of the past, in most of cases this is not a particular past but a generalised, accumulated and condensed past embracing identity symbols related to different periods and different dimensions of local and national history. Old and new *khachkar*, stones from the Soviet house of celebration that include the memory of an earlier church, modern tomb-stones of lost soldiers come together in an attempt to embed a collective past with little if any reference to individual experi-ences within a single monument, making »no difference«, as Halbwachs said, »between older memories and more recent ones« (1992: 52).

Representing thus a collective and generalised history that the memorials encapsulate in the everyday life of the community, they become their spa-tial, visual and semantic centres. They have become a part of the village's cultural and natural landscape. The choice of a site marks the local process of the ›territorialisation of memory‹ (Smith 1999:151) as a reverse and more domestic, more rational and more practical side of the memorialisation of territory. The localisation of a memorial is concomitant to a process of social, hierarchic organisation of communal space and is very functional. It serves to create a focal point, a benchmark, an axis mundi without which the whole process of domestication and adaptation to the new vital space

would be disoriented and chaotic. It is thus no surprise that such an important instrument of territorial organisation becomes an object of power and inter-community competition. The memorial function of the monument is cast into the background, while its social functions are highlighted.

Returning to Nora's *lieux de memoire*, places of memory are often viewed as debris of the past, as values through which the present generation feels linked to the past (1999: 26). But as Marutyan states in his overview of theories of memory, the past should not be the ›example‹ for future generations but a ›model‹ for it at best (2006b: 6). What I have shown here is that the accumulated, reified and highly symbolised past can also be a point of departure for enabling vitally important functions of society and creating mechanisms for its immediate survival and further development.

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Tea Kamushadze

Conceptualisation of the Past
The Place of the Socialist City
in Georgian National History

The past exists and acts in the present as a factor defining everyday life. The level of its influence is significantly determined by the relations of power operating in society in the here and now. Representations of the past are based on the images existing in the present, defining their form and content. The past always includes remembering and forgetting something. Two forms of the past have to be differentiated, that is, the past as history and the past as memory. Both types consist in the selective use of past events. This selection has to be seen as a form of politically motivated social action of remembering or forgetting.

In her book ›Memory‹ (2009), Anne Whitehead discusses the dialectic relationship between remembering and forgetting. She considers forgetting a part of memory and concludes that the ability to forget enables humans to virtually live longer. She argues that some forms of forgetting are necessary preconditions for the personal and societal health. Research on memory should be developed towards the investigation of what has been actually forgotten (2009: 157). In this article I will connect the perception of remembering and forgetting with social memory and history. Already Maurice Halbwachs distinguished between ›collective memory‹ and ›history‹. He drew a distinct line between the past as a product of collective memory and the past as history (1980: 106). Informed by Halbwachs, Pierre Nora introduced the concept of ›realms of memory‹ (*lieux de mémoire*) in everyday life; for him history is a reconstruction of the past, of something that no longer exists. Therefore, with its monumentality, history is against fragmented memory and seeks to replace it (Nora 1996: 3).

In the following I will present the analysis of representations of two conceptions of the ›pasts‹ in the city of Rustavi in south-eastern Georgia. These pasts coincide with two chronologically different periods. The first is the

foundation of Rustavi and the creation of a past during Soviet times, i.e. the attempts to insert a brand new city into the history of Georgia. The second past refers to the post-Soviet period and the disappearance of some narrations of the city. This is the past of living memory, which also includes the experience of the fabrication of history. Based on this example I will demonstrate what happens, when the memory of a society meets created history and how much forgetting takes place between them. We can oppose the two pasts of the city: Soviet reconstruction as history, and post-Soviet experience as memory. In the city, when it comes to remembering the past and its representation, ›forgetting‹ is taking ›the place of history‹ as a result of live memory. This is part of the process of searching for new identities. The aim of this article is to reveal the frame the ›communists‹, the state leaders, members of the ruling Communist Party, used to reconstruct the past of the city and its role in national history; and then to examine what happened with these narratives when the regime collapsed. Why did this past disappear from national history? Is it possible to conceptualise this process as a ›social skill‹ of forgetting the past, which, according to Whitehead, is a self-protecting function. I would argue that a past constructed as a historical reality by the communists is still alive in the memory of the city and that its place in Georgian history has been taken by forgetting, at least until the new ruling elite offers a new interpretation of the same past.

In the first part of the article I will review the history of the founding of Rustavi and its portrayal as the revival of a historical city, how communists along with the construction of the industrial city introduced a historical narrative that had allegedly been forgotten, abandoned and deleted from the Georgian history. The forms of representing the city by the communists will be discussed based on ›official‹ narratives (print media and film). The second part of the article will be dedicated to the fate of the same narratives in Rustavi and their relation to national history in post-Soviet Georgia. The dialectic connection of the past and the present of Rustavi with remembering and forgetting will be discussed based on the specific case of a school level contest of knowledge of Georgian history held on 20 November 2011. I participated in this contest as member of the jury and had the opportunity of clarifying the issues raised in the article by means of participant observation. In this case I will emphasise what was ›forgotten‹, lost in the scope of the contest on the history of Georgia and what area of Georgian history might be explored in finding a new identity for the city.

Fig. 1: Permanent exposition in the Rustavi City Museum showing ›heroes of labour‹ of the Rustavi Metallurgical factory: it is partly covered by a poster made by students for the school history contest. The poster represents three battles from the 17th century. On the poster is a picture of St Ketevan the Martyr, who was killed after tortures for refusing to give up Christian faith (photo by the author).

The Communist representation of Rustavi

The history of Rustavi begins with the end of World War II and was a core arena of Soviet industrialisation. It was to be an example of Georgia's radiant future. The Rustavi Valley, where the historical remains of a city were found, was chosen for building a city for the metallurgical industry in 1944, when construction of the metallurgical complex was begun. The official date of the founding of the city is 19 January 1948. It should also be mentioned that this date coincides with the religious celebration of Epiphany according to the Orthodox Calendar. This is extremely symbolic considering that in Orthodox Christianity 19 January is the celebration of the baptism of Christ in the river Jordan by John the Baptist. As for the name of the city, the remnants of the old settlement were recorded in historical sources as either Bostan-Kalaki (›city of orchards‹), Nagebi (›constructed‹) or Rustavi.[1] Certainly the most historically sounding and persuasive name had been chosen to be given to the new city. Historically, the toponym Rustavi had been used for different places in Georgia and is directly related to the great Georgian poet Shota Rustaveli (1172–1216). The communists did everything to include ›ethnic elements‹ in the construction of the industrial city, and even used Georgian history as a resource to embed the new city historically. By inserting Rustavi into the Georgian past, the communists proposed a specific interpretation of reading national history.

Several issues can be distinguished from the period of the founding the city that emphasise the national importance of the city and make it possible to perceive it in a Georgian context. These include:

1. the construction of the city on the remnants of an older settlement but at the same time in abandoned, empty space
2. the historical importance of the region
3. its association with the famous Georgian poet Shota Rustaveli
4. the revival of the tradition and the economic heritage of the Chalybes, a people, who lived along the southern Black Sea coast at the end of 2nd millennium BC. In Georgian historiography the Chalybes are identified as a Georgian-speaking group known for their special ore mining and processing skills. The Greek term for iron is associated with the Chalybes.

[1] All three are names and their origins are presented in the Rustavi City Museum together with historical sources on the historical settlement of the territory.

Voices of the founding of Rustavi can be found, for example in a special issue of magazine ›Metallurgy‹ celebrating the 20th anniversary of the city's founding. One of these is the famous Georgian writer Konstantine Gamsakhurdia (1893-1975), in which he notes: »When I was young I used to hunt jackal and hare in Rustavi. Time past and construction began. I frequently visited Rustavi during the first year, and was friendly with the founders of this city – Nestor Ghiorgadze and Niko Gomelauri. As a result of their enormous efforts, the deserted steppe was made into a city. We live in a very hard and interesting epoch. Those who do not keep pace with it will remain provincial. We Georgians were blacksmiths since ancient times and should not give up being the first; we should fight and work for our beloved nation's welfare« (1968: 1).

Fig. 2: Permanent exposition in the Rustavi City Museum showing visitors and guests of the Rustavi Metallurgical factory: it is mostly covered by a poster made by students for the school history contest displaying motives from the 16th century and of King David the Builder (1073-1125), which is considered to have been the most powerful ruler of Georgia (photo by the author).

This narrative – supported by the authority of the great writer – speaks of a place that was wild and uninhabited, and the necessary challenge of its development into a city. He also makes the link between the ancient Georgian tradition of blacksmithing and how it was revived in a certain sense with the construction of the new city. He mentions that the Georgians were great leaders in the past and accordingly should not give up this position. It is also no accident and worth mentioning that working and fighting are similarly important means to serve the nation. These tropes are cited in these words of the writer as a stimulus and a challenge to realise the miracle of the new time – transforming a desert into a city.

This 1968 issue of ›Metallurgy‹ includes a contribution by Abuladze, one of the most prominent citizens of the city. Her article is titled ›32 Years on Rustavi Land‹ (in a volume celebrating the 20th anniversary of the city's founding): »At night we heard the jackals yelping; often, when we misbehaved, our mother's would threatened us with jackals and wolves. The only sound heard in the desert during the day was the wind blowing. The terrible silence was terrifying and we never went far from home – this is how Zhouzhouna Khoshtaria, a worker in the publishing house of the metallurgical complex, remembers her own and Rustavi's past« (Abuladze 1968: 3).

Abuladze continues her narrative, with Zhouzhouna's dream, how much she wanted to live in a city full of life and how her father promised to fulfil her wish and that she still would not believe until she saw it herself and heard the noise of cars. It can be said that the city was born before her eyes. After finishing school, Zhouzhouna began to work in the printing house as a typesetter. She was the first to read the news every day. Finally, the author marks the symbolic importance of this fact: »The first inhabitant of our city is the typesetter of its history« (Abuladze 1968: 3).

The next author is T. Lekveishvili, a ›Metallurgy‹ staff member, who, under the headline ›History of Glory‹, considers the history of the city in direct relation to the past and the present of the nation. ›City full of Sun‹ is the title of his article dedicated to the 20th anniversary of the city. To better understand the city, the author invites readers to look over the city from the top of the Iaghludja mountain from which they can see not only the beautiful young city but also feel the greatness of the human effort involved in its construction and the spirit of that epoch. It is very difficult to imagine, he says, that the city ›lying like a giant‹ between the two mountains is only twenty years old: »Smokestacks reach to sky, stork-necked cranes, the tops of many-storeyed buildings painting a wonderful panorama« (Lekveishvili 1968: 2). The author uses multiple metaphors to describe Rustavi at night, too. She compares the city to the stars, where she distinguishes five brightly

sparkling stars, an allusion to the five socialist heroes living in Rustavi at that time.

Lekveishvili continuous the imaginary panorama of Rustavi, remembering with regret the words of Vakhushti Batonishvli,[2] who tells the story of the destruction of Bostan-Kalaki by Berka Khan, a captain of the Mongolian ›Golden Horde‹, in the 13th century.

Fig. 3: Permanent exposition in the Rustavi City Museum showing the construction of the Rustavi Metallurgical factory: it is mostly covered by a poster made by students for the school history contest. The posters represent the life of Ilia Chavchavadze (1837-1907), considered as father of the Georgian nation (photo by the author).

She continues with the history of Rustavi in the ›October Century‹ (that is, the 20th century as the century of the October Revolution) when the city is reborn. Less than a decade was enough to build a city on remnants so glo-

[2] Vakhushti Batonishvili (Bagrationi) is an 18th century Georgian historian and geographer and author of ›Description of the Kingdom of Georgia‹ (completed in 1745) in which he describes the destruction of the city by the Mongols.

rious and magnificent: »The labour front looks like a battlefront; heroes are here, too!« She draws a parallel with the construction of Svetitskhoveli[3] and the Panama Canal, followed by the large scale of industrial production in the city. »The twenty year old city produced enough metal to lay a carpet around the world« (Lekveishvili 1968: 2).

In conclusion, the author notes, twenty years are a very short time, but enough to achieve so much in this city. Having said that, she makes Vakhushti Batonishvili look out over the city from atop the Iaghludja Mountain and write about how it was wiped out by Berka Khan and abandoned for such a long time. It has been reconstructed by ›hard-working, intelligent and strong people‹ and now it tempers steel, knits fabric, and produces construction materials.

A very interesting example of the construction of the city's historical past is presented in the story ›Black Monday‹, written by the archaeologist George Lomtatidze, describing the last day of the old city of Rustavi: »When they left the house they heard a dog whining in the front yard; one of them pulled a sword and beheaded it […]. By noon the Mongols, full of blood and fire, gathered and went on their way to the west. They did not mind declining to plunder taken here since bigger and wealthier cities awaited them on their way; and their merciless and greedy minds were already ahead of them. Meanwhile Rustavi was burning to ashes and no one was left alive to put out the fire or save something« (1975: 155). It should be mentioned that the author headed archaeological excavations in the city and was one of the founders of the Rustavi State Museum. He tried to describe the most tragic day in the history of the city on the bases of archaeological evidence. By mentioning invented names and brutal scenes characteristic for this epoch, the author aimed to make the last day of the city unforgettable.

For Silovan Akhvlediani, as for many Georgian poets, Shota Rustaveli was an ideal, and Akhvlediani was sure about Rustaveli's origins: in Rustavi. Relating Rustaveli with the city of Rustavi was very tempting for the communists since he was a great source of inspiration to proletarian poets. The great majority of poems and verses written about the city reiterate Rustaveli's origins as being from Rustavi and thus solidified it. The collection titled ›To the Joy of Shota's Land‹ (Mumladze 1966) and I am from Rustavi (Jakhua 1998) are two prime examples. In ›A Dream about a Meet-

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[3] Svetitskhoveli is a Georgian Cathedral from the 11th century in Mtskheta, the first capital of Kartli. The monument is listed as a UNESCO world heritage site.

ing‹ with Rustaveli from the latter work Akhvlediani describes his dream in which Shota Rustaveli himself visits him. Rustaveli is astonished at what he sees in his native city and asks the poet to describe this new time.

If we consider the importance of Shota Rustaveli for Georgian national identity, we can clearly see the weight of the argument to rebuild the ›City of Rustaveli‹ and giving it a place in the history of Georgia. Interpretations of this fact provide a new version of the history of Georgia. If Rustaveli's epoch is considered to be a golden age in Georgia, the fall of his native city can be interpreted as the greatest tragedy in the nation‘s history. The triumphal reconstruction of Rustavi under Soviet authority was thus of great importance to the nation.

One of the best examples of the idealised representation of Rustavi is the film ›They Descended from the Mountain‹ (1954). The film is a retelling of Akaki Beliashvili's ›Vepkhia Khibliauri‹ (1960). The main character of the film is Vepkhia Khibliauri, who lives in mountain village in Khevsureti. After Vepkhia finishes secondary school he decides to study in the city. He had heard about the construction of the metallurgical complex and wanted to work there. Before leaving the village, his fiancée's grandfather tells him that their ancestors had once known the secret of tempering steel but that they had lost this knowledge in time. Now they wanted to use the opportunity and regain this skill. Vepkhia arrives in Tbilisi and registers at a technical school. Vepkhia and his friends are then taken to visit Rustavi, where they discover an empty, deserted valley. The students are surprised and ask where the city and the factory are. Selected young students are then sent to Siberia to upgrade their qualifications in metallurgical plants there. After a while they returned to Georgia and find a newly built city as well as a factory. The film clearly shows tropes reflected in Georgian history, among others the ancient, Georgian-speaking tribes of Khalibian. Emphasis is put on the recovery of lost traditions with the help of the Russian people.

The Post-communist representation of Rustavi

As regards post-Soviet Georgia, it is natural that the change in regime was followed by attempts to reconsider the past. But while the Soviet Union ceased to exist, its memory continued, in the form of human experience and the physical landscape. In the following discussion of post-Soviet Rustavi and its place in Georgian history, I would like to consider a school history contest. The contest titled ›Nation and History‹ was held in Rustavi on 20 November 2011. The discussion will reveal the role of history and memory, as well as forgetting, in post-Soviet Rustavi. I would like to em-

phasise the fate of the narratives created by the communists about the city, in what form and where were they were to be found during the contest. Along with the content and form of the contest, I would like to underline the space where this event was held. The contest was held in ›Rustavi City Museum‹, the place where memory and history meet, where two stories of the city are told. The first the story of the historical city destroyed by an invading army and, the second the triumphal restoration of the city by the communists.

The contest was initiated by the directors of two public schools in Rustavi. Their idea was implemented with the assistance of the ›Rustavi Education Resource Centre‹. A specially created board divided the history of Georgia into different themes and distributed them among the schools. The students together with their teachers had to prepare the presentations, the maps, panels and fictional stories on each of four related themes.

In the contest the history of Georgia was defined as beginning with the unification of the Kingdom of Kartli in the 3rd century and ending with loss of independence in 1921. The Soviet period was totally ignored, including the ›rebirth‹ of Rustavi as an industrial city. Being interested in this issue, I enquired of one of the organisers of the event about the reasons behind this decision. They answered that they had decided not to include the Soviet period because too many issues could have been debated. Does this mean that there is nothing unclear about Georgian history before the 20th century, while the history of Soviet period is an issue of dispute? Is it because the history of the Soviet period reaches into present day lives is still alive in our memory? Many questions and answers came to mind about this rejection of more recent history – the issues of political sensitivity that should necessarily be considered when organising such contests notwithstanding. I was also surprised that no one else expressed any interest in the missing Soviet period (including the specialist of this period, an associate professor of the Tbilisi State University who was invited to participate as a member of the jury).

The themes that were to be presented at the contest covered the role of religion in Georgian history, Georgian unification and narratives of battles and heroes. Social and economic history was ignored, as were cultural issues. These accents made it clear why the Soviet period was rejected: religion could not have been a factor in an atheist system; the unification of the nation and its fight for were of little importance in that period;

Fig. 4: This photo was taken on the award ceremony of the school history contest (11 December 2011). The boy is wearing the costume of Erekle II (1744-1798), the last king of Kartli-Kakheti (photo by the author).

and we know that the ›battlefield‹ of the Soviet period was the factory and the heroes were all workers. It was just impossible to integrate the themes of the contest and their pathos with a historical perception of the city's and the nation's earliest past that can simply explain its ›forgetting‹.

As mentioned above, the contest was held in the city museum, the construction of which coincided with the construction of the city, though the official date of its founding is 1951, when intensive construction and archaeological works were initiated in Rustavi. Today the museum consists of two floors on which two different pasts, two stories of the city are told. The artefacts discovered during archaeological and construction works are presented on the first floor. The exhibits are dated from the 19th century BC through the 18th century AD. On the second floor the communists' triumphal construction project and the heroes of the metallurgical complex are presented. From a visual point of view, nothing has been changed in the museum since Soviet times. The exhibition looks like must have looked when the museum first opened. The school history contest was held on the second floor of the museum.

The fact that posters reflecting antique and medieval centuries were fixed to elements of the permanent exhibit depicting the socialist past of the city verged on the bizarre: images of historical heroes covered the pictures of socialist heroes, sometimes forming an odd unity. This presentation of the students posters expressed ideally the attitude towards the two pasts of the city, the recent past being covered by the earlier past – socialist heroes of labour, some of which still living, were covered by the pictures of Georgian historical heroes fallen in battle.

The socialist period has not yet taken its place in history since it still belongs to the realm of memory. When history is used in creating identity it is usually sought in the earlier past. The entire history of Rustavi – ancient and modern – and have disappeared together with the history of socialist period, as witnessed in the themes and content of the presentations, maps, posters and stories developed for the contest. None of the presentations or posters were dedicated to antique or medieval Rustavi. The same was true for Shota Rustaveli. If we continue to write the communists narratives representing the city, these will continue to be difficult to find in post-Soviet Rustavi, even if these narratives have a national character and are considered in the historical context of the nation. If the communists offered a new reading of the history of Georgia based on the example of Rustavi, then today it is difficult to find clear imprints of Rustavi even at a history contest. There appears to be no interest in the date and the circumstances under which the city was founded, nor for the city's namesake. Interest in

the history of the recovery of the Georgian metallurgical tradition disappeared together with the metallurgical complex.

The only trace of the socialist heritage to be found in the history contest was in the narratives written by the contestants. A total of 25 stories of various genres were written, among them:

1. ›Boy Parnavaz‹, a two page novella about a schoolboy, who shared his name with the first King of Kartli who unified the country in the 3rd century BC. This fact became a kind of a challenge and premonition for the boy. This name put the weight of history on the shoulders of the boy and the expectations put on him were extraordinary. He became ill and had nightmares reminding him of his destiny. It is interesting that in this case the story was situated in modern everyday life (that is, the post-Soviet period), but referred to the hero-king of the past. I would argue that this story was a response to the need to look for a new identity in a new reality.

2. ›Hands‹ tells a story of an old communist whose hands are burning because of the crimes that he committed during the Soviet period, namely, desecrating the grave of the great King David the Builder (1073-1125). This work might be considered a primary reflection of the Soviet past and its reflection in the post-Soviet period. It is oriented on the present. The recent past appears as a punishment for forgetting the earlier past, which is followed by deep regret. This story was an exception in the scope of the contest.

3. One essay was dedicated to Vakhtang Gzirishvili, a hero of the Russian-Georgian war of 2008 from Rustavi. One street in Rustavi was named after him. It was a love story set on the seaside and was interrupted by the war in 2008. The author explored the human features of a contemporary individual who died a heroic death for the nation. This essay was excluded from the contest because it did not address any of the stipulated themes.

The awards ceremony was held in the Rustavi Theatre on 11 December 2011. One part of the performance consisted of the calling out of the names of the heroes of Georgian history. Accompanied by patriotic music, participants dressed in the costumes of the kings and heroes took their

place on the stage. The scene was typical of a socialist city's search for an identity in the ancient Georgian past.

Conclusion

The communists took care to construct a past for the city immediately after its, giving it a historical face. Following Maurice Halbwachs and Pierre Nora this was an attempt to occupying the ›territory‹ in our memories. Urban narratives of Rustavi were ›written‹, claiming their place in national history. Such narratives gave new life to the historical settlement of Rustavi, which was destroyed in different invasions. The great Georgian poet Shota Rustaveli was connected with the past of the city. Another aspect of these narratives was the revival of forgotten traditions, like smelting iron, and in this process the role of the communists was naturally magnified. With the collapse of the Soviet regime they disappeared from the historical discourse, remaining only in memory and the archives. The exclusion of these narratives from the history of Georgia presented at the school history contest may indicate that the history of these narratives is still alive in society's memory. There have not yet been replaced by an ›official‹ history. As such, this is an example where forgetting can be interpreted as a source of self-defence for society until a new identity can be found. This conflict is best illustrated in the presentation of the contest materials on the second floor of the museum, covering the exhibition of the recent past, of Soviet life. The Soviet period is not yet history since it is still embedded in in their memory of the people. And it is being conveniently forgotten, although not completely, as witnessed in the essays, which inadvertently addressed Soviet and post-Soviet realities. But as a whole, the contest on Georgian history held in Rustavi showed that the revision of the Soviet past is not today on the agenda; it is still living memory, controversial, ambiguous and includes personal experience. Accordingly, historical space is filled with older history, which is easier to apply to the expression of present-day ideology and aspirations.

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Melanie Krebs

Negotiating Cosmopolitanism in Baku

On the last Sunday of November 2011 I met with three Azerbaijani[1] medical students learning German so that they could work in a German hospital for a few years in order to continue their studies. Together we went to the old German church[2] where the annual Christmas fair had just taken place. The yard and the parish hall were overcrowded with members of the German community, other foreigners and local Christians (mainly Russians) as well as German language students looking for opportunities to practice their language skills and curious neighbours who had brought their children to this uncommon event.

After chatting with several other friends and a look to the prices for a ›typical German‹ meal of sausages and a pretzel or some cookies, we decided to find a calmer place to sit down. We ended up in a new concrete and glass shopping mall with a cinema screening the latest Hollywood movies, with stores sell brand name fashion from all over the world and a food court where we could choose between burgers, Turkish, Mexican and Chinese fast-food, French pastries, Italian coffee, Azerbaijani tea or American ice cream, when suddenly one of the students asked me: »All these foreign people in Germany – are you not afraid of them? Do you think it is good for a country to have that many foreigners?« A bit concerned about this

[1] Arif Yunusov found out that Azerbaijanis apply three different terms of self-identification. When he asked a sample of 463 people how they would call themselves, 215 (46%) call themselves ›Azerbaijani‹, while 119 (25.7%) preferred ›Azeri Turks‹, 10.4% ›Azeri‹ and 11.2% ›Turk‹ (Yunusov 2009: 249-250, 264). In this paper I use the term ›Azerbaijani‹ unless the respondent explicitly used another term or when I want to indicate explicitly the differences in the ascriptive use of the terms.

[2] The neogothic German Protestant church in Baku was built together with the parish hall (Kapellhaus) in 1908 and is one of the few religious buildings in Baku that survived the Soviet anti-religious campaign in 1939.

question (after all, I was a foreigner in their country and they were just about to join the ranks of the just-mentioned foreigners in Germany) I asked back, why they think that too many foreign people could be dangerous for a country. After all, Baku also seemed to have a long history of different ethnic and religious communities living together peacefully. One of the students looked at me suspiciously and asked: »You are talking about Baku cosmopolitanism, aren't you?«

It was not the first time that I had heard such a remark in reference to discussions about foreigners, multiculturalism and/or the history of Baku. »Foreigners always talk about cosmopolitan Baku«, said a young woman in my neighbourhood with a sigh, when I told her I was interested in the fate of the old Jewish and Armenian quarters of Baku. For me a surprising comment because I did not draw any connection between the idea of cosmopolitanism and this now rapidly changing or already changed city space. For me it appeared until that point that Bakuvians liked to talk about cosmopolitanism, whether in discussions about foreign communities, former ethnic or religious quarters or in nostalgic narratives, whether because it was something ›foreigners always talk about‹ or in fact a lost part of everyday culture – cosmopolitanism appeared to play an important role in the way the city and its changes were perceived and discussed.

Cosmopolitan ideas

This paper explores how cosmopolitanism and ›cosmopolitan memories‹ are negotiated between different social groups in Baku today – between Russian and Azerbaijani speakers, old and new inhabitants, nouveau-riche and newly marginalised people and sometimes between generations. I argue that the attitude towards ›cosmopolitanism‹ or ›cosmopolitan Baku‹ appears in this context as a code to place the speaker in a certain social and cultural frame and is used to describe their feelings towards the historical as well as contemporary changes in a city that only became the capital of an independent nation-state twenty years ago. It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the complex problem of the different concepts of *kosmopolitanizm* and *internationalizm* in Soviet history. *Kosmopolitanizm* was used under Stalin as an accusation for people (especially Jewish intellectuals) whose patriotism and loyalty to the Soviet Union was (or appeared to be) questionable or who had strong ties to other parts of the world and were therefore considered rootless (*bezrodnyy kosmopolit*). While the accusation of being a *kosmopolit* could quickly lead to condemnation as an ›enemy of the people‹, *internation-*

alizm was part of the highly appreciated goal of ›friendship among the nations‹ (Humphrey 2004, Grant 2010: 131-133).

In some ways the use of ›cosmopolitanism‹ in Baku can be seen in the same context as Richardson described it for Ukrainian Odessa, another multicultural and multireligious port in the southern Soviet Union, namely as a ›trope of tolerance‹ and an urban ›myth‹ of (Richardson 2006: 224). Both cities can look back at a history in which – at least in memory today – the local identity of being ›Bakuvian‹ or ›Odessan‹ was more important than religion, nationality or language. Even if it has often been challenged through pogroms and emigration, the ›Odessan myth‹ is still nourished today in the city's mixed population (Richardson 2006, Sapritsky 2012, Humphrey 2012), while the ›Baku myth‹ was violently interrupted with the pogroms against the Armenian minority in 1990 and is today merely part of collective memory.

Today the question of ›cosmopolitanism‹ in Baku is also an important part of discourse on who has a right to live in the city and be considered an ›urban person‹ eligible to shape the city in the ›right‹ way. In this way various concepts of modernity as well as national vs. international/global culture are contested. I thus use cosmopolitanism (or when it comes to memories of Soviet times, in its Russian version *kosmopolitanizm*) in the emic sense used by my interviewees. Even if elderly people in particular use the Soviet term *internationalizm* as well, they tend to use the two terms synonymously. *Internationalizm* in general seems to be more connected with Soviet official policy and is thus usually used less than *kosmopolitanizm*, which mainly describes a certain lifestyle and everyday experience. In contrast to *kosmopolitanizm*, *internationalizm* is never used when it comes to questions on Baku's cosmopolitan (or non-cosmopolitan) present and future. ›Tolerance‹ is also hardly ever used by my interviewees when they spoke about Soviet times. Asked whether she would describe her ›old Baku‹ as tolerant, one Azeri woman said »Well … I think it was. But we didn't think about it as tolerance. We just lived together.« Baku-Armenians were, in general, even more hesitant with the term ›tolerant‹: They stressed the peaceful living together, but when asked about tolerance, they usually told a story of small, everyday discrimination instead. ›Tolerance‹ and ›peaceful living together‹ are obviously not the same.

In the last decades, Western research on cosmopolitanism has also changed, and with it the outlook on the interconnection between cosmopolitanism and national ties: From Kant's ideal of a personal rootlessness, of a state of mind where origins became unimportant for the individual, it changed to an idea in which it is possible to be rooted in a certain cultural –

even a national – background but also be open to the world and show mutual respect between people from different origins (Robbins 1998, Appiah 1998). In this definition, cosmopolitanism is largely a personal attitude that can – but does not have to – be shared within a wider group. According to Hannerz, cosmopolitanism »is first of all an orientation, a willingness to engage with the Other. It is an intellectual and aesthetic stance of openness toward divergent cultural experiences. A search for contrast rather than uniformity« (1990: 239). The question how residents of Baku situate themselves and their city in the conflict zone between openness towards divergent cultural experiences and national awareness will be explored in the following.

The idea of cosmopolitan cities where people with different cultural backgrounds live together and form an environment where everybody can enjoy different cultural expressions, from exotic food to festivals, plays an important part in branding cities today. Cosmopolitan city branding and discussions about the urban changes related to it do not only take place within the scientific community but in the wider public as well (Binnie 2006: 2). The examples from Western Europe and Australia collected by Binnie and others show cosmopolitan urbanism as often connected with the emergence of a new urban middle class with a (self-proclaimed) cosmopolitan lifestyle and growing interest in urban quarters that were until recently considered dangerous and dirty. Building and branding cities as cosmopolitan is therefore often associated with increasing gentrification (Binnie et al. 2006, Bodaar 2006).

The first ›cosmopolitan‹ period

The importance of the ›cosmopolitan question‹ for Baku seems astonishing because at first glance, today's Baku does not appear to be a cosmopolitan city. It does not have those features often linked with ›cosmopolitan cities‹ and promoted as ›cosmopolitan lifestyle‹ in the tourism industry, such quarters dominated by ethnic minorities who live and perform their own distinct cultures or different ethnic and religious festivals performed in the public sphere, attracting visitors from other cultures. In fact – if one ignores for the moment the businessmen and oil engineers from all over the world sent by their employers to work and live in Baku temporarily – then there are not many visible ethnic minorities in Baku at all. But on the other hand, Baku can draw on at least 150 years of history of different religious and ethnic groups living together. When Russia seized the Southern Caucasus and destroyed the local Khanates in the early 19th century, Baku was

nothing more than a small port on the Caspian Sea with a population that was not diverse at all but dominated by Shia Muslims speaking a Turkish language. The important transformation occurred after 1870 when Baku's expanding oilfields promised quick money for entrepreneurs and work for the impoverished rural population. In only a few decades, Baku grew into a diverse city. In the ›Imperial Census‹ of 1897, Baku has 182,897 inhabitants. Azeri Turks formed the largest ethnic group with 63,415 members, followed by Russians (45,510) and Armenians (22,233) (Altstadt 1992: 30).

There were also other ethnic communities, which were not significant in absolute numbers but had money earned in the oil business. Their cultural and economic influence shaped large parts of the growing city according to their taste. The facades of the late 19th century Art Nouveau buildings, which are an important part of Baku's self-representation as a modern European city, attest to this.

There were a significant number of local Muslims in this group of new millionaires. The most famous today is perhaps Zeynalabdin Taghiyev (1823-1924), but many others also played an important role in the cultural and social development of Baku and formed a special group within this rapidly changing city. If we take Hannerz' most general definition of cosmopolitanism, then during this era of the first oil boom, we would tend to find this cosmopolitan mind-set among the so-called ›locals‹, the Muslim oil millionaires, rather than among the Western or Russian entrepreneurs or representatives of the big companies, who brought with them their Western culture and had little interest to ›engage with the Other‹. In fact, the activities of Muslim oil millionaires showed that their interest in Western culture was due not only to their interest in new possibilities but also from a strong national awareness: The adaptation of some Western achievements, such as higher education for women, media in the form of daily newspapers and printed books or theatre, was adopted in the name of a developing a national consciousness, all the way to establishing Azeri as a language of literature and a form of a distinct national identity. For the oil millionaires, cosmopolitanism was not a way of thinking ›beyond the nation‹ but ›for the sake of nation‹. Engaging with the ›Other‹ was mostly done with the aim of strengthening one's own position against these others. In this way they became ›model-citizens‹ for the contemporary Azerbaijani government: Western-oriented, but with a strong national conscience; Muslim, but open to new and modern influences; rich, but engaged in the community; and victims of the Russian Revolution and the Soviet Union. No wonder that they appear in magazines aiming to present Baku to the outside world as often – or so it appears – as the contemporary elite.

The first ›cosmopolitan period‹ in Baku ended with the outbreak of World War I. The pre-revolutionary population structure with three main groups – Azerbaijanis, Russians and Armenians (in this order) − stayed the same during Soviet times.[3] The Western Europeans working in the oil business who emigrated in the course of World War I and the Russian Revolution were replaced by experts from other parts of the Soviet Union.

Cosmopolitan nostalgia

The first people I heard talking about cosmopolitan Baku were the first ones I made contact with when I started my research in Baku in the summer of 2010: colleagues and friends of colleagues who had done research in Baku in the past. This was an academic, Russian-speaking community. For most members of this group, the idea of cosmopolitan Baku is strongly connected with Soviet times and especially with the 1960s and 1970s. In these years, after Stalin's death in 1953 and the beginning of the ›Khrushchev's Thaw‹ in 1956, people gained a bit more freedom in their everyday lives, the economic situation was stabilised and Baku's cultural life became more vibrant. Not only in the perception of the Bakuvians, but for most people of the Soviet Union, the image of Baku in these days changed from an industrial, dirty and maybe even dangerous town to ›the southern city‹, a sunny city by the seaside with a famous promenade where people could enjoy a stroll and a drink and some live music in one of the outdoor cafes in the daytime as well as on warm summer nights (Darieva 2011: 167-168). These times are also often connected with the Baku jazz scene, which attracted jazz enthusiasts not only from other parts of the Soviet Union but from outside the communist world. Musicians came from abroad to perform in Baku and their concerts added to the feeling of an open city with an international cultural life (Rumyansev/Huseynova 2011: 233-235). Not only inhabitants of Baku but also visitors from other parts of the Soviet

[3] According to the 1959 census, the total population of Baku was 897,000, with 38% Azeris, 34% Russians and 17% Armenians. By 1979, the population had grown to 1.5 million, with 56% Azeris, 22% Russians and 14% Armenians (Yunusov 2000: 65). The decreasing percentage of Russians and Armenians does not necessarily mean that members of these groups left Baku but that a larger number of Azeris migrated to Baku and that the birth rate among them was much higher than in other groups. In the mid-1980s there were still 200,000 Armenians (or 10% of the population) living in Baku (de Waal 2003: 87).

Union got this impression and passed it to their children, so that every time I spoke about my research to Baku colleagues who had experienced life in the former Soviet Union (or who had parents of this generation) told me that this was exactly how they or their parents remember Baku in the 1960s and 1970s.

But while jazz was more a holiday and upper-class form of entertainment enjoyed mostly by students and academics on special occasions, there was also a more everyday kind of *kosmopolitanizm* that had its place in the courtyards between the typical Soviet apartment blocks, where people from all nationalities lived together. An elderly neighbour of mine shared a typical reminiscence of this time: »We had neighbours from the Ukraine, from Russia, even from Kyrgyzstan. There were Armenians, Jews and Russians in our courtyard. We all lived together. The children went to school together, they played together. […] When I prepared something special for a holiday, I sent my daughter with a tray over to our neighbours and they sent the tray back later with something they had prepared for one of their holidays« (retired Russian teacher, Azerbaijani, age 67).

Because of the Soviet policy of restricting internal migration (*propiska*), it was more difficult for people from rural Azerbaijan to settle in Baku than for specialists from Russia, the Ukraine and other parts of the Soviet Union who were needed on the city's oilfields. This was an urban, well-educated and Russian-speaking middle class that shaped the city and its self-perception. Baku's population was thus always different from that in other parts of Azerbaijan – a fact that also contributed to a feeling of being a ›Bakintsy‹ – a citizen of Baku – that many Bakintsy[4] considered more important than national or religious belonging and set them apart from others with whom they shared the same nationality – at least according to their Soviet passports. This led to conflicts between Azeris from Baku and Azeris from other parts of Azerbaijan (Sayfutinova 2009: 36-41), but also between Baku-Armenians and Armenians from Armenia. The feeling of belonging to a specific urban class apart from their nation was shared by members of all ethnic groups alike, whether they were Azeris, Russians, Armenians, Jews or members of other nations. Many Armenians who had belonged to this group and had lived in Baku for generations but were forced to flee due to the pogroms in 1990 (or were able to stay because

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[4] I use the emic term ›Bakintsy' here to distinguish between this special group that calls itself Bakintsy independent of where they live today and Bakuvians, that is, people who live in Baku but do not identify with the city in this way.

they were married to Azeris) still call themselves Bakintsy. Even if all of them can tell stories about being discriminated when applying for university or for a certain job because they were not Azeri, they in general describe their life before 1988 also as *kosmopolitan* – even if it sometimes sounds a bit bitter. A typical statement made when talking about their memories of the ›good old times‹ was: »That was our *kosmopolitanizm* … well … at least we thought so!« (Armenian woman, living in Baku, age 68). Others now living in Armenia complain that they still feel discriminated against by other Armenians for being ›someone special‹. An indication of how important the urban ›cultivated‹, mainly russified background in Baku was, and how it also divides Armenians from Baku and from the countryside, can be found in the words of a Baku Armenian now living in Yerevan: »We were always a bit different from other Baku Armenian families. You see, my father was from Karabakh. He was interested in Armenian history, culture, [...] for example, he gave us children Armenian names. Other Armenians in Baku had Russian names. Or European ones. My mother's family, who were real Bakintsy, couldn't understand this. For them, being Armenian was not important« (Armenian man, living in Yerevan, age 36).

I heard the phrase ›it was not important‹ quite often in reference to the many nationalities living in Soviet Baku and how they got along with one another. It was ›not important‹ whether someone was Azeri, Armenian, Russian or Jewish. But being ›not important‹ obviously did not mean ›forgotten‹. The frequent affirmations of how much everyone was alike do not alter the fact that everybody knew the nationality of their neighbours quite well. In contradiction to the general idea of cosmopolitanism, it seems that not the fact that different nations and religions lived peacefully together was important but the fact that there was a special time when everybody was alike, distinguished merely by small traditional differences, like certain foods, songs or holidays. Grant describes the success and failures of the Soviet ›internationalism‹ project for Baku based on the memories of Bakintsy, their stereotypes and jokes on different nations as well as on interethnic marriages, from which Azerbaijan was among the Soviet republics with the lowest number (Grant 2010: 127) – something that is vehemently denied by everybody I spoke to about it, no matter if this person was part of an interethnic family or strongly against interethnic marriages.

Most people who enjoyed the Baku cosmopolitanism of those days only enjoyed limited spatial mobility. Only a few had the opportunity to study in the cultural centres of the Soviet Union, like Leningrad, Moscow or Kiev. Some might have travelled as *komsomol* to other Soviet Republics or obtained some experience of ›being abroad‹ while serving in the army in other

parts of the Soviet Union or East Germany, but those parts of the world they felt connected with through jazz or wearing Western-style clothes or haircuts were generally out of reach for them. The today often used connection of cosmopolitanism with transnationalism and a lifestyle of more or less voluntary mobility therefore cannot be applied to this group.

The memories on cosmopolitanism told by them today serve often not only to explain how Baku has changed since these days and to recall ›the good old days‹ of cosmopolitan Baku, but also to make a distinction between real Bakintsy and the Azerbaijani refugees from Nagorno-Karabakh and other rural migrants who came to Baku in large numbers after restrictions on internal migration were lifted. The departure of some ethnic groups, the decline of Russian as a common language, the fact that the ›Baku Jazz Festival‹ is getting worse every year and the increasing prices for cultural events like theatre and opera are, in the eyes of this group, evidence of an increasing ›provincialisation‹ or even ›islamisation‹ in Baku. Contemporary politics and most kinds of Azerbaijani nationalism were also seen as signs of a backwardness that isolated Azerbaijan (and especially Baku) from the rest of the world. The fact that Baku was the ›Capital of Muslim Culture‹ in 2009 is interpreted not as another international event and part of representing Baku to a wider world but as a step backwards to precosmopolitan times (Ryumansev/Huseynova 2011). For them, ›being cosmopolitan‹ meant being oriented to European – and to a lesser extend – North American culture. The centuries-old contacts to countries like Iran and Turkey seemed not to matter anymore – or only as negative examples of what »we had left behind before independence and the nationalists came« (Azerbaijani woman, Russian-speaking, age 41).

Nostalgia plays a big role in this evocation of Baku's cosmopolitan past, a nostalgia that is mainly ›restorative‹ in shape, as Svetlana Boym describes it (2001: 41). In general, my interviewees did not see themselves as nostalgic but as the keepers of Baku »as it was and how it should be,« as one of my interviewees, a woman in her late thirties put it. This example shows that even people born in the 1970s (and even later) can be part of this kind of collective memory shaped by oral traditions. To question these memories means to question the memories not only of an individual but of a whole social group. Critical questions are often answered in aggravated terms: »Everybody knows that it was like that!« ›Everybody‹ is at this moment all keepers of the ›right‹ Baku. While most of this nostalgia is expressed in private conversation, there are also certain – mostly temporary – places where people gather and celebrate their memories of the Soviet, Russian-speaking Baku. One example for such a temporary space is the ›Russian

Song Writer Festival‹ that is held every summer (at least until 2010) in the Rashid Behbudov Theatre. Others are some jazz clubs and events, which are not considered ›completely right‹ anymore but are close enough to be recommended in order to experience Baku ›as it was and how it should be‹.

These memories are not in any way ›restorative‹ in the sense that anyone believed that it might be possible to return to this ideal. ›Cosmopolitan Baku‹ was a symbol of a time gone by, a Golden Age that if it cannot be restored is at least worth mourned forever. This ›cosmopolitan nostalgia‹ is still far from being a reflective nostalgia that allows for playing with nostalgic attitudes and it is still very averse to irony (Boym 2001: 49-55).

Contemporary cosmopolitism

The ›*kosmopolitanism* of the backyards‹ ended abruptly in the late 1980s and the woman I quoted above was not entirely wrong to blame the ›nationalists‹ for this, even if the whole truth is much more complicated. The big national question was not connected with Baku or even with the demand for Azerbaijan‹s independence but was raised over the future of the Autonomous Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh, then part of the Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan, but mostly inhabited by Armenians, a region which both Armenia and Azerbaijan had historically considered their own land. In February 1988 the always somewhat fragile ethnic balance between Azeris and Armenians was destroyed when the Soviet government of Nagorno-Karabakh voted to leave Azerbaijan immediately and become part of the Armenian Soviet Republic. This vote was seen as a provocation by the Azerbaijanis who considered Nagorno-Karabakh an integral part of their country. The aggression escalated and soon violence broke out. While Baku itself stayed calm, pogroms against Armenians began on 28 February 1988, in the neighbouring industrial town of Sumgait, quickly suppressed by Soviet forces (de Waal 2003: 31). But the events in Sumgait were only the beginning. The conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan got more violent and Baku Armenians – and with them the dream of a multiethnic, peaceful, cosmopolitan Baku – became one of the first victims. In January 1990 pogrom also broke out in Baku. The death toll among Armenians is unclear, but was certainly higher than in Sumgait two years before, and thousand Armenians fled across the Caspian Sea to Turkmenistan, from which they were flown to Armenia (de Waal 2003: 40). Whereas the Armenians were the first ethnic minority to leave Baku, others followed after independence due to the war over Nagorno-Karabakh from 1992 to 1994 as well due to

the everyday hardships they faced after the collapse of the Soviet economic system.

This led to a serious change in the Baku population pattern as at the same time the internal migration restriction was lifted and people from the countryside migrated to Baku in higher numbers. Together with the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) from Nagorno-Karabakh, who still forms a special group within the city, they are a new group of urban dwellers suspiciously observed by the old Bakintsy for whom the ›Azerbaijanization‹ of the city was seen as the city's provincialisation and therefore its decay. Often reported proofs of this claim are for example the fact that Russian is more and more replaced by Azeri, the dirt in the streets or the deteriorating behaviour especially of young men in public: »They throw their garbage out of the windows, because they are not used to garbage bins. In the villages it does not matter where you throw your garbage or where you spit. In a city you have to take care for the city. They don't care because they were not grown up in a city. They don't belong here. They belong to the villages« (Woman, Azerbaijani, Russian speaking, around 40). The claim that these newcomers ›belong to the villages‹ is made by many Bakintsy and became part of a public controversy in 2008 when the Baku-born filmmaker Rustam Ibrahimbekov explained that these newcomers were ›not able to live in a city‹ in an interview with a Russian newspaper (Sayfutinova 2009: 36).

The new discussions just illustrate a split between the inhabitants of the capital and the Azerbaijanis from the countryside that have its roots in Soviet times and the immigration regulation to the cities back then, but got stronger with the lifting of this regulation. While some Azerbaijanis who moved to Baku in the 1960s and 1970s can't remember any hostility or offences towards them and told me that they always felt welcomed in their new neighbourhoods, others never forgot compliments they couldn't help finding offensive. A woman in her late fifties got still angry when she told me: »When I came to Baku in the 1975 to study music, they always asked me: How did you learn to play the violin if you are from the region? They could not imagine that we had music schools outside their precious city!«

The subject of belonging to cities and being an urban, cultivated person even if not coming from Baku seems particularly touchy for IDPs from the towns and cities in Nagorno-Karabakh, especially from Shusha, who tend to stress that they were not from the countryside but having an urban background, too.

It took me some time during my fieldwork in Baku to get in contact with this new Bakuvian middle class who did not complain about the lost Soviet

kosmopolitanizm but expressed a positive feeling about this diverse ›cosmo-politan‹ population in Baku today. It might be not accidentally that I met most of them for the first time not in Baku itself, but outside Azerbaijan on international conferences. For them Baku today is as ›cosmopolitan as it always was and always will be‹ as one of my interviewees stated. They are Azerbaijanis mostly from Russian speaking families, even if some of the younger ones got at least part of their higher education in Azeri language. While all interviews with Bakintsy were conducted in Russian, the language of conversation with members of this group changed often quite quickly into English, the language they are used to when speaking with foreigners or talking about their research. They mostly fit in the concept of transna-tional cosmopolitans, having studied abroad or – if from the generation which got their first degrees still in Soviet times – spent time as guest schol-ars at Western universities, they are used to travel and establish and main-tain extensive international networks through travelling and new media. They also have in common that they were not grown up in Baku or if they did they describe themselves as ›not real Bakintsy‹ because their parents came from the regions. So their nostalgia is not linked to Baku, but to other places. They might criticise the longing of Bakintsy for the old times and express their incomprehension of the feeling that Baku lost its cosmopoli-tan face, but often have their own nostalgia for the places they or their parents grown up.

For this new urban middle and upper class, the undeniable fact that due to the second oil boom since the mid-1990s, Baku has a big foreigner community from the United States and Europe as well as an increasing number of refugees or migrant workers from Afghanistan, Northern Cau-casian and the Central Asian republics, not to forget Azeris from Iran and students from Turkey, proofs that the city's ›cosmopolitan times‹ had just began.[5] They are interested in (and mainly able to pay for) the increasing variety of ›globalised‹ places and events in Baku such as Western-style malls, bars and restaurants as well as diverse international festivals as the ›Interna-

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[5] It is difficult to say how many of these ›high level working migrants‹ actually live in Baku. Since official Azerbaijani statistics only show the number of people regis-tered as living in the country permanently, they hardly reflect the real numbers of Azerbaijanis living abroad or foreigners living in Azerbaijan. Cf.
http://www.azstat.org/statinfo/demoqraphic/en/index.shtml#, accessed 12.05.2012.
There exists a visible infrastructure of restaurants and bars that provide social spaces ›just like home' for this group in the city center.

tional Mugam‹ or jazz festivals or the ›Eurovision Song Contest‹ in 2012 –
events that are now far too expensive to attend for the old Soviet middle
class. Living in a city that is attractive even for Western foreigners and able
to grant shelter for refugees from poorer or political more instable coun-
tries became a matter of pride for members of this group and they in gen-
eral don't make a difference between the Western foreigners and the ones
from Muslim or poorer countries when it comes to defending the idea of
contemporary cosmopolitan Baku – even if most of them are for biograph-
ical reasons mainly oriented towards the US and their contacts within the
foreigner community in Baku are often limited to Western well-off expatri-
ates with whom they share certain urban spaces, while the hardly ever know
Afghan or Chechen refugees personally. This lack of personal contacts can
also be the reason, why the number of refugees is constantly overestimated
by nearly all inhabitants of Baku: So I often heard that »Baku is full of Af-
ghans«, »There are hundreds of Iraqis alone«, »They are everywhere«. Offi-
cially there are, as of January 2012, only 1730 registered foreign refugees in
Baku and 48 asylum seekers.[6]

Asked where the refugees or poorer foreigners are and why they are more
or less invisible compared with the Western ones my interviewees refer to
open air markets far in the outskirts of Baku or one even recommended me
»Go to Baku OWIR[7] and you will see how« cosmopolitan Baku is!« when I
claimed that I didn't see much foreigners in Baku outside certain areas. It
was no point for them, that a registration office for foreigners might not be
the place to experience cosmopolitanism, as for them cosmopolitanism
seems to be strongly connected with the number or the fact that foreigners
can live a peaceful life in their city. It does not necessarily mean to share an
everyday life.

The violent end of the Soviet *kosmopolitanizm* in Baku left the old urban
middle class living and believing in it with an uncertainness how to deal

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[6] Cf. *http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/page?page=49e48d1e6*, accessed 22.06.2012.
These 1730 people are holders of an UNHCR letter of protection that serves as a
personal document, providing, for example, for access to basic medical help. It is
unlikely that there are many refugees without this document living in the country.
The number also includes adults and children, the latter nearly half of the total
refugee population. (Interview with Boyan Kolundzija, Danish Refugee Council,
25.05.2012).
[7] Otdel viz i registratsii (Office of Visa and Registration, OWIR) where foreigners
living in Azerbaijan for a longer period have to register.

with the ›Other‹, how to behave towards foreigners (Grant 2010: 136-138), after the way they behaved for decades went somehow and indefinable wrong. On the other hand, the new urban elite and middle class is usually more confident how to behave towards foreigners, because their way of dealing with the ›Other‹ learned mostly on Western universities or during working in Europe or the US and practiced in real and virtual transnational spaces was not challenged as the Soviet *kosmopolitanizm*. But despite their many contacts to the US and Europe they are mainly not that focused on Western role-models anymore as the Bakintsy were: They travel to Iran with the same easiness as they travel to the United States and they imagine the new Baku not in competition to European cities like Paris, London or St Petersburg any more, but rather with Singapore and Dubai.

Challenging cosmopolitanism

While the old Soviet middle class as well as new one have in common that they see ›cosmopolitanism‹ in general as a positive‹ concept that either has enriched or is still enriching (or will enrich) their lives in many ways, there is also another group that challenges the general idea of cosmopolitanism as a positive way to live and an enriching factor of cultural and everyday life. At the contrary, members of this group stress the importance of concentrating on nationality and national culture instead of celebrating a cosmopolitan lifestyle. They – mostly young people coming from other part of Azerbaijan (not matter of this means the second largest city Ganja or a small remote village) to study – see a direct connection between the idea of cosmopolitanism and the disrespect they feel especially from the Bakintsy. As one of my interviewees, a student, stated: »I don't like all this talking about cosmopolitanism. … The same people who talk about cosmopolitanism don't respect their own people. … I came from the regions and I feel disrespected by them. They say, I am not as cultivated, intelligent as they are. They are city people and I am not. It hurts me how they treat me. It hurts me more as when foreigners disrespect me, because these are my people. We should be equal« (student, Azerbaijani, age 20).

Another student who already grew up in Baku but with parents who moved there from a small town in the south also stressed the point of not being respected by the ones ›who talk about cosmopolitanism‹. For him it seemed to be clear that »being cosmopolitan means not to respect your own people. I am tolerant. I like everybody. They don't like me. It is better to be tolerant than ‹to be cosmopolitan.«

Taking the heated debates on newcomers and their ability ›to live in a city‹ together with the fact that the Bakintsy talking about cosmopolitanism in most cases actually set the ›golden cosmopolitan age‹ against today's deteriorating Baku with the newcomers from the regions into account, the fiercely rejection of any cosmopolitan ideas and the social group connected with them seems understandable. On the other hand it seems as a contradiction that most of these young people also dream of continuing their studies abroad and planning to follow an international career. They already speak English very well and make use of the international places and events Baku has to offer – as long as they can afford it and it is not too late in the evening, because especially the young women among them are usually still living with relatives in quite traditional family structures. But nevertheless for them there is no point of connecting cosmopolitanism with any positive associations, as something that could enrich their lives positively. They set tolerance against cosmopolitanism, making clear that they are not interested in engaging with the ›Other‹, at least not in way as it was done in Soviet Baku where ties among a certain urban class at least for a while were more important than nationality. In this way they mostly unknowledgeable follow the old German accusation against cosmopolitans as ›traitors to the fatherland‹ or the Soviet one against ›rootless cosmopolitans‹.

These statements on tolerance and cosmopolitanism are quite in line with statements from the government. Though nobody can deny that the Azerbaijani government is concerned with tourism development, branding Baku as a ›cosmopolitan city‹ is not part of its strategy as it is in the Western city brandings Binnie et al. (2006) describe. There are clear statements claiming Azerbaijan's long traditional as a multi-religious and multi-ethnic country, but official sources referring to multiculturalism and the multicultural society in Azerbaijan connect this in general with the claim of national unity.[8] The word ›cosmopolitan‹ with its difficult Soviet history and the often

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[8] For example: "In Azerbaijan, a country known worldwide as a model of tolerance and a venue of dialogue between civilizations and cultures, religions and beliefs have historically existed in the conditions of peace, mutual respect and trust. Individual nations and ethnic communities representing different cultures have demonstrated common love for the Motherland, unbreakable unity and solidarity around the ideology of Azerbaijanism.« Ilham Aliev to the Orthodox Christian Community, Christmas, 5.12.2012 (*http://en.president.az/articles/4080/print*, accessed 15.06.2012). I have to thank Dmitri Heerdegen for the research on the representation of multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism in official Azerbaijani announcements.

drawn connection to the times when Azerbaijanis, Armenians and Russians used to live together in Baku, is never used in this context.

Conclusion

In Baku *kosmopolitanizm*/cosmopolitanism and ›being cosmopolitan‹ is negotiated within a framework of a rapidly changing city with new sets of cultural and economic possibilities. So the case of Baku does not conform to what is described as new cosmopolitan quarters or cities in Europe, where an ›old‹ local working class is pushed out of the city and its cultural life by a new spatially mobile and cosmopolitan middle or upper class. In Baku, it is an old and a new middle class with higher education and cultural capital who try to defend their own ideas of how the city should be. There are many factors playing a role in the differences between both groups as the economic marginalization of the Soviet academic middle class and the restricted mobility they face due to the need of visa and increasing travel costs, in contrast to the group whose horizon has widened after the fall of the Soviet Union and the new possibilities to go abroad. But I argue that the main difference between the two groups lie in the way how they remember the 1960s and 1970s and their nostalgic feelings of belonging to the city how it was back then, because having nostalgia for these days does not necessarily means to be marginalised in the new Azerbaijan – even if this is true for many of the ones looking back to their youth and lost cultural and economic opportunities. It can also be heard by younger people who have the same opportunities and live more or less the same way as the group of contemporary cosmopolitans. For them the difference is made by the feeling of belonging to Baku and to this Soviet academic middle class with whom they feel solidarity. The third group challenges not only the idea of Baku as a cosmopolitan city but also the concept of being a Bakintsy, a citizen of the city more than being a citizen of Azerbaijan. One thing at least seems not to be questioned by all of them: That Baku in the 1960s and 1970s was indeed a cosmopolitan city. So for example everybody denies that Azerbaijan had the lowest percentage of interethnic marriages, arguing that there were actually a lot of them and that this exactly was the proof of Baku's history as a cosmopolitan city with a diverse and mixed population. In this case it does not matter whether the speaker thinks that the cosmopolitan past was the ›Golden Times‹ of the city or the biggest mistake Azerbaijanis could ever make.

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Sevil Huseynova

Ethno-cultural Diversity
in the Imperial and Post-Imperial City
Communal Violence, Nationalist Conflicts
and Interethnic Cooperation in Baku
in the 19th-21st Centuries

> »Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity / genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined.«
> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*

> »The officer asks me: ›Armenian‹? I go: ›Don't think so‹. He actually has his own specialist in the ethnic issue behind the armor. ›San‹, he says, ›have a look at him, you can tell them apart, can't you‹. That guy goes: ›How should I tell them apart? They are all *chureks*‹.« Afanasiy Mamedov, *Khazarskiy Veter*

At the turn of the 19th century, Baku was a small town populated predominantly by Shia Muslims at the southern periphery of the expanding Russian Empire (Ashurbeyli 1992: 333-334). Two decades later, in the late 1820s, a mass resettlement of Armenians from the neighbouring Persian and Ottoman empires began: »Before the start of resettlement, 107,000 Armenians were registered in the Russian Transcaucasus (there was a total of 133,000 Armenians in Russia – about 6 to 7 per cent of all Armenians living in the world, whereas over 80 per cent of their total number were in Turkey). […] Before WW I there lived 1.8 million Armenians in the Russian Empire – a little fewer than in Turkey (2 million)« (Vishnevskiy 1998: 257-258).

   The large Armenian community in Baku also emerged in this period from the last third of the 19th century to the early 20th century. Back in the middle of the 19th century, the small city was of no interest to Armenian mi-

grants: »The relocation of the provincial centre to Baku in 1859 was the start of a new phase of its development« (Bretanitskiy 1970: 37-38). The early 1870s also saw its quick transformation as a centre of the oil drilling industry (Bretanitskiy 1970: 95-97). Since that time the town began to attract migrants, among them ethnic Armenians (Baberowski 2003: 44-47). Until the late 1980s, Armenians made up a major part of the fast-growing population of the city, having become the third largest (after Azerbaijanis[1] and Russians) ethnic group.[2]

It is a common belief that the relations between Azerbaijanis and Armenians determined the specific features of conflicts in the city over the last 150 years. In this period, which was marked by large-scale socio-political shocks and transformations, the social status of Baku Armenians underwent major changes (as did the status of Russians, Jews and Azerbaijanis). These changes were defined primarily by the policies of the state, but they were also were related to the formation and circulation of ideas of Armenian and Azerbaijani nationalisms in the late 19th and the early 20th centuries and later with the process of the formation of a ›conglomerate identity group‹ (Laitin 1998: 31) of Bakuvians, i.e. a community united within the boundaries of a common ›local identity‹. In these two last socio-political contexts the power of the state often lost some of its omnipotence.

The main thesis which I am putting forward in this article is that Baku, as the capital city (regardless of whether of an imperial province, of oil extraction or of a nation state) in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was a

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[1] In order to avoid confusion, I will use the term ›Azerbaijanis‹ (*azərbaycanlılar*). In the late 19th and early 20th centuries there was no established term and today's Azerbaijanis were either referred to as ›Muslims‹, ›Turks‹ or ›Caucasian Tatars‹. From the late 1930s on the term ›Azerbaijanis‹ became the official one. With the collapse of the USSR disputes reemerged about the correctness of this ethnic name. At present, the term ›Azerbaijanis‹ is used parallel to the terms ›Azeri‹ or ›Azeri Turks‹ (*azəri türklər*).

[2] In 1810, Baku's population did not exceed 6,000 people, mostly Shia Muslims (Ashurbeyli 1992: 318-319). During the ›oil boom‹ (end of 19th and early 20th centuries) and Soviet industrialisation, the population of Baku grew rapidly and became much more ethnically diverse. Thus, »by 1 January 1913, Azerbaijanis comprised only 38 per cent of the total city population, Russians – 34 per cent, Armenians – 17 per cent« (Badalov 2001: 267). From the 1950s to the 1970s, Baku still grew rapidly but retained its ethnic diversity: »According to the 1979 census, 1.5 million people were living in Baku; 56 per cent of them were Azerbaijanis, 22 per cent were Russians and 14 per cent were Armenians« (Yunusov 2000: 65).

space of permanent Armenian-Azerbaijani contact. The range of these contacts varied from extremely cruel and bloody clashes to mixed marriages and a firm friendship based on a shared memory of socialisation in schools and universities.

Given the contemporary Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the discourse about violence and enmity has become prevailing. This statement is true not only for the official political and ideological discourses but also for academic studies and a wide range of publications in the Azerbaijani or Armenian media. As a result, the diverse and complex range of contacts and relationships between Armenians and Azerbaijanis, which still continue in Baku, has been reduced to pogroms and violence. In this article I write about Baku as a city in which interethnic contacts took place continuously. I argue that the lack of interest in the daily life of Bakuvians (both Azerbaijanis and Armenians) and the attention on political conflicts in the social and historical sciences is an important factor in the continued predominance of the discourse of violence and incessant enmity between Azerbaijanis and Armenians in Baku. The conflict is historicised,[3] essentialised and perceived as inevitable and unsolvable.

Research methodology

The main method of data collection consisted of biographical interviews among two groups of people. The first series of twelve interviews (with eleven women and one man) was done with ethnic Armenians, who continue to live in Baku[4] on issues of daily life in Soviet and post-Soviet Baku, survival strategies in a dramatically changing social context, the loss of status as a ›normal‹ resident of Baku and citizen and the problem of stigmatised identity. Based on these interviews, I will reconstruct the main stages of the process of the changing status of ethnicity and the formation of a ›tribal stigma‹ (Goffman 1986: 4) before, during, and ›after‹ the contemporary Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

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[3] This means the conflict is becoming historical. As Vladimir Malakhov (2005: 53) puts it, »Historicism […] is the belief in the possibility of understanding the past from the present. This is the belief that the key to events taking place today lies in history. What is happening now is viewed as the unfolding of tendencies that were there earlier«.

[4] I conducted these interviews in 2006 while a Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung grant holder.

The second series of interviews conducted with people who were born in Baku and identify themselves as being Bakuvian allow me to add to the information about the specific features of daily life in Soviet Baku and during the period of transformation after the collapse of the USSR.[5]

Another important method I applied was participant observation. I collected numerous statements and stereotypical ideas about Armenians that can be heard in present-day Baku in a variety of situations (on public transport, in conversations at the work place, in homes, etc.). Usually I tried not to initiate this kind of talk but listened and recorded different types of conversations and statements made in my presence. The everyday discourse about Armenians is important given the fact that it represents a constitutive element of social relations against the backdrop of which daily practices and the identity of Armenians in Baku are formed.

Finally, I applied a critical discourse analysis of the print media, including texts collected in the archives in Baku (most of them articles from local city newspapers from the early 20th century) and post-Soviet publications in the Azerbaijani media. The simultaneous analysis of everyday and official discourses was very productive. I proceeded from the assumption that the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict has transformed and changed the perception of ›Armenians‹ held by ordinary people. In many respects the conflict had a significant impact on the formation of stereotypes about Armenians. The media both shaped and reflected these stereotypes.

Armenians in Baku: Process of Status Transformation

Three approaches appear as the most important to describe the specificities of daily life of Baku Armenians from the late 19th to the early 21th century. Each of them has to do with a specific period and socio-political context in which the community of Baku Armenians is imagined differently. Any attempt to reduce the Armenians' living in Baku to only one dominant idea will only result in erroneous constructions. Understanding the specificities of an ›imagined community‹ like the Armenians in Baku is only possible in the context of approaches that take account of the dynamics and often

radical changes of the boundaries of the community and the social status of its members (or the status of Armenian ethnic identification). On the whole, for different time periods and socio-political contexts it makes sense to refer to Baku Armenians as a diaspora or an ethno-religious community (first approach), or as a conglomerate hometown identity group (or better, a component part of this group – second approach), or, finally, today, as a ›stigmatised group‹ (third approach). These approaches are based on the perspective that the boundaries of these different groups have always been changeable and never impenetrable.

Baku Armenians as a diaspora or an ethno-religious community

This approach to identifying the Armenian community predominated at the moment of its formation until the founding of the Soviet Union. Here it makes sense to ask if one can describe the Armenian community of that time as some sort of a community that was to some extent delimited from other ethnic groups that made up the rest of the population of the city. Is it possible to think in categories of diaspora or ethno-religious community closed within its boundaries? One should recall that it is the Armenian diaspora, after the Jewish and Greek, which is considered to be the most relevant example of ›classical‹ or ›paradigmatic‹ diaspora community (Clifford 1994: 302-304, Tölölyan 1996: 6-12, Baumann 2000: 314, 322).[6]

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[6] Safran notes that »for many generations, the phenomenon of diaspora was dealt with only in connection with the Jews«. However, the set of features that makes it possible to describe the Jewish diaspora (»it developed a set of institutions, social patterns, and ethno-national and/or religious symbols that held it together. These included the language, religion, values, social norms, and narratives of the homeland«, 2005: 36, 38), can also be applied to the Armenian, Greek and a number of other diasporas. Attempts to identify clear-cut criteria for describing even the Jewish diaspora receive fair criticism. Robin Cohen (2008: 17), who shares Safran's (1991: 83-84) approach to a considerable extent, when describing criteria of diaspora communities still justly maintains that: »All scholars of diaspora recognize that the dominant Jewish tradition is at the heart of any definition of the concept. Yet, if it is necessary to take full account of this tradition it is also necessary to transcend it. […] Jewish diasporic experience is much more complex and varied than many assume. The Jews are not a single people; they have a multi-faceted, multi-located history with a genetically complex set of roots. At different periods, they looked either to their homeland or to more local links. Like other ethnics groups, their history is socially constructed and selectively interpreted« (Cohen 2008: 34-

By the early 20th century a large Armenian ethno-religious diaspora community existed in Baku. These were the descendants of refugees from the Ottoman and Persian Empires, many of whom (and especially those who made up an influential segment of the Baku bourgeoisie) originally settled in Tiflis (present-day Tbilisi) later, with a gradual increase in interest in oil extraction and trade, relocated to Baku. In the early 20th century there existed in Baku a multi-branch institutional community structure (Armenian Church, schools, newspapers, theatres etc.).

Activists of Armenian nationalist parties entered into a rivalry and then into an open confrontation with nationalist Muslim parties (Azerbaijanis) (Ter Minassian 1996: 141-51, Libaridian 2004: 82-83, Suny 1993: 65, Swietochowski 1985: 27-45, Shaffer 2002: 28-31, Bagirova 1997: 7). In that time, Baku was divided into ethnic neighbourhoods: a Muslim (Azerbaijani), an Armenian, and – at the administrative centre – a Russian neighbourhood (Altstadt-Mirhadi 1986: 303). But the boundaries of these neighbourhoods were penetrable for representatives of other ethnic groups, and one could even find mixed settlements in some parts of the city (especially in the administrative centre).

Baku Armenians competed with Azerbaijanis in entrepreneurship and also in managerial and administrative structures (Baberowski 2003: 28-56). For example, one of the bases of the identity of the Russian Empire was the Orthodox Christian religion, and the imperial authorities saw more loyal subjects in Christian Armenians (although the latter were not Orthodox Christians) than in Muslims. Baku was also a city where the first major conflicts between Armenians and Azerbaijanis started in 1905. These conflicts reemerged again later, but in a considerably crueller and bloodier form, in March and September 1918. But while the borders between the Armenians and the Azerbaijanis were very stable, they were not impenetrable either. Large entrepreneurial families stood in contact to one another to some degree. Neighbourhood-based relations also took shape gradually among ordinary residents of the city.

35). In my view, this state described by Cohen can be applied to the Armenian diaspora, too, especially regarding our specific case, i.e. the Armenian community of the city of Baku.

Baku Armenians as a conglomerate hometown identity group

Despite the bloody conflicts of the early 20th century, the large Armenian community remained, and its status experienced a serious transformation in the years of Soviet power. It is understandable that representatives of the ›class‹ of entrepreneurs suffered to an equal extent regardless of their ethnicity. However, at the same time, Soviet ethnic policy, in particular regarding the indigenisation of elites (*korenizatsiya*) (Martin 2001: 10, Slezkine 1996: 208-212, Baberowski 2003: 316-348) also led to a gradual ousting of Armenians from managerial and administrative positions. The Armenian SSR, where Armenians received the status of ›titular nation‹ (*titulnaya natsiya*, Brubaker 2000: 28-40), became the place where Armenian culture developed most. Certainly, for a long time the Soviet authorities also backed the institutions of ›ethnic minorities‹ in the Azerbaijani SSR (including Armenian schools, offering a number of subjects in universities in the Armenian language, theatres, etc.). In the post-war period, however, the majority of these ethnic institutions gradually disappeared. This had to do with two factors: a gradual withdrawal of Soviet national policy (*natsionalnaya politika*) in support of ethnic minorities and the focus on developing the cultures of ›titular nations‹, and the gradual loss of interest in these institutions on the part of the Armenian population of the city. The latter circumstance had to do with the formation of a conglomerate hometown identity group – of ›Bakuvians‹ – in the post-war period.

The formation of this community was another result of Soviet policy. The aggressive anti-religious drive led to a gradual weakening and erosion of different taboos and stereotypes that had to do with religious norms (Baberowski 2003: 599-661). Soviet gender and economic policies also facilitated the formation of a space of more frequent and intensive daily contacts between Azerbaijanis and Armenians (and Russians, Jews etc.). The incessant growth of the population of the city, its parallel large-scale reconstruction and a permanent shortage of housing led to the quick erosion of the boundaries of the ethnic neighbourhoods and a mixed inhabitation.[7]

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[7] One district in the city retained its informal name ›Armenikand‹ throughout the 20th century. Two central districts in the city, Sabayil and Nasimi (of which Armenikand was a part), remained populated by a large majority of Bakuvian Armenians. In the Soviet period, Armenian, Azerbaijani, Jewish or Russian families often lived in the same communal flats. Before Soviet power was established, such close

In the context of the Soviet *natsionalnaya politika*, the socio-cultural space of the city was also gradually nationalised. People who came from the community of the Muslims started to hold leading administrative posts and gradually began to play a more noticeable role in the cultural field. However, under Soviet power, Baku also remained an example of a ›Soviet multinational city‹ (see Krebs in this volume). Bruce Grant argues that even in the Soviet period »demographically and administratively, it was a city led by Russians, Armenians, and Jews« (2010: 126). This statement is an exaggeration.[8] However, ethnic Armenians and Jews continued to play a very noticeable role in the city, not only in the 1950s, when the ›successes‹ of indigenisation fully manifested themselves, but later as well.

In the context of Soviet national policy a stratum of Bakuvians gradually appeared, for whom local identity was no less (and perhaps in some contexts of everyday life even more) important than their ethnic identity (*natsionalnost'*). A certain group of residents, mainly those from intellectual circles, perceived Baku as a space of a ›truly‹ urban ›cosmopolitan‹ lifestyle,[9] unlike the rural periphery that the rest of the republic was. They imagined

neighbourhoods were simply unimaginable given religious and other taboos (e.g. there was only one kitchen and toilet for everyone).

[8] No doubt, in the post-war period the majority of medium-ranking and all the high-ranking leading posts in the republic in general and in Baku in particular were held by Azerbaijanis. It is sufficient to remember that Alish Lambaranski remained the most famous mayor of the city (chairman of the city executive committee) in the collective memory of Bakuvians themselves. He was mayor only briefly – from 1959 to 1964 –, but upon his return from Moscow to Baku in 1969, he held the post of deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Azerbaijani SSR for construction. All large-scale reconstruction projects in Baku and its rapid growth in the 1970-1980s took place under his immediate control and management. In the context of the discourse on the cosmopolitan Baku of the 1960-80s, this period is called the ›Lambaranski's Era‹ (cf. Azerbaydzhanskiye Izvestiya 21 July 2005: 4).

[9] Following Grant, I share his point of view that »recent works on cosmopolitanism [see it] as a product of particular social contexts, rather than as the adoption or near-adoption of a distant European model«. Analysing a discourse representing Baku as a cosmopolitan city, which is common among Bakuvians, Grant concludes that: »To look back on a Baku in the 1970s was not necessary to reach for Europe […]. What seems more important is that the cosmopolitan ideal more commonly appeared as an act of reaching itself, a respite from the older, more express ideologisms of the international, while still holding out for the right social mixing, the right kind of condominium agreement that the Caucasus region has long been obliged to go in search of« (Grant 2010: 125, 135).

the community of Bakuvians as unique and look to 1960-80s as its Golden Age. In the opinion of many Baku residents, the city had a cosmopolitan ›atmosphere‹ until 1988. Older residents of Baku ›constantly complain‹ and ›moan‹ about the loss of this ›atmosphere‹ (Badalov 2001: 260). Their memories of Baku are inseparably connected with the memory of a special ›spirit‹ of internationalism and cosmopolitanism. The discourse of cosmopolitan Baku contains many trivial stereotypes about large Soviet cities where people of different nationalities coexisted peacefully. The memory of a special ›atmosphere‹ in Soviet Baku is constructed in the context of the low significance of ethnic markers and boundaries in the everyday lives of Baku residents. Very often these are narratives about the city in which nationality played no important role. The boundary between ›us‹ and ›them‹ meant the boundary between ›us, the residents of Baku‹, i.e. the ›real‹ residents of the city, and ›they, the villagers‹, i.e. newcomers from the countryside.

Finding an adequate description of the markers of ›being a Bakuvian‹ (*bakinets* in Russian, *bakılı* in Azerbaijani) is not an easy task. According to Badalov, »any factor – language, ethnicity, and social status – in this case is vague and not constitutive […]. Perhaps the most important is a distinct time-space, in which a particular ›geographic‹ place of the city and a specific historical time converge« (Badalov 2001: 272).

The given time-space (the social urban space of Baku in the 1960-1980s) also plays an important role in determining what constitutes ›Baku residents‹ or Bakuvians. The factor of the availability of a common language for communication (Russian) was also essential. We should remember the rather typical situation in large Soviet cities in which, according to Vladimir Malakhov, the use of Russian among residents was a special form of demonstrating cultural loyalty. At the same time, »there is no doubt that the culture established in the beginning of the 1990s was considered to be the Russian-language, but it was not Russian in the sense of ethnicity« (Malakhov 2007: 165).

Bahodir Sidikov also tried to define this urban community. He defines Bakuvians (*bakiners*) as a sub-ethnic group, the solidarity of the members of which is based on the fact that they are Russian speakers with an urban mentality (2007: 306-307). However, Sidikov does not pay due attention to the collective memory of the 1960-80s. For him, this community is comparable to other groups (regional groupings or clans) in present-day Azerbai-

jan, whose solidarity[10] is based on their regional identity (*Naxçivanlılar* and *Erazlar*).[11] He singles out only those whom he identifies as Russian speaking ethnic Azerbaijanis. In essence, this is an argument made in the spirit of ›groupism‹,[12] which is justly criticised by Rogers Brubaker, to construct a real united community *bakiners*, »as if they were [an] internally homogeneous, externally bounded« group, »unitary collective actors with common purposes« (2004: 8).

The fact that only ethnic Azerbaijanis are singled out from Bakuvians and a sub-ethnic group is constructed from them should be viewed as a reduction of a complex process of the formation of an urban community from a culturally and ethnically heterogeneous population of a rapidly growing imperial city. Indeed, we can talk about an urban Russian-speaking community within which Azerbaijanis, Armenians, Russian, Jews and other residents of Baku were united at some point. Multi-ethnicity is actually its most important specific feature, as well as the discursive negation of the significance of ethnic boundaries (*natsionalnosti*) in the daily life of Bakuvians.

I believe that this community should be described as a conglomerate hometown identity group, for the members of which an imaginary boundary with »dominant society in which they live« (Laitin 1998: 31-32) was the most important characteristic for making them a community. The boundary

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[10] According to Yuri Slezkine ›clannishness‹ is »loyalty to a limited and well-defined circle of kin (real or fictitious)« (2004: 26). However, Azerbaijani clans are based not only on kinship links but also on where members of clans come from and on regional links. This phenomenon of organisation and implementation of power needs more research. The above-mentioned work by Sidikov, I believe, is an unsuccessful attempt to conduct this kind of a study. We are not dealing here with ›traditional‹ or sub-ethnic groups, but with a socio-political community created by the Soviet system. Baberowski justly notes that the 1920-1930s nationalisation in Azerbaijan the »meant tribalisation and traditionalisation of apparatuses« (2003: 498), but the phenomenon of *semeistvennost*, or »mutually protective ›family circles«‹, was a widespread phenomenon in all republics of the USSR (cf. Fitzpatrick 2005: 104, 110-111, Khalid 2007: 89-91).

[11] This is a widespread designation for natives of the Nakhichevan region in Azerbaijan and Azerbaijanis who come from Armenia.

[12] By ›groupism‹ Brubaker understands: »the tendency to take discrete, sharply differentiated, internally homogeneous and externally bounded groups as basic constituents of social life, chief protagonists of social conflicts, and fundamental units of social analyses« (2004: 8).

between the relatively small urban community and the far more numerous ›guests‹ from the rural periphery is, no doubt, although the most important, still an extremely eroded category. To be a Bakuvian, it was desirable to be born in that city. But not all residents of Baku born in this city, however, were part of the community of Russian-speaking Bakuvians (Rumyansev 2008: 248-252).

Only the following can be regarded as the necessary criteria of belonging: mastering certain behavioural stereotypes, having a good command of Russian and being accepted as such (by other students, coworkers, neighbours, etc.) when the ›new Bakuvian‹ moved to the city. This community was far smaller than an aggregate of all residents of Baku. Moreover, not only ethnic Azerbaijanis were ›guests‹ in the city and often remained outside the community of Bakuvians; the same could be said for Jews (to be exact, rural Jews who had previously lived outside Baku) or Russians and Armenians who relocated to the city from the countryside in the post-war years.

Despite the fact that representatives of the community and residents of Baku even today underline the exceptional internationalism of Soviet Baku, we should not think that ethnicity did not play any role in the daily lives of the residents. It should be remembered that this was a period characterised by a high degree of formal institutionalisation of ethnicity. The famous reflection of this was the designation in the fifth line of the Soviet passport. According to Brubaker, »the Soviet institutions constructed the territorial status of the nation and the personal nationality through the comprehensive system of social classification, organized by the ›principle of the vision and the division‹ of the social world, a standardized scheme of social accounting, an explanatory network of public debate, a set of boundary markers, a legitimate form of public and private identities« (1994: 48). Thus, at least in relation with the government and the state, ethnicity acquired a certain importance, even in international and cosmopolitan Soviet Baku. Even on the level of everyday practice, the issue of ethnicity was apparently also frequently put forward: »The ethnic Azerbaijani boss can do everything if his deputy is a Jew, his secretary a Russian and his driver an Armenian«, was a well-known and widespread adage in Baku during the Soviet period. Of course, this popular saying does not reflect the diversity of inter-ethnic contacts and relationships in Baku in the 1960-1980s. It demonstrates, however, that in certain situations and even in Soviet Baku, ethnic boundaries were well maintained. As Frederick Barth puts it, »stable, persisting, and often vitally important social relations [were] maintained across such boundaries, and [were] frequently based precisely on the dichotomized ethnic statuses« (1998: 10).

It is not surprising that the maxim ›residents of Baku are a special nation‹ emerged among the inhabitants of Soviet Baku. This expression should be understood in the context of the fundamental conceptions of *homo sovieticus* regarding the nation. In other words, local identity was ethicised in the imagination of the people, acquiring features of an ethnic solidarity group. Effectively, belonging to the community of Bakuvians implied a discursive negation of the significance of ethnicity in a situation where ›personal and ethnocultural‹ nationhood (*natsionalnost'*) (Brubaker 2000: 32-35), institutionalised by the Soviet authorities, could play an essential role in the public field and have a significant impact on the trajectories of biographies. At the same time, ethnic boundaries within the Bakuvian community were becoming far less stable and increasingly more porous. Evidence of this is the spread among Bakuvians of inter-ethnic (including Azerbaijani-Armenian) marriages, which were simply impossible before the Sovietisation.

Baku Armenians as a stigmatised group

The last approach is characterised by the process of stigmatisation of Baku Armenian identity. After the Soviet Union collapsed, ethnic Armenian residents of Baku lost their status as equal members of the urban community. This was determined not only by the ethnic demarcation of the population as a result of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, i.e. not only due to the fact that the majority of Armenians living in Baku were forced to leave the city. Status as full members of the community was lost during the conflict when ›Armenian‹ ethnicity became virtually synonymous with ›the (historical) enemy‹ or ›the other‹. The on-going conflict stigmatised the ethnic identity of ›the Armenian‹. To be an Armenian and at the same time to reside in Azerbaijan was a contradiction, by no means satisfying the criteria for being a ›good citizen‹. The self-perception of the Armenians living in Baku today is formed in this context.

Erving Goffman used the term ›stigma‹ to define »an attribute that is deeply discrediting, but it should be seen that a language of relationships, not attributes, is really needed. An attribute that stigmatized one type of possessor can confirm the usualness of another, and therefore is neither creditable nor discreditable as a thing in itself« (1986: 3). According to Goffman, the concept of stigma – in our case, »the tribal stigma of race, nation, and religion« (1986: 4) – always contains a double question that can be summarised as »does the social environment (neighbours, colleagues, etc.) know about the ›wrong‹ ethnicity of ›X‹« and »does ›X‹ lives under the constant threat of exposure by the social environment (neighbourhood,

colleagues, etc.)?« Whatever the answer is, the informational space of the city and the country[13] is permeated with an ideology. This ideology declares the stigmatised, ethnic Armenians residents of Baku to be a community posing a threat or provoking other negative emotions. The boundaries between the stigmatised and the ›right people‹ are clearly marked. In the media as well as in everyday life we hear the stigmatising concepts: ›historical enemies‹, ›little Armenian mongrel‹, *khachik*, etc. (i.e. various pejorative names of Armenians using in everyday language). To paraphrase Goffman, one can say that ethnicity becomes a kind of quality that distinguishes the Baku Armenians from other Baku residents and other citizens of Azerbaijan.

The basic difference, of course, is related to the contemporary Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (1988-1994), which was the bloodiest conflict to erupt in the South Caucasus with the collapse of the Soviet Union. This conflict became a major factor defining the social context that stigmatised Armenians in post-Soviet Baku. It is believed that at the moment the so-called ›black‹ or ›bloody‹ January occurred in Azerbaijan in 1990 the history of the Armenian community in Baku ended.[14] Those who were not able to leave the city by January 1990 were forced to flee following riots and intervention by Soviet troops. By that time, Azerbaijanis had already been forcibly expelled from the territory of Armenia. The same fate awaited the Armenians living in Azerbaijan, with the exception of Armenians who lived in the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region (NKR).

It should be mentioned that according to the 1999 census of the State Statistical Committee of Azerbaijan, 120,700 ethnic Armenians were found to be living in Azerbaijan at that time. Almost all of them were registered within the boundaries of the region of Nagorno-Karabakh, which was not under the control of Azerbaijani authorities. President Heydar Aliyev once named a figure of 30,000 Armenians living in Baku. This number became entrenched in discourse and is widely used in the expert community. But during the 1999 census, only 645 people living in the territory of Azerbaijan outside the Karabakh region declared themselves to be Armenians. Even this figure was questioned by Arif Yunusov (2000: 66), who claimed that by

[13] Here I mean not only mass media (TV, newspapers, radio, Internet), but everyday conversation, gossip, rumours, communication with colleagues, etc.
[14] In January 1990 the Armenian pogroms took place in Baku. Soviet troops intervened, resulting in significant casualties among civilians (Cornell 2001: 88-90, de Waal 2003: 89-95).

1996 there were 1,393 Armenians living in Baku. All of these numbers illustrate perfectly that that it is impossible to identify even remotely the number of Armenians living in Azerbaijan.

My research was largely determined by the fact that people living in Baku were aware of the ethnicity that my informants preferred not to display after the ›events‹ of January 1990.[15] Rasim Musabekov, one of the most active Azerbaijani political analysts of the post-Soviet period, argues that today's Armenians prefer »not to manifest […] their ethnicity« (2001: 360). Harald Eidheim described this environment of stigmatised identity in terms of »interaction and communication, as the area within which people have mutual personal knowledge of place of residence, heritage, doings and personal inclination« (1998: 43-44). This ›crucial‹ set of circumstances for the Armenians became the most effective channel for me to obtain my data. Virtually all contacts with Armenians were made through informal networks of friends and acquaintances. Another channel for establishing contacts was non-governmental and human rights organisations that cooperate with Armenians and offer them assistance. Almost all contacts established through the above-mentioned channels were with those Armenians who were the most vulnerable and the most affected by this stigmatisation.

In the course of my work I came to the conclusion that the stigmatised identity has taken on significant meaning for my informants in their everyday lives. This identity is formed in the context of the expectations placed on them by their own social environment. Having an Armenian parent, be it mother or father, leads to stigmatisation as Armenian by the social environment. This is a situation in which the primordial belief in genetics and the blood inheritance of ethnicity is transferred to the social sphere. Deliberately or not, the stigmatised individual takes into account this ascribed status in organising their daily life. Anderson points out that »in everything ›natural‹ [i.e. ethnicity defined as blood and genes] there is always something unchosen. In this way, nation-ness is assimilated to skin-colour, gender, parentage and birth-era – all those things one cannot help« (Anderson 1991: 143).

The beginning of nationalism in the everyday life of Azerbaijanis in Armenia and Armenians in Azerbaijan coincided with massacres, deportations and war, which cast a traumatic shadow, inducing a feeling of fatality of nationality. Their ethnicity was considered to be their fate: ›talking blood‹.

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[15] When they speak of ›events‹, Baku residents (not only ethnic Armenians, but all the others as well) mean the events of January 1990.

In addition, a lifestyle, behaviour, perceptions and other elements are justified by ethnicity (Brednikova/Chikadze 1998: 256). Despite the fact that nationality is not indicated in the new passports, the investigation of an individual's origins, including the ethnicity of a neighbour or a colleague, is a widespread habit for ordinary people and often becomes a reason why, even now, ›everybody knows everything‹. In addition, the government continues to control the definition of ethnicity, which needs to be indicated in various official documents. The registration of one's residency still requires that this information be specified. Entries in the housing maintenance offices, the archives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, military offices or in registers accumulated during the years of the Soviet Union remain valid. Clashes with the government, which controls the issuance of documents needed to identify each registrant as a ›true‹ citizen, become inevitable.

A possibility to escape the daily oppression of fear and the sense of instability lies in the process of ›ethnic re-socialisation‹ so that the citizen is no longer perceived by others and the authorities to be Armenian. The most important conditions for successfully completing this process include the good will of neighbours (and/or work colleagues), a micro-socium in which the citizen is included through informal communication. It is also possible to attempt to radically change one's neighbourhood or working environment. However, in this case, remaining in the same city still implies the existence of a certain number of actors who are familiar with the citizen's ›past‹. The fatality of the stigmatised identity is associated with the inevitability of a change in the ›ethnic image‹. Alternatively, the individual must cease to be Armenian, or must confine themselves to their own family and circle of friends. The possible exceptions, in which an individual remains Armenian for his or her environment as well as for the authorities, are the proverbial verifications of the rule.

This is what the present-day situation is like. In going back to the origins of the Armenian community in Baku it is possible to verify my field material and the argument that focusing attention on Armenian-Azerbaijani conflicts only leads to their essentialisation. In reality, contacts were far more diverse in the past 150 years and ranged from fierce conflicts to peaceful inter-ethnic cooperation.

The pre-Soviet ethno-religious community

No serious Armenian-Azerbaijani conflicts were recorded until the winter of 1905, when the history of the existence of the Armenian community of Baku had already counted 50 years. Inter-community tensions grew slowly.

In Baberowski's opinion, the mass migrations of Russians, Armenians, Jews, Georgians and others to Baku saw the indigenous Muslims suddenly in the situation of being a minority: »The indigenous residents of Baku were not ready for the social and cultural changes that had taken place. […] In the process of the competitive struggle, they lost contact with the economically blooming urbanized newly-arrived Armenian population.« Thus, the city gradually became »a laboratory for aggressive xenophobia« (2004: 323-324). Finally, »in February 1905, violence erupted in the city of Baku on a scale unimaginable, even for citizens used to lawlessness and murder. With increasing intensity during a period of four days, the perpetrators set fires, looted and killed. The clashes continued in various parts of the South Caucasus through 1905 and 1906. […] ›Witnesses‹ gave conflicting accounts about who attacked whom first in particular clashes, which was reported in the media or conveyed in rumours, and led to increased anxiety and mistrust between Armenians and Azerbaijanis. Between 3,100 and 10,000 people are believed to have died during this period« (Sargent 2010: 144).

These clashes, which started in Baku and spread to all of present-day Azerbaijan and Armenia, became so large in scale that historians sometimes describe this period as the first Armenian-Azerbaijani war (Swietochowski 1985: 37-83, 1995: 37-42, Altstadt 1992: 27-49, 89-107). In this and subsequent years, »Baku was a violent city. Simply brigandage was common. Serious conflict erupted in two forms – class conflict, as embodied in the labour movement, and ethno-religious conflict. The former made Baku a major centre of the Empire's revolutionary movement. The latter made it one of the bloodiest« (Altstadt-Mirhadi 1986: 303-304).

Even crueller and bloodier conflicts took place twice in Baku in 1918. In late March, a power struggle started in the city between Bolsheviks, who entered into an alliance with radical Armenian nationalists from the ›Dashnaktsutyun Party‹, and local Muslim nationalists, mainly supporters of the Musavat party.[16] After the Muslim nationalists lost the fight, fierce pogroms started in the Muslim neighbourhood. Punitive actions of armed groups of Dashnaks spread to nearby towns and villages. In September 1918 the city came under the control of Ottoman regular troops, who acted in alliance

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[16] This is the best known party of Armenian nationalists. The ›Armenian Revolutionary Federation‹ (ARF) or ›Dashnaktsutyun‹ was founded in Tiflis in 1890 (Ter Minassian 1996: 151). Followers of this party are called ›Dashnak‹. One of the most noted Azerbaijani nationalists parties was ›Musavat‹ (equality), founded in 1911 in Baku (Swietochowski 1985: 225)

with local Muslims. The capture of Baku is accompanied by a no less cruel pogrom of the Armenian population of nearby towns and villages and in Baku itself. These conflicts claimed the lives of thousands of townspeople (for more details cf. Swietochowski 1985: 135-139, Altstadt 1992: 45-49, Suny 1993: 38-43, 72-76, Baberowski 2003: 133-150).

Both in Azerbaijan and Armenia the 1918 events are described as ›genocide‹. On 26 March 1998, the then president of Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev, signed a decree that declared 31 March a ›Day of Genocide‹ of the Azerbaijanis. A campaign to commemorate the March 1918 events got under way in the country. In this context, the September victims are normally not remembered (Rustamova-Togidi 2009). In Armenia they do not recall the March massacre of Muslims but talk a lot about the events of September 1918, which are also viewed as the genocide of Baku Armenians (Dadayan 2007). A lot is said about these genocides in the media, academic monographs are written, and documentaries are filmed. Almost all specialists involved in this debate focus on the causes, development and results of these conflicts.

No doubt, the Armenian-Azerbaijani clashes of March and September 1918 were very bloody and fierce. However, there was a different Baku as well, a city where there was a place for inter-ethnic reciprocal help, cooperation and support, where Muslims and Armenians did not kill and rob one another but tried to save their neighbours' and acquaintances' lives. What remains beyond most scholars' attention[17] is a problem that Brubaker described as »post-imperial migrations of ethnic unmixing« (1995: 189-192). In 1918-1920, when these conflicts were taking place, the Russian Empire no longer existed. At different times, Ottoman and British troops took control of the city, but there were also periods when the region and the city were left to its own devices.[18]

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[17] I.e. local Azerbaijani and Armenian specialists (historians, anthropologists etc.), almost all of whom speak from the position of not scientists but of demagogues in the service of today's conflict, constructing a theory of a long and incessant enmity. This is not a criticism of serious research (e.g. Swietochowski 1985, Altstadt 1992, Suny 1993, Baberowski 2003).

[18] Already in the winter of 1917-1918, local nationalist and Bolshevik groups fought for the control over the city. In September 1918 the city came under the control of Ottoman troops. British troops replaced them from November 1918 to August 1919. From August 1919 until the arrival of the Red Army in April 1920, control over the city was completely in the hands of a government formed by local nationalist Muslims (cf. Altstadt 1992: 89-107, Baberowski 2003: 142-183).

It is important to understand that despite such cruel clashes, Muslims and Armenians continued to live within the space of one and the same city. Inter-ethnic contacts and cooperation did not cease. The cultural life of the Armenian community did not stop either. Even in the situation of the massacre of Muslims in late March 1918, we can see how personal connections and relations saved lives. Information about these tragic events can be found in the minutes of interrogations conducted after the city came under the control of Ottoman troops and then, after their departure in October-November 1918, under the administration of the ›Azerbaijani Democratic Republic‹ (ADR). In that period, an ›Extraordinary Investigative Commission on the Ransacking of the City of Baku and its Outskirts‹ was called into being. It worked to clarify the situation and collect testimonies from vicitims. This was simultaneously an investigation into the September events (1918) as well. Material related to the interrogations contain different kinds of information. For example, Rza Quluoglu Manafov (age 48) stated »I live at 178 Surakhanskaya Street in Baku. At about 6 pm on 18 March of this year, shooting started. I closed my office and hurried home to Surakhanskaya Street. All night they fired from rifles and machine guns and *we were told that Armenians had declared to Muslims their neutrality.* In the neighbouring houses and in my house there lived Armenians but we Muslims did not touch them as we considered them to be friends. In the early morning on Monday, the Armenians started an offensive against the Muslims and it was not until Tuesday that the Muslims who lived in Surakhanskaya and Tatar streets saw for themselves that the Armenians had been deceiving us and that the Armenians were acting against the Muslims. I, together with other Muslims, was in the trenches, defending our district from the Armenian invasion, and we defended our positions until Tuesday. On Wednesday we cleared our trenches and then the Armenians broke into the homes and dragged the Muslims out of their homes. The Armenians killed my street cleaner in my courtyard. They took me and my family captive and took us to the Mayilov theatre and they also took my brother's family there, in all about 52 people. *The Armenians did not kill us owing to the fact that there were old Armenian acquaintances among the 30 armed Armenians that took us captive* […]. The bodies of Muslims killed by Armenians lay in Tserkovnaya Street. The Armenians had taken all of these people out of their homes and killed them in the street. I was taken to the Mayilov theatre where they kept me for three days and then they let us out […]. The corpses of slain Muslims lay

on the streets, and there were the corpses of slain Muslims, women and children, in houses. All flats belonging to Muslims were ransacked.«[19] In the situation of cruel pogroms, some Muslims managed to survive only because their everyday contacts with their ›old‹ Armenian ›acquaintances‹ created some kind of a resource of reciprocal aid.

The memoirs of witnesses are another source of that on the events of these days. Unfortunately, very few such texts exist. Still, from those few that were written we learn that the situation should not be reduced to an uncompromising conflict between two united ethnic-religious groups: »At four in the morning, people started knocking so loudly on the main door […] Here they are, the Dashnaks! They are going to massacre all of us now! My father took his revolver and left the room […] We were preparing to die. But, apparently, we were a bit too fast. A while later, my father and Amina came back. They were with our neighbours, Armenians who lived opposite. They offered to hide us in their house. It would be safer there. What else were we supposed to do? […] The hosts met us and surrounded us with care. At that moment that was worth a lot; and it was very touching« (Banin 2006: 98-99).

Undoubtedly, this is not the only case of reciprocal help during the pogroms (cf. Suleymanov 1990: 214-215, Narimanov 1990: 59-60). In the autumn of 1918 and up until the summer of 1920, territorial conflicts between Armenia and Azerbaijan did not subside (Altstadt 1992: 99-105). Clashes between Muslims and Armenians took place across these two republics. Newspapers of the time carried frequent reports on such conflicts. For example: »The government has received the following telegrams from the Gancauyezd: I. On 2 November, Armenians troops crossed Azerbaijan's borders and used the strength of their weapons to demand that the Kogcha Muslims surrender; they are currently robbing residents and encroaching on their honour. On behalf of 60,000 Muslims we request that the honour, property and lives of the Muslims be saved from the sacrilege of the barbarians. Sultanov. II. 60,000 Muslims have suffered from the atrocities of the Armenians troops who have crossed the border. Save the honour of the nation and of innocent children and women, heed their supplications. Send help to the Kogcha people«.[20]

However, these conflicts did not result in ›ethnic unmixing‹. Fairly peaceful contacts and cooperation, which were apparently sufficiently intensive,

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[19] State Archive of Political Parties of Azerbaijan, Fund 277, Inv. 2, Case 13: 37.
[20] Protest by the Azerbaijani Government (Azerbaijan no. 31, 10.11.1918: 1).

remained. While it would be a long journey until the ›friendship of peoples‹ was reached, Baku remained home to a large and successful Armenian ethno-religious community. The authorities saw citizens in this Armenian community, and the latter were involved in active social lives. Thus, the edition of the official newspaper of the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic published one day before the publication of the telegrams cited above and less than two months after the September pogroms of Armenians in Baku reads: »An order of the finance ministry, § 2 no. 10. Appointed: Soprak Melik-Tsaturov, residing in Baku, to the post of chancellor of the department of treasuries of the Ministry of Finance from 1 November 1918. Cashier category 2 of the Shusha treasury Grigoriy Ayraptov to the post of account of category 1 at the same treasury from 1 November 1918.«[21]

This is a situation that is quite hard to imagine now in the wake of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Armenian doctors continued to work in the city; it was reported that »Dr. K. I. Oganesyan worked in Internal and Sexually Transmitted Diseases« (Yedinaya Rossia no. 8, 12 December 1918: 1) or that »Dr N. B. Shakhnazarov was readmitted especially for skin and sexually transmitted diseases« (Azerbaijan, no. 136, 2 July 1919: 4). Newspapers' front pages were packed with such reports and advertisements. New newspapers started to come out in 1918 in addition to older newspapers: »On Wednesday 25 December a new daily newspaper in Armenian will come out: ›Mer Omer‹ [Our days]« (Azerbaijan no. 17, 24 December 1918: 4). Armenian directors and artists stages performances in Baku theatres on the basis of works by Muslims: »The State Theatre (formerly called the Mayilov Brothers' Theatre) – an ensemble of Armenian operetta artists featuring the favourite of the Baku public, M. A. Kostanyan, will present today, Saturday 5 July: ARSHIN MAL ALAN. Asgar's part performed by Kostanyan. Tickets are available in the theatre's ticket offices. Starts at 8.30 pm, ends at midnight. Directed by Kostanyan. Manager Dnazmishtryan« (Azerbaijan no. 139, Saturday, 5 July 1919: 1).

Listing these kinds of events (conflicts and those that represent peaceful everyday contacts and relations) could be continued indefinitely. Unfortunately, the myth of irreconcilable enmity that contemporary Armenian and Azerbaijani historians construct (as do specialists from European and

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[21] Official Section. Order. Protest by the Azerbaijani Government (Azerbaijan no. 30, 10 November 1918: 1).

American institutions, which focus only on political history) overshadows data of this kind.[22]

Before the ›Events‹: the ›Lost Paradise‹

A critical approach would undoubtedly be very useful in the analysis of the myth of the ›friendship of peoples‹ in the USSR. The Bolsheviks did not manage to immediately control the situation and effectively prevent conflicts (Baberowski 2003: 241-271; 349-395). But as time went by, the new authorities managed to do so and Baku became »the outpost of socialism in the East« (Bretanitskiy 1970: 117-118). After World War II it was transformed into a prototypical, cosmopolitan city of the »international friendship of peoples«.[23] This was a controversial period in which the Soviet authorities created a socio-cultural space and institutions that, while they created intensive peaceful contacts at the everyday level, also facilitated the blooming of mass nationalist movements in the late 1980s.

It would seem that, paradoxically, Soviet national policy, in the context of which everything possible was done to institutionalise and strengthen the boundaries of the personal and ethno-cultural form of ethnic identity, also facilitated, to a certain extent, the emergence of a situation in which these boundaries became more visible. Soviet people had to identify with an ethnicity but this identity was not supposed to interfere with their contacts and relationships. In the course of the implementation of this controversial policy, the Soviet authorities managed to create some urban ›islands‹ in which ethnic boundaries did lose their impenetrability in routine daily life.

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[22] The author of one of the latest studies devoted to the first Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict of 1905-06 comes to similar conclusions. Leslie Sargent (2010) cites numerous attempts by representatives of the two sides to stop the clashes. She also notes the fact that this first outbreak of mass violence was an exceptional event in the life of the Armenian and Azerbaijani communities.

[23] In the 1950s, the composition of the city population was a subject of frequent debates at sessions of the leaders of the Azerbaijani SSR. In his speech at the 8th plenary session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan in June 1959, the secretary of the Azerbaijani Central Committee Bayramov said: »If Baku was a city where 90-95 per cent or at least 80 per cent were Azerbaijanis and 5-6 per cent other ethnicities, then maybe one could justify talk about the switch of institutions to the Azerbaijani language. However, Azerbaijanis actually make up only 38 per cent in Baku now, according to the latest census, while 62 per cent are representatives of other ethnicities« (Hasanli 2009: 559).

As a result, Azerbaijanis and Armenians not only entered into neighbourly or business relationships but also were friends ›from the cradle to the grave‹, and, finally, even intermarried.

In the following I will discuss more intensively four biographical interviews with Armenian women (although I will also refer to other interviews where relevant). All names have been changed in order to maintain anonymity. The first and second informants, Janna (57 years old, secondary vocational education) and Violetta (55 years old, college graduate) are both married to Azerbaijanis and each has two children. This fact elevates their social status. They represent a rather large group of Armenians living in Baku. The third informant, Oksana (61 years old, college graduate), is married to a Russian man, but the marriage is one of convenience. The fourth is Marina (36 years old, college graduate) and has been married to an ethnic Russian for one year. These latter two are good examples of a rather insecure group of ethnic Armenian women in Baku.

The main feature of the narratives reproduced during the interviews is a clear division of life into two parts. The first half is what happened before the ›events‹ of January 1990, namely the Armenian pogroms and the deployment of Soviet troops. This date represents a place of historical memory and plays a vital role in one way or another for representatives of practically all ethnic groups. Everything that was in the Soviet past is compressed into very cursory, usually idyllic narrative of life in ›those days‹. The manifestation of nationalism or any cases of discrimination as a result of the policy of *korenizatsiya* (indigenisation of elites) are now seen as minor nuances in the relationships between people of different ethnic groups. This policy did not influence the less educated people who never strived for career advancement. Oksana, a college graduate, notes that »to become an honoured teacher there were restrictions. The national cadres were supposed to be present there, but of course the others deserved it more than the national cadres taking into account their knowledge, their level of knowledge. Well, naturally, if there was a commission or something, then they were brought to us and if any promotion was awarded, then it was given to them and so it worked as a workhorse – he who carries a load is always used to carry a load«. Her very phrase expresses the condescending attitude common among Russian-speaking citizens of Baku towards those who were called the ›national cadres‹, who were often migrants from rural areas.

Janna describes the Soviet times somewhat differently: »During Soviet times there were no problems at all, absolutely none. Even at school we were never interested in each other's nationality«. Violetta recalls the days

before the ›events‹ similarly. However, the contradiction in the projection of experience in Soviet daily life to today's circumstances results in dual memories of life ›before‹. On the one hand, for Marina, ethnic discrimination occurred during Soviet times as well: »Well, if we take an institute as an example – between the two people who were equally well prepared on the topic, one had to be chosen; she [the informant's elder sister] clearly knew that Mamedov and not Abramov or anyone else had passed. I am not saying that there were some measures against this nation [Armenians], but I'm talking about the national question, which meant that measures were taken to ensure that Azerbaijanis passed«.

On the other hand, the Soviet period was the best time of Marina's life, a peaceful time which will never return. Thus not all events of that time are remembered in an unpleasant light. And after telling the story about all the vicissitudes of life ›afterwards‹ she stated: »Now I think that one can criticize the Soviet times, but due to the fact that I have this problem [is stigmatised] now I consider my childhood as very happy and joyful. And I have a particular affinity for Gorbachev [laughs], though many say that he just opened the abyss, I do not know. Maybe this stagnation was the happiest time for me, because it never affected me. I never felt myself slighted«.

The existence of ethnic boundaries in the Soviet past can be traced most clearly in the discussion of marriages between Baku residents who identified themselves with different ethnic groups. The strengthening of endogamy in the post-Soviet period was connected to the process of nationalisation. But even in Soviet times, the state statistics indicated a very low number of interethnic marriages in Azerbaijan (and also in Armenia) as compared to the other republics of the USSR (Susokolov 1987: 142, Kaiser 1994: 298-299). The fact that the rule of marrying ›one of us‹ was practiced even in the Soviet period was confirmed in the interviews. Janna remembers: »My father then told us that he would not interfere if we love each other – it meant that was our fate, but he also said he felt sorry for us. He said, ›You are young, you do not know, but I've seen it all, when the Armenians and Azerbaijanis were killing each other‹. He was born in 1908 and lived there [Janna's mother was from Karabakh, and her father was from Kapan (Armenia)]. He said, ›I feel sorry for you, you should not date; it is a big mistake‹. But he never did anything against us. He had seen it all, but what did it mean for us? We were young. And back in 1973, who would have thought that this might happen. Well, my husband's parents were also against our marriage at the beginning. When his mother learned about it, she urged him – ›maybe you could find one of our girls – an Azerbaijani girl‹. But my husband went against them, and that was it«.

In general, while ethnic boundaries in the Soviet Union remained very strong, in certain contexts and in certain social strata, this situation did not imply rigid forms of discrimination or exclusion from ordinary life, and did not lead to the formation of a stigmatised identity for Armenians living in Baku.

After the ›Friendship of Peoples‹: Living with the Stigma

Two situations predominate in the everyday life of Baku Armenians. The first is the larger group, consisting mainly of women married to Azerbaijanis, whose husband and children (who, of course, define themselves as Azerbaijanis) guarantee their security. Their lives are often restricted to the family and circle of friends. These are the ethnic Armenians living in post-Soviet Azerbaijan who are least affected by the conflict. As a rule, at the time of the pogroms they were less in danger, their apartments were not seized, and many of them were even able to keep their jobs and property.

The second group, rather small in number and most vulnerable among those remaining in Baku during the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, were those women who did not enjoy the immunity of having an Azerbaijani spouse and thus the important external marker of an Azerbaijani last name. Many of these are women born into ethnically mixed families, who went through the events of the late last century as ›Armenians‹ and had the ›wrong‹ last name. Some of them lost their apartments and jobs.

Since the 1990s there have been discussions about the few Armenians who did not leave the city. Such discourse took place both at the level of the leadership of the republic, as well as in the form of rumours and conversations among ordinary citizens. In the 1990s, as today, these discussions emerged in the context of the idea of the tolerance of the Azerbaijani people towards others as one of the essential characteristics of this imagined community.

It should be noted that the Baku Armenians' experiences after the ›events‹ vary widely. Oksana, representing the most vulnerable group of Armenians, had experiences very different from Janna's. But despite these differences, their everyday lives have much in common. This is because although the society puts different kinds of pressure on them, the principle of how this pressure is implemented is the same in both cases. Oksana lost her apartment, not during the ›events‹ but in 1992: »I went out for half an hour. I came back and all the doors and the safe and everything was open. They were already sitting there. There were about ten of them. I was taken in by my neighbours, my close neighbours«.

Janna claims that she does not feel any sense of fear, but her description of everyday life is one of permanent confinement in a restricted, familiar neighbourhood environment. In her narrative we always hear the idea that »everyone knows me and no one troubles me«. However, some discomfort appears in her case, too, when the ›fear‹ is transformed into a feeling of ›shame‹: »I'm not [afraid for myself]. Only for the children. Rather, I'm not afraid, but am ashamed. I am rather ashamed. Why ashamed? Well, because someone can say something. To say – she's Armenian, somewhere in the street. I'm just ashamed to imagine that it could happen. I think it's shameful to get into such a situation«.

The very appeal to the sense of shame becomes an unavoidable conflict with the way a citizen of Azerbaijan who has nothing to be ashamed of presents herself. Of course, she is trying to find a mode existence consistent with her external environment, but because of the absence of hostility from others, it becomes possible only due to the peculiarities of her character. The easiest way is not to watch national television, not to read newspapers, and not pay attention to conversations in public places. Oksana tries to do this. But, of course, other strategies can be just as successful. Janna tries to distance herself from the community designated as the ›enemy‹: »I'm telling you, I understand this in a way that it is not about me. I understand that when they talk about it they do not have me in mind, but only those Armenians who started it all: the government, politicians from Armenia. This is my attitude towards it. I think that it's not me they have in mind.«

In practice, Janna does not seek protection from her husband. Only once did she mention him, when referring to the events of January 1990. This is the only time when her husband, as an Azerbaijani who has a certain social capital (e.g. relatives who can take him) acted as the guarantor of her security. In this case, too, we notice a very important factor in the relationship. In the course of the interview, Janna constantly emphasised that »all the neighbours here have known me for more than twenty years. They have never seen anything bad from my side. All the neighbours respect me. When I come to my daughter everyone says hello, asks me how things are going.«

This is the social capital Janna has earned herself, a system of neighbourhood and personal relationships built on the emotional platform of friendship and affection developed over twenty years. Precisely this system of similar relations served as a salutary thread for many Armenians, who had to hide in the apartments of neighbours during the pogroms.

Conclusion

The three different situations into which I symbolically divide the history of Armenian community of Baku do not in any way imply a search for direct or even indirect analogies. Following Brubaker, »I adopt this historical and comparative approach not because I believe we can find in the past precise historical analogs of the present. There are no such analogs. Comparative history can provide not analogs but analyse« (1995: 191-192). In my view, the very significance of this kind of analysis lies in the possibility of reviewing three different cases (or situations). In all of the three cases we can see very different socio-political contexts in which the significance of ethno-religious and cultural boundaries and the intensity of inter-ethnic contacts and relations (conflictual and peaceful ones) varies.

Certainly, one can also make an attempt to see something common that unites these three periods, for example in the attempts of the political regimes to exert pressure on inter-group relations and to control them. However, in all three situations we are dealing with very different types of state authorities and organisations. No doubt, the ethnic policies in the Russian and Soviet empires were absolutely different in terms of their goals, intensity and ways of implementation. The post-Soviet conflict situation and the national state is also quite obviously different from the imperial context.

But, at the same time we can see that despite the differences in the socio-political and cultural contexts, inter-ethnic cooperation and peaceful relations between Azerbaijanis and Armenians were always possible. These relations are characterised by very different intensities, but they remain, even during extremely fierce conflicts. Analysis of the entire range of inter-ethnic contacts and relations (and not only of conflictual ones) makes it possible to avoid the mythologisation and a retrospective historicisation of the conflict.

It is precisely the lack of attention historians and social scientists pay to cases of peaceful relations and their prevailing interest in conflicts that cause the essentialisation of inter-ethnic enmity. Were these scholars to focus not only on political events but also on everyday relations, they might avoid this trap. It is necessary to reject simple patterns of meta-narrative and analysis and to listen to the voices of contemporaries and participants in those events.

Then we might learn that life was not only about enmity, that collective memory of the tragic events of the pogroms and massacre is not the inevitable reason for the resumption of ›old‹ conflicts but only serves as a resource for constructing an ideology that serves the contemporary conflict.

We might also learn that however tragic the history of conflicts is, their transformation always remains possible. Conflicts can never be viewed as inevitable. There always remains a possibility of their gradual transformation and, perhaps, a possibility of overcoming them.

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Nino Aivazishvili-Gehne

Ingiloy – Ingiloi
The Ethnicity and Identity
of a Minority in Azerbaijan

The aim of this paper is to provide a brief description of the Ingiloy, an ethnic group in Azerbaijan that has to date been relatively neglected in the anthropological literature. Most studies until now have been carried out by Georgian and Azerbaijani historians (e.g. Dumbadze 1953, Papuashvili 2008, Haciəli 2007). The Ingiloy live in north-western Azerbaijan as a minority with Georgian origins. In the early part of fieldwork, which lasted from April 2009-January 2010 I was quite surprised by the internal incoherence of the group. They are both Christian and Muslim and a strong distinction between these two sub-groups exists. The complexity of Ingiloy identity expresses itself already in the numerous self and external ascriptions, which I will explore in the following. I will illustrate how the emic and etic categories of the ›correct‹ name for the group work and can be creatively interpreted and managed by the Ingiloy themselves.

The Ingiloy are an autochthon Georgian-speaking group living in Azerbaijan in three districts (Zaqatala, Balakan and Qax). All three districts are located in north-western Azerbaijan close to the border with Georgia and Dagestan. According to Azerbaijani statistics, 14,877 Ingiloy lived in Azerbaijan in 1999 (Khuloshvili 2004: 12). This number has been steadily decreasing due to labour migration, predominantly to the Russian Federation. They account for approximately 0.2 per cent of the total population of the Azerbaijani Republic (Khuloshvili 2004: 12) and can be divided into the following two sub-groups that have little contact:

- Ingiloy from Qax (approx. seven villages), which are also known as *xaçpərəst* (Christian), *heren* (a term used for the ›Ingiloy‹ in medieval Georgian historiography) or ›Georgians in Azerbaijan‹. They refer to themselves as Georgians and tend to use Georgian surnames.

- Ingiloy from Balakan (village of Ititala) and from Zaqatala (villages of Aliabad and Mosul) who call themselves ›Ingiloy‹. They are Sunni-Muslims and have Azerbaijani surnames.

There are varying explanations for the ethnic origin and etymology of ›Ingiloy‹ in both Azerbaijani and Georgian historiography. In a first Azerbaijani version the Ingiloy got their name from the Azerbaijani term for ›new convert, returning‹: *yenidandöndərimişlər* (*yenimüsəlmanlaşmiş*) (Haciəli 2007: 23) or *yenidininyollagedəh* (Cavadov 2000: 234) when they converted. Another version describes the Ingiloy as descendants of the ›Caucasian Albanians‹, *gelen*, and *yengeloy* – *yeni gellər*, which means ›new *gelen*‹ (Haciəli 2007: 23-24).[1] The third version in Azerbaijani historiography defines the Ingiloy as *gelen* from Aliabad, which was formerly known as Eniseli (Haciəli 2007: 25). Georgian historiography also offers no unanimity on this. Some authors assume the theory of re-conversion (Adamia 1979: 19), while others define the Ingiloy as Georgian peasant farmers who pay tribute to the people of Dagestan (Dumbadze 1953: 22; Papuashvili 2008: 125).

Varying local views on who the Ingiloy are

I met Alisia and Madlena (from the district of Qax) during the Christian festival *kurmukhoba* in Qax.[2] Among other topics, we discussed the term ›Ingiloy‹ in a conversation that I will repeat here verbatim:

Nino: What does Ingiloy mean?
Alisia: Ingiloy means newly-converted.
Nino: Do you class yourself as Ingiloy?
Alisia: No, we aren't Ingiloy. We don't use the term at all.
Nino: Why not?
Madlena: What does Ingiloy mean? You said you're writing a dissertation on that. Then think about what it means yourself!
Nino: I have an idea, but I'm interested in your explanation. Otherwise I might misunderstand something.

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[1] ›Caucasian Albania‹ is a name for the historical region of the eastern Caucasus that existed on the territory of present-day republic of Azerbaijan and in part also in southern Dagestan.

[2] *Kurmukhoba* is dedicated to St George and is celebrated twice a year, on 6 May and on 22 November.

Alisia: You're right. In such cases it is necessary to question the locals.

Madlena: If we called ourselves Ingiloy, that would mean we used to be Tatars and then changed our beliefs. However, we have never changed our beliefs. We couldn't be converted. We were never Ingiloy, we're Georgian. We refer to each other as Georgian or *heren.*

Nino: But why? In Georgia, everyone who lives in Azerbaijan und speaks Georgian is known as Ingiloy!

Alisia: Generally we call the area Saingilo [place where the Ingiloy live].

Nino: Are you going to Kurmukhi [the church]?

[Both nod]

Nino: I have heard that people from the whole district gather there.

Madlena: From the whole district. You'll see for yourself, there'll be a lot of Tatars. There was a dispute about the church. They claim it's Albanian and not Georgian.

Nino: Do visitors also come from Zaqatala?

Madlena: Why would they come here? They're Muslims.

Nino: But the Azerbaijanis come too?

Madlena: They know. [About the church and its meaning.]

Alisia: Those who come only come from our district. The church is holy for them, too. They claim the church belongs to them.

Nino: Don't you have any contact with them?

Alisia: Not kinsman-like, they're Muslims.

Nino: Don't you know anyone from there?

Alisia: Yes, I lived together with a few people from Aliabad in Tbilisi.

Nino: What do you call them?

Alisia: I don't know [short pause]. I don't know a term for them! I don't call them Ingiloy either. More likely Aliabadian. They've all got Azerbaijani surnames. Do you know what's really bad? They don't understand that they used to be Georgians and then changed their faith. They are neither Georgians nor Azerbaijanis. I can't call them Azerbaijani, because they speak Georgian!

This emic perspective shows that religion plays a significant role in local exclusion and inclusion processes. However, it also shows that religion is not the only deciding factor and that other factors, such as language and lifestyle, must also be considered. The reaction of both of my Christian and Muslim informants was based on resistance to and denial of a common name for the two sub-groups. Madlena claims that the inhabitants of Qax

are not Ingiloy but Georgians. In Mosul it was often indicated that the people of Mosul are the ›real‹ Ingiloy and not those of Qax. Two configurations of religion and ethnicity are apparent:

1. To equate Georgian nationality with the Christian Orthodox faith, excluding Islam.
2. To equate Ingiloy ethnicity with Islam, excluding Christian Orthodoxy.

Neither their common history nor their common language can break the ›boundary‹ (Barth 1998 [1969]). Sometimes these boundaries are not explicit and not very crucial, but sometimes, such as at the above-mentioned festival of *kurmukhoba*, they are clearly a major focus. Madlena is upset and annoyed that the Ingiloy from Zaqatala also visit the church. Why is this considered to be unacceptable considering that ethnic Azerbaijanis (who are also Muslims) are accepted as guests to Kurmukhi by the Christian inhabitants of Qax? The two women explain these questions with regional and historical reasoning: the Azerbaijanis see the Church of Kurmukhi as their cultural heritage and can identify with it.

Alisia's final two sentences »They are neither Georgians nor Azerbaijanis. I can't call them Azerbaijani, because they speak Georgian!« are worth a closer look. In this passage another ›boundary‹ and dimension of identity becomes clear – language. When talking about the Georgian language, the division within the group and the religious-based ›exclusion‹ are no longer relevant. The ›we-group‹ (Elwert 1989) is redefined and both Muslims and Christians feel united through language.

I met Adas in an Azerbaijani village. Adas, like other ethnic Azerbaijanis referred to me as *təmis gürcü* (real Georgian) and I asked about this term.

Nino: Who is *təmis gürcü*?
Adas: Someone who is a real Georgian.
Nino: How are the inhabitants from Mosul called here?
Adas: *Gürcü*.
Nino: What is the difference between *gürcü* and *təmis gürcü*?
Adas: There are Georgians there [in Georgia], and there are Georgians here, but these [people from Mosul and Aliabad] are Azerbaijani.
Nino: How do you call people from the Qax region?
Adas: *Təmis gurcü* live there, too.
Nino: And they're also Azerbaijanis?

Adas: No, they are Georgian.

Nino: How do you differentiate?

Adas: What do I know? These [people from Mosul] are ours and have Islam. In Qax they are Christian.

Nino: Oh, so *təmis gürcü* is someone who is *xaçpərəst* [Christian]?

Adas: Yes, yes.

Adas describes here the emic perspective.[3] External groups (in these case ethnic Azeris) are categorised on the basis of religion as are internal groups. The first category, *təmis gürcü*, refers to people from Georgia and from Qax. The second category ›Georgian/Azerbaijani‹ refers to the Ingiloy from Zaqatala. An explanation for Adas' somewhat complicated categorisation can be found in the writings of Şahin Mustafayev (2005, 2007) and Aliaga Məmedli (2008), who point out that the question of ›Who are the Azerbaijani?‹ has changed constantly over decades, starting already in the pre-Soviet period.

Were the Azerbaijani Muslims? (Məmedli 2008) Simply Azerbaijanis? Caucasian Albanians? Descendants of the Oghuz Turks? Or descendants of various indigenous groups from different religions and ethnic backgrounds, who, in primeval times settled in the territory of what today is Azerbaijan (Mustafayev 2007: 104)? Ethno-historical and ethno-territorial principles of identity formation were moulded by Tsarist and Soviet ideologies and redefined after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Ingiloy identity and its boundaries are equally elastic, complex and varied.[4] Sometimes the boundaries are explicit and permanent, sometimes they fade and blend, such as in the case of the religious festival *kurmukhoba*. Here it becomes clear that religious and geographical boundaries intertwine and that regional affiliation plays a significant role in behaviour and attitude. Religion often causes geographical affiliation to become secondary. To fully understand this specific problem, one must consider in detail not only the historical, but also contemporary political, economic and social developments.

Another informant, Ramil, who is himself Ingiloy and a politically involved local player who could be seen as a kind of ›ethnic leader‹ for Ingiloy

[3] I recorded numerous similar conversations about emic and etic (Harris 1976) perceptions.

[4] The ethnicity of Ingiloy emigrants or dual citizenship also offers interesting examples concerning identity.

put it as follows: »The fact that the Ingiloy have established themselves as a nationality over centuries creates a feeling of insult in Georgia. We are not Azerbaijanis and if you address an Ingiloy as Georgian, they will take it as an insult. They would sacrifice themselves for the Ingiloy nation. If you went back to our roots, you would see that we belonged to Georgia, but are now so assimilated with the Azerbaijanis that we have detached ourselves from Georgia and will continue to detach ourselves further. We are the ›bridge‹ between Azerbaijan and Georgia. Why shouldn't these nations follow this way and consider the Ingiloy a ›bridge‹?« (Ramil, age 34; conversation on 26.06.2009)

From Ramil's perspective, the formation of Ingiloy identity is anchored in state recognition, social use and subjective awareness of desirable and undesirable affiliations. At the same time, Ramil calls attention to the process of breaking from the old and integrating into new affiliations. What is happening to the Ingiloy corresponds from this perspective with Barth's model of ethnicity, namely penetrability and the possibility to cross boundaries between ethnic groups and by doing so changing affiliation (Barth 1998).

Conclusion

> „If you do not agree with your neighbour's classification, this may only signify that you have a somewhat or wholly different basis for drawing symbolic circles around things« (Strauss 2005: 22).

I have attempted here to describe the religious and linguistic affiliation of the Ingiloy and various emic and etic attitudes and categories applied to them. The formal label ›Ingiloy‹ as based on national ascriptions and attributes is not very useful. As Anselm Strauss suggests, Christian and Muslim Ingiloy have or choose different viewpoints to define things around them. Their affiliation is situational and multiple, are dependent on time and place.

Religion and language form criteria for identity and the relationships other have to the Ingiloy. Group structure and characteristics become clear in their description. They suggest an imaginary Ingiloy unit, whose boundaries are symbolically marked and imprecise. All told, the relevance of these categories and discourses in determining the ›cultural stuff‹ (Barth 1998: 15) in the daily life of the Ingiloy is ambiguous.

The relation between religion, language, ethnicity and their boundaries is complicated. The group members pass between different domains of affilia-

tion, different ›senses of belonging‹ (Hunt 2005: 127) and place different importance on faith and affiliation. In this complex process new dynamics of inclusion and exclusion appear; boundaries are not only crossed but new ones are created (Pelkmans 2009, 2003).

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Natia Jalabadze and Lavrenti Janiashvili

Perspectives for the Integration of Ethnic Minorities in a Multicultural Region
The Example of Kvemo Kartli

With the democratisation of independent Georgia, the integration of different minority groups has become an urgent political issue. This is especially problematic in those multi-ethnic regions where Georgians are in the minority. Kvemo Kartli is one such area.[1] A result of intensive migrations (sometimes voluntary and sometimes forced) the administrative region of Kvemo Kartli (consisting of six municipalities: Marneuli, Gardabani, Tetritskaro, Dmanisi, Bolnisi and Tsalka) is the ethnically most diverse region in Georgia. Georgians, Azerbaijanis,[2] Armenians, Greeks, Ossetians and Russians, among others, have lived in this region, mainly in isolated, compact settlements, for centuries. The ethnic composition of Kvemo Kartli is in a state of permanent change. The non-Georgian population, mostly Greeks, Azerbaijanis, and Armenians, predominated in number over the Georgians in different municipalities. Today the Georgians comprise around 45% of Kvemo Kartli's population (Tab.1).

Representatives of at least two and often more ethnic groups with different religions (generally Orthodox Christians, Muslims and Armenian Apostolics) reside in mono-ethnic or mono-confessional, multi-ethnic or multi-confessional settlements in the region.

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[1] The authors of this article were part of a research project directed by Lia Melikishvili and funded by the Shota Rustaveli Foundation (2008-2010) on processes of democratisation and the development of civil society in multi-ethnic Kvemo Kartli. They also investigated the ethnic dimension of social security. The research was also informed by collaboration in the project ›The Revitalisation of Traditional Law in the Republic of Georgia‹, which was funded by the Volkswagen-Foundation (2009-2011) and directed by Stéphane Voell.

[2] ›Azerbaijanis‹ and ›Azeris‹ are generally used synonymously in the literature.

Municipality	Georgians	Azerbaijanis	Armenians	Greeks	Others
Kvemo Kartli	44.71%	45.14%	6.39%	1.49%	2.27%
Gardabani	53.20%	43.72%	0.93%	0.21%	1.95%
Marneuli	8.04%	83.10%	7.89%	0.33%	0.63%
Bolnisi	26.82%	65.98%	5.81%	0.59%	0.80%
Dmanisi	31.24%	66.76%	0.52%	0.78%	0.69%
Tetritskaro	74.03%	6.47%	10.38%	5.05%	4.07%
Tsalka	12.02%	9.54%	54.98%	21.97%	1.50%

Tab.1. Ethnic Composition of Kvemo Kartli (Wheatley 2009: 5)

From a socio-psychological standpoint, generally, the coexistence of ethnic groups with different histories, cultures and mentalities in one region implies confrontation between them. However, mechanisms of peaceful coexistence in Georgia have a long tradition, despite significant changes that have taken place since the beginning of the 19th century, when Tsarist Russia promoted the resettlement of different ethnic groups from different areas, like in Kvemo Kartli. Guided by the imperial principle of ›divide et impera‹, the Russians did not attempt to promote the integration of ethnic minorities into Georgian society; on the contrary, it promoted conflicts between the different ›ethnoses‹ (see Voell and Abbasov in this volume). In Soviet times a process of rapprochement could be witnessed, which promoted a certain degree of integration. While the ethnic minorities in the region continued to live in isolated settlements, they worked side-by-side in the cooperatives and factories, which lead to the development of positive interpersonal relationships. The promotion of the Russian language, as lingua franca and as the language of the administration also contributed to the rapprochement of different ethnic groups. Our field material shows that the number of mixed marriages grew in this period. Mixed marriages were an additional basis for integration processes. For example, an Armenian informant from the village of Khacheni (district of Bolnisi) informed us: »Mixed marriages were frequent in communist times. In each Armenian family in our village either grandmother or grandfather was Georgian. Now, such marriages are rare, though possible. That is why our children do not speak Georgian. They learn Georgian at school, but still, this is not satisfac-

tory. They have no intensive contact with Georgians!« (Field material, Bolnisi 2010).

As a result of ecological catastrophes in Svaneti and Ajara the affected population migrated to Kvemo Kartli in the late 1980s and 1990s (cf. Trier/Turashvili 2007). The appearance of these Georgian groups in Kvemo Kartli – where the Georgians were a minority – was perceived as a nationalist Georgian strategy and opposed by the local non-Georgian population. As the majority in the region, the non-Georgian groups enjoyed certain privileges (according to some Georgian informants, they were given priority in the allocation of land or in obtaining positions in the administration). Thus, in the 1980s conflicts between these Georgian migrants and members of different ethnic minority groups became more frequent. The Georgian newcomers – many of them Svans – considered this area a part of the historical Georgian homeland, making increasing use of Georgian national symbols (Georgian flags, Christian crosses or the reopening of abandoned churches), which profoundly irritated the local non-Georgians. A political awakening of non-Georgian ethnic groups (Azerbaijanis, Armenians) could be observed as well. Individual confrontations escalated increasingly into ethnic conflicts. Although this process did not attain any outright separatist or irredentist forms, but various data, including ethnographic field materials, confirm that there were secessionist tendencies among the part of Azerbaijani and Armenian populations, particularly in those areas where they formed a majority.

In their work on what they call ›eco-migration‹ in Georgia, Tom Trier and Medea Turashvili (2007) describe the dramatic outbreaks that took place at a time of general tension in Kvemo Kartli in 1989-1990: »In June 1989 an argument between a Svan and an Azeri young man turned into a massive demonstration in Marneuli town, during which Azerbaijani activists from Marneuli, Gardabani, Bolnisi and Dmanisi, all used the occasion to raise demands for autonomy« for the region« (Trier/Turashvili 2007: 42).[3]

The confrontation was triggered by a fistfight at a taxi stand. The Svans living nearby came to help and they beat up the Azerbaijani. The Azerbaijanis attacked the Svans in response. The police was sent out from Rustavi and Tbilisi. On the following day, mass demonstrations were held in Marneuli, demanding »the expulsion of Svans from Kvemo Kartli, autono-

[3] On the Svans in Kvemo Kartli cf. the special edition of ›Caucasus Analytical Digest‹ No. 42 on ›Traditional Law in Georgia‹, ed. by Stéphane Voell, with, among others, articles by the authors: http://www.css.ethz.ch/publications/pdfs/CAD-42.pdf, accessed 12.11.2012.

my for the region, replacement of all Georgian officials with Azeri ones in local power bodies, etc. Meanwhile, Azeri groups attacked police forces in Gardabani rayon, and fighting broke out between Azeris and Georgians in Bolnisi town [...] Chaos, accompanied by demonstrations, continued until the first half of July« (Trier/Turashvili 2007: 42). It must be noted that such incidents were inspired by aggressive nationalist agitation, both among Georgians and Azerbaijanis.

Svante Cornell considers a lack of information to be one of the main causes for the tension in Kvemo Kartli in the late 1980s (Cornell 2002: 273-274). He recalls the situation in Azerbaijani-populated municipalities of Kvemo Kartli. Among the Georgian nationalists there were rumours that the Azerbaijanis living in Georgia were planning to secede and join Azerbaijan. The Georgians assembled their supporters and marched on the Azerbaijani-populated areas. The government managed to coordinate positions with the ›Azerbaijani Popular Front‹ and clarified that Azerbaijanis were against secession, thus defusing the situation and preventing any bloodshed.

Undoubtedly, the question of autonomy within Kvemo Kartli (Borchalo) was raised, but today it is expressed more in cultural than political terms: in Dmanisi, near the village of Kamarlo, the Azerbaijanis celebrate an annual ›Cultural Day of the Borchalo Turks‹. However this was not always the case. Respondents from Dmanisi recollect: »When the Svans first arrived in Dmanisi, they behaved quietly; a bit later relations became tense and it lasted for some time. Svans are very brave and bold people. They wanted to be first in the region. There were no concrete reasons or land ownership problems that inspired conflict. Svans demonstrated their power. They carried guns, cared about nothing and even beat people. After their arrival, many Azerbaijanis left the region. Then they returned and now their relations are normal, but it was different before« (Field material, Dmanisi 2009).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the fragile equilibrium that existed in the vast Soviet space was dislodged by social and political upheaval and a severe economic crisis. The situation was aggravated in Kvemo Kartli, too. The political, social and economic convulsions of the early 1990s in Georgia contributed to the migration of non-Georgians from Kvemo Kartli (the majority of Greeks resettled to Greece, Ossetians to North Ossetia, Russians to Russia, Armenians and Azerbaijanis in their historical ›homelands‹ and Russia). The empty houses in the depopulated areas were occupied by western Georgian eco-migrants refugees from the 1993 Georgian-Abkhazian war. The considerable growth of the Georgian population has changed the region's ethno-demographic balance and infrastructure. How-

ever the municipalities of Kvemo Kartli remain relatively diverse in ethnic and religious terms.

After Georgia's independence, after the announcement of Georgian as official language and after national restructuring, serious problems in Kvemo Kartli emerged. The majority of non-Georgians could not speak Georgian, which resulted in the disruption of communication between the groups. It hindered the process of the integration of national minorities into the social and political life of independent Georgia. A considerable part of the middle-aged and older, non-Georgian population feels significant nostalgia for Soviet times, even today. They yearn for those days not only because of the better material and social welfare, but also because of by-gone social relations: »In Soviet times, education was in Russian; almost all knew Russian and we spoke with each other in Russian. Now the young generation does not speak Russian and the representatives of different nationalities scarcely have contact with each other. Georgian is taught at schools but this is not enough for our children. Only those who live in mixed villages, or in close neighbourhood, know Georgian better. They even know each other's languages. In Soviet times, when we had some problem or we did not like something, we made a complaint to Moscow and thus achieved our object. But now? Our Georgia does not like Russia anymore! In those times we got everything from Moscow. If you had ten roubles, you could go to the market, you could buy all you wanted and even bring change back home! And now?! You will not be able to take even a single step! In those times, beans cost twenty kopeks, tomatoes five kopeks, cucumbers twenty kopeks. Now we do not live; we merely exist« (Field material, Tsalka 2008).

After Georgia's independence, ethnocentric tendencies were replaced by economic and ownership issues (mainly to land) as the main reasons for conflict. These were sometimes accompanied by autonomist inclinations among the minorities. The tensions were greatest in those settlements, where different ethnic groups interacted frequently. Mutual accusations were and still are made, that the respective other was in some way or another being privileged, but effective government measures (tightening of control, rule of law) have stabilised the situation. Generally, Georgians are still concerned about secessionist inclinations among the non-Georgian population. Their anxiety is in part legitimate, as witnessed in the conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia (as a result of the conflict between Georgia and South Ossetia in the 1990s, the Ossetian population left Kvemo Kartli). The territorial autonomy of ethnic minorities is seen as a first step towards secession.

Granting autonomy might increase the risk of intervention from neighbouring states. Advocates of autonomy solutions claim that they are effective conflict-resolving mechanisms. However, there is considerable reason to argue that the institution of territorial autonomy may foster ethnic mobilisation, increased secessionism and even armed conflict rather than be conducive to interethnic peace and cooperation. Giving autonomy to one region might also be regarded as discrimination of another ethnic group (Cornell 2004: 44).

At the end of the 20th century, the processes that began in Georgia on its way to sovereignty generated new perspectives in the development of relations between different groups in Kvemo Kartli. Both possible directions of development could be observed: the integration of ethnic minority groups into greater society and the strengthening of cultural differences between the groups. While the ›Rose Revolution‹ (2003, see Naucke in this volume) resulted in new democratic tendencies in the development of the state, the development of inter-cultural relations in Kvemo Kartli continued simultaneously in two opposing directions — integration and isolation.

Again, the ignorance of the Georgian language forms the main barrier to the integration of minorities today. Among the region's non-Georgian population, Georgian is spoken fluently spoken mainly by members of minorities who have lived in the capital or in poly-ethnic settlements; knowledge of Georgian is very poor in isolated, mono-ethnic areas. Recently, the state has focused on teaching Georgian to the minorities and on harmonising the education system. Special programs have been developed with the help of local and foreign NGOs, which support the teaching of Georgian to minorities and facilitate communication between different groups. There is proven interest and the knowledge of the need for knowledge of the Georgian language among the non-Georgian population (Melikishvili 2011: 444).

Knowledge of culture and religion are vital for integration. However, ethnic groups in the research area kept their distance in this regard. In the socialist period, religious practices either did not exist or were concealed as family cults. There were no conflicts on the religious level between the different confessions in Kvemo Kartli. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the turn to religion and the revival of religious practices took place among all ethno-religious groups: Orthodox churches were reopened, derelict old churches reconstructed and the new ones built. New mosques were constructed, the number of parishes grew and religious holidays were celebrated openly. In Kvemo Kartli, no serious religious confrontations have taken place (except for some minor ones in the municipality of Tsalka). The population is more or less tolerant in this respect. However, these groups

are also isolated very isolated from each other, they are secluded in their own religious ›shells‹, as stated by an Armenian informant from Bolnisi: »Azerbaijanis live far from our village and therefore we have less contact with them. They never invite us to their religious celebrations and neither do we. Azerbaijanis do not like to attend the religious celebrations of Christians« (Field material, Bolnisi 2010).

In settlements where various ethno-confessional groups live side by side, they invite each other to their religious celebrations or organise events together, like in the village of Sioni (municipality of Marneuli), where Georgians and Armenians share a church, though the church building itself is of Georgian origin. Both Armenians and Georgians go there and celebrate the celebrations of St Mariam and St George. Even Azerbaijanis from the village of Akhkula got there for these celebrations.

Azerbaijanis of the village of Gardabani are very friendly towards non-Muslims and especially towards the Orthodox Christians. The majority respect Christian monuments. The Georgian priest of the Orthodox Christian Church of Vakhtangisi admitted with some irritation that these Muslims worked much better than the Georgian and Armenian builders during the construction of the church. Muslims never smoked tobacco or cursed near the church. Some of them even took part in Christian rituals.

However, the isolation of the groups is not a determinant of their religious tolerance. Having no contact means not having conflicts, but it does not mean tolerance. A higher degree of religious tolerance is observed among those groups who have traditionally have lived close to or in mixed settlements with other religious communities. But the chance that open conflicts emerge in these situation is higher too.

In terms of integration, the situation in Kvemo Kartli could not be assessed as favourable, although some positive dynamics are present. The old and new groups have acquired certain experience in dealing with other cultures, especially on those settlements where daily interaction takes place

Our field material confirms that the character of coexistence of different groups in the multicultural region of Kvemo Kartli is determined by the culture of relations and the influence of culture as a while. This raises the issue of cultural ›code switching‹. Different ethno-cultural groups adopt elements of each other's culture via code switching. This is evident in material culture, such as in the cemeteries and their design, in the clothing of the youth, culinary traditions, feast rituals and the ignoring of some religious prohibitions. Many Muslim men in Kvemo Kartli drink alcohol and eat pork, and you will often see Georgian traditional cuisine at the table of non-Georgians and vice versa.

Intergroup relations are considerably influenced by global processes as well, which have differently affected the various groups in the region. Although certain elements in society are striving to preserve local identity, mostly through isolation, simplified international and local communication, the intensification of inter-cultural relations and economic and cultural contacts are reflected in all spheres of traditional life and culture. Most elements of society are being subjected to this transformation, resulting in the opening of relatively isolated cultural systems.

It is common knowledge that the successful implementation of an integration policy is only possible if the majority and minority groups choose to adopt such a strategy voluntarily, i.e. the minority is ready to adopt new attitudes and values, and the majority accepts these people, respects their rights and values and adapts social institutions to the needs of these groups. Social psychologists argue that the policy of integration in multicultural societies is possible if there exists a positive ›multicultural ideology‹, that is, a will to recognise cultural diversity, where ethnocentrism, racism and discrimination is reduced to a minimum and xenophobia absolutely excluded, where different cultural groups stand positively towards one another and where a desire to identify with a larger group or community exists (Berry 1997: 7). Integration implies a process where minorities have become an integral part of society, with their way of life, with their obedience to the law, through the sharing of many social and cultural values and in joint efforts to improve social conditions.

Inter-cultural communication between ethno-confessional groups in Kvemo Kartli engenders two tendencies. On the one hand the development of integration processes, the exchange of cultural elements, an increase in interpersonal and intergroup contact, mixed marriages, mutual activities, knowledge of the official language, decline in intergroup confrontations and conflicts, involvement in each other's religious practices, growth of confidence in the state and satisfaction with its activities become the basis for further civil integration. Isolationist tendencies will also appear, preserving ethno-cultural specificities, strict observation of religious and wedding practices, ignorance of the official language, lack of interpersonal relationships, weak sense of belonging to the state and separatist impulses. Despite these contradictions life in Kvemo Kartli has brought people closer, introduced them to each other's culture and forced intercultural communication.

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Giorgi Cheishvili and Natalie Wahnsiedler

Student's Report on
›Caucasus, Conflict, Culture 1‹

The conference ›Caucasus, Conflict, Culture‹ invited not only scholars to share their research results, but offered students the possibility to deepen their knowledge about the countries of Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan by listening to presentations and the exchange with scholars and experts. Moreover, it involved students more actively by enabling an active dialogue between the participants. Twenty-five students from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Germany took part in group discussions. The goal was to increase the awareness of different perceptions on the conflicts in the region. The students were divided into five groups and given the task of talking about the conflicts that had taken place in the past in the region of South Caucasus, to explicate the causes of the conflicts, but moreover and more importantly, to discuss future developments and maybe even to suggest solutions.

Two groups discussed the Abkhazian conflict, two groups the South Ossetian conflict and one group the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. To ensure that students of different nationalities work together, the membership to a group was drawn by lot. The discussions took place mostly in the evening, after the presentations and during the breaks.

On the last day of the conference, the students presented the results of their group discussions in a plenary session. They pointed out that the conflicts are seen differently depending on ethnic or national belonging. It became clear that they expected some form of compromise from the conflicting parties (or rather the possibility of new convergence between the nations/ethnic groups), not from above (from political leaders), but from below, and especially from the younger generation (and they see themselves as contributing to this development). Some students even stated that the solution of the respective conflict is only possible if the young post-Soviet generation takes the lead, as it is free of Soviet thinking. The older scholars

argued that the younger generation is still not free of prejudices. Students and scholars agreed on the point that individual exchange between two conflicting parties is necessary to reduce prejudices.

Fig. 1: Student's presentation during ›Caucasus, Conflict, Culture 1‹ in Tbilisi, November 2011 (photo: Stéphane Voell).

In retrospect, all students agreed that not the final presentation but rather the process of discussion was most important. Several challenges had to be overcome by the participants before the final presentation. For many students, participating in the conference was their first international exchange experience. The educational systems in the countries of the Caucasus are not oriented towards the international exchange of knowledge. Projects that could enable Caucasian students and scholars to share and exchange results rarely take place. Students rarely have the possibility to take part in international projects, even on the regional level. Personal relations established with the help of the project will form the basis for future partnerships and invitations to future conferences.

One of the basic challenges to overcome was language since not all students spoke English. In some cases, Russian proved to be helpful. Another challenge was the different approach to the issue of conflict. While the German students were focused more on the analysis of the conflict and the reconstruction of the events, for students from Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia, the issue proved to be more emotional. Their approach was to focus on the future and not on the past. The exchange in groups was thus also a chance to experience different scientific approaches to the same field.

The international experience proved to be helpful for rethinking one's own position.

The discussion of past conflicts was rather charged with emotions. Especially for Armenian and Azerbaijani students, the discussion of Nagorno-Karabakh proved to be deeply moving and the initial tensions were noticeable. The project was thus very important especially for Azerbaijani and Armenian students since it was the first time that they met citizens of the respective other country. ›Caucasus Conflict Culture‹ offered them the possibility to establish personal relations. All of the Armenian and Azerbaijani students said that it was very interesting to listen to how this conflict was seen from the other side of the border, irrespective of whether they accepted these positions or not.

The Georgian students emphasised the importance of face-to-face discussions on the issue of conflict for Azerbaijani and Armenian students and expressed their hope that in the future it will be possible to invite Abkhazian and Ossetian participants as well. In groups where the task was to talk about the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, it was easier for Georgian and German students to remain neutral. The Abkhazian and South Ossetian conflicts were discussed with only one (the Georgian) side present, which created some discomfort. However, it was impossible to involve young Abkhazian and Ossetian people in the project.

Fig. 2: Student's presentation during ›Caucasus, Conflict, Culture 1‹ in Tbilisi, November 2011 (photo: Stéphane Voell).

German students were actively involved in the discussions. First of all, it was interesting for them to familiarise themselves with other scientific approaches. They injected a certain degree of objectivity in the final presentations since the German students were relatively free of subjective views and discussed problems less charged with emotions than students from the conflict regions.

Informal exchange and discussions contributed in large part to the development of acquaintances. Parties that took place within the framework of the project contributed to rapprochement and played an important role in the development of personal relations between the participants from four countries. Young participants of the project had the possibility to meet each other in the informal environment of the ›Student Party‹ and discuss various issues. On the last day all the participants attended the final banquet which was organised in the manner of a traditional Georgian banquet (supra).

The project ›Caucasus, Conflict, Culture‹ was considered very productive by the participants. Activities planned and organised within the project achieved their main goals, i.e. students were able to share their knowledge with each other. It was also very important that the project and tasks given to the students made young people from the Caucasus and from Germany think about solutions to problems of the region since this can play a significant role in development of their civil consciousness and prevent future problems. One of the most important achievements was the successful dialog between Armenian and Azerbaijani students. Personal relations between future colleagues from these conflict countries can affect the improvement of relationships between the Azerbaijani and Armenian people beyond scholarly exchange. ›Caucasus, Conflict, Culture‹ gave students the possibility to improve their teamwork skills on the international level. Participants in the project expressed their hope that the project will continue and grow and that it will be possible in the future to involve young people from other conflict regions in the Caucasus.

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