

**Ethnic Parity and Democratic Pluralism in Dagestan:**

**A Consociational Approach**

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What factors permit some ethnically and religiously segmented societies to avoid large-scale violence while others sink into protracted conflict? The collapse of the Soviet Union has given rise to a variety of plural societies, the principal common feature of which has been their rapid, and seemingly irrevocable, descent along a trajectory of ethnic conflict, political separatism, and socio-economic disintegration. Nowhere has this collapse had more tragic consequences than the Caucasus where, with rare exceptions, all administrative units have approximated this trajectory to varying degrees. This study focuses upon perhaps the most dramatic of those exceptions.

The absence of protracted ethnic conflict in the Russian Republic of Dagestan stands in stark contrast to its neighbors in the region, and indeed to the Russian Federation considered as a whole. For whereas the latter has been mired in horrific ethnic conflict just across Dagestan's border, in Chechnya, Dagestan has largely avoided such difficulties.

This is especially remarkable in that, even by regional standards, Dagestan is distinguished by its extremes of ethnic diversity and economic deprivation. Indeed, Dagestan has been depicted (falsely, we will argue) as a miniature Soviet Union on the verge of disintegration. With more than thirty-four ethnolinguistic groups, Dagestan is by far the most ethnically heterogeneous of Russia's republics. Apart from Chechnya, it is also the poorest. Since these conditions have been compounded by the rigors of social transition; by the collapse of a central authority that previously guaranteed order and subsidized most of the Dagestani economy; by an influx of refugees from the three bordering republics that have been mired in violent ethnic strife; by pressures of Islamic fundamentalism; by a virtual blockade during the first

Chechen conflict; by relative isolation following that conflict; and by two cross-border invasions from Chechnya that played upon Dagestan's internal ethnic and religious cleavages, there would seem to be few localities with a greater potential for ethnic civil war.

Surprisingly, Dagestan is among the few administrative units in the Caucasus to have avoided this fate. To be sure, there have been, and will continue to be, cases of serious conflict in the republic. Dagestan, undeniably, is mired in crime; kidnapping has been fashionable; and, apart from Chechnya, no Russian region has a higher incidence of terrorist acts. But mechanisms existing within Dagestani society have so far prevented these trends from escalating into protracted ethnic conflict. Ethnic relations in Dagestan are extraordinary not only for their rich diversity, but also for their relative tranquillity.

Moreover, the results of the 1999 invasions by Chechnya-based militants have been nearly as cathartic for Dagestan as they have been catastrophic for Chechnya. While the war resulted in the devastation of Grozny it stimulated a dramatic improvement in relations between Moscow and Mahachkala, Dagestan's capital, and has contributed to the stability of the republic as a whole. Federal financial support for the republic has increased 270% since 1999, and the invasions actually helped Dagestan to resolve a number of previously intransigent social and political problems (Kisriev and Ware 2000b).

These developments invite questions: Why have Dagestan's fortunes differed so dramatically from those of Chechnya, with which it has close ethnic, religious, and historical connections? Why has Dagestan neither disintegrated among various separatist movements, like the Soviet Union, nor been engulfed by enduring ethnic conflict, like Russia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, etc.? What accounts for the relative stability of Dagestan's political institutions and ethnic relations in the midst of its social and economic decay?

Paradoxically, it appears to be Dagestani society's intricate ethnic structure, the very cause of some of its most pressing problems, that has inhibited conflicting elements from taking radical steps.

This has involved the development and preservation of a complicated and often precarious parity among the thirty-plus ethnic groups that comprise the peoples of Dagestan.

We will suggest that Dagestan's political stability is drawn initially from its traditional social structure, and sustained, since the ratification of its constitution in 1994, by a political system that is compatible with consociational models. Indeed, we will suggest that there may be certain similarities between the former and the latter. Yet while we suggest that Dagestan's political stability owes much to its quasi-consociational political system, we also find developments that offer to augment theories of modernization and consociational democracy. While some of these are attributable to Dagestan's social traditions, others derive from its recent socio-economic transformation. Hence, this study might be regarded as suggesting a need for the broader extension of consociational analyses to the problems of transitional societies.

We begin with a brief review of the relevant literature before focusing upon Dagestan's social traditions and political institutions in order to assess their compatibility with consociational models. We conclude by considering ways in which the Dagestani case diverges from some existing models.

### **What are the causes of ethnic conflict and accommodation?**

Whereas cultural pluralist theories have conceived of ethnic conflict as a clash of incompatible values (Furnivall, 1948; Kuper/Smith, 1969; Parsons, 1964; Smith, 1973; 1979; 1981; 1983; 1986; 1988; 1990; 1991a; 1991b; 1992), modernization and economic interest theories consider conflict as the struggle for resources and opportunities that are valued in common (Allensworth, 1998; Barrera, 1969; Bates, 1974; Brass, 1976; Deutsch, 1956; 1969a; 1969b; Grancelli, 1995; Melson/Wolpe, 1969; Pennar, 1971; Perdue, 1995; Pirages, 1972; Sigelman, 1971). Where cultural pluralist theory stresses separation and isolation of the different ethnic groups, modernization and economic interest theories emphasize contact and competition. Where one speaks of divergence and disengagement, the other underscores convergence and consensus.

This debate has been echoed in various consociational models of ethnic accommodation. Arend Lijphart (1977a) defines consociational democracy “in terms of both the segmental cleavages typical of a plural society and the political cooperation of the segmental elites.” He explains that in a consociational democracy “the centrifugal tendencies inherent in a plural society are counteracted by the cooperative attitudes and behavior of the leaders of the different segments of the population,” and he emphasizes that pragmatic accommodation among elites is the principal feature distinguishing the consociational model. In particular, Lijphart’s account has lent currency to concepts of a “grand coalition of the political leaders of all significant segments of the plural society” and the “mutual veto or “concurrent majority” rule, which serves as an additional protection of vital minority interests.

Many consociational models (Esman, 1986; 1994; Horowitz, 1975; 1985; 1993; Kymlika, 1994; Lijphart, 1977a; Nordlinger, 1972) have involved a macrostructural emphasis upon proportionality among ethnic groups and the expression of ethnic autonomy through federal arrangements. Yet while the view that territorial boundaries should correspond with ethnic divisions has received considerable support (Beloff, 1983; Duchacek, 1977; Kymlika, 1995; Lijphart, 1977a; Watts, 1992; Wheare, 1988), some scholars (Esman, 1986; 1994; Horowitz, 1975; 1985; 1993; Nordlinger, 1972) have been more cautious, and a few (Lipset, 1960; 1963; Ware 1993, 1998b) have defended the Madisonian contention that ethnic cleavages are beneficially crosscut by territorial boundaries. To one extent or another, all of these investigations have underscored the importance of approximate long-term parity, proportionality, reciprocity, and autonomy in achieving accommodation among ethnic groups. However, none of these studies has considered a case that compares with the ethnic heterogeneity of Dagestan.

### **Who are the Dagestanis?**

Dagestan is by far the most ethnically and linguistically diverse republic in the Russian Federation. The Republic’s people are culturally, linguistically, and territorially divided among more than 30 recognized ethnic groups, ranging in population from 1000 to more than 500,000. Dagestan’s multi-national political

system is not only an ethnographic peculiarity, but a complicated framework which has evolved over several centuries, and which has long supported the whole of the socio-political system. The stability of the society, bursting with all sorts of serious problems is dependent upon a complex balance of power among ethnic elites, each with a power base in one of these groups. Most of these groups have their own language, living, for the most part, in newspapers, magazines, theater, and television programs, as well as village conversation.

Some of these belong to a single Dagestan branch of the Ibero-Caucasian languages. These include Andis, Botliks, Karatints, Akhvakhs, Bagulals, Tindints, Chamalints, Godoberints, Tsezs or Didoyts, Khvarshints, Ghinukhts, Beshtints or Kaputchins, Gunzibts, and Archins. All of these groups identify themselves as Avars, which is consequently Dagestan's largest ethnic group. Avars total 577,100 persons (all ethnic statistics are approximations, see Kisriev 1999), or 28% of Dagestan's 2,137,600 people (July 1996).

The second largest group is the Dargins, including Kubachins and Kaitags, who comprise 16% of the population, with 333,000 persons. Living near to the Dargins, in the central regions of the Dagestani highlands, are approximately 100,000 Laks, constituting 5% of the total.

The Lezgins occupy the southernmost tip of Dagestan, traditionally inhabiting an area that extends from the Caucasian highlands to the shores of the Caspian Sea and into neighboring Azerbaijan. Unlike the Avars, members of this group are registered officially as separate nationalities. These are proper Lezgins, with 250,000 people or 12.5%; Tabasarans, with 95,000 or 4.5% of the population; Rutuls comprising 17,000 or 0.8%; 16,000 Aguls with 0.75%; and 6,500 Tsakhurs, for 0.3% of the total.

On the Caspian lowland to the north of Derbent, back to the foothills and north on the Tersko-Sulack plain live an Altaic people known as the Kumyks, whose language belongs to the Turkik branch. Kumyks number 268,000 people, or 12.5%. In the same region, and predominantly in the Khasavyurt district, live Chechen-Akkins, or Aukov Chechens, a Veinakh people. 95,000 Dagestanis, or 4.5%, are of Chechen ethnicity.

North of these groups, along the Terek River, in the Kizliar and Trumovsky districts, and including the town of Kizliar are concentrated 150,000 Russian nationals comprising 7% of Dagestan's population. In the semi-arid region further to the north live 35,000 members of another Turkik group. These Nogais make up only 1.6% of Dagestan's population, but there are another 37,000 Nogais nearby in Chechnya and the Stavropol region of Russia.

Though Sunni Muslims predominate, Dagestan also contains 90,000 Shiite Azeris<sup>1</sup> constituting 4.2% of the population, and significant populations of Christians and Jews. In the southern part of the Caspian lowland, in the town of Derbent and in the nearby foothills, live 12,000 mountain Jews, known as Tats whose language belongs to the Iranian group. Together with another 6,000 Jews residing in Dagestan they comprise 0.8% of the population.

While Dagestan's cities have long been multiethnic, the countryside traditionally has been a mosaic of ethnic territories. Recently, economic and political pressures, most notably from refugees, have increased ethnic heterogeneity in rural areas. There the scarcity of land and the paucity of economic development have yet to deter the expansive birth rate. The population has doubled in the last thirty years, and the Republic regularly appears at or near the bottom of the list of Russian republics for a wide range of socio-economic indicators.

### **Why has Dagestan diverged from Chechnya?**

Sometimes Dagestan appears at the bottom of such lists alongside of Chechnya. Yet a casual glance at the indicators sometimes may be deceptive, for developments in Dagestan and Chechnya are following remarkably divergent paths. In August of 1999, the extent of this divergence came equally as a surprise to Chechen militants, such as Shamil Bassayev, and to Kremlin leaders, such as Vladimir Putin.

Muscovites tend to assume that all of the dark-complected peoples of the Caucasus are united in their hostility to Russian rule. Hence, both Muscovites and militants were thrown off guard in August 1999 when Dagestanis overwhelmingly affirmed their solidarity with Russia, and resisted a series of invasions

by guerillas based in neighboring Chechnya and bent on the establishment of a radical Islamic state. Given the close geographical, historical, ethnic, and religious ties between Dagestan and Chechnya, how can their divergence to be explained?

The explanation for these events begins with the development of Dagestani political relations during the recent social transformation. The collapse of the authoritarian state structure led to the reemergence of traditional values, institutions, and social organizations. Prior to both Czarist and Soviet regimes, Dagestani life was dominated by a system of *djamaats*. A *djamaat* is a community organized politically and defined along territorial and historical lines. Typically, it is a village or a group of villages with an historical connection. Each *djamaat* consists of a few, and sometimes as many as ten, different tribal or ancestral structures, known as *tuhums*. Each *tuhum* is a broadly extended and closely connected family. Governments of the *djamaats* traditionally consisted of councils of elders drawn from each of the constituent *tuhums*. This is to say that a traditional *djamaat* might be considered as a proto-consociational society in so far as it is a plural association consisting of segmented kinship structures, and governed cooperatively by elites drawn from each of these segments. The independent *djamaats* were governed by *adat*, customary and sometimes written law, which structured a complex of economic, political and socio-cultural norms that collectively distinguished Dagestan as a coherent cultural entity.

For more than 500 years, Dagestan has been a separate country, set apart from Shiites in the South, Christians in the West, and Chechens to the North. From the end of the fifteenth century, Dagestani life was defined, not by tribal relations, but by the civil and political structures of the *djamaats*, which operated in a manner analogous to the ancient *poleis*. From this period forward, the civil and judicial structures of the *djamaat* successfully transcended ethno-tribal connections, which thereafter gradually diminished in their significance. The *adat* restricted the intra-tribal solidarity among members of the *djamaat* and demanded the subordination of kinship concerns to the political integrity of the community.

Despite the independence and sovereignty of the *djamaats*, a unified Dagestan emerged through common faith in Islam and an integrated intelligentsia consisting of educated *alimi* (Dagestanis typically do not use “*ulama*”). Hence, Dagestan’s ethno-linguistic diversity did not play a decisive role in its early political development. Citizens of most *djamaats* spoke the same language, but this was not the reason for their connection. On occasion, indeed, ethnic homogeneity of some *djamaats* tended to provoke resorts to artificial extra-ethnic distinctions. In short, ethnic identification was not a factor in the socio-political discourse of traditional Dagestan. Rather it has been traced to Soviet ethnic policies (Ware 1998b), and to the national movements that sprang up in the late 19880’s and early 1990’s as loci of grassroots agitation and elite legitimation (Ware and Kisriev 1999 and below; Kisriev and Ware, 2000c).

Though the national movements remain a factor, their significance has faded as the social transformation has progressed, and especially as Dagestan’s 1994 constitution provided new sources for authority. Gradually, the national movements have given way to traditional structures of social solidarity, which are now consolidating as an informal foundation of the formal political system. Thus, the *djamaats* have begun to reemerge through the course of the transformation and the consequent struggle for control of the economic and political legacies of socialism. Despite the superficial appearance of national movements and Western-style political parties, Dagestani political life has settled increasingly into its traditional patterns.

The resulting political organizations may be described as “ethnopolitical parties” since they display many attributes of Western-style political parties (below). However, ethnopolitical parties are peculiar in that their entire membership and base of support consists of a single *djamaat*. An ethnopolitical party may include some activists from another ethnic group, but all key positions of leadership and support are filled by *djamaat* members. Every ethnic group receives representation through its ethnopolitical parties, yet because ethnopolitical parties typically are concerned primarily with local interests they do not represent an entire ethnic group. The leaders of ethnopolitical parties may unite with leaders of the same ethnicity, but they may also form alliances against other leaders of their ethnic group by uniting with other ethnic groups. As a result, Dagestan has

seen the emergence of *djamaat*-based elites (below). The elites devote all of their efforts to maintaining and strengthening their control over their supporters by proportionate measures of pressure and concession.

Though close ethnic cousins, geographic neighbors, and historic allies of the Dagestanis, Chechens have a significantly different social structure. The foundation of the Chechen social order was not the *djamaat*, but a complicated system of kinship relations and norms. Whereas the Dagestanis found order and security in a territorially and administratively distinct political entity, Chechens drew support from a multi-leveled hierarchy of extra-territorial tribal relations. The fundamental differences in their social structures have profoundly affected values and behavior in the two neighboring republics.

In Chechnya, kinship ties are organized within a seven-level hierarchy that begins with the nuclear family, or *dozal*, runs through the extended family, or *dja*, and culminates with the *k'am*, consisting the entire Chechen people. However, the predominant Chechen social organization is the *teip*, or clan, characterized by its remarkable cohesion and group loyalty. Members of a *teip* will not betray each other and will sacrifice mightily for the group. The strong ties of the *teip* extend far back into time and are not diminished by spatial separation. No matter how far apart they may reside, Chechens maintain their *teip* connections. While inter-tribal village relations may play an important role, the *teip* remains the preeminent social structure.

In 1994, all Chechens were united as a *k'am* in their common struggle with Russia. However, in the course of the war and during subsequent years, Chechen military and social structures gradually reverted to their tribal foundations. A member of one *teip* is loath to place himself under a commander from another *teip*, and conversely all Chechen field commanders became aldermen of their *teips*. After the war this peculiarity became the major obstacle for the formation of the national political institutions and state discipline. Since only Islam transcended the *teips* religious appeals intensified with the entrenchment of kin-based political factions

At nearly any time in 1998 or 1999, Chechnya's President Maskhadov could have been overthrown by a warlord from any Chechen *teip*. However, his successor would prove equally unable to create a unified Chechen state. Except in the most acute crisis, Chechens will never submit to leadership from any *teip* other than their own, and each *teip* will remain a rival of the others. Chechens function as a *k'am* only in the face of a clear external threat and are unable unite themselves under their own power. They simply lack a tradition of a supra-familial political organization. Hence, after August 1996, when Chechnya was faced with the responsibility for organizing an authoritative political structure, the result, instead, was a catastrophic social implosion, which has engulfed all of Chechnya, and within which the subsequent war is merely a later phase.

In compensation for this absence of political organization, many Chechens had recourse to three expedients, all of which proved disastrous. First, many Chechens found comfort in their national mythology. In their ferocious resistance of Russian imperial forces in the early nineteenth century Chechens united with their Dagestani neighbors under the legendary Imam Shamil, who was himself Dagestani. The enduring legacy of the struggle was an heroic mythology that served as inspiration for, and drew further intensification from, the 1994-1996 conflict. Chechens like to say that a Chechen fighter is worth one Russian tank or a hundred Russian soldiers. Yet this warrior mythology is self-destructive particularly because it is self-perpetuating.

As a principal feature of Chechen self-conception, Islam also served as an expedient through which many Chechens sought to address the deficiencies of their political organization. Sufi brotherhoods, which were the organizational basis of Imam Shamil's nineteenth century resistance, have emerged as a principled force for education, moderation and tolerance in neighboring Dagestan. Yet their role in Chechnya was complicated not only by warrior mythology and clan-based membership, but by an ideological intensification that occurred after 1996 as competing clan leaders staged appeals to Islam in order to acquire political legitimacy. It was also complicated by the introduction of Wahhabite Islamic

fundamentalism, which spread rapidly through Chechnya and Dagestan with the help of supporters in the Persian Gulf, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

It is not simply the case that Wahhabism, and more tangible influences from the Gulf, have interfered with Chechen unity, but also that traditional inter-teip cleavages, and more recent political rivalries, found expedience in puritanical Islam. Competing groups made Islamic appeals as a means of legitimizing their claims vis a vis one another. This expedient was crucial insofar as these same cleavages prevented the Maskhadov regime from establishing the traditional foundations of political legitimacy: law and order, economic stability and growth, public services, etc. Due to the entrenched nature of the Chechen kinship system, inter-clan political legitimacy can only be established through appeals that are external to Chechnya in one form or another: Prior to August 1996 and after September 1999, the appeal for Chechen unity was framed transcendentally in opposition to Russia. Between September 1996 and October 1999 that same appeal was framed transcendentally in terms of political Islam. The latter is an import, no less than the former. Wahhabism is spiritually alien to the North Caucasus.

Theocracy may have been the only hope for an independent Chechen unity, but it is incompatible with Dagestani politics and social organization. However, the absolutist, and consequent proselytizing, features of Wahhabism, together with cleavages in Dagestani society, and the expansionist aspirations of both local and international adherents, rendered a strictly Chechen theocracy impracticable.

The cycle is also vicious in its economic ramifications. In the Northeast Caucasus, Wahhabism holds a special appeal to those that are hopelessly impoverished, geographically isolated, and otherwise disenfranchised. When the Chechen kinship system of social organization interfered with the establishment of law and order requisite to the organization of a legitimate economy it contributed to the impoverishment and despair of ordinary Chechens. Some of them resorted to the raiding traditions that are also a part of their national mythology, thereby further impeding legitimate economic development. Economic instability contributed to the appeal of puritanical Islam, which offered, in addition to consolation, dignity, meaning, and foreign financial assistance.

These forces have fed upon one another in a maelstrom of self-perpetuating lawlessness, in which even military triumph becomes a contributing factor. The Khasavyurt agreement that ended the first Chechen conflict in 1996 on terms that were largely favorable to Chechnya also contributed to the Chechen myth of self-sacrificial militancy, resurrected kinship rivalries, and ultimately encouraged the import of puritanical Islam. Indeed, Chechnya's supreme Islamic leader, Mufti Akhmad- Khadzhi Abdul Kadyrov, who took up arms against Russian troops in the previous conflict, has defended the current Russian occupation of Chechnya on the ground that it is preventing civil war among Chechnya's rival factions (Moscow 'Argumenty i Fakty', 9 February, 2000, page 7).

By contrast, the traditions of the Dagestani *djamaat*, transcending both kinship and ethnic structures, provide a basis the stabilization of a political system, which however fragile, has nevertheless endured in the face of extraordinary crises, and which increasingly provides for peaceful integration into Russia's federal system.

Small-scale political organization was ideally suited to Dagestan's rugged terrain, where groups cluster in alpine valleys, and the people on the other side of the mountain speak a different language. But after the revolution, when the Soviets combined its diverse ethno-linguistic groups to form the Republic of Dagestan, the traditions of the *djammat* became the basis for a political organization that transcended not only blood, but ethno-linguistic barriers. Unlike the Chechens, who never accepted Russian rule, the Dagestani's developed a trans-ethnic national identity and settled fairly comfortably within the Soviet federal system, which was, for them, in some respects, the *djammat* writ large. Today most Dagestanis are nostalgic for that system, which brought them pavement, plumbing, electricity, education, sexual equality, and security.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Dagestanis reflexively remained within the Russian Federation, adopted a new constitution in 1994, and set about the development of a unique political system, as described in the following sections.

These differences in the social structure of Dagestan and Chechnya were underscored in September 1999 when the Chechen-based insurgents announced that their dual invasions of Dagestan were parts of the first phase of a tripartite campaign, named for the three Imams, Gazimagomed, Gamzatbek, and Shamy, who waged war upon the *djamaat* system in order to unite the highlanders of Dagestan with their Chechen allies against nineteenth century Russian imperialism.

These same differences have resulted in an underlying anti-Chechenism which played an important role in the unified Dagestani reaction against Wahhabi rebels and their Chechen supporters in the high mountains of Avaria. In Dagestani public opinion, local Wahhabis were “traitors” and Chechens were “invaders” or an “occupying force”.

Thus Dagestan and Chechnya present a stark contrast inviting further study. Hallmarks of the Chechen tragedy have been factionalism and self-seeking ahead of solidarity and state building, in a society that is capable of uniting only when it faces an acute external threat. In each of these respects the Russian macrocosm sometimes seems to mirror the Chechen microcosm, and for the moment at least, it is striking that neither society seems to be capable of uniting except through its violent struggle with the other. While Dagestan lacks neither factionalism nor self-seeking it nevertheless has been able to channel these forces into a unified Dagestani identity and an authoritative political system. The traditions of the *djamaat* at the informal foundation of Dagestan’s political system have much to do with this fragile success, but so does the quasi-consociational expression that those traditions have received in Dagestan’s constitution.

### **The Constitutional *Djamaat***

The 1994 constitution echoes traditions of the *djamaat* insofar as it provides a codified framework for transcending kinship structures through the cooperative interactions of elites. Dagestan’s ethnic diversity is the defining feature of its political system, which conforms with consociational models at a number of different points. Article 88 of the Constitution requires that “there cannot be more than one representative

of each of fourteen major ethnic groups” on the Republic’s chief executive body, the *Gos Soviet* (State Council, or SC); and a representative of the same ethnic group cannot “be elected Chairman of the State Council for two consecutive terms.” (Art. 93) Indeed, the collegial nature of this executive has a consociational basis. Dagestanis have thrice rejected referenda (most recently on 7 March 1999) that would have created an individual presidency for fear that it would give too much power to a single ethnic group. The Chair of the SC is elected by its members for a fixed term, a restriction intended to provide for the rotation of the Chair among the Council’s members. This system of rotation was devised as a compromise among ethnic elites who feared, firstly, a violent and precipitous ethnic struggle for this powerful position, and secondly, the loss of ethnic balance through the influence of an individual executive. The Chair of the SC appoints two Vice-chairs.

While institutionally distinct from the SC, the Cabinet of Ministers (*Soviet Ministerov*) is subordinate to the executive power of the latter. The ministers are responsible to the Chair of the SC and not to that body as a whole. Hence, the Chair is the most powerful position in the land. The Head of the Cabinet, or Prime Minister, (a Kumyk named Hizri Shiksaidov) is at the same time the one of the two Deputy Chairmen of the SC. By convention the highest officials in each branch of government are selected from different ethnic groups.

Under the new Constitution, representatives to the new People’s Assembly (*Narodnoye Sobraniye*) were first elected in March 1995, and again in March 1999. While the first election was highly contentious, involving violent incidents and several fatalities, the second election proceeded more smoothly. The Assembly consists of 121 members, of whom the Chairman, 2 Deputy Chairmen, the heads of 5 standing committees, and 2 or 3 members of each committee (about 25 people), serve on a continuous basis. Some members are popularly elected and others are appointed by the rayons (counties). The function of the Assembly is largely restricted to legislation and budgetary allocations.

However, the People’s Assembly also comprises one half of the Constitutional Assembly. The latter is formed from the entire People’s Assembly plus an equal number of delegates (i.e. 121 + 121=

242 total delegates) elected from the municipalities and rayons particularly for the occasion of any given convention of the Constitutional Assembly in the same ethnic proportions (see below) as the delegates to the People's Assembly. The Constitutional Assembly considers Constitutional Amendments and elects members of the SC.

Each member of the Constitutional Assembly can nominate one candidate for the SC, and the three individuals from each ethnic group with the greatest number of nominations are then placed on a ballot for the SC. Any member of the Constitutional Assembly may vote for any SC candidates regardless of nationality. This system of selection promotes political integration and stability insofar as it favors individuals with cross-national support. Due to the extent of Dagestan's ethnic diversity, candidates with support from several nationalities are likely to receive more nominations than those whose support is concentrated within a single group. Single group candidates are even less likely to triumph in the Assembly's final vote. It is significant that no leader of a national (mono-ethnic) movement has been elected to the SC. Those who are elected are regarded as the most influential members of their ethnic groups, but they do not attain that position through ethnic chauvinism. This process is intended to ensure that the government is made up of individuals and interests that favor stability and seek moderate and conciliatory solutions to conflicts occurring between segments of the population.

Yet the power of the People's Assembly has been increasingly overshadowed by the growing executive power of the SC. In particular, the Chairman of the Assembly has come to be significantly less powerful than the Chairman of the SC, and the power of the latter is growing. This imbalance has a destabilizing potential, for Dagestan is edging toward a *de facto* presidential-style system, which it has thrice rejected. Moreover, the first (and only) Chairman of the SC, a Dargin named Magomedali M. Magomedov, declined to yield his position at the end of his two-year term, precipitating a constitutional crisis.

The Constitution stipulates that the SC should be elected at 4 year intervals, but the first SC

(according to the transitional chapters of the Constitution) was elected only for two years. By February 1996 it became clear that Magomedov would not surrender power in June at the end of this two year term, but intended to continue for a further two years. The Assembly, led by an Avar named Mukhu Aliev, initially resisted this move. However, all non-Avar representatives were quickly offered incentives by the executive branch. By March, Avar representatives found themselves insufficiently numerous to prevent the Assembly from extending Magomedov's term of office for two years on the grounds of "exceptional circumstances". The Avars appealed to the Constitutional Court (*Constitutionnyi Sud*), which upheld the extension on 19 March. Nevertheless, on 21 March the Assembly voted to convene the Constitutional Assembly. The vote of this Convention on 22 March finally extended the term of the SC by two years, until the summer of 1998. In the Spring of 1998, Magomedov maneuvered to obtain support of two-thirds of the People's Assembly for a constitutional amendment permitting the Chair of the SC to seek a second term.

On 25 June 1998 the Constitutional Assembly met to select from among two candidates for the Chair of the SC: Magomedali Magomedov and Sharaputdin Musaev. The latter is, like Magomedov, a Dargin, who served as Chairman of the Republic's Pension Foundation prior to his removal in 1999 on charges of corruption. Musaev and other officers of the Foundation made their fortunes by regularly delaying pension payments and using the money to make millions of dollars for themselves. In a secret ballot Musaev received 78 votes to Magomedov's 162. The Assembly also approved Magomedov's nomination of a Shikhsaidov for Prime Minister.

These events were followed by the nomination and election of the remaining 12 members of the State Council. Only three seats were unopposed: in contests for seats allotted respectively to Aguls, Russians and Tats one of two candidates withdrew in favor of the other. In the cases of the Aguls and Tats the remaining candidate was a woman. Candidates for the nine remaining seats won by slim majorities. Nearly fifty percent of the SC are new members from the following nationalities: Avar,

Lezgin, Lak, Rutul Tabasaran, and Tsakhur. Representatives were re-elected from the following groups: Agul, Azeri, Chechen, Dargin, Kumyk, Russian and Tat.

### **Does Dagestan's electoral system display consociational features?**

Dagestan's electoral system is designed to avoid the marginalization of any group and to ensure the representation of all nationalities in proportion with their numbers. These objectives could not be ensured unless the authorities had complete control of the nomination process. Though the Communist Party previously exercised such control, this is no longer feasible. During recent elections the government consequently has depended upon informal agreements among ethnic groups. Where this is insufficient the Electoral Commission has the authority to allocate seats to members of a given ethnic group.

Article 72 of the Dagestani Constitution establishes that in the People's Assembly "representation of all the peoples of Dagestan shall be guaranteed." A Law on Elections to the People's Assembly of Dagestan lays down a procedure guaranteeing the representation of all the constituent nationalities in proportion to their share of the Republic's population. Of the 121 single-mandate electoral districts for elections to the Assembly, 66 districts with multinational populations are designated by the Electoral Commission as "national electoral districts" (e.g. an Avar district, a Lezgin district, etc.). Within these districts only candidates of a single pre-determined nationality can run for election, though voters of all national groups may select from among these candidates. This is done to avoid inter-ethnic confrontations during elections and to achieve the necessary proportions of ethnic representation. Of the 66 nationally defined electoral districts, 12 are Avar districts, 12 Kumyk, 10 Russian, 7 Dargin, 5 Tabasaran, 5 Azeri, 4 Lezgin, 4 Chechen, 3 Lak, and 2 Tat, 1 Nogai, and 1 Tsakhur.

Most of the remaining 55 electoral districts are in mountainous regions, whose populations are largely mono-ethnic. The exception was the Rutul region, where two electoral districts were established: one for the Rutuls and one for the Tsakhurs, the least numerous of the Republic's peoples. Table 1 shows that as a result of these careful arrangements, each of Dagestan's 14 principle ethnic groups achieved, in

1995 as well as in 1999, a representation in the Assembly that was almost precisely proportionate to its representation in the total population. However, the proportion of Chechen representatives was somewhat lower, and that of Dargin representatives was slightly higher, than their respective population proportions. Notably, for an Islamic society, the Tats, or Mountain Jews, have benefited, in both Assemblies, from slight over-representation.

#### Table 1

Some ethnic groups (such as Kumyks, Azeris, Russians, Chechens, and Tats) live entirely in multi-ethnic rural regions or in Dagestan's multi-ethnic cities. Other ethnic groups (including Avars, Laks, and Lezgins) inhabit primarily mono-ethnic territories. Thus, for example, the 21 Avar representatives who are not from designated Avar districts are from districts in which the population is overwhelmingly Avar.

This system of designated ethnic electoral districts has been widely criticized by Dagestan's democratic intelligentsia, who regard it as a violation of civic equality and the individual's right to stand for election in a district of choice. Prior to the election, in February 1999, this system was scrutinized, at the insistence of certain democratic organizations, by the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Dagestan. The Court concluded that designated electoral districts do not violate Dagestan's Constitution, and that they are consistent with guarantees that are made to minorities by Articles 1, 2, 4, 5, 72 (*Dag. Pravda*, February 2, 1999).

In addition to designated ethnic districts, Dagestani electoral laws also provided for 7 women's districts and several "professional" (or "full-time") districts. Whereas 96 representatives serve on a part-time basis, while retaining their principal means of employment, the remaining twenty-five representatives serve full-time as administrative officers of the Assembly or members of standing committees. Only individuals who are able to leave their jobs for full-time parliamentary positions are permitted to run from districts that are designated for full-time representatives. In a few cases, a single electoral district was designated simultaneously as an "ethnic", "women's", and "professional" district, so

that the only candidates permitted to stand were women of a certain ethnic group who were able to leave their jobs.

Following formal protests, the Constitutional Court abolished "women's" districts on the grounds that they violated the Constitution, Articles 19, 21 (Parts 1 and 2), and 32 (Parts 1 and 2). The Court decided that such districts undermined individual equality and discriminated against men. (*Dag. Pravda*, February 4, 1999) However, when several men immediately declared their candidacy in these districts public opinion was aroused against them. Perhaps in part for this reason, women hold six seats in the Second Assembly whereas they held only three in its predecessor.

Electoral districts are also defined nationally for regional and town assemblies so as to ensure ethnically proportional representation in local government. For example, in the Khasavyurt rayon the administration determined the ethnic allocation of the thirty-nine seats of the local soviet: Avars (14), Kumyks, (13), Chechens (9), Dargins (2), and Lezgins (1). Since most of the rayon's villages are mono-ethnic their seats were assigned to their respective nationalities. Where villages were mixed, the seat was assigned to the largest nationality. In urban areas electoral districts were reserved for specific nationalities when their members constituted the bulk of the inhabitants. Leaders of different nationalities were able to arrive at an agreement concerning the allocation of more ambiguous districts. The Electoral Commission refused to recognize the validity of candidates from groups other than that to which a district had been assigned. Neither Kumyks nor Chechens in Khasavyurt have been entirely satisfied with their allotments.

In some cases the approach is clearly unsuccessful. Consider, for example, Makhachkala's June 1994 elections in which Avars, who constitute 20% of the population, took 50% of the seats; Dargins with 10% of the population won 30% of the seats; Kumyks and Lezgins each won two seats despite the fact that they respectively constitute 14% and 10% of the cities inhabitants. With 10% of the population Laks held only a single seat, and though 20% of the city is Russian they held no seats at all. Kaspiisk elected no Lezgin, Russian, or Kumyk representatives though Kumyks count for 10% of the municipal

population, Russians for 22% and Lezgins are the largest national group. Though Kizilyurt is 15% Kumyk none of them were elected. While accepting that individuals should be elected on their merits, and while encouraging cross-national voting, the government is nonetheless concerned that such results may leave some groups feeling marginalized. In Makhachkala ten new seats were created, and a new election was held in which Dargins and Avars were barred from candidacy.

The government has been considering other electoral strategies for the achievement of balanced results. Interestingly, it has rejected the proposal of a two chamber Dagestani Assembly with a lower house representing each nationality in proportion to its size and an upper house providing equal seating for every ethnic group. In a sense, however, this system is already in place, since the SC provides a single seat for each ethnic group regardless of its size.

Alternatively, a system of proportional representation would have advantages insofar as it offered enough seats in each constituency so that all local nationalities had a reasonable chance of representation. Yet even an effective proportional system would be challenged by the ethnic heterogeneity of Dagestan's larger towns. And insofar as Dagestan's preeminent political goal is stability, a proportional system might also have disadvantages. As existing single member constituencies generally favor political centrism, Dagestani candidates are more likely to succeed when they organize across ethnic lines and avoid ethnic extremes. This has tended to marginalize the popular leadership of national movements and to favor established elites, local celebrities and others with a broad following.

### **What are the consociational features of Dagestan's political system?**

No analysis of Dagestan's political stability would be complete without consideration of its patently consociational features, for these have had much to do with Dagestan's ability to avoid, and perhaps ultimately transcend, entrenched ethnic cleavages. Yet clearly there was no intent to base the Dagestani political system upon consociational models. Consociational features of Dagestani politics may be attributed to the general demands of any highly segmented society, as filtered through ancient social

traditions which were, themselves, influenced by such demands. Hence, a consociational analysis will suit some features of Dagestan's political system better than others, and we will suggest that whereas the formal structure of Dagestani politics displays a number of consociational aspects, its informal political practices involve elements that are novel in consociational literature.

It is significant that Dagestan's traditional political system is also based upon political structures that specifically transcend the bonds of kinship through governments based upon written law and the consensual administration of elites. This was, in fact, the function of the traditional Dagestani *djamaats*, based upon the application of *adat* by councils of elders drawn from the constituent *tuhums*. In other words, the *djamaats* historically have displayed proto-consociational features that have served to influence the political culture within which Dagestan's constitution was framed.

There is little difficulty in identifying consociational elements of contemporary Dagestani politics. For example, it is difficult to imagine a better illustration of Lijphart's grand coalition than Dagestan's State Council, with its 14 representatives of Dagestan's principal ethnic groups. The original constitutional mandate for the rotation of the Chair of the SC after four year terms, was a particularly interesting arrangement from a consociational standpoint since it seemed to guarantee that no elite from any single group could retain power for long enough to establish an ethnic dynasty in the various branches of power. However, constitutional amendments to this institution (as described above) have edged Dagestan toward a *de facto* presidential system, and have risked dangerously disproportionate power in a single segment of the population. This is all the more significant in light of the 15 February 1998 election of Said Amirov, to a highly influential position as Mayor of Mahachkala. Like the Chair of the State Council, Amirov is a powerful Dargin, who, in fact, was previously appointed by Magomedov to the post of vice prime minister. Nevertheless fierce rivalries among Dargin elites thus far have prevented consolidation of ethnic power, even at the cost of numerous acts of violence among principal players.

Yet while these events bring Dagestan closer to a *de facto* presidential system, and while they

have not occurred without political cost and democratic peril, the structure of the SC fundamentally remains both consensual and consociational. It should also be emphasized that the successful elections of SC and Assembly members, though not without violent disturbances, were evidence of the success of this coalition in representing the components of Dagestani society.

However, it is also necessary to consider rather undemocratic instances of electoral fraud, which are connected to Magomedov's ascendancy and Dargin power. Evidently, Magomedov was instrumental in delivering the Republic to Yeltsin's forces during the second round of the 1996 Russian presidential election. Whereas Dagestan voted 29.2% for Yeltsin in the first round of the election, Yeltsin received 51.7% in the second round amid widespread whispering, and notable anecdotal evidence, of fraud.

Extra-democratic arrangements were even more transparent in the Duma election of 1999, which contributed to the rivalry between Magomedov and Amirov. While the State Council was supporting the Unity party, Amirov agitated for the Fatherland-All Russia (FAR) party of Luzhkov and Primakov.

An independent, public opinion survey, conducted by Kisriev just before the election, showed that 47% of the Dagestani electorate favored the Communists, 21% supported Unity, and 20% would vote for FAR. However, the Dagestani government would not permit the results of this survey to be published in Dagestan.

No doubt, this was, in part, because the Republic's government took an active role in attempting to influence the voters toward the achievement of maximum representation for the republic in the Duma, and toward the achievement of ethnic balance among the representatives. In addition to the Republic's two single mandate districts, the government judged that it had a good chance to win seats for more Dagestanis through the party lists. Toward this end, leaders did their best to insure that as many Dagestanis as possible appeared near the top of party lists. They appealed for the preference of Dagestani candidates on many grounds: the Dagestani victory in the recent war, the fact that Dagestan is the largest republic in the North Caucasus, and their "special relationship with Putin" who once proclaimed that he "loved" the people of Dagestan. They reckoned that if the Communists, Unity, and FAR each received no

less than 25% of the Dagestani vote then Dagestan would have three additional representatives in the Duma.

The following Dagestani candidates were well-placed in the party lists: in Unity was Gadjimed Safaraliev (Lezgin, Physicist, Rector of Dagestan State University); in FAR was Magomed-Kadi Gasanov (Dargin, Director of an enterprise called Adam-International, supporter of Amirov); in the Communists were Hapisat Gamzatova (female Avar) and an ethnic Russian named Sergei Reshulsky. Since Communists usually attract substantial support in Dagestan, the government found it "necessary" to "readdress" their "excessive" ballots to Unity and FAR. Dagestani officials argued that similar techniques have been employed in other North Caucasian republics where the government is less pluralistic and the electorate more pliable than in Dagestan. Increasingly, Dagestan, and perhaps other North Caucasian republics are prepared to present themselves monolithically in their dealings with the federal center. When it comes to federal politics, ethnic, ideological, and political differences are increasingly pushed to the rear.

When the election took place on 19 December there was a 74% turn-out. In the Buinaksky single mandate district number 10 (including the southern half of Dagestan, below the 43rd parallel) the victor was Gadjimurad Omarov, a wealthy businessman who has lived for the last 4 years in Moscow. He won 27.6% of the vote, upsetting two well-known political figures. They were a kumyk surgeon named Askerkhanov, who served in the Duma in 1995, and Magomed Tolboyev, former secretary of the Security Council of Dagestan, and representative in the first Duma in 1993.

Tolboyev had been expected to win, but the government had pinned its hopes upon Askerkhanov because he is Kumyk and they had no other Kumyks to promote. Omarov was accused of vote buying and there were published discussions of his controversial practices, which also included the performance of services on behalf of voters.

The single mandate Mahachkalinsky district #11 (essentially north of the 43rd parallel) went overwhelmingly for Gadjji Mahachev, leader of the Avar national movement, vice-prime minister of

Dagestan, representative to the Dagestani People's Assembly, and head of the Dagneft oil company. There was little surprise in Mahachev's 62.4% victory.

With regard to the party lists, the government managed to exceed even its own expectations, securing six Duma representatives from the republic. This success is likely to encourage further reassignment of votes in the future. Officially, the Communists received 37.1% of the vote, Unity 29%, and FAR 28.6%. Amirov allowed himself to be persuaded that FAR should receive slightly less than Unity. The Communists are protesting that their votes were "readdressed" to Unity and FAR. But Magomedov has responded that the vote was fair.

Here we should note that much of the Communist's strength is in the Lezgin south of the republic. Lezgin communists chronically accuse Mahachkala of electoral fraud, probably with some reason. The results of this election are unlikely to improve Lezgin alienation.

Dagestan's six representatives to the Duma are Gadjimurad Omarov (Avar, SMD), Gadji Mahachev (Avar, SMD), Sergei Rushulsky (Russian, KPRF), Hapisat Gamatova (Avar, KPRF), Gadjimed Safaraliev (Lezgin, Unity), and Magomed-Kadi Gasanov (Dargin, FAR). In addition, a Dagestani Lak, residing in Moscow, was elected to the Duma from Zhirinovskiy's list. The government regrets that the list does not contain a Kumyk and will surely remedy the situation through the promotion of a Kumyk to a high office in the near future.

The chairman of the Election Committee, named Shapiev, announced that the committee had received numerous complaints concerning voters who were bribed, and that these had been forwarded to the office of the public prosecutor.

While these events raise concerns about the development of democratic culture, the literature has noted that the consensualist and elitist features of consociational systems sometimes fall short of democratic standards arising from adversarial systems, such as Britain and the United States. These features are vividly illustrated by the cooperation among Dagestani political elites to maximize the republic's representation in the Duma in a manner consistent with the proportionate representation of the

republic's ethnic groups.

### **What of autonomy and proportionality?**

A second important feature of consociational models is the mutual veto, which once again, appears prominently in Dagestan's political system. Any of the 121 representatives to the people's assembly can block the passage of any legislation that significantly effects the member's ethnic group, particularly if the legislation involves ethnic boundaries or territories. As described by Article 81 of the Constitution, an override requires a two-thirds majority: "During the review of questions concerning changes to the current administrative-territorial arrangements, and likewise to the demographic linguistic, socio-economic and cultural environment of the peoples of Dagestan, in the case of disagreement with the projected draft law of a deputy or group of deputies from the said territory, a decision is reached by a vote in which not less than two-thirds of the total number of deputies of the People's Assembly agree."

Dagestan's political system has numerous arrangements to provide for proportionality, the third feature of the consociational model. Representatives to the Assembly are elected from districts that are identified with particular ethnic groups in order to guarantee remarkably precise proportionality. Elections to local government bodies often involve similar arrangements, and proportionality is an objective that guides government appointments at all levels.

Further illustration of proportionality in Dagestani politics is provided by a remarkably consociational innovation that we call "packet replacement." In view of Dagestan's complex ethnic balance personnel replacements are a difficult issue at any level of government, and this is especially the case in the higher echelons. The replacement of any high-ranking official results in a dramatic swing of the ethno-political pendulum. Suppose, for instance, that the Ministry of Health is headed by an Avar Minister who is approaching retirement. If another Avar is appointed in his place, then the Avars would achieve a dynastic control of health services, which would alarm other groups insofar as it might result in sustained Avar patronage throughout the lower echelons of health care. On the other hand, if a member

of any other nationality is appointed then Avar representation will be reduced and members of that group will be consequently disturbed. Of course, an Avar could be appointed to another position, but in the past this has led to a dangerous game of administrative musical chairs. If a Dargin replaces the Avar in the Health Ministry, then another Avar must receive a compensatory post. If this results in the displacement of a Kumyk, then the latter must be given another position even if it displaces a Lezgin or a Lak, and so on. Once the process of replacement begins, it becomes very difficult to stop. Consequently, the replacement of high level officials has been relatively infrequent.

However, the government has devised a procedure that might be described as “packet replacement.” This involves the simultaneous replacement of several ministers together with high level staff members. Selections are made by considering the size and significance of potential resistance to any candidate. Insofar as this process has a propensity to snowball even highly placed officials are unable to control it, and there is no recourse save consensual pragmatism and mutual accommodation. In 1996 the government managed to replace six ministers by this method. The shift required the abolition of one post and the establishment of another highly authoritative position, and efforts were made to appoint compliant, instead of charismatic, individuals. Opponents of the adjustment were “neutralized” by the sheer mass of interested participants and observers. The details of the procedure provide a number of helpful illustrations.

In April 1996 the appointment of a Dargin named Gamid Gamidov as Minister of Finance substantially disrupted the existing ethnic balance. Efforts to restore a condition of parity were undertaken by the SC, and by Chairman Magomedov in particular. These efforts were successful because of their introduction of an extensive packet replacement program, which resulted in changes to nearly a third of the cabinet ministers and their staffs.

#### Table 2

Table 2 shows the ethnic distribution of 7 cabinet posts before and after the introduction of packet replacement. Line 1 refers to the Secretary of the Security Council, a post that did not exist prior to the

shift. An influential Avar cosmonaut, military officer and politician named Magomed Tolboev, who formerly represented Dagestan in the Duma and who competed with Magomedov for the Chair of the SC in 1994 was appointed to the post. The second line describes the retirement of the Dargin Minister of Conservation and Natural Resources, and his replacement by a young and talented Dargin representative to the Assembly. The latter vacated his post in the Assembly, which was filled by another Dargin. Line three shows the retirement of the Dargin Minister of Social Security and his replacement by an Avar of impeccable reputation. The fourth line refers to the difficult and controversial retirement of the Avar Education Minister and his replacement by an authoritative and widely respected Lezgin. The retirement of the Avar Minister of Health, indicated by line five, led to the appointment of a distinguished member of the same ethnic group. The sixth line follows the replacement of the somewhat under qualified Lezgin Minister of Zoning and Land Use by his hardworking Russian deputy. Line seven refers to the elimination of the post of the Information Ministry, and the consequent elimination of an Avar Minister whose adamant Communist approach had earned her a reputation for obstinacy. The Ministry of Information was replaced by the State Committee of Information and the Press, which was headed by the Lak deputy of the former Information Minister.

The new appointments were carefully selected for their contribution to competent administration and ethnic parity. The success of packet replacement, in this instance is due in part to the large number of people who carefully followed the process, who had interests in its outcome, and who were able to overcome others who opposed these changes. Additionally, the retiring ministers avoided stigma and disgrace through their very numbers. This exchange took place on August 2, 1996.

A further consociational feature of Dagestan's political system is the high degree of autonomy that is permitted to each segment with regard to its internal affairs. Most of Dagestan's 39 rayons are mono-ethnic, and exercise complete control over their internal cultural and agricultural affairs. Both during and after the Soviet period the Dagestani government has supported ethnic groups and protected national cultures. Indicative of this concern is the establishment of a Ministry of Nationalities with

responsibility for external relations in keeping with the external ramifications of Dagestan's ethnic issues. It funds six national theaters (sharing three buildings) as well as locally administered, mixed cultural centers in Makhachkala and in various rayons. It supports radio broadcasts in eleven languages and television broadcasts in nine. It finances eleven newspapers in the major indigenous languages and multiple language editions of a women's magazine. Though these newspapers claim independence they are generally supportive of the government. In addition, there are numerous un-subsidized ethnic publications.

Many of the national movements (especially the Kumyk "Berlik" and the Lezgin "Sadval" have agitated for a confederated political system incorporating ethnic regions with a greater degree of autonomy. Given the partition of the Lezgins by the border with Azerbaijan, Sadval's advocacy of a new "Lezgistan" is particularly poignant, and a Lezgin autonomy within Azerbaijan reportedly has attracted some sympathy from Azerbaijan's President Aliev. In Dagestan, however, the national movements have been of declining significance since their perestroika high-point, as their leaders either rise to institutional positions, or descend into criminality. A few groups have also experimented with ethnic assemblies, but these have been without political power.

While Dagestan's approach to ethnic autonomy thus falls short of the full-blown federalism that Lijphart invokes (1977a, pp 41-4), it is consistent with Nordlinger's concern that segmental autonomy encourages secession: "The combination of territorially distinctive segments and federalism's grant of partial autonomy sometimes provides additional impetus to demands for greater autonomy... secession and civil war may follow." (1972, p 32) In Dagestan, these darker possibilities are ever-present concerns, which serve not only as a restriction on structural arrangements, but also as a force for the moderation and speedy resolution of conflicts.

The consociational literature sometimes suggests that societies with relatively few segments, perhaps three or four, provides more fertile ground for consociational democracy than do those with a large multiplicity of segments (Lijphart, 1977a, p 56). At first glance, Dagestan's thirty-plus ethnic

groups would appear to place it in the latter category. However, Dagestan has only four powerful segments. The Avars and Dargins are strongest. Their strength derives not only from the fact that they are most numerous, but also from the traditional Avar concern with power and honor and from the Dargin cultural emphasis upon wealth. Respectively following in numbers and power are the Kumyks and Lezgins. However, Lezgin culture, which prizes education, and which is the most cosmopolitan of the Dagestani ethnic cultures as a consequence of its contact with an earlier cosmopolitanism in Baku, often produces specialists, professionals and educators precluded from genuine political power by their modest salaries and scholarly proclivities.

Elites from Dagestan's other thirty ethnic groups may be compared to wandering electrons which ceaselessly transfer themselves from one of these ethnic nuclei to another in order to sustain a constantly-shifting balance of political forces. This feature becomes all the more important insofar as the larger groups are effectively complex combinations of ethnopolities, which may detach from their own ethnic group and unite with others. It appears that such features are unprecedented in the consociational literature, and when taken together with the approximate parity of the four main groups (which these features also help to sustain) it is one of the great secrets of Dagestan's political stability. From a theoretical standpoint it is of prime significance that these uniquely transient groups of elites actually strengthen the political system insofar as they facilitate a highly flexible political structure that may shift to respond to the latest crisis or to correct the overall balance against the ascendance of any particular group. Yet while Dagestan's political system responds quickly to characteristically local crises, it is often prevented by this same political fragmentation from responding effectively or with anything approaching long-term strategy. And it is deeply vulnerable to pressures being plentifully applied by all external powers.

With just over two million inhabitants Dagestan is a small political system. Lijphart argues that "When a country is very small, its reservoir of political talent will also be small. Because consociational democracy requires an exceptionally able and prudent leadership, smallness is a favorable factor only to a

certain extent.” (1977, p 66) On the one hand, this appears to be the case in Dagestan, where a lack of charismatic leadership has contributed to the social strife, political fragmentation, short-term evasions of long-term problems, and susceptibility to external pressures.

Yet it can be argued that the constant series of confrontations and crises, which are evaded (if not always resolved) by elaborate political compromises and contortions, are indicative of plentiful political talent. There are ready explanations for this talent: First, Dagestani political culture has always prized political experience and honored the opinions of its elders. Second, “*Maslat*”, meaning “reconciliation” is the key word in Dagestani politics. Third, Dagestan has a long history of independence and self-rule through which political talent has been cultivated. By tradition in Dagestani villages, each man is independent and his power depends only upon his skill. Dagestanis say: “A holy place cannot be empty”; hence, any political void will be filled. Fourth, Dagestani culture is highly competitive, as reflected, for example, in their love of sport. The intricate maneuvering of Dagestan’s political arena exercises a natural attraction for the most adroit members of the population and provides opportunity at all levels for the cultivation of their skill.

Yet this is not necessarily to suggest that the consociational features of the Dagestani system will be sufficient to ensure political stability against the republic’s enduring social and economic problems. Elsewhere, indeed, some consociational governments have proven to be brittle and transitory. And insofar as Dagestan’s political system does, in fact, conform with consociational models there are also factors that render it unique in consociational literature: 1) It has developed during the collapse of a communist regime. 2) It is forming within a larger state that is simultaneously striving to develop an adversarial (non-consociational) democracy, a state that will never accept a consociational system for itself, but that nonetheless plays a role in the segmental balancing of Dagestan’s political system. While there is minimal separatist sentiment in Dagestan, it remains conceivable that the diverging democratic forms that distinguish Dagestan’s political system from that of the Russian Federation could ultimately contribute to Dagestan’s independence. 3) Dagestan’s political system involves institutional innovations

and social idiosyncrasies that distinguish it from other cases considered in the literature on theories of modernization and consociational democracy. These include: a) the increasing salience of ethnic and religious identity as a consequence of modernization and democratization; b) the recruitment of elites; c) the development of a multiplicity of informal organizations that we describe as “ethnopolities;” and d) the rapid growth of a volatile Islamic Wahabite fundamentalist movement, at least partially in response to the pressures of modernization and democratization. We will consider these distinguishing features in sequence.

### **What is the effect of modernization on ethnic identity in Dagestan?**

The Dagestani case differs from much of those in consociational literature in terms of its response to modernization. The primary thesis of modernization theories is that assimilation and integration are promoted by the social mobilization that comes with modernization. Modernization introduces universal interests and homogenizing influences that may serve to transcend long-standing social divisions, while at the same time, stimulating new cleavages, including class and inter-generational divisions, that cut across the traditional segmentation of a plural society. Improvements, for example, in agricultural and industrial technology, transportation and mass communication have profoundly effected traditional patterns of social interaction.

In Austria, Belgium and the Netherlands this process has involved the weakening of vertical cleavages between ethnic and religious segments of the these societies, accompanied by the emergence of new horizontal stratifications, along economic, educational, and generational lines for example. Yet this is possible precisely because the consociational system has already furnished the foundation for the resolution of religious and ethnic conflicts (Dogan/Pelassy, 1990; Lijphart, 1977a). Thus modernization and consociational democracy often have been viewed as making mutually reinforcing contributions to the development of plural societies. (Dogan/Pelassy, 1990) Within this development, consociational

democracy appears as an “historical phase,” the very success of which “permits its replacement rapidly or slowly by a more competitive (democratic) model.” (Dogan and Pelassy, 1990; van Mierlo, 1986)

However, modernization theories also concede that integration and assimilation may be impeded when modernizing forces increase contacts between members of different groups more rapidly than these can be accommodated by integrative institutions. The slow process of assimilation can be reversed in modernizing societies when the increasing pace of transactions between members of different groups renders their differences more conspicuous (Deutsch, 1953; Huntington, Lijphart, 1977b). In such cases, ethnic identity and ethnic conflict may be increased by modernization.

At the same time, ethnic identity may be increased by democratization, which encourages the establishment of ethnic organizations, the formulation of ethnic agendas, and the expression of ethnic demands. In much of the consociational literature, ethnic pluralism is taken as an independent variable and democracy is treated as the dependent variable, such that the question is whether an ethnically segmented society can sustain a democratic regime. Yet this causal relationship involves an inherent reciprocity. Thus democracy also appears as the independent variable and ethnic pluralism becomes the dependent variable, such that democratization is linked to ethnic conflict. In the past decade Dagestan has been jolted by high-speed processes of modernization and democratization. Both of these have served to strengthen ethnic identification and the ethnic organization of the society (below).

Moreover, while this vertical segmentation has intensified, important cross-cutting cleavages have been diminished. An overarching ideological motivation has disappeared, though the Communist Party remains a significant force in Dagestan. Furthermore, in the last two years, we have conducted a series of surveys indicating that, despite a dramatic resurgence in the number of mosques and other religious institutions, a declining number of Dagestanis are committed to Islam. Prior to the conflict of 1999 there was a small, but rapidly growing minority, that turned Wahabite Islamic fundamentalism, partly in reaction against the Westernizing forces of modernization (below).

Thus whereas much of the consociational literature views modernization and democracy as cooperating to reduce ethnic and religious differences and promote assimilation, the opposite is the case in Dagestan.

### **How are elites recruited in Dagestan?**

Evidently Karl Jaspers was wrong in his insistence that authoritarian regimes cannot be eliminated from within. (1991, p 218) He may have been correct in his assertion that a totalitarian system cannot be changed from below, but he overlooked the possibility that the regime, and indeed the entire political system, could be changed from above when elites transform the system in order to achieve their private objectives. The demise of the Soviet Union and the rise of Russia's current political system could be described as revolution from above.

Party and government elites, along with factory managers and other industrial leaders, who were closest to the distribution of financial and material resources prior to perestroika, were best-positioned to exploit social and political changes to their own advantage. Many of these were able to amass huge resources during the social transformation. At the same time a new and generally younger elite emerged informally from among those with the energy and daring to profit from social upheaval. Preoccupied by their competition with one another, the older elite failed to prevent the rise of these new bosses in no small part because the former required the support of the latter.

The transformation of the Russian elite has been reproduced in Dagestan with peculiarities resulting from its social structure and cultural diversity. First, the abolition of the old hierarchy has resulted in markedly less reticent, more assertive elite behavior. The destruction of this reticence resulted from, and has led to, the introduction of new principles for the selection of elites. These have resulted in an expansion of elite ranks, and in the increasing complexity of interactions among them, thereby diminishing the influence exerted by any particular group of elites.

Generally, these changes resulted not so much from the replacement of old *aparatchniks* with new leaders, but from the political rise of an entrepreneurial and financial elite unknown in the Soviet Union. Whereas it might have been supposed that the collapse of the cumbersome Soviet regime would result in the simplification and rationalization of government institutions, the opposite has occurred. Since 1991 the number of state officials has increased by a factor of fifty percent in the Russian Federation, and by a factor of one hundred percent in Dagestan. This “swelling” of state agencies, together with relations between old and new elites largely determines the character of ongoing political processes.

Shortly after the collapse of the Communist regime there were few changes in the highest echelon of power. However, tendencies are rapidly developing that have significantly changed the character of political power and are now changing the personnel. There are now two principal types of influence in Dagestan, corresponding with a Weberian distinction between authority and power: 1) formal-legal authority primarily exercised by the highest officials of all three branches of government; and 2) informal, extra-legal power that depends upon a) financial capacity, b) charismatic appeal, and c) force, including violent acts and threats thereof from well-armed ethnic and religious organizations. Elites who enjoy a combination of formal and informal influence have seen their influence expand most dramatically. This intersection can be approached either by formal or informal routes: 1) High officials may enrich themselves, attracting acolytes and establishing extra-institutional support networks. 2) Popular leaders of ethnic organizations or other mass movements, and wealthy individuals may acquire official positions through appointment or popular election. Meanwhile, those elites whose power remains primarily formal or primarily informal tend to become marginalized, and in many cases, radicalized.

Old and new elites may be distinguished by the political tactics that they employ. The old regime relied upon extra-economical levers of influence, including moral and ideological inducements as well as formal-legal mechanisms of control and political repression. By contrast the new elite is largely indifferent to ideological considerations. Power is measured by the material benefits that it bestows and is supplemented by extral-legal suppression and threats thereof.

Increasingly, Dagestan has seen the emergence of a new class of political “bosses,” the primary motivation of a whom is the corporate interest of a tightly connected group of people. While the term “boss” evokes connotations of corruption and even criminality that are often appropriate in this context, it is also intended to connote an informal, highly personal, and sometimes charismatic, capacity for the acquisition, amalgamation and retention of power. Under present circumstances, it is often the case that informal operations leads to an increase in material prosperity, followed by the “bosses” entrance into formal power structures. Elections in 1997, 1998 and 1999 have provided newer elites with legitimacy and have sometimes contributed to their reconciliation with their elder peers.

Nevertheless this transition has not been smooth. In 1996-7 there were thirty-two reported cases of criminal pressure on state officials. Fourteen officials were assassinated, including seven members of the Assembly. The fact that not one of these assassinations was solved does not mean that the murders went unpunished. According to the spokesperson of the former Minister of Internal Affairs M. Abdurazakov, suspects in assassinations were often found murdered themselves. For example, suspected assassins of Representative M. Sulaymanov and former Trade Minister B. Hadjiev were murdered, as was the suspect in the beating of S. Reshulsky. Since many of these attacks involve explosions in public places, it may be observed that Dagestan’s elite is responsible for a significant portion of its terrorist activity, a fact as ominous as it is remarkable.

If these circumstances have led to increasing insecurity among Dagestan’s politico-economic elites, they have also contributed to increasing tensions between these elites and the general population. In Dagestan, where the richest ten percent is thirteen times wealthier than the poorest ten percent, there may be greater discrepancies of wealth than anywhere else in Russia. Average income in Dagestan is a third the average for Russia as a whole. This places Dagestan’s average salary below the living wage in the rest of the Federation and eight times lower than the average in Russia’s wealthier regions. Moscow’s average income, for example, is five times higher than Russia’s living wage. Moreover, debts owed in salaries to Dagestan’s two million people (a figure that includes underage, retired, and other non-workers)

is in excess of one hundred and thirty-one billion rubles. Dagestan is also among the six Russian regions with the highest debts in the payment of child allowance.

Dagestan's wealthy elite forms an increasingly tight circle. At present there are about 200 clans in Dagestan that have managed to acquire huge resources and that consequently define the system of political relations. Money that Moscow provides for the Republic is siphoned by these individuals who openly flaunt the law, leading lavish and ostentatious lifestyles in mansions and palatial, often fortified, compounds. This nucleus consists of approximately 1000 families with 6500 members (or 0.3% of the population). This highest elite is supported by another 5% to 7% of the population who have significantly improved their financial situation. Another 20% to 25% have managed, often by means of extraordinary effort, to raise their income two to five times above the living wage. Approximately, 70% of the population lives in deep, and deepening, poverty. Apart from electrification, rural life is often characterized by nineteenth living conditions. Even in the capitol, the overwhelming majority live in crumbling apartment blocks where electricity and running water are at best unreliable, and where water, when it runs, must always be treated before it can be consumed.

The increasing tensions among Dagestani elites, and between these elites and their supporters, are both unusual and unhealthy for a consociational system, which ultimately must depend upon traditions of cooperation among elites no less than upon conditions of trust between elites and their supporters.

### **How is Dagestan's traditional social structure reflected in its political system?**

These tensions reverberate along the traditional divisions Dagestani elites into ethnic groups and clans. These divisions have their own recent history. Whereas the Communist regime initially declared proletarian internationalism, it later underwent a political erosion, first effecting its creative elite and then its political and scientific elites. The last two decades of the USSR were remarkable for the increasing attention devoted to ethnic factors. Whether in Moscow or the republics, declining confidence in

established social structure led to an ascendance of personal loyalties, which developed naturally along ethnic lines. Latent nationalism sunk deep roots the decaying Soviet society.

Communist cosmopolitanism had never been more than a thin veneer on Dagestan's historically multi-national social structure, and it was initially among Dagestan's elites that this structure began to regain political significance. By the time of perestroika, ethnic political structures were completely re-established. With the collapse of the Communist regime, Dagestan's governing elite lost the support of previously existing political structures, but recovered support through informal networks of friends, relatives and community members of common ethnic heritage. Yet when grass-roots ethnic organizations began to arise, they often were resistant to consolidation by governing elites who now sought to strengthen their vertical, intra-ethnic connections. The ensuing political process focused upon competition between formal elites who sought to acquire influence over newly emergent national movements, and informal leaders of national movements who sought institutional authority.

Throughout the last decade, this transformation of Dagestan's multi-ethnic political balance has become the prevailing political factor. Those ethnic communities which were previously without political power, and which acquired political significance only insofar as they were objects of ethnic policies determined by a distant, authoritarian regime, suddenly attained political prominence. Political mobilization in the Republic was based neither upon ideological nor partisan divisions, but upon ethnic consolidation.

Each of Dagestan's ethnic segments tries to spread its influence not only in politics, but also in economic and financial concerns, education, the media, healthcare, public works, and even cemetery administration. Yet while these segments of the society compete for horizontal influence, the vertical connections within each segment are subject to proliferation and reinforcement as they are cultivated by those ethnic elites that depend upon them for support. The combination of this horizontal and vertical expansion is a circle of friends and relatives that heads the political, economic, social, cultural, religious, and healthcare organizations in each community, further entrenching the elitist elements of Dagestani

democracy.

Dagestan's genuine political organization is expressed in informal social structures built on an ethnic basis, which we call ethno-parties. Ethno-parties tend to be clan-based and local, each occurring within a *djamaat*. They possess all of the attributes of political parties: aspirations toward the expansion of their power by political means; ideological like-mindedness; organization; authoritative leadership and a broad circle of activists; financial support and support of the masses. They differ from traditional parties primarily in that leaders and supporters are all members of a single ethnic group. Larger ethnic groups such as Avars, Dargins, Kumyks and Lezgins have several such ethno-parties, the leaders of which may oppose one another and unite, if necessary, with leaders of different ethnic groups.

These ethnopolitical parties are to be distinguished from the national movements that emerged during perestroika to advocate the interests of the principal ethnic groups. In fact, the ethnopolitical parties are related to the national movements in a number of different ways. For example, the Lak national movement, "Kazi-Kumuch" became the nucleus of an ethnopolitical party, and its leader, Magomed Khachilaev, became the genuine political leader of the Laks, prior to this arrest in 1999. On the other hand, the Dargin national movement "Zadesh" has little to do with the Dargin ethnopolitical parties. Generally, national movements are subordinate to ethnopolitical parties or serve as fronts for the latter.

Constant maneuvering among these ethnopolitical parties is a major source of political instability in Dagestan; yet paradoxically it also does much to sustain the fragile balance among Dagestan's ethnic groups. Ethnopolitical parties tend to diminish the significance of Dagestan's other political, economic and ideological polarities. At the same time, they form a system of counterbalances that maintain an intricate equilibrium of ethnic power through a multiplicity of limited and countervailing oppositions. This dynamic balance, which follows from the extremity of Dagestan's ethnic heterogeneity is responsible for the unique character of Dagestani politics. Though Dagestan's numerous local conflicts sometimes become acute, they are limited by the *djamaat* structure of Dagestani politics; thus far, their failure to issue in any more than local crises, lends support to this analysis.

At the same time, the existence of ethnoparties tends to fragment the political elite and thereby inhibits the articulation and realization of common social objectives. This appears in contrast to neighboring Russian republics with titular nationalities. Perhaps for the same reason, Dagestan's recent history has not produced the charismatic leadership that has flourished in other regions of the Caucasus. Moreover, because Dagestani politics is based upon the perpetual struggle of ethnic elites it has been nearly impossible for the government to focus upon external issues affecting the Republic as a whole. Regardless of their importance external issues are at best a secondary concern, and all the more so when a tough solution is required. For a united political elite, it is relatively easy, and often advantageous to focus upon external threats and problems. In Dagestan, an effort to resolve such difficulties could only weaken the domestic position of any elites who attempted it. Any decisive solution will result in a new cleavage around which the population will polarize, dividing one's supporters and enlivening new opponents. Similar considerations often inhibit decisive resolution of domestic problems. Thus the incessant efforts of elites to counterbalance one another, and the efforts of the government to maintain stability tend to inhibit the decisive resolution of fundamental problems. As a consequence, Dagestan's external relations are chronically problematic.

For example, the internationalized border between Dagestan and Azerbaijan is a political malignancy that promises greater problems. Border controls that are at once tough, restrictive and arbitrary, are causing serious problems for the Lezgin people, one of the Caucasus larger ethnic groups. Traditionally living along the Samur River, the Lezgins were divided when the Samur became part of the border between Russia and Azerbaijan, thereby separating families and friends, buyers and sellers. Whereas the Lezgins, historically, have occupied a central position in the Caucasus, straddling the main range and the East Caspian trade route they now occupy remote, and forsaken provincial backwaters on both sides of the border. The only Lezgins who have profited from the situation are those who have formed well-armed bands of smugglers.

Moscow has created a 5 kilometer border zone on the southern edge of Dagestan. This means that the fertile Lezgin land along the Samur river valley has been placed under control of the Russian army. Naturally, the local population is strongly opposed to the creation of this military zone. Lezgin unrest may be of geopolitical significance insofar as it registers in Baku or reverberates along the pipeline that transports petroleum across the Samur and through Dagestan on its way to the West. Yet the weak and divided Dagestani elite has sought more to placate Moscow than to protect its own people.

### **What of religious cleavages in Dagestan?**

The population of Dagestan is divided equally between those who are oriented toward Western culture and values and those whose orientation is primarily Islamic. The former outlook prevails in urban areas, among Laks, Lezgins and other ethnic groups from southern Dagestan, and of course, among Russians and Russian-speaking Dagestanis. Whereas less than 50 percent of the population are fully practicing Moslems, many more identify themselves as Moslem or as upholding Moslem values. This is particularly so in Avar, Chechen-Akkin, and Dargin communities.

Table 3 presents data on Islamic religious observance in Dagestan, gathered in a series of surveys that we have conducted at intervals of six months since September 1997. Each survey involves an ethnically stratified sample of approximately 700 respondents.

#### Table 3

Dagestanis oriented toward Western values could be subdivided between communists and democrats, with the former category vastly outnumbering the latter. While this polarity is clearly articulated, it is a source of dispute only during election campaigns or private discussions. Similarly, the Muslim-oriented group is also subdivided. While most Dagestanis are traditionalist Sunni Muslims, the 1990's saw rapid growth among so-called "Wahabi" Islamic fundamentalists, who advocated the purification of local "Islamic" practices (Ware and Kisriev 2000b). Though Wahabism never accounted for more than 3% of Dagestan's Islamic faithful, they were concentrated in villages of the central

foothills and Western mountains. These include the Dargin Buynasky region and the Avar regions of Botliksky, Kisilurtovski, Khasavurtovski, and Tsumadinsky (Kisriev and Ware 2000; Ware and Kisriev 2000b). There are also reports of Wahabism in some Lezgin villages of the south.

As travel restrictions were eased, more Dagestanis made the pilgrimage to Mecca. Indeed 80% of those who have embarked on the Haj from the Russian Federation since independence are from Dagestan. This has increased the role of Persian Gulf influences and contributed to the growth of Wahabite fundamentalism.

The result was the deepening of cleavages within Dagestan's Islamic majority. Children were divided against their parents, and a tensions quickly mounted whenever a few Wahabis turned up in a village (Ware and Kisriev 1997, 2000b). In response to the Wahabi's puritanical critique of the religious establishment, the latter responded with the proclamation that paradise would be the automatic reward for anyone who killed a Wahabi. (Kisriev and Ware 2000).

Yet despite government support for traditional religious elites, Wahabism struck deep chords in certain rural areas. The roots of this movement lie not only in foreign influences, but also in the deepening poverty, in disillusionment with political corruption and social decay, and in the intolerable burden of pseudo-traditional customs (e.g. the various monetary gifts which have surrounded marriage ceremonies during the last six decades, Ware and Kisriev 2000b).

The political significance of the Wahabites is greater than their numbers would suggest. They were well-armed, and by their very presence they provided incentive for mountain populations to arm themselves for their own security. When a few villagers espoused Wahabism the entire village began arming itself. Secondly, the Wahabite critique of traditional clergy not only increases mutual enmity, but also had a radicalizing effect upon the otherwise mild traditionalists. For example, in 1997, Dagestan's Spiritual Board of the Muslims of Dagestan (DUMD) cited the Islamic prohibition against the realistic depiction of people in order unexpectedly to demand (by unanimous vote) an end to a project to erect a monument of Imam Shamil on the two hundredth anniversary of his birth. Caught off guard, the

Dagestani government canceled its decision to construct the monument to the leader of the emancipation movement of the Caucasian mountaineers. There were several armed and fatal confrontations between Wahabites and traditionalists. Yet most of these disturbances have occurred in monoethnic communities and did not escalate into ethnic conflict.

Traditional Islam in Dagestan is based in the same system of *djamaats* that has given rise to ethnoparties. In the south of the Buynasky rayon, Wahabites took control of a *djamaat* which includes the villages of Karamakhi, Chabanmakhi and Kadar. In May of 1997 the Wahabite ascendance in this *djamaat* led to a violent incident involving up to 450 armed combatants and culminating in two deaths. On 22 December 1997 Wahabis from this *djamaat* joined with Chechen raiders (comprising a total party of 30 to 120 gunmen according to various sources) to attack the 136<sup>th</sup> Motorized Brigade based in the village of Gerlakh, near Buynask. The incident resulted in 3 civilian fatalities and 14 casualties. Subsequently, the residents of this *djamaat* unanimously refused to recognize the authority of the Dagestani government, and successfully resisted intensive pressure from the authorities. In May 1998, with the failure of government efforts to reassert control, this *djamaat* became a kind of “little Chechnya” within Dagestan, serving by its very presence as an indictment of the efficacy and authority of all levels of government, from Mahachkala to Moscow. However, when this self-styled “Islamic *Djamaat*” (or “liberated Dagestan”) subsequently attacked Chechen forces in the Chechen border town of Gudermes, it was denounced by the Presidents of both Chechnya (Maskhadov) and Ingushetia (Aushev), and briefly reconciled with Moscow. Even before the conflict of 1999, the role of the “Islamic *Djamaat*” in Dagestan’s external affairs was underscored by its access to a Wahabite satellite uplink in Kizilyurt, and by the fact that its leader, Emir al Khattab, is a Jordanian married to a resident of Karamakhi.

Thus whereas Islam traditionally has cut horizontally across Dagestan’s vertical ethnic segments, Wahabism threatened to “verticalize” religious cleavages in a manner that reinforced ethnic divisions. Since the movement has had greatest appeal among Avars, Dargins, and Dagestan’s Chechen-Akkins, and since it has had least appeal among Russians, Tats, Laks, and (for the most part) Lezgins the numerous

fears and controversies that it generated were ethnically divisive. Since Wahabism spread through Dagestan's structure of *djamaats* it had potential access to Dagestan's political system through existing ethnoparties. Yet whereas that political system is well-equipped to manage ethnic conflict, it has little experience with entrenched religious cleavages. This is dramatically illustrated by the fact that the "Islamic *djamaat*" managed to establish an autonomous region, as none of the national movements has ever managed to do. Its maintenance of this autonomy against government efforts to reassert authority continues to undermine popular perceptions of government legitimacy. Its fundamentalist critique of corruption and social decay appealed to a population that had grown increasingly desperate in its poverty, disillusioned with its elites, weary with the stresses of democratization, anxious at the upheaval of modernization, and jaded with the promises of Westernization. At the same time, Wahabism radicalized Dagestan's traditional Islamic authorities and ensnared the secular government in religious controversy. Along with other external pressures, it posed the greatest threat to Dagestan's stability.

The threat was fully realized during the invasion that began on 2 August 1999. Evidently, about 50 percent of the insurgents were Dagestani Wahabis. They had been trained at military camps in Chechnya that were operated by warlords, including Emir al Khattab and Shamil Basayev, with funding from the Persian Gulf. The remainder of the insurgents, during the August invasion, were Chechens and international elements, especially from Central Asia, the Middle East, North Africa, and Eastern Europe. The second invasion from 6-15 September 1999 evidently included a greater percentage of Chechen fighters, and a lesser percentage of Dagestani Wahabis.

The conflict completely discredited Dagestan's Wahabi movement. During the war, the People's Assembly bowed to pressure from the DUMD and urgently prepared legislation prohibiting Wahhabism in Dagestan. On 16 September, the day the war ended, and after only one reading, the fourth session of the People's Assembly unanimously passed the law "On the Prohibition of Wahhabite and Other Extremist Activity on the Territory of the Republic of Dagestan."

The law establishes an official religious organization with specified duties, sanctions, and connections with the governments of the republic and the localities. Essentially, it will require that the DUMD create an internal organizational hierarchy, reminiscent, perhaps, of the communist party. In the past, the DUMD has cooperated with Dagestan's political establishment. Its internal structure has more or less paralleled that of the emergent political system, at least in so far as both are based in the *djamaats*. In the past, however, the government, while tending to favor the Islamic traditionalists, has sought to maintain a posture of neutrality on religious issues and has been reluctant to intervene in religious affairs.

All of this has now changed. With the Mufti at its head, the DUMD will monitor the "correctness" of Islamic spiritual life. "Incorrectness" with regard to issues such as domestic instruction or study abroad will be rectified through government organs of enforcement, adjudication, and punishment. Ironically, the law goes some distance toward establishing a kind of "Islamic republic," a concept strenuously resisted, in their struggle with the Wahhabis, by the vast majority of Dagestanis, and particularly by the authors of this law. Clearly, there is reason for concern.

Given the traditional fervency of religious confession in Dagestan, given that different ethnicities tend to take different approaches to Islam, and given that differences in religious attitudes also distinguish urban and rural Dagestanis, the centralized regulation of faith, and especially of spiritual instruction, may give rise to additional arenas of ethno-political cleavage, and may also contribute to greater political alienation.

In this regard, it is worth noting that the DUMD is presently dominated by leaders connected with Avar *tariqat* orders, whereas Dargins (such as Magomedali Magomedov and Said Amirov) control important political offices. Hence, there is a possibility that increased power of the DUMD eventually may contribute to tensions growing between Avars and Dargins, especially if the former attempts to use it as leverage against the latter. Indeed, in the past there have been efforts to establish separate ethnic Islamic boards, though these have not endured.

Yet it is also possible that these developments may relax certain tensions between Avars and Dargins. In 1998, following the assassination of the Mufti of Dagestan, an Avar-dominated Congress of Muslims of Dagestan called for the resignation of Magomedov, and demanded the adoption of a presidential system for the republic. Subsequently, Magomedov managed to relieve the pressure that was placed upon him by persuading the religious leaders that a constitutional matter of this sort would require a referendum. Now the situation has changed. Political elites have moved closer to the DUMD, and have voluntarily strengthened the influence of the latter.

Perhaps it is most likely that the new status of the DUMD will relieve ethnic tensions in the short-run, especially while Dagestan is enjoying post-war unity, but contribute to tensions in the long-run, as the struggle for ethnic dominance begins to intensify.

The most important impact of these developments is that Islam will henceforth function as an important component of personal power and political authority. The outcome will be detrimental for the development of civil society. In the worst case scenario, elites might be tempted to compete for political legitimacy by upping the Islamic ante, that is, by increasingly intensified appeals toward an increasingly politicized Islam. A similar competition for political legitimacy through the politicization of Islam occurred, disastrously, in Chechnya. Thus, it is possible that the ratification of these laws in September and October may ultimately have endorsed a politicization of Islam comparable to that which the Dagestanis repelled in August and September. The latter was an export of related developments in Chechnya, involving an increasing politicization of Islam through competition among political elites. Russians say that in every victory there is a defeat, and in every defeat a victory.

These ethno-religious cleavages have no clear precedent in the consociational literature, nor to other aspects of Dagestan's recent political experience, including its response to modernization, elite recruitment, and ethnoparties. Thus, while Dagestan's formal political structure invites consociational analysis, its political culture suggests certain modifications.

### **Do consociational studies apply to third-wave plural societies?**

It is possible to regard the consociational analysis of democratic systems as occurring in two waves. The first wave of consociational studies focused attention on consensual democratic procedures occurring in segmented societies found in the Netherlands, Belgium, Austria, Switzerland and Canada. (Barry, 1975a; b; Daalder, 1974; Dahl, 1966; Haas, 1964; Lembruch, 1967; Lijphart, 1977; McRae, 1974; Nordlinger, 1972; Powell, 1970; Steiner, 1967; 1974; Steiner, 1972) Shortly thereafter, a second wave of analyses examined consociational frameworks in Lebanon, Malaysia, Cyprus, Colombia, Uruguay and Nigeria. (Apter, 1971; Hudson, 1969; Lewis, 1965; McRae, 1974; Nagata, 1975; Suleiman, 1967) More recently, Lijphart (1996) has considered India as a consociational system. In varying degrees, the latter studies considered the emergence of democratic systems that followed from the relaxation of colonial orders that had imposed unification upon historically segmented societies.

In a preliminary fashion, the present case study suggests that there may be an emergent third wave of plural societies which 1) also follow from the relaxation of political orders that had imposed unification upon historically segmented societies; 2) have been largely unattended by consociational literature; 3) present novel political practices that raise new challenges for consociational models; 4) and suggest that democratization and modernization may play a more complex role in plural societies than has been previously appreciated. During the period that these segmented societies fell under the sway of authoritarian political systems, traditional patterns of intersegmental accommodation were allowed to atrophy, while vertical cleavages sometimes were exacerbated by policies imposed from the top. (Ware, 1998b) Hence, there are similarities between this and the second, post-colonial, wave of consociational societies which emerged after the second world war. Yet there are also important differences, which follow not only from divergent administrative and ideological factors, but from features including industrial development, education, and expectations of third-wave plural societies. And however great the theoretical challenges raised by third-wave of plural societies, they are accompanied by policy challenges that are immediate and undeniable. These challenges are addressed, in part, through insights

introduced by recent literature on regime transition (Cohen, 1992; Derlien, 1993; Easton, 1995; Higley, 1992; Rozman, 1992), and new institutionalism (Alvarez, 1995; Brinton, 1998; Grofman, 1989; Guy, 1998; Powell, 1991; Rutherford, 1994). Some of this material might be usefully expanded and incorporated through the extension of consociational analyses to third wave plural societies.

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