*Main Article—Research Note*

Chechen Clans and Other Kin Groups in Times of War and Peace: Definitions, Types, Saliencies and Need for Further Research

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Abstract   *Arguably, most traditional societies conform to a predominant religion, state, emperor, nation, ethnicity, or to a predominant collection of tribes and clans; multi-clan or other mixed groups with residential unity and self-identification in hamlets, villages, towns or other localities; and finally to extended families and nuclear families. In this research note I discuss some (preliminary) observations of mine, and those of Dettmering, Sokirianskaia and some other scholars, observers and others on the identified, claimed or actual (sub-)clans and other kinship or localised ethnic (sub-)groups however defined among the Chechens in distant and more recent history. Further research is required to determine with more confidence what roles any such surviving kinship and ethnic (sub-)groups may have played during particularly the First Russo-Chechen War (1994–1996) and the first high-intensity phase of the Second Russo-Chechen War (1999–2005), which since then has morphed into a collection of small-scale insurgencies across the North Caucasus.*

Introduction

Arguably, most traditional societies conform to a predominant religion,
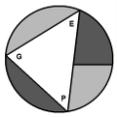
state, emperor, nation, ethnicity, or to a predominant collection of *tribes* i.e. kin groups without residential unity ('ethnic' if with perceived common ancestry); *clans* i.e. kin groups with residential unity; multi-clan or other mixed groups with residential unity and self-identification in hamlets, villages, towns or other localities; and finally to *extended families* and *nuclear families* within or straddling across kin groups.

Louis Dupree asserts that the "key ... is kinship, that reciprocal set of rights and obligations which satisfies and .. limits an individual's .. role" (Dupree 1997: 181; 183-92 on kinship typology (no clear 'tribe' definition)). In this regard one must keep in mind that scholars generally discern the same kinship or other social units, but apply different terms (family, clan, tribe, etcetera) for these.

Therefore most but not all scholars researching social groups broadly define the concept of 'clan' as the multi-household group with actual or perceived common ancestry—though just a few of them nowadays apply Dupree's classic-anthropological marker of residential unity or its absence to distinguish between 'clans' and 'tribes'.

At any rate, I argue that even in many 'modern' (post-)industrial societies nowadays, 'pre-modern' kinship groups and their constituent values appear to hold sway or at least retain some considerable influence:

> "Despite industrialisation, urbanisation and (de)colonisation, many present-day societies, be they formerly tribal or still (partially) tribal, appear to retain many traditions having to with extended families, (sub-)clans and other kinship groups more
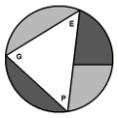
often than not adhering to 'pre-modern' customary laws. Paradoxically, their adherence to 'old' values—however much contemporary ignorance, manipulation and brutalisation disfigure these in times of war and (relative) peace—leads to the same "conflict of the aggressive impulses .. with the moral norms" Talcott Parsons discerned in Western societies (Parsons 1947: 169)" (Ten Dam 2019: 157).

That is to say, groups still adhering to 'old' values often come into conflict with the 'dominant' moral norms typically inscribed in domestic constitutional law of the 'modern' societies they happen to live in. As I noted elsewhere, violence can "ensue between "relatively 'emancipated' and ... traditional groups" (Parsons 1947: 178); no single society is purely traditional or modern" (Ten Dam 2012: 240, note 21; see further Ten Dam 2015: 620).

Be that as it may, in this research note I discuss some observations of mine and others on the identified, claimed or actual (sub-)clans and other kinship or localised ethnic (sub-)groups however defined among the Chechens (Nokhci) in particular and the *Vainakh* (i.e. mainly Chechen and Ingush) Nakh-speaking peoples in the Caucasus in general.[1]

Above all, I seek to determine what roles these native ethnicities, tribes and lineage sub-groups have played during particularly the First Russo-Chechen War (1994–1996) and the first high-intensity phase of the Second Russo-Chechen War (1999–2005), which since then has morphed into a collection of small-scale insurgencies across the North Caucasus.
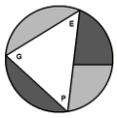
Incidentally, I agree with those analysts and scholars who deem the Second Russo-Chechen War actually continuing to this very day albeit on a diminished scale in both Chechnya and the North Caucasus at large: thus despite "all of its efforts, Russia has not been able to win the war entirely and decisively. Although Moscow has a strong local government in Grozny that controls all of Chechnya, it has been impossible to eliminate all of the Chechen guerilla formations" (Askerov 2015: 27).

Violence-values, combat-stresses, conflict motivations and (brutal) violence among Chechen (kin) groups

I am engaged in ongoing research on behavioural and cultural violence-patterns by combatants based on (sub-)clan and other kin-group identities and loyalties, during and after post-Communist separatist conflicts like those in Chechnya (1994–1996, 1999–2005 or arguably to this day), Kosovo (1997–1999) and Nagorno Karabakh (1988–1994).

In this research I seek to explain amongst other things the intermittent, persistent or increasing *brutalities* i.e. violations of local and/or international violence-norms—or the surprisingly frequent maintenance of these norms (*non-brutalities*)—among both kin-based and non-kin-based combat units of separatist fighters and those of their (semi-) incumbent-state enemies. This latter research project is just one of many that I am undertaking, alone or in collaboration with others, which form part of my overall Brutalisation research agenda.

The latter research agenda revolves around a Brutalisation theory that I
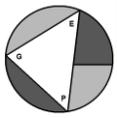
have developed myself, with its variables *violence-values* (my composite term) on proper and improper violence; *conflict-inducing motivations* (grievances, avarices, interests and ideologies) that bring about i.e. cause or trigger the conflict; *combat-stresses* like fear, fatigue and rage resulting from or leading to trauma's (and hypothetically to brutalities as well); and *conflict-induced motivations* (grievances, avarices, interest and ideologies) that happen by, through and during the conflict in question.[2] Empirical findings indicating the significant yet partial validity of some aspects or variables of the Brutalisation theory have already been published (see e.g. Ten Dam 2010, 2011, 2012, 2015).

I am not alone in doing research on traditional pre-industrial and modern (post-)industrial societies and their impact on violent conflict. Thus I have pointed out in several review essays (esp. Ten Dam 2017a, 2017c) that Babak Rezvani convincingly shows in both his *Ethno-Territorial Conflict and Coexistence* (2013) and *Conflict and Peace in Central Eurasia* (2015) that five interrelated factors can or do account for the outbreak of secessionist ethno-territorial conflicts:

i) historic grievances like the wholesale deportation of the Chechens in 1944 on orders of Stalin;
ii) the obligation in martial cultures to avenge historical wrongs and seek safety from such wrongs in the future through independence;
iii) a rebelling movement representing or claiming to represent the largest indigenous group in the region or contested territory; and most importantly of all:
iv) the contested territory exhibiting a "so-called mosaic type of ethno-geographic configuration" of "highly homogeneous
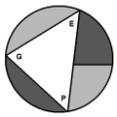
pockets of ethnic concentration" (Rezvani 2013b: 15; Rezvani 2015: 3); and

v)   a "politicization of ethnicity" (2013b: 55; 2015: 43) in a hierarchical-territorial ethnopolitical system whereby some ethnicities get a higher autonomy, nationality status and other privileges than others (2013b: esp. 116-120; 2015: esp. 107-112).

Indeed, as mentioned in my review essays (Ten Dam 2016: 68-69; 2017d: 50; 2017e: 438-439) on Ilyas Akhmadov's books on the Chechen independence struggle (Akhmadov et al 2010, 2013), it is the combination of all these five factors identified by Rezvani that appear to account for the Chechen conflict. After all "there are many cases of ethno-territorial groups in the (post)Soviet space that enjoy territorial autonomy and a dominant demographic position therein, but nevertheless have not waged a war of independence" (Rezvani 2013b: 249). One also needs to account for "why an ethnonationalist conflict emerged in Chechnya, and diffused and transformed into a Wahhabi/Salafi religious conflict" (Rezvani 2014: 871, 886, note 57).

Alternatively, Emil Aslan Souleimanov and Huseyn Aliyev posit that their own case-study encompassing the First and Second Chechnya Wars between 1994 and 2005 shows that, in asymmetric conflicts, socio-cultural values based on codes of *retaliation*, *silence* and *hospitality* upheld by insurgents from 'traditional' honor cultures facilitate, as socio-anthropological phenomena, violent mobilisation and pro-insurgent support (Souleimanov & Aliyev 2015b, 2017, 2018). [3]

These socio-cultural values among "*honorific* insurgents" (Souleimanov
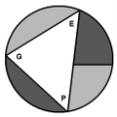
& Aliyev 2017: 9) resemble my own typology of *violence-values* I apply in my research on brutalisation in armed conflicts: *honour*, *blood-feud*, (predatory) *raid*, *hospitality* and *mediation*; these honorific values among Chechens and Albanians have solidified their *societal values* of martialism, resistance and (male) egalitarianism during their wars of independence in the Caucasus and the Balkans in their recent and more distant history (Ten Dam 2010: esp. 333-335; Ten Dam 2011: esp. 265-266; Ten Dam 2012: 226, note 2; Ten Dam 2015: 578, note 3).

Indeed, their observation that an overarching "concept of honor is irrevocably connected" to notions of (blood-feud) retaliation, silence and hospitality in "honor cultures that are organized along .. blood kinship" (Souleimanov & Aliyev 2017: 18-19) resembles my own observation that such "violence-values" which can be seen as "derivatives of the central "honour" value ... characterise many or most tribal and other pre-industrial societies" (Ten Dam 2010: 335).

As I noted in one of my articles in my How to Feud and Rebel Series, "Chechen society lacks hierarchies i.e. classes; competition occurs among clans and other kinship groups instead, and tends to be violent given the martial tradition" (Ten Dam 2012: 233). I observed that due to this inter-clan competition and martial tradition, "youngsters and adults are pressured to excel", whereby consequent "group expectations lead to potentially brutalising honour-stress among youngsters with fragile self-esteem" (Ibid: 234). Therefore, I concluded that:

> many Chechens, especially those from minor or 'impure' clans (including those made up of former slaves), felt compelled to prove their valour in spectacular acts as *smertniki* (suicide fighters)
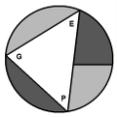
against non-Chechen enemies, Russians in particular. Such violence reveals *double brutalisation*, i.e. discarding of both international and traditional norms: war-traumatised youngsters came to reject customs and adore brute strength (Ten Dam 2012: 234).

Still, do Chechen armed formations during the wars in the 1990s and the present low-intensity conflict significantly differ in their behaviour and thus brutality if any, and do different (sub-)clan memberships and identities account for many or any of these differences? These questions are exceedingly difficult to answer, as little field and empirical research has been done to directly answer these questions.

Yet before one can study degrees of brutalities for whatever reasons among (ethnic-) Chechen clans and other kin groups, one needs to identify these groups first—and even ascertain whether these truly have existed as functioning entities at any point in time.

Thus one of the first questions one needs to answer is whether *all* the 158 Chechen and 55 non-ethnic Chechen clans identified by historiographers like Magomet (Mahomet) Mamakaev [4] and Tarik Cemal Kutlu and Chechen nationalists alike [5], have—supposing all of these have truly existed as claimed—in fact survived the brutal Russo-Chechen Wars of the 1990s and beyond. Probably not, as reprisals like *zachistkas* (cleansing, mop-up operations) and other brutalities by Russian and pro-Russian forces led to the "murder or disappearance of the males (and sometimes even females) of entire families and clans"
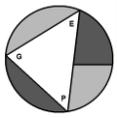
(Souleimanov & Aliyev 2015b: 697-698) among the insurgents and their supporters. It seems unlikely that the members of the most affected, most badly mauled clans have survived these wars in sufficient numbers so as to remain functioning clans or at least surviving sub-clans in the present day. Moreover, reportedly a number of the 'classic' clans already ceased to function and exist even prior to these conflicts due to Soviet indoctrination, industrialisation and urbanisation.

Provenance, saliency and extancy of Chechen and other Vainakh kin groups: conceptualisations and observations

At first sight the broader patterns of (ethnic-)Chechen clan and other kinship entities, identities, distributions, characteristics and present-day existence i.e. survival in and beyond Chechnya seem to be generally known and agreed upon—yet on closer inspection turn out to be highly uncertain and contested. Indeed, the lack of up-to-date knowledge and lack of consensus on the rare out-of-date knowledge on Chechen clan and other kin groups remarkably resembles the gaps in research and knowledge on their Albanian counterparts.

As I have shown in a couple of review essays and research notes on Robert Elsie's groundbreaking *Tribes of Albania* (2015) and his related works (Ten Dam 2018a, 2018b), the presently "known data on the numbers, denominations and other characteristics of the Albanian clans seem rather outdated and confusing" (Ten Dam 2010: 352, note 30; Ten Dam 2011: 254, note 24). Indeed hardly any systematic research has been conducted on the Albanian clan and other kin-group structures ever since Franz Seiner's seminal census study in 1916-1918 of Albanian
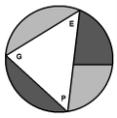
regions occupied by Austrian-Hungarian troops which basically covers presentday Albania and some adjacent areas in Montenegro and Kosovo (see Seiner 1922). So I have had to conclude that even Elsie's *Tribes of Albania* "does not fully succeed in determining and clarifying the precise fate of all known Albanian tribes [and other kin groups]" (Ten Dam 2018a: 42; 2018b: 37).

Elsie acknowledges that his *Tribes of Albania* is "admittedly, a motley collection of information and texts with many lacunae of which the author is painfully aware" (Elsie 2015: 12). This admission is disquieting: Dr. Robert Elsie has been one of the few and most prominent specialists on (ethnic-)Albanian poetry and literature, who in more recent years has broadened his studies to (ethnic-)Albanian politics and society as well, including the history, structure and saliency of the "about 70" (Ibid: 10) clans or tribes among the Albanians. His untimely death in late 2017 prevented him from conducting and publishing any more follow-up research on this kinship phenomenon.

Despite very specified claims by some scholars and analysts, the Chechen kinship phenomenon remains as fuzzy, indistinct and contested as the Albanian one—arguably even more so. Even I claimed that, broadly speaking, "inter-clan competition grew together with Chechnya's population, increasing the number of clans from 59 to a 100 during the first half of the 19th century, and to 170 (100 in mountains, 70 on plains) by the 1990s—mostly due to ambitious sub-clans declaring themselves *teips* or *taips*" (Ten Dam 2011: 247-248).

At any rate some scholars and analysts assert that, to this day, "Chechens identify themselves as belonging to one of roughly 150 large clans (*teips*),
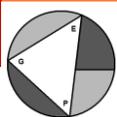
sometimes referred to as tribes. Teips are subdivided into several branches of clans (*gars*), split into smaller branches of patronymic families (*nekyes*). Nekyes, in turn, are subdivided into groups of related families spanning up to seven generations (*shchin-nakhs*), which are further subdivided into nuclear families (*dözals*)" (Chereji & Sandu 2021: 7 (quote); Souleimanov & Aliyev 2015a: 169-170; Askerov 2015: 222, 228).[6]

However, even the general 'facts' regarding the tribal and kin structures in Chechen society remain contested to this day. Strictly speaking, the "origin of the Chechens and their early history is unknown" (Luzbetak 1951: 22 (quote); 195-99, 204-206).

There is no consensus on what civilisation shaped Chechen culture and ethnos, nor on the provenance of Chechnya's 150 to 170 clans. Some believe they and their mountain democracy were formed thousands of years back; thus Chechen ethnologist Magomet Mamakaev regarded the *taipa* "an ancient Chechen institution that simply acquired a new name in the 17th century" (Dettmering 2005: 470-471 & note 15; from Mamakaev 1973: 5-7).

Others, like Russian-Chechen ethnologist Yan Chesnov and Kabardin-Circassian ethnologist Amjad Jaimoukha, believe the Chechen clans were established during a seventeenth-century democratic revolution (e.g. Jaimoukha 2005); some scholars believe these clans were formed as late as the nineteenth century (e.g. Broxup-Bennigsen 1992: 4).

Some even question whether such clans have ever existed at all, or dismiss these and their supposed customs as "mythical social structures" (re)invented by political entrepreneurs (Tishkov 2004: 14). Thus Valery
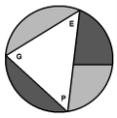
Tishkov opposes Chesnov's 'primordialist' take on Chechen identity and history of resistance to the Russians, which so influenced local and Western scholars (e.g. D.E. Furman, Gall & De Waal, Lieven): rather "a constructivist approach is absolutely timely for this research" (Ibid: 49). Still, both Chesnov and Tishkov agree that the high-lowland distinction among Chechen clans is overly simplistic. Here Tishkov appears to recognise the *teip*—or as I would call it, the *gar* or *neqi*—as a reality after all. [7]

From the contestations as those described above, Ekaterina Sokirianskaia deduces that even more recent literature on "teips (clans)" seem "to pose more questions than provide answers as to what the contemporary teip really is" (Sokirianskaia 2005: 454). While primordialist, often nationalist scholars vaguely describe it as a kin-based tribal unit, modernist pro- *and* anti-Russian scholars insist that there is "no such thing as teip" (Ibid). Interestingly, modernist nationalists among the Ingush and Chechens argue that all "these myths about clan structures, Elders, customary law are created in order to construct an image of backward, primitive societies .. who cannot govern themselves and have to be governed by the strong hand of Moscow" (Ibid).[8]

Ironically, many founders, proponents and followers of the separatist Chechen Republic of Nokhchi (*Noxçiyn Respublika Noxçiyçö*, NRN), also called Ichkeria after Chechnya's south-eastern 'heartland' (*ich keri*: "place over there" in Kumyk)—of which currently only remnants exist in exile in London and elsewhere—(did) believe in these 'myths', or at least (did) consider these vital ingredients for creating or maintaining their national identity and state-building efforts.
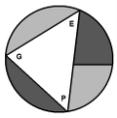
Russia's colonial conquest and ethnography in the Caucasus

During the 19th century authorities of Tsarist Russia and the ethnographers they employed initially regarded Vainakh and other Mountaineer clans in the Caucasus with their diverse customary laws, "supposedly pre-Islamic traditions" and intertribal rivalries as bulwarks against unifying "Islamic ideas and institutions" which Imam Shamil and other native leaders so effectively employed when opposing Russian encroachment; yet eventually "the clans, one of the defining elements of traditional societies in the eyes of Russian observers, were themselves regarded as a danger to Russian statehood" (Dettmering apud Cvetkovski & Hofmeister 2014: 341-343 (quotes), 344-345).

Consequently the Tsarist authorities and their ethnographers in the Caucasus sought to co-opt those 'aristocratic', 'princely' and other 'kindred' leaders among particularly the Vainakh peoples who could counteract, weaken, nullify and even destroy both clan and other kin-group structures and Sufi and other Islamic influences in their midst. Yet initially, until the mid-19th century, Tsarist authorities fostered perceived and/or actual clans and their customary laws for anti-Islamic purposes (Dettmering apud Cvetkovski & Hofmeister 2014: 350-353).

Thus the Russians initially sought with rather limited success to utilise Vainakh customary "law of the mountains" (*Adat*, from Arab. *'ādat*, pl. "customs") against Islamic rules and laws (*Shari'a*)—while encouraging native languages at the expense of Arabic (and Persian) for this very purpose (Dettmering apud Cvetkovski & Hofmeister 2014: 355-363). Actually Islamic judges (*qadis*) and customary elders had been alternatively cooperating and competing with each other even before
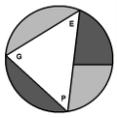
the Russian encroachment.

Even so the Tsarist authorities tended to overestimate the 'Islamic danger' in general and perhaps the 'clan danger' in the Caucasus as well. This overestimation was understandably due to the challenge posed by Imam Shamil's resistance during 1834-1859 and the Imamate or Islamic state he established and led during the 1840s, strictly imposing Islamic rules and laws in the territories he controlled, which basically covered present-day Chechnya, (parts of) Ingushetia and Dagestan.

At any rate, local men reportedly "voted in communal, clan, and tribal assemblies, and elected Elders with legislative, judicial and/or military powers; Muslim judges (*qadi*) and scholars (*'ulama*) were scarce among Chechen and Dagestani highlanders" (Ten Dam 2011: 251 (quote); Zelkina 2000: xvii, 17 18, 42, 43). Arguably the *Shari'a* "altered and marginalised the *adat* only among Dagestani and Chechen lowlanders" during the 19th century (Ten Dam 2010: 346).

All in all, any native peoples with perceived or actual clan structures within the Tsarist Empire did constitute a particular challenge for the authorities. Integrating or at least subjugating the "diverse peoples and their different political and social traditions" already constituted the "empire's main task .. to secure the viability of the multinational state" (Cvetkovski apud Cvetkovski & Hofmeister 2014: 2-3).

Incidentally, the above observations signify that Russian ethnographers, ethnologists and other analysts did perceive Vainakh and other Mountaineer clans and other kin groups as genuinely existing phenomena—even if (mis)perceived through biased eyes.
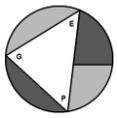
Vainakh and other peoples in the (North) Caucasus

Regarding peoples on supra-kin levels, Christian Dettmering stresses that "Chechens and the Ingush should be compared because their reaction to Russian advance diverged, with the Chechens perennially fighting and the Ingush remaining calm" vis-à-vis the Russians (Dettmering 2005: 470). Indeed through much of the 19th century "the Russian military command was able to establish a working relationship with the Ingush, while the Russian-Chechen relationship was always prone to conflicts" (Dettmering apud Cvetkovski & Hofmeister 2014: 343).

Russian ethnographers, travelers and other outside observers aided the Tsarist authorities in their divide-and-rule policies—including provoking blood-feuds from or among anti-colonial resistance fighters through raids by collaborating Chechen and other native (youth-)militias (Dettmering apud Cvetkovski & Hofmeister 2014: 347-349). They did so by describing "real or imagined cultural, social, and political differences" between Mountaineer peoples in general and Vainakh peoples in particular (Ibid: 345)—and thus between Ingush and Chechens as well. For instance the traditional robberies including ritualised, manhood-affirming intertribal raids were supposedly far more prevalent, cruel, thuggish and politicised i.e. insurgent among the 'fierce' Chechens than the 'gentle' because 'less-Islamicised' Ingush (Ibid: 345-348).

Dettmering convincingly observes that the traditional raids or robberies generally were highly constrained with customary rules limiting the degree of violence so as to prevent blood-feuds, making it improbable
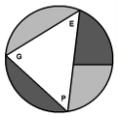
that the "differences between the Caucasian peoples in the cruelty and fierceness"—and frequency—of their attacks were huge (Dettmering apud Cvetkovski & Hofmeister 2014: 346 (quote)-347).

Even though Chechens may "consider themselves to be the toughest and most freedom-loving people in the world" (Ten Dam 2011: 251), their traditional "lightning raids (*nabeq*) to capture horses, cattle and other properties" to initiate their youngsters in bravery and martial skills (Ibid: 249) may not have been fiercer or in any way more 'superior' than those by other Mountaineer peoples. At any rate the "superiority complex among Chechens regarding their "unique" martialism contributed to the lack of regional support for their 1990s independence drive" (Ibid: 251).

Despite their consequent isolation, many Chechens dared to seek independence from Russia at the time. One major reason for this daring, even rash independence drive is the fact that Chechens, in contrast to other North-Caucasian peoples, have "retained their demographic-cultural unity, [large] population size and martial ethos through secretiveness and imaginative measures, like taking multiple wives" during and after Stalin's 1944 Deportation drive (Ten Dam 2011: 252).

Be that as it may, Russian policymakers and ethnographers temporarily ceased to distinguish between Chechens and Ingush during the 1870s for political reasons, mainly because they considered the latter as less friendly than before and sometimes "even worse than the Chechens" (Dettmering apud Cvetkovski & Hofmeister 2014: 364)—thereby inadvertently and ironically still distinguishing and comparing the two peoples.
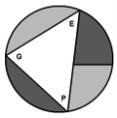
The main reason for the diminished standing of the Ingush—and consequent invalid denial as a people distinct from the Chechens—by the Russians at the time was the rise in the Ingush territories of the Qadiriya Sufi order (*tariqa*). Sheikh al-Hajj Kunta al-Michiki al-Ilishkani also called Kunta Hajji Kishiev (1829?–1867?) had been proselytising this order throughout the North Caucasus. The Russians considered this a threat despite Kunta Hajji and his followers being initially "a-politically ascetic, pacifist, individualist and populist" (Ten Dam 2011: 243). Ironically "Russian brutality, including starving Kunta Hajji to death during his captivity (1864–1867), transformed the Qadiri into fierce resistance fighters" in subsequent years (Ibid: 243).

Particularly one of the hereditary sub-orders (*virds*) formed by Kunta Hajji's deputy-leaders (*vekils*), the devout Batal Hajji *vird*, alarmed Russian authorities due to its paramilitary structure and fierce appearance—even though Batal Hajji (Belhoroev) himself was apolitical (Dettmering apud Cvetkovski & Hofmeister 2014: 363-366; Ten Dam 2011: 243; see further Lemercier-Quelquejay 1983; Bennigsen & Wimbush 1985 (1967): esp. 7-12, 18-24, 32-36).

Dettmering himself is ambiguous (perhaps because ambivalent) about the degrees in which both the commonalities and differences or distinctions between the Vainakh peoples were either primordial, artificially constructed or even imagined by the Tsarist authorities and their ethnographers for empire-building and divide-and-rule purposes.

On the one hand Dettmering asserts that the "Chechens, the Ingush, the Karabulaks, and the Kists" all "belong to the Vainakh family of ethnicities" speaking "closely related dialects" and generally exhibiting
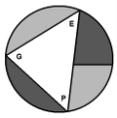
similar egalitarian clan societies—while at the same time having grown into "different peoples" with separate cultural-religious-political trajectories in the space of a few centuries or even decades, with most of the "fault-lines" appearing or already establishing in the early 19th century (Dettmering apud Cvetkovski & Hofmeister 2014: 343-344, 366 (quotes); Dettmering apud Branch 2009: 594-595; Dettmering 2011: 333-336).

On the other hand Dettmering emphasises that both the supposed common identities and particular differences among the Vainakh peoples during the late 18th and early 19th centuries "can no longer be determined"; indeed "neither exact linguistic nor social proofs" appear to exist regarding the nowadays widely accepted and firmly ingrained distinctions between Chechens, Ingush, Karabulaks and Kists (Dettmering apud Cvetkovski & Hofmeister 2014: 344 (quote); Dettmering apud Branch 2009: 583-585; Dettmering 2011: 142-146).

Kinship groups within Vainakh and other peoples in the (North) Caucasus

Regarding kin-level differences, Dettmering is ambiguous (perhaps because ambivalent) about the degrees in which clans and other kin groups among the Vainakh and other Mountaineer peoples were either primordial, constructed or imagined by the Tsarist authorities and their ethnographers for empire-building and divide-and-rule purposes.

On the one hand Dettemering repeatedly suggests that such kin groups have been genuine entities: thus he concludes that 19th century Russian
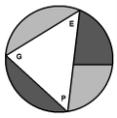
ethnographers 'merely' "exaggerated the influence of clans on the Chechen societies and underestimated the role of the villages as political entities of these societies" (Dettmering apud Cvetkovski & Hofmeister 2014: 354)—while the consequent aim by the Tsarist authorities of "destroying the clan structures by the resettlements was probably achieved" (Ibid: 353).

On the other hand, like Sokirianskaia regarding contemporary clans or tribes, Dettmering repeatedly suggests that Chechen and other North-Caucasian clans and smaller kin groups including "maximal lineages" (extended families in concentrated settlements) have been hard to define because these have remained intangible, ill-understood entities which ceased to exist even before the Russian conquest—or (many of these) never truly existed in the first place. Thus he claims that the (pro-)Russian ethnographers, being "obsessed with the clan"—and their paymasters in the Russian political and military establishments as a consequence—were pursuing "a chimera" (Dettmering apud Cvetkovski & Hofmeister 2014: 353, 354).

Given these cautions and apparent doubts about kin-group extancies and saliencies, Dettmering questions the basic presumptions behind Mamakaev's highly-structured and hierarchical "Chechen clan model" as reproduced in Figure 1.1 here (Dettmering 2005: 469-471).

Dettmering thus criticises Mamakaev's belief that Chechen—or rather Vainakh i.e. mainly Chechen and Ingush—clans were "political structures with no territorial cohesion" (Dettmering 2005: 469-470) by the 19th century since they already had "descended to the fertile plains between the Sunzha and the mountains" in the 16th century (Ibid: 471)
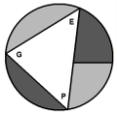
but were still powerful political actors opposing the Russian colonisation by armed struggle and other means a few centuries later. In this regard, Mamakaev's simplified model as shown in Figure 1.1—which depicts just five of the nine *tukhums* or tribal unions shown in Tables 1.1 and 1.2 in the Appendix—appears to reflect a widespread 19th-century idea among Russian and other colonialists and colonial-minded ethnologists that " 'stateless' societies with clan structures were much more difficult to integrate into empires" (Ibid: 469).

Figure 1.1: Mamakaev's simplified kin-structure model of the Chechen nation
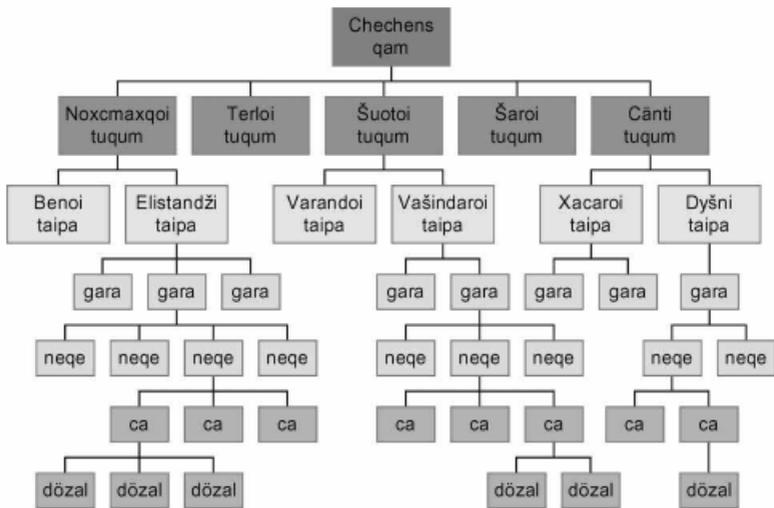
From: Christian Dettmering, 'Reassessing Chechen and Ingush (Vainakh) clan structures in the 19th century' *Central Asian Survey* Vol.24 No.4, December 2005, p.471, Figure 1.
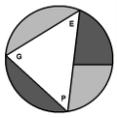
Original source: Magomet Amaevich Mamakaev, *Chechenskii taip* (*rod*) *v period ego razlozheniia* (Чеченкий Тайп (Род) в Период его Разложеня—The Chechen tribe/clan (family) during its [period of] expansion) Grozny: Checheno—Ingushskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1973.

Dettmering consequently questions the entire design of Mamakaev's Chechen clan model—a model followed by many other scholars (Aroutiunov, Kutlu, etc.)[9] —as a forced, artificial adoption of the pioneering model by American anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan (1818–1881) of the Native-American *Iroquois* people. This includes the transfer of "Morgan's 23 criteria of an Iroquois clan to the Chechen taipa" (Dettmering 2005: 471; see Morgan 1954 (orig. 1854, 1901); Tooker 1983).[10] Still, it remains unclear to what extent Dettmering precisely agrees or disagrees with Mamakaev's circumscriptions of:

a) extended families—the *dözal* as a "joint extended family of four generations"; the *ca* as "several *dözals*" which "formed the family space around the hearth"; and the *neqe* (line) as "several *cas* and forming a lineage over four to six generations"; and

b) clans—the *gara* (branch) as the "maximal lineage .. which comprised seven generations"; and the *taipa* as an apparent, yet unspecified 'super-clan' with a "common mythic ancestor" (Dettmering 2005: 470-471 (quotes)).[11] Again, I generally translate and define *gar* and *neqi* as clan and *teip* as tribe.[12]

Dettmering does unequivocally reject Mamakaev's basic assertion that "most *taipanas* were united in nine *tuqumas*" (Dettmering 2005: 479)—and asserts instead that the *tuqum* originally meant, and truly existed as,
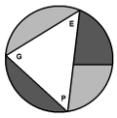
a union between kindred, blood-related (super- or sub-)clans within villages, and was not a multi-clan union or a multi-tribe commune beyond or across the villages. Nor was there a true Chechen 'nation' (*qam*) in the sense of a confederation of *tuqumas* under a so-called " '*mexk qel*' (council of the land)" that also "regulated the customary law and traditions" (Ibid: 471).[13] Similarly, Azerbaijani-born scholar Ali Askerov—like many other scholars and analysts—insists that *tukhums* certainly nowadays do "not play any role in social and political processes in Chechnya" (Arsakov 2015: 228).

Dettmering is not the only scholar critical of the unfounded presuppositions and lack of corroborated research on Mountaineer kinship groups. Thus Ekaterina Sokirianskaia, founder and director of the Conflict Analysis and Prevention Center (CAPC) and author of one of the rare fieldworks on post-20th-century clans and other kin-groups in Chechnya and Ingushetia, lambasts the lack of falsifiable, corroborated theory grounded in "primary fieldwork" in the ongoing "academic and ideological debate" (Sokirianskaia 2005: 455).

This critique is echoed by the more general criticism by Nino Kemoklidze and others about the "relative dearth of independent research into the cultural, social, historical, ethnic and religious complexion" of the Caucasus region (Kemoklidze et al 2012: 1611).

In Sokirianskaia's own field research she found two distinct meanings of *teip* among Chechen and Ingush communities: 1. "clan, i.e. large kin-group, consisting of hundreds of families"; and 2. "extended family, which includes all the relatives with whom a person maintains kin relations" (Sokirianskaia 2005: 456). [14]
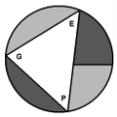
Sokirianskaia concludes that the teip-as-clan (meaning 1) does no longer truly exist as a functioning *social group* due to the breakdown and impracticability of "face-to-face communication" (Sokirianskaia 2005: 456) by the destructive impacts of Russian colonisation, Soviet collectivisation, WWII deportation and post-WWII urbanisation and industrialisation. This conclusion concords with her assertion in earlier research that "the Osetian and Ingush peoples were non-existent as such" in the 18th and 19th centuries but rather were "so-called "societies" or tribes" which later separated and coalesced into two distinct Osetian and Ingush nations (Sokirianskaia 2004: 4). [15]

Yet in the same earlier publication, she notes that the Ingush (like Chechens) traditionally treat the "land of the forefathers as sacred" and thus (like Chechens) returned *en masse* during the late 1950s to their ancestral villages in the Caucasus after Khrushchev's reversal of Stalin's forced deportation of many North-Caucasian peoples in early 1944 to other parts of the Soviet Union (Sokirianskaia 2004: 6).

Such territorial attachment to villages and other geographical locations are typical of both clans and smaller kin groups like extended families with traditions of residential unity, suggesting that both teips-as-clans (meaning 1) and teips-as-families (meaning 2) may have persevered among the Ingush during that period.

Indeed, Sokirianskaia's observation that the "years of deportation strengthened the traditional family structure, informal social institutions, solidarity, [and] customary law" among the Ingush (Sokirianskaia 2004: 6) suggests that *clans* may have been among these 'informal social institutions' paradoxically strengthened by exile.
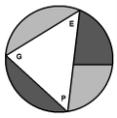
This mirrors my observation (as mentioned earlier) that even during the worst devastations like Stalin's 1944 Deportation leading to tens of thousands of deaths, "Chechens retained their demographic-cultural unity, population size and martial ethos through secretiveness and imaginative measures, like taking multiple wives ... if the nation is under threat" (Ten Dam 2011: 252). They returned in large numbers to their homeland in the late 1950s just like the Ingush did. Still, one must ask the question why the Chechens nor the other North-Caucasian Mountaineer peoples had been able to organise effective resistance to Stalin's deportation drive through "any dormant (sub-)clans or other structures" (Ibid: 252).

On closer thought, the secretive, swift and well-organised Deportation campaign, which took the Chechens and other North-Caucasians by surprise, may not have been the only reason for their lack of large-scale armed resistance: thus their once-vibrant tribes and smaller kin groups may have been so dormant, dysfunctional and even non-existent as political-military or even social entities by that time that effective resistance would have been impossible to begin with.

In any case, Sokirianskaia acknowledges that the teip-as-clan has remained a symbol of *social identity* among Chechens and Ingush, maintained by lineage narratives, burials in the mythical or factual village or other location of origin, and exogamous intermarriages.
However, she perceives the teip-as-extended-family (meaning 2)—i.e. the man's extended family—to be much more relevant and salient in Chechen and Ingush societies, especially in rural villages where one could maintain face-to-face contacts more easily. Relatives of the extended family function as vital contacts, patrons and guarantors for
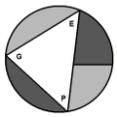
finding employment, though neighbours, *virds* (religious brotherhoods) and friends fulfill these functions as well (Sokirianskaia 2005: 456-460).

Sokirianskaia thus deems the teip-as-clan as a "loose identity" at best, while the daily routines of "Chechen and Ingush individuals are to a greater extent shaped by close kin, religious groups, regional/village identities and ideological orientations" (Sokirianskaia 2010: 6). Given this assertion it is hardly surprising that she hardly mentions Chechen, Ingush or other Vainakh clans and kin-groups in most of her other publications (e.g. Sokirianskaia 2019, 2020, apud Jayakumar 2019).

However, I believe that Sokirianskaia overstates her case, by asserting that the teip-as-clan is a "non-existent entity" (Sokirianskaia 2005: 462) *everywhere* in Chechen and Ingush society, as if there are no exceptions at all. Actually she does refer to such outliers, when she observes that "in some small teips (up to 300 nuclear families), mostly in Ingushetia, face-to-face communication remains possible" (Ibid: 457). Indeed, even if "small teips are few" (Ibid), they *may* have played state-building, policy-making and military roles in Chechnya and Ingushetia in the recent past and may still do so in the present day.

One other reason why Sokirianskaia prematurely 'disqualifies' the main hypothesis—"State building and policy-making in Ingushetia and Chechnya have been shaped by interaction of primordial patterns of social integration, primarily teips (clans)" (Sokirianskaia 2005: 462)—is that the results of her study are pioneering and insightful yet neither exhaustive nor conclusive. Her "participant observation and in-depth interviews" in Chechnya and Ingushetia between 2002 and 2005 are significant yet incomplete; by her own admission "certain areas" in
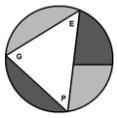
Chechnya were "inaccessible" at the time due to continued fighting and military operations there—consequently, "pro-federal groups" were "more accessible to analysis" than anti-federal groups i.e. insurgents (Ibid: 453, 465 (quotes)).[16]

Therefore I take issue with Sokirianskaia's statement in her subsequent PhD research (Sokirianskaia 2009) that "clan (teip) ties do not play the defining role" (Sokirianskaia 2010: 4) in the state-building and political-integration processes in Ingushetia and Chechnya.[17] She does identify "descent (clanship), kinship, territory, religion, and ideology" and other ties through "acquaintances, colleagues, friends and professionals" (Ibid: 4) as the main six factors shaping the elite compositions and effects of successive governments in both republics between 1991 and 2009 as shown in Figure 1.2 below.

However, Sokirianskaia clearly considers the first two factors—clanship and kinship—as peripheral compared to the other ones. Consequently she opposes the school of thought which claims that "regime transition and state-building in Central Asia and the Caucasus is shaped by and organized around clans—pre-existing informal identity organizations based on kinship" (Sokirianskaia 2010: 5).

Yet despite Sokirianskaia's impressive fieldworks, like the one carried out during 2008-2009, I deem her statement that "clans (*teips*) have ceased to function as patterns of political integration of any prominence" (Sokirianskaia 2010: 5) too sweeping, too generalised.

Thus *some* clans and smaller kin-groups within clans could have played significant roles in Chechen, Ingush and other Vainakh societies in the
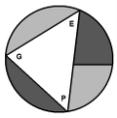
Caucasus—perhaps even in governing and state-building processes during the late 20th century. And these may still continue to do so well into the early 21st century. As shown in the next section, some clans and other kin-groups have been more supra-kin nationalistic and independent-minded yet at the same time more cohesive and state-ruling capable than others—thereby nuancing the general observation that the "strength of ties among the elites does not covary with kinship" (Sokirianskaia 2010: 6).

Figure 1.2:   Sokirianskaia's diagram on Elite Composition and Ties in Government
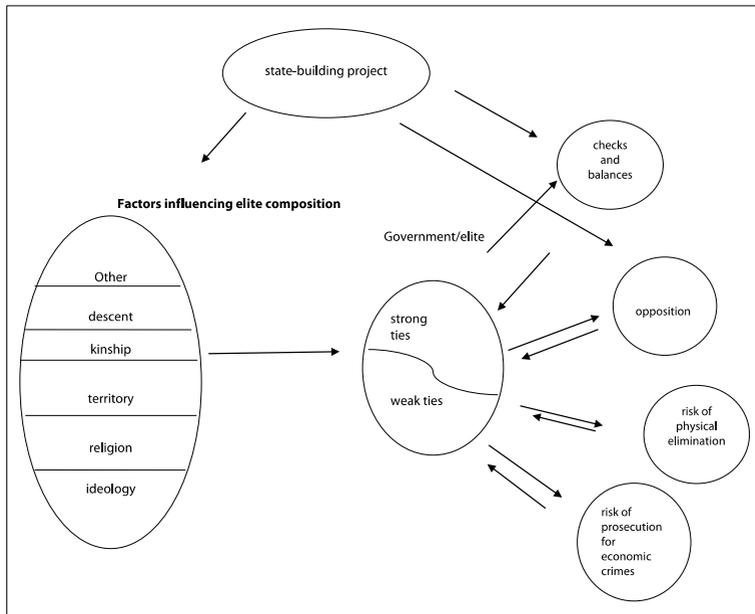
From: E. Sokirianskaia, 'State-Building and Political Integration in Ingushetia and Chechnya (1991–2009)' *Russian Analytical Digest* No.86, 16 November 2010, p.7, Figure.1.
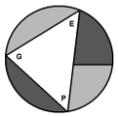
At this stage of my own research, however, I cannot confidently take side in the debate, i.e. either exclusively support or reject Mamakaev's presuppositions in his clan-structure model as shown in Figure 1.1—or take an alternative position. Incidentally I would consider the *gara* a clan or at least a sub-clan, rather than an extended family given its apparent size and complexity. And I circumscribe the *kup* as the multi-family (lineage) village commune (Ten Dam 2011: 247), while it remains uncertain whether Dettmering circumscribes the *kup* as such a commune too.

Even so, Dettmering closely ties the *kup* to the *gara* as villages apparently are or were dominated by such single (sub-)clans or supra-families, both being territorial "entities that owned the land and distributed it amongst their members" (Dettmering 2005: 476 (incl. non-defined reference to 'kup')).

I tend to agree with his earlier-noted critique of the widespread assumption that clans, Chechen clans in particular, have had no territorial cohesion in one or more villages or other localities since the 19th century onwards. Indeed, during the latest Russo-Chechen wars certain "populated areas" in Chechnya such as those of "Tsentoroy, Belgatoy, Dargo, Benoy" (Mashkadov in Akhmadov & Daniloff 2013: 43) appear to refer to geographically concentrated *teips* or 'clans' of the same name.[18] For so far these latter *teips* do exhibit residential unity, I would call these 'clans' rather than 'tribes' (see start of Introduction)—but if I would apply the terms *gar* or *neqi* for these kin groups instead, I would have to deviate from the application of kin-group names in Mamakaev's multi-pyramidical kin-group model (see Figure 1.1).
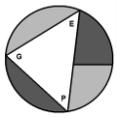
Actually Dettmering at one point seems to use the terms clan and tribe in the reverse sense as I do regarding residential unity or lack of it (see start of Introduction), when he concludes that the "dominant Chechen entities were the villages, which were united into tribes for defensive reasons and these tribes were not based on blood relationship" (Dettmering 2005: 482).

While I generally use the classic anthropological distinction between the *tribe* as a kin group without residential unity ('ethnic' if with perceived common ancestry) and the *clan* as a kin group with residential unity, Dettmering appears to use the terms in a more multi-faceted way. He appears to consider clans as kin groups with or without residential unity, and tribes as multi-kin or non-kin groups without or with residential unity.

At any rate, Dettmering convincingly argues that the village-based and multi-village and/or multi-ethnic territorial tribes played a significant political and military roles in the 19th century—and I would add 20th century—rebellions against Russian encroachment, while the *teips* and smaller clans were subsumed and divided across lowlands and highlands, villages and other settlements, playing only social and cultural roles under these territorial arrangements.

However, I do wonder whether *teips* (tribes) and *gar* and *neqi* (clans and sub-clans) as I define them may have been, and may still be, distinct and significant political actors within the villages and other settlements (hamlets, towns, etc.), competing with other resident tribes and (sub-)clans in the decision-making bodies of those villages and other settlements.
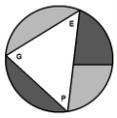
Perhaps Dettmering—a specialist on 19th century rather than 20th century Vainakh history (see Dettmering 1999, 2005, 2011; Dettmering apud Branch 2009; Dettmering apud Cvetkovski & Hofmeister 2014)—underestimates, or even has not considered, the dynamics of *intra-village and other intra-territorial competition between resident (sub-)clans and tribes* to this day. The most powerful, respected and/or savvy kin groups may shape decisions and policies in villages and other settlements in which they happen to coexist with other, 'lesser', less successful (sub-)clans there—even if formal decision-making in those localities is done by consensus, and supposedly represent unity and common identity in those localities.

Chechen kin groups and their political and military formations in recent history: claims, anecdotes and observations

Despite the theoretical and interpretative contestations, and rather to counteract minimalist and constructivist views on Chechen clan culture and structure, present-day Chechen nationalists come up with very precise identifications of the names, ethnicities and numbers of clans and other kin groups in Chechnya—which some scholars fully or largely adopt in their works (e.g. Askerov 2015: 222, 228).

Thus those supporting the residual government-in-exile in London of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, that once seceded from Russia in the early 1990s and ultimately failed to remain independent during the subsequent Russo-Chechen conflicts, list on their website *Waynakh Online*—as shown in Tables 1.1 and 1.2 in the Appendix—the names of
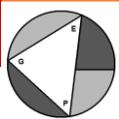
158 clans (or tribes) distributed among nine *tukhums* (tribal unions), and 55 non-Tukhum Chechen and non-ethnic Chechen clans residing in the republic, based on the works of just a few yet still authoritative sources (Mamakaev 1973; Kutlu 2005).[19] Indeed, they claim that all these "society bodies and names from the smallest to the largest .. still exist with all [its] spiritedness in the Chechens". [20]

For now, one could take their contestable claims as a point of departure for seeking to answer half a dozen questions for future research (see Concluding remarks). Still, if any other scholars and sources credibly criticise or validly depart from their claims regarding the identification and salience of (any of) the clans and other kin groups, they should indicate this accordingly.

To undertake systematic and comprehensive research on Vainakh (i.e. mainly Chechen and Ingush)[21] kin groups will be an uphill challenge however, no matter what claims are taken as a point of departure. Unfortunately there appear to be just sparse anecdotal references and rudimentary analyses about the kin-group memberships and saliencies of Chechen leaders and ordinary Chechens in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. This appears to be true even in more recent publications by former and current separatist leaders or indigenous and foreign scholars (e.g. Akhmadov & Lanskoy 2010; Akhmadov & Daniloff 2013; Askerov 2015; Zakayev (Zakaev) 2019). And even those references and analyses tend to contradict and contest each other.

Thus Ilyas Akhmadov, Foreign Minister of the Chechen separatist government abroad from 1999 to 2005, rather briefly mentions—or does
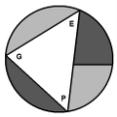
not mention at all—his own kinship and those of compatriots, rivals and other leading figures during the Chechen independence struggle or 'separatist insurgency' in his autobiographical *Chechen Struggle* (2010) and biographical *Chechnya's Secret Wartime Diplomacy* (2013) based on twenty-four secret audiotapes sent to him by his President Aslan Maskhadov (see Ten Dam 2016, 2017d, 2017e).

These references (should) include, amongst others, the kin-group provenances of General Johar Musaevich Dudaev, the first elected President of the self-styled Chechen Republic of Nokhchi or 'Ichkeria'; and General Aslan Khalid Maskhadov, Dudaev's eventual successor in 1997 after the former's violent death in 1996 until he was himself killed by Russian forces in 2005 (Ten Dam 2017d: 44). Akhmadov does at one point explicate that Dudaev was from a "*teip*, the Yalkhoroi" (Akhmadov & Lanskoy 2010: 9). [22]

However, neither Akhmadov nor Maskhadov in his audiotapes to him mention the kin-group provenance of Maskhadov himself—or for instance that of Maskhadov's great Islamist rival, commander Shamil Salmanovich Basaev, who helped to defend Chechnya's capital Grozny against Russian invasion in late 1994 and to recapture it in mid-1996, and was eventually killed in mid-2006 reportedly by Russia's secret service (Akhmadov & Lanskoy 2010: 44).

In contrast, Ali Askerov mentions in his *Dictionary of the Chechen Conflict* (2015) that Basaev "was born into the Benoy [23] *teip* in the village of Dyshne-Vedeno" and that Maskhadov's "family belongs to the Alleroi[24] *teip*" (Askerov 2015: 58, 157).
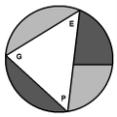
Just like Akhmadov in his publications however, Askerov fails to consistently explicate the kin-group provenance if any of all major Chechen figures with entries in his *Dictionary of the Chechen Conflict*—including that of Akhmadov and Dudaev (Askerov 2015: 35-36, 88-89).
Nor does he indicate whether some may not possess any kin-bloodline identity in the patrilineal or at least patrimonial sense. After all, these Chechens may have forgotten such an identity for themselves, or it no longer exists or has never existed for them in the first place. The latter may be particularly true for many non-ethnic Chechen inhabitants of Chechnya who still call themselves Chechens. Still, Askerov may not have had room in his dictionary to explicate all these provenances or explain their absence in his typically brief entries on individuals.

In short, both Askerov's and Akhmadov's references to ethnic, local and above all kinship identities, bonds, customary laws (*adat*), blood-feuds and crosscutting Sufi, Salafi and other Islamic schools (*tariqats* or *tarikats*) and brotherhoods (*djamaats* or *jamaats*, often political organisations with military wings) of individuals and groups are quite rare or quite brief [25] —or quite contested given the diverging claims by other scholars.

A revealing case in point is the contested provenance and relevance of Johar Dudaev's blood ties on the family and larger kinship levels. Dudaev was just forty-six years old when he was elected head of both the separatist All-National Congress of the Chechen People (*Obshchennatsional'nyi Kongress Chechnskogo Narodna*, OKCh)[26] and its armed wing the National Guard at the founding meeting in November 1990.
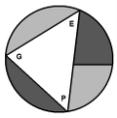
Dudaev did not seem to have the credentials to become Chechnya's first separatist President in the late Soviet and early post-Soviet eras: Dudaev was a member of the semi-Ingush *yalkhoro* mountain *gar* (clan); moreover, he was married since 1969 to Alla Kulikova, a Russian from Estonia, and continued to exhibit pro-Soviet sentiments and nostalgia (see e.g. Sheehy 1991a & 1991b; Broxup-Bennigsen 1992: 219-239).

However, disagreements on the social and political strength of a particular *teip* or tribe[27] already become apparent here. To some analysts the *yalkhoro* or *yalkhoroi* [28] tribe to which Dudaev belonged was "relatively small and insignificant" (Lieven 1998: 58) and hardly respected by hardline Ichkeria nationalists.

Dudaev was actually born on 15 April 1944 in the "mountain village of Yalkhoroi" just a "few weeks before the deportations" in south-western Chechnya; yet the *yalkhoro* tribe was "an obscure mountain one, .. descended from the semi-Ingush people, the Karabulaks, .. with little influence in Chechnya" (Gall & De Waal 1997: 83-84). To others, however, the tribe's members were "renowned for their military genius" (Souleimanov 2007: 83). Moreover, reportedly many of the powerful *melkhi* [29] tribe supported Dudaev and his call for full independence from Moscow (Akhmadov & Lanskoy 2010: 9-10).

Nevertheless, Dudaev got his initially ceremonial posts as a compromise figure, whatever the strength, reputation and influence of his tribe or clan. Even so, after elections on 27 October 1991 organised by the All-National Congress, Dudaev became the first President of the independent Chechen Republic of Nokhchi (*Noxçiyn Respublika Noxçiyçö*, NRN), also called Ichkeria after Chechnya's south-eastern
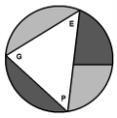
'heartland' (*ich keri*: "place over there" in Kumyk) already declared by the second All-National Congress on 8-9 June 1991. [30]

Perhaps by oath Dudaev secured the loyalty of his Presidential Guard, even while released criminals and other paramilitaries under then twenty-seven-year-old gangster Beslan Gantemirov, opportunistic founder of an 'Islamic Path' party, infiltrated the National Guard and Grozny's municipal police. The former head of *Chechenstroi* construction company Yaragi Mamadaev, like Gantemirov a member of the apparently powerful *chinkho*[31] tribe, became deputy and later acting prime minister after both bankrolled the All-National Congress in its early years (see e.g. Sheehy 1991a & 1991b; Broxup-Bennigsen 1992: 222,225-226,230; Gall & De Waal 1997: 90-91; Lieven 1998: 58-59).

Valery Tishkov dismisses Dudaev's vanguard as a "narrow, ragtag group" of "three to five thousand people" believing in the *teip* (clan) 'figment' (Tishkov 2004: 13-14). Still, he affirms that the labour surplus of up to 200,000 jobless, seasonal-work and criminal(ised) youths "became the main reserve for the armed struggle" (Ibid: 41).

Unlike state-dependent proletarians i.e. regular-wage earners (mostly Russians), these seasonal sub-proletarians with their 'social capital' of family and friends became Dudaev's foot soldiers. This separatist coalition initially "created and led by national intellectuals were able to splinter and overcome the *nomenklatura*, but could not preserve state order" (Derluguian 2005: 165).

According to Georgi Derluguian, "family honor, kinship and patronage" were and are part of this social capital, and sub-proletarians most rely
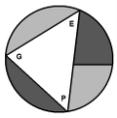
on these "traditional .. notions" (Derluguian 2005: 132). However, it remains unclear or at least highly disputed whether these 'traditional notions' (Ibid: 136, 141-154, 194, 207) influenced or even shaped combat units and other armed formations during periods of violent conflict in and around Chechnya.

Zelimkhan Yandarbiev—a Chechen poet and leading ideologue of the Chechen Revolution, Vice-President of Ichkeria and party leader of Harmony (Bart), later renamed the Vainakh Democratic Party [32] —has apparently suggested that "armed groups or squads were organized on a territorial basis throughout the war"; yet Tishkov did "not trace any special *teip* connections or solidarity in .. critical moments of the armed uprising" (Tishkov 2004: 94).

Other authors do point to such clannish connections in the political and military spheres however. Thus Akhmadov points out that Vakha Arsanov, who allied himself with Maskhadov as vice-presidential candidate with the latter as victorious presidential candidate during Ichkeria's 1997 presidential elections, was a leading member of reportedly the largest mountain tribe the *cheberloi* or *chaberloi* [33]; Arsanov had "tremendous authority among his men" who primarily belonged to the same tribe, from which he formed a "highly disciplined unit, with highly competent commanders at the mid- and junior levels" (Akhmadov & Lanskoy 2010: 70 (quotes)-71).

Perhaps Tishkov could not find these clan connections in Chechen armed formations, because Dettmering's theory that neither the *taipanas* or 'supra-clans' nor the lower-level clans (*neqe*, *garanas*), but
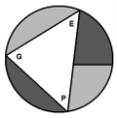
rather the multi-clan and non-lineage tribal villages and larger territorial units were the primary political and military actors in the 19th-century rebellions, may hold true for Chechnya's 20th- and 21st-century rebellions as well.

Even so, certain clans from certain villages did form armed formations, or at least dominated and led the village-groups that in turn formed and dominated the larger armed formations. Tishkov acknowledges this as much, as he extensively cites his guide and cross-reviewer Rustam Kaliev (even though buried in an endnote) on this phenomenon:

> There are people from different *teips* living in every village. It is true that armed groups were formed along territorial lines, but *teip* membership also played a part. For example, the Galaizhoiskaya brigade in Yermolovka were practically from one Galai *teip*. In Zakan-Urt, the Chaberloy special regiment, headed by Kurdi Bazhiyev, consisted mainly of Chaberloy *teip* members (Tishkov 2004: 94 & 235 note 2).

Sokirianskaia actually acknowledges that the overall picture of clan saliency in political and military formations is mixed, though revolves around the teip-as-extended-family rather than teip-as-clan, or what we would call the extended-family (*dözal*) or higher sub-clan levels: among the Vainakhs (mainly Chechens and Ingush), the "political (and in Chechnya also military) unit" with a leading figure "may or may not be formed by the figure's close kin" as its nucleus; many a politico-military group is "then manned by the supporters of this figure, including relatives, neighbours, fellow villagers" (Sokirianskaia 2005: 464).
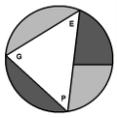
Yet other groups were not based on kin, village and/or neighborhood affiliations—and apparently were so much the weaker for it: thus "Aslan Maskahadov's political-military grouping was based on shared political ideals rather than kinship and neighbourly relations, which reduced its competitiveness with other groupings" (Sokirianskaia 2005: 464). [34]

Be that as it may, the interplays of ideologies, interests and feuds between (pro-)rebel and (pro-)regime tribes and clans sealed the fate of the National Guard and Dudaev's Revolution. A(k)hmad Kadyrov, his two sons Zelimkhan and Ramzan, and other members of the *benoy* tribe came to oppose Maskhadov's 'Ichkeria republic'—which they once defended in the 1994-1996 war—and throw in their lot with Putin's Russia. They were horrified by the 'Wahhabi' or rather Salafi [35] take-over of the separatist movement, and sought to reinvigorate traditional Sufi Islam with maximum autonomy of their people inside Russia.

Russia's leader Vladimir Putin, who sought to 'normalise' Chechnya by co-opting local groups ('Chechenisation'), orchestrated Ahmad's election as Chechen President on 5 October 2003. Jihadist separatists killed Ahmad with a bomb in May 2004—only to have his young son Ramzan Kadyrov (b. 1976), a former wartime warlord notorious for his ruthlessness, take over the Presidency in March 2007 after stints as deputy-premier and premier.

To this day Ramzan intimidates—for the time being—the overwhelming majority of the Chechen populace into submission. Over the years he has done this by brutal cleansing (*zachistky*) operations against insurgents and their supporters of all stripes, pogroms against
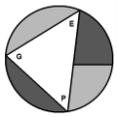
suspected homosexuals and (other) dissidents resulting in often deadly beatings, hostage-takings, expulsions and destruction of property, and intimidating, hardly effective if not counterproductive Countering-Violent-Extremism (CVE) programs to 'deradicalise' (former) Jihadist insurgents and their families; over the years neighbouring republics like Dagestan and Ingushetia have adopted similar if less brutal tactics and deradicalisation programs to stamp down the wider Islamist insurgency in the North Caucasus (see Sokirianskaia 2013, 2017, 2019, 2020). [36]

Ramzan has been able to do hold on to power primarily by enhancing from the start the pro-Moscow ethnic-Chechen *kadyrovtsy* paramilitary force founded by his father. One reason for the Kadyrov family's power and influence—and the decision by Putin to ultilise them—appears simply to be the immense size of the clan or tribe they belong to. As Maskhadov himself has observed in one of his surviving audiotapes, "Benoy's people must come to power at any cost, this is a big clan" (Akhmadov & Daniloff 2013: 78). [37]

The *benoy* clan or tribe to which the Kadyrovs and many of the *kadyrovtsy* belonged to, consisted of over 80,000 members, being thus by far the largest among "roughly 150 teyps or large clans" or tribes among the Chechens (Souleimanov & Aliyev 2017: 33-34 & 42, note 8).

Indeed, the *benoy* reportedly "amounts to 15% of the Chechen population" (Sokirianskaia 2005: 456), thereby being as large or larger than many a *tukhum* or tribal union, and apparently the largest Chechen clan or tribe as well. As I have argued elsewhere, this very fact "may paradoxically further Chechen autonomy and even (*de facto*) independence on the long term" (Ten Dam 2017d: 51).
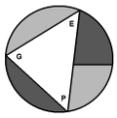
Intriguingly, the prominent secessionist Shamil Basaev, an eventually 'Wahhabist' or rather Salafist [38] commander notorious for violent acts like the Budennovsk hostage crisis in June 1995 in southern Russia and the incursion into Dagestan in August 1999 (Ten Dam 2017d: 44), belonged to the large and powerful *benoy* tribe as well (Askerov 2015: 38).

Basaev's tribal lineage may at least partially account for his extraordinary impact on the Russo-Chechen Wars and the period in between—though no known source has pointed to this. Indeed, one must wonder how many *benoy*-members joined his battalions rather than the pro-Moscow *kadyrovtsy* at the time, and how many joined or switched sides to the latter after Basaev's death—though no known source has delved into this. [39]

Concluding remarks

After having reviewed the research by Dettmering, Sokirianskaia and others, I still maintain that the saliency of Vainakh clans and other sub-clan and supra-clan kin groups is more checkered and nuanced than often supposed. Like among the Albanians (see Ten Dam 2018a, 2018b), many Chechen, Ingush and other Vainakh clans and other kin groups appear to have been annihilated and many others weakened and dispersed due to centuries of persecution and forced modernization. Still, some other clans and other kin-groups may have persevered as social and political units despite all these devastations, deprivations and assimilations.
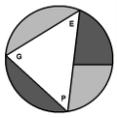
Of course, one could and should question whether the tribal and (sub-)clan structures among the Chechens as depicted in Mamakaev's model in Figure 1.1 have actually been ever true in the (late) 19th century—let alone in any period during the 20th century or the early 21st century.

For one thing, many of the identified (sub-)clans, super-clans, tribes and tribal unions as shown in Tables 1.1 and 1.2 (see Appendix) have probably been dispersed and decimated during the multiple armed conflicts, ethnic cleansing and deportations over the last few centuries. Yet I have not come across any research detailing the exact fate of any of these kin groups in distant and recent history, indicating a huge gap in our knowledge of Chechen, Ingush and other Vainakh kin structures.

In large part this knowledge gap about kin structures is due to an exasperating if understandable reluctance among Chechens—and indeed other North-Caucasian peoples—to divulge their own knowledge about their own culture to outsiders.

Given their repeated sufferings from colonisation, repression, warfare, deportation and other devastations in the past and present, Chechens and other North-Caucasians may be fearful to divulge any such information and insights to outsiders. The latter may betray them to incumbent, all-too-often hostile authorities—or otherwise betray, misinterpret and dishonour their trust by, for instance, writing disparaging accounts about their culture and traditions. Indeed, their traditional, honourific and arguably clan-based code of silence (see esp. Souleimanov & Aliyev 2015b: 695-698; Ibid 2017) has both predated and been reinforced by these sufferings and disparagements over the last few centuries.
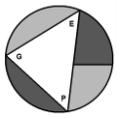
In that regard it is puzzling that even the few scholars who have been able to conduct extensive field research in Chechnya and the broader Caucasus, like notably Ekaterina Sokirianskaia, rarely if ever point to this reticence to foreigners among local respondents and wider populace—let alone acknowledge that they themselves have only gained a degree of trust among the latter after painstaking and repeated efforts to make contact with them and put them at ease.

True, there exist "challenges facing scholars and practitioners who are dealing with the Caucasus" (Kemoklidze et al 2012: 1611) other than gaining trust of the locals. Most notably, this concerns the challenge of overcoming the dearth of independent research by Western and other foreign scholars due to their overreliance on the dominant Soviet and Russian ethnological research and (post-)colonial perspectives on the region from the 19th century to the present day.

Indeed, barring a few exceptions (e.g. Broxup-Bennigsen 1992; Zelkina 2000; Derluguian 2005; Gammer 2006, 2008; Cvetkovski & Hofmeister 2014) [40] most outside researchers have harboured rather narrow cultural, geopolitical and security-analytical preconceptions of the Caucasus being "largely constructs of the late Russian and Soviet supremacy in the region" (Kemoklidze et al 2012: 1613). Consequently many of the latter researchers have tended to recognise little if any differences between and within the North-Caucasian peoples and republics.

Ironically, decisionmakers, policymakers, ethnographers and other analysts and observers have otherwise tended to exaggerate or even invent differences between peoples in the North Caucasus as either semi
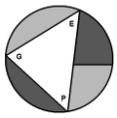
-artificial constructs or semi-primordial identities. The Tsarist and even Soviet empires nurtured and expediently exaggerated for divide-and-rule purposes many ethnic and (sub-)tribal differences in the Caucasus and elsewhere. Indeed ethnography as a nascent discipline aided to "provide imperial authorities with new instruments of control" (Cvetkovski apud Cvetkovski & Hofmeister 2014: 2).

Outside researchers should be aware and knowledgeable about these ethnic and (sub-)tribal categories which have solidified into genuinely felt identities among Circassians (Cherkess, Adyghe), Kabardanians (originally aristocratic Circassian tribes), Chechens, Ingush, Avars, Kumyks and other peoples in ethnically diverse Dagestan and elsewhere in the Caucasus.

Even though the Soviet regime preferred to speak of classes and nations and to (re)name or (re)categorise the peoples in the Caucasus and other regions in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) accordingly, the recognised nationalities generally equated the ethnicities distinguished in Tsarist times. But "unlike tsarist policy, which emphasized (and strengthened) heterogeneity" albeit with ethnic-Russian dominance through ethnographical categorisations based on race, religion, language and territory, the "Soviet regime, conversely, developed a clear concept of nationality precisely because it wanted to overcome it" (Cvetkovski apud Cvetkovski & Hofmeister 2014: 4).

Even so the Soviet Union's hierarchy of nationalities within the federal structure of sovereign and autonomous (sub-)republics unintentionally served to strengthen their identities, rivalries, mutual jealousies and consequent animosities, thereby contributing to the USSR's eventual
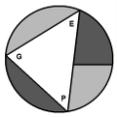
disintegration (see Rezvani 2013b, 2015).

At any rate, few outside researchers are able to access original sources or their translations, let alone recognise the "influence of the Middle East, especially Persia/Iran, both historically and in more recent times in the Caucasus" (Kemoklidze et al 2012: 614). Indeed, I myself know of just a few researchers who have been able to conduct extensive archival and/or field research with interviews in the native languages in the Caucasus, including Ekaterina Sokirianskaia (see Sokirianskaia 2004, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2020; Sokirianskaia apud Jayakumar 2019) and Babak Rezvani (see Rezvani 2008, 2009, 2010, 2013a, 2013b, 2015, 2020; Ten Dam 2017a, 2017c; Rezvani & Ten Dam 2020).

Rather than departing often subconsciously from (pro-)Russian perspectives given the wealth of Russian(-language) sources, outside researchers should examine and perhaps even depart from local perspectives more often. They can only do this if they help to overcome the "disengagement of local scholars, who possess unique factual data" (Kemoklidze et al 2012: 1615). However, even Nino Kemoklidze and others fail to mention that such local self-isolation may be due to the widespread code of silence born out of past and present sufferings and continuing need of self-preservation.

Consequently, to further a "dialogue with the local writers, academics and researchers" (Kemoklidze et al 2012: 1615) is easier said than done. In any case, what is certainly needed is "old-fashioned research in the field, research in archives, research in social anthropology and auto-ethnography" (Ibid: 616). Such research is needed to bridge the gap in knowledge about the Caucasus due to the "very limited attention among
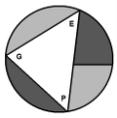
Western academics" (Ibid: 1614) it received over the last few centuries.

The overall inattention on the Caucasus actually forms part of the relative scholarly neglect of the wider Eurasian continent in for instance conflict and development studies—with the marked exception of the close attention paid to the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation in the narrow field of security analyses in the West since the late 19th century to the present day.

Thus in conflict studies "scholars rarely study Eurasian insurgencies compared with those in Africa, the America's and South-East Asia" (Ten Dam 2017b: 47). At one point I have urged those in development studies that it would be "wise and indeed urgent to compare the histories, deprivations and current fragilities of post-colonial countries in the (former) Third World and those of post-communist countries in the (former) Second World". [41]

The mainly communist Second World has largely been situated on the Eurasian continent until the end of the Cold War. It still is to a large degree today, if one includes quasi or *de facto* communist states like Belarus and to a lesser degree Moldova and unrecognised Transnistria—and outright communist states like China and North Korea on the Asian part of the continent—not counting all the post-communist states on it that struggle with their communist legacies and persist in Soviet-style practices.

Despite the aforementioned shortfalls and challenges in obtaining knowledge, I intend in future research to ascertain whether each of the named tribes, clans, sub-clans, other kin groups or localised ethnic (sub)
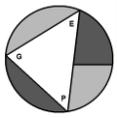
groups however defined [42] among the Chechens and any Chechen combat units in, around or beyond Chechnya:

i)   is correctly identified by the indicated name;
ii)   exists at least 'formally' in name (*existent*);
iii)   is really *salient* i.e. vibrant and culturally active, according to the asserted or actual norms, customs and other practices;
iv)   has been politically and/or military active prior to and during the armed conflicts in the 1990s and beyond;
v)   if so, has been active in identifiable political and/or military formations, and been involved in fighting and other violence;
vi)   if so, has exhibited identifiable brutality, brutalisation and/or rather debrutalisation patterns;
vii)   if so, whether any particular norms, beliefs, customs and practices of the clan or other group in question account for any of the brutality, brutalisation and/or debrutalisation patterns.

One of the most relevant yet challenging questions tied to research question v) is to determine the extent to which (sub-)clan identities and loyalties shape discernible combat-units from platoons to battalions or their equivalents upward of each warring party—as opposed to political, secular and/or religious and other ideological or cultural group identities and loyalties.

Before we could even begin to deal with the research questions formulated above, we need to identify and distinguish the kin groups as indicated in research questions i) and ii). However, despite repeated requests to (Chechen) scholars and analysts I know of (including those at *Waynakh Online*), few of them have helped me to date to clarify and
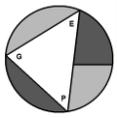
couple the different transliterations across different sources of the originally Chechen names of tribes and other kin groups in and beyond Chechnya. [43]

True, the "problem of transliteration is everywhere, and we accept this as normal" (Askerov 2015: x).[44]   Even so, the best linguists and translators among us should clarify which diverging transliterations refer to and belong to which particular Chechen or any other kin group—or any other phenomenon—in order to avoid befuddlement on which kin group or any other phenomenon one is referring to.

Perhaps Chechens themselves may be sensitive about and contest the identifications, distinctions and transliterations of their kin groups, who may thus be unwilling to share their thoughts on these matters to outsiders like me. Indeed, as noted before, their traditional code of silence regarding their own family, clan or any other form of bond or identity—especially when coupled with the codes of retribution which could engender blood-feuds (*chir*) or hospitality (*siskal*) even to one's enemies which could temporarily halt or even resolve blood-feuds (see Souleimanov & Aliyev 2015b, 2017)—makes it very hard for outsiders to gain their trust and access to their culture. Still, I hope the publication and dissemination of this Research Note would encourage them to divulge their thoughts on these at long last.

Ideally, if we are able to collate required reliable data, we may even be able to map the violence-patterns during battles, manoeuvres and other events of each major Chechen combat-unit during the Russo-Chechen Wars and other conflicts from the early 1990s to the present day. We may
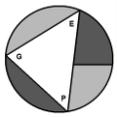
thus be able to assess and categorise these violence-patterns in their degree of adherence to or violation of local and international norms, including those of humanitarian law and human rights law.

This undertaking—if ever doable—would present a more advanced testing or falsification of my Brutalisation theory. This will probably show that the theory is just partially valid, i.e. characterises only certain factions among the warring parties at certain time-periods. Still, the theory's overall validity seems to increase the longer any violent conflict like the ones in Chechnya lasts, with recurrent high-intensity fighting and a detectable erosion of local and international norms vis-à-vis the sanctities of the non-combatant and the prisoner of war.

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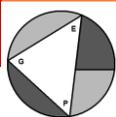
Appendix

Table 1.1: Tribal Unions and Clans in the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria *

Each column shows clans (or tribes) of each of the 9 tukhums (tribal unions): 158 clans

Ākkiy	Myālxiy	Noxčmāxkaxoy	Terloy	Čantiy	Čebarloy	Šaroy	Šotoy	Erštxoy
Barčaxoy	Byāstiy	Alaroy	Bavloy	Bugaroy	Arstxoy	Buti	Varandoy	Jalxoy
Zhevoy	Benastxoy	Aytkxaloy	Bešxoy	Deraxoy	Ačeloy	Dunarxoy	Vašindaroy	Jandaloy
Zogoy	Talčxoy	Belgatoy	Bešni	Kxokadoy	Basoy	Zhogjaldoy	Giattoy	Belxaroy
Nokkoy	Kamalxoy	Benoy	Gemeroy	Xačaroy	Begačerxoy	Kharoy	Giorgačxoy	Bokoy
Pxarčoy	Koratxo	Biltoy	Gizxoy	Xildexaroy	Bosoy	Kačexoy	Dexestoy	Bulgučxoy
Pxarčaxoy	Keganxoy	Gordaloy	Gilšxoy	Cjamdoy	Buni	Kevasxoy	Keloy	Bielxa-
Vyāppiy	Mešiy	Gendargenoy	Zheraxoy		Gulatxoy	Kinxoy	Muskulxoy	Nekhi
	Sakanxoy	Gunoy	Kenaxoy	(6 clans)	Day	Kiri	Myaršoy	Garčoy
(7 clans)	Teratxoy	Dattıxoy	Macarxoy		Zhelaškxoy	Mazuxoy	Nixaloy	Galay
	Čarxoy	Dišni	Nkaroy		Zūrxoy	Čerčixoy	Pamyatoy	Gandaloy
	Erxoy	Zandakhoy	Ošniy		Xaroy	Xašalxoy	Ryaduxoy	Merzhoy
	Amxoy	Xirxoy	Sanaxoy		Kezenoy	Ximoy	Sanoy	Muzhaxoy
	Jamxoy-	Šxoy	Šyuidiy		Kiri	Xinduxoy	Syattoy	Muzhgaxoy
	Byāstiy	Kurčaloy	Eltparxoy		Kuloy	Xixoy	Tumsoy	Örgxoy
	Barčaxoy	Sesanxoy			Laškaroy	Xulandoy	Urdyuxoy	Fergxoy
	Dzhjarxoy	Singalxoy	(14 clans)		Makazhoy	Xakmadoy	Xakkoy	Xayxaray
	Yueganxoy	Xaračoy			Nizheloy	Čeyroy	Xalkeloy	Yalxaroy
		Cjontaroy			Nohči-keloy	Šikaroy	Xarsenoy	Cečoy
	(16 clans)	Čartoy			Nuyxoy	Cesi		
		Čermoy			Osxaroy		(18 clans)	(17 clans)
		Širdi			Rigaxoy	(19 clans)		
		Šuonoy			Sadoy			
		Egašbatoy			Salbyuroy			
		Elistanzhxoy			Sandaxoy			
		Enakxaloy			Sikkaxoy			
		Enganoy			Sirxoy			
		Ersanoy			Tunduxoy			
		Yalxoy			Xarkaloy			
					Xindoy			
		(28 clans)			Xoy			
					Cikaroy			
					Čebyaxkinxoy			
					Čeremaxkxoy			
					(33 clans)			

*: Collected by *Waynakh Online*, www.waynakh.com/eng/chechens/tribal-unions-and-clans/ (first accessed 3-03-2011 and 14-10-2013; last accessed. 12-06-2020 and 8-01-2021). Sources: Mohmad Mamakaev, *Çeçenskiy tayp v period ega radlojeniya* Grozny, 1973; Tarik Cemal Kutlu, *History of the Chechen Resistance* Istanbul, 2005.

Table 1.2: 55 Non-tribal and non-ethnic Chechen Clans in the Republic of Ichkeria *

Non-Tukhum clans	Clans from diverse nations	Ethnic-Georgian clans	Ethnic-Dagestani clans	{For later: any clans from other sources}
Guxoy Gučingxoy Dzumcoy Mayst Mulkhoy Key Našxoy Pešxoy Xukoy Činxoy (10 clans)	Abzoy (Abkhaz) Arseloy (Russian) Gjebertloy (Kabardian) Zhugtiy (Jewish) Nogjiy (Nogay) Orsi (Russian) Turkoy (Turk) Čerkaziy (Circassian) Gjezloy (Tatar) (9 clans)	Ardaloy Bacoy Ghurzhiy Mexaloy Čartoy Šoy (6 clans)	Jandiy (Andiycı) Akxšoy Almakxoy Ancadoy Argjanoy Axtoy Börtiy Gjaz-gjumkiy (Lakcı) Gjalgjtloy Gjumkiy Danuxoy Zhjay Etloy Kogjatiy Kulinaxoy Kübčiy Khordoy Melardoy Nikotoy Särxoy Sogjattoy Suliy (Avarcı) Tjundalxxoy Tarkxoy (Kumuki) Xjakaroy Judaloy Cjadarxoy Čanakxoy Čungaroy Šolardoy (30 clans)	

*: Collected by *Waynakh Online*, www.waynakh.com/eng/chechens/tribal-unions-and-clans/ (first accessed 3-03-2011 and 14-10-2013; last accessed. 12-06-2020 and 8-01-2021). Sources: Mohmad Mamakaev, *Çeçenskiy tayp v period ega radlojeniya* Grozny, 1973; Tarik Cemal Kutlu, *History of the Chechen Resistance* Istanbul, 2005.

NB: Total number of clans from tables 1.1 & 1.2: 158 + 55 = 213 clans
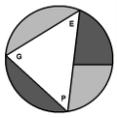
Endnotes

1. I define *Nokhchi* as "people" and *Vainakh* as "our people". Scholars disagree on how to translate these terms. I designate Nokhchi for Chechens, and Vainakh for all Nakh-speaking peoples, including the Ingush and Christian-Orthodox Kists and Batsis (Batsbis, Tsova-Tush) in Georgia (Ten Dam 2011: 247-248 & note 15).

2. From 2005 till 2014, I have described my Brutalisation theory, with some minor modifications, as "a cycle of violence involving four main variables: *values* on "good" and "bad" violence (variable 1); *grievances* leading to armed conflict (variable 2); *combat stress* leading to atrocities (variable 3); and *new conflict grievances* emanating from such atrocities (variable 4), spawning counter-atrocities and eventually hardening or debasing the original violence-values (the cycle returns to the first variable)" (Ten Dam 2010: 332). Yet since then I have widened and reformulated the theory's variables so as to more equally represent different motivations as explanations of brutal behaviour. In a forthcoming book *Brutal violence* (Cambridge Scholars) I will further widen the theory so as to encapsulate any kinds of violence, with modified variables: violence-values, violence-stresses and violence-inducing and violence-induced motivations.

3. My extensive book reviews—one with and one without additional source references of my own publications and those of others—on Souleimanov and Aliyev's *How Socio-Cultural Codes Shaped Violent Mobilization and Pro-Insurgent Support in the Chechen Wars* (Palgrave-Springer 2017), and their earlier study on the same topic published in the *Journal of Strategic Studies* (Vol.38 No.5), are forthcoming in this journal and *Terrorism and Political Violence*.

4. Askerov's *Historical Dictionary of the Chechen Conflict* contains a short entry on apparently the same "Magomet Mamakayev (1910-1973)"; yet this entry does not refer to the major work *Chechenskii taip* (1973)
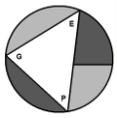
written by the Mamakaev we speak of and which is the original source of Figure 1.1 and the basic source of Tables 1.1 and 1.2 in the Appendix (see further Askerov 2015: 76, 155).

5. See *Waynakh Online*, www.waynakh.com/eng/chechens/tribal-unions-and-clans/ (last acc. 12-06-2020 and 8-01-2021); see further Tables 1.1 and 1.2. Apparently the identified clans do not include any ethnic-Chechen clans residing mostly or fully outside Chechnya, like any in neighboring Ingushetia, Dagestan, Georgia, elsewhere in Russia or further abroad.

6. I have preferred to translate *gar* and *neqi* as "clan" and *teip* as "tribe" (Ten Dam 2011: 248, notes 15, 16), though I may opt in future publications to translate *neqi* as "sub-clan" or more specifically as "patronymic family" (Souleimanov & Aliyev 2015a: 169; Chereji & Sandu 2021: 7). Askerov describes Chechen society as a "*k'am* (people)" subdivided into "*tukhum* (community), *teip* (clan), *gar* (branch), *nek* (smaller branch), *dja* (large family), *dozal* (family)" (Askerov 2015: 228), thereby largely following Mamakaev's kin-structure model shown in Figure 1.1. As I indicate in the Introduction, scholars generally discern the same social units, but apply different terms (family, clan, tribe) for them. Many use the term *teip* for clans of over fifteen households. *Taip* derives from Arabic *ṭāifa* (community, group).

7. Tishkov acknowledges that "neither my cultural nor my geographic identity is neutral" (Tishkov 2004: 2).

8. Third and last quote from Prof. Arsamakov, rector of Ingush State University, during a conversation with Sokirianskaia in 2002.

9. Russian ethnologist Sergei Aroutiunov appears to follow Mamakaev's model, when he speaks of around 150 "tribal, i.e. teip units" being divided into "smaller units, lineages (varisses)" and united into about "nine larger tribal units—tukhums"; yet Aroutiunov's other claim that
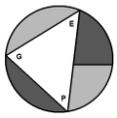
there are also around 150 "kin-neighbor based communities" seems to accord closer to Dettmering's multi-clan village model (see Sokirianskaia 2005: 454 (quotes)). Tarik Cemal Kutlu (1944-2004) is a Turkish scholar who translated Mamakaev's works and published his own works on Chechen culture and history (see e.g. Kutlu 2005).

10. Dettmering presumes that the reader is familiar with Lewis H. Morgan and his pioneering work. Consequently he does not elaborate on Morgan's work nor make any source references. Therefore I have located some sources myself (Morgan 1954 (orig. 1854, 1901); Tooker 1983).

11. Apparently Dettmering does not fully support Mamakaev's kinship definitions. Thus the "exact distinctions" amongst *dözal*, *ca* and *neqe* "were not very clear" (Dettmering 2005: 470). Moreover, "Mamakaev used the terms *dözal* and *ca* for the first time and there is no record for these terms in 19th century literature .. . Thus it is very difficult to determine the various family functions of entities smaller than the *neqe*" (Ibid: 476). Even so, Dettmering does not come up with any explicit, precise, formal definitions of the various possible kinship entities of his own—at least not in the cited and other publications being consulted here.

12. See note 6.

13. The "first time the term *mexk qel* appears in literature is in Mamakaev's book" (Dettmering 2005: 481).

14. Sokirianskaia apparently follows the fundamentals of Mamakaev's model: "There exist over a hundred teip-1 groups (allegedly about 150), each uniting tens of lineages (*gar*), subdivided into dozens of extended families (*nek*) consisting of nuclear families (*dozal*)" (Sokirianskaia 2005: 456).

15. Thus tribes like the "*ironsty, kudartsy, digortsy*" subsequently "formed the Osetian nation" and tribes like "*ghalghajtsy, dzejrahktsy, kistintsy,*
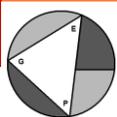
metskhaltsy, *tsorintsy*" later "merged into the Ingush nation" (Sokirianskaia 2004: 4).

Apparently the mentioned Ingush tribes are not part of or connected to the 'clans' and 'tribal unions' in the Republic of Ichkeria (self-styled independent Chechnya) as presented in Tables 1.1 and 1.2 in the Appendix i.e. as collected by *Waynakh Online*, www.waynakh.com/eng/chechens/tribal-unions-and-clans/ (first acc. 3-03-2011 and 14-10-2013; last acc. 12-06-2020 and 8-01-2021).

16. Despite the acknowledged inaccessibility of some parts of Chechnya, Sokirianskaia insists she spoke with a "sufficient number of respondents in different regions of Chechnya" (Sokirianskaia 2005: 453). But how many and representative were they, and could their responses be so substantial and exhaustive as to have "*fully* disqualified" (Ibid: 462; italics added) the hypothesis regarding the saliency of the teip-as-clan?

17. Sokirianskaia's article in the November 2010 issue of *Russian Analytical Digest* bears the same title as the sub-title of her PhD-thesis *Governing Fragmented Societies*, and thus clearly constitutes a summary of the latter (see Sokirianskaia 2009, 2010).

18. See the *Belgatoy* and *Benoy* 'clans' within the *Noxčmäxkaxoy* 'tribal union' in Table 1.1. Yet given the diverging transliterations of originally Chechen terms by different sources, I have been unable to locate equivalent clan names for 'Tsentoroy' and 'Dargo' in Tables 1.1 and 1.2.

19. Mamakaev's classic *Chechenskii taip* (*rod*) *v period ego razlozheniia* (1973) is hard to get at; it is available in just a handful of libraries, like the Bodleian Library in Oxford (code 24744e.108). I was able to get a copied version of it from Prof. Victoria Arakelova at Yerevan State University during one of my visits to Armenia, to attend a conference in early November 2013.
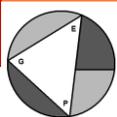
20. See *Waynakh Online*, www.waynakh.com/eng/chechens/tribal-unions-and-clans/ (first acc. 3-03-2011 and 14-10-2013; last acc. 12-06-2020 and 8-1-2021). These Chechen nationalists and separatists—or patriots and freedom fighters (depending on which side and perspective one takes)—particularly adopt the following kin-group definitions and categorisations, closely following Mamakaev's circumscriptions (Mamakaev 1973; see Dettmering 2005: 470-471): "

Düozal: Nuclear family
Cha (Ts'a): Residence, Family
Nieqhiy (Niekiy): Stirpes {?} (aul = village, clan)
Gar Soy: Tribe
Tayp: Clan
Tuxum: Tribal Union
Qham (Kam): Nation, Commonweal

Düozal that nucleus of the family is parents (mother and father). Eight generation relatives which breeding from a mother and father, has names. In the literature, 3th, 4rd and 5th lines are calling generally as yuqharalla, yuqralallaš (category of people, categories of people; community, communities)" (Ibid *Waynakh Online*).

21. See note 1.

22. Possibly identical to the Yalxaroy 'clan' within the *Erštxoy* tribal union in Table 1.1. Given the diverging transliterations of originally Chechen terms by different sources, this and many other identifications on my part are currently uncertain. As often happens "different sources spell the same Chechen name differently" (Askerov 2015: x), which may lead to erroneous identifications as well. Moreover, other (semi-)Chechen, (semi-)Ingush and other Vainakh tribes or clans, certainly those residing outside Chechnya, appear not to be tabulated by representatives of the Ichkeria Republic as reproduced in Tables 1.1
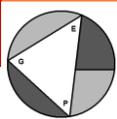
and 1.2 in the Appendix. See further notes 5 and 15.

23. Apparently identical to the *Benoy* 'clan' within the *Noxčmäxkaxoy* 'tribal union' in Table 1.1.

24. Apparently identical to the *Alaroy* 'clan' within the same *Noxčmäxkaxoy* 'tribal union' in Table 1.1.

25. See for those rare and/or brief references: Akhmadov & Lanskoy 2010: esp. 9-10, 70-71, 117-118, 254 note 5. Akhmadov & Daniloff 2013: esp. 66, 77, 89, 94, 138, 174, 190, 222, 224, 232, 260 note 15, 261, Ch.7 notes 2 and 3. Askerov 2015: 31, 58, 76, 77-78, 88, 108, 115, 119, 120, 122-123,127,137-139, 144, 154, 156, 157, 161, 162, 179, 187, 197, 199, 209, 210, 220-221, 222, 229, 230, 233, 245, 246, 251, 254-255.

26. Also called 'Pan-National', later 'National' Congress of the Chechen People(s) (Lieven 1998: 56-60; 96-101).

27. For translating *teip* as 'tribe' rather than 'clan' see note 6.

28. Possibly identical to the *Yalxaroy* 'clan' within the *Erštxoy* 'tribal union' in Table 1.1. See further my cautionary remarks in note 22.

29. Possibly identical to the non-Tukhum *Mulkhoy* 'clan' in Table 1.2. See further my cautionary remarks in note 21.

30. Despite both anti- and pro-independence opposition, Dudaev's (all-)National Congress organised self-styled, separatist presidential and parliamentary elections on 27 October 1991; Dudaev became president with reportedly 85-90% of the votes and nationalist parties won all seats. During 1-2 November, Dudaev and the new parliament reaffirmed Chechnya's independence. Local Russians, Cossacks and Chechens opposing Dudaev's Revolution either boycotted or were allegedly barred from the elections: BBC's Summary of World Broadcasts, SU/1250/B1: *Tass* world service (ws), 5 Dec 91.

31. Possibly identical to the non-Tukhum *Činxoy* 'clan' in Table 1.2. See further my cautionary remarks in note 22.

32. Yandarbiev's suggestion or claim of territory-based formation of
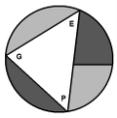
armed units can apparently be found in his *Chechnya – Bitva za svobodu* (Chechnya – The Struggle [Battle] for Freedom) Lvov, Ukraine, 1996.

33. Possibly identical to the ethnic-Kabardian (!) *Gjebertloy* 'clan' in Table 1.2. Yet it could otherwise refer to the *Čebarloy* tribal union (!) in Table 1.1. See my cautionary remarks in note 22.

34. Sokirianskaia speaks here (Sokirianskaia 2005: 464) of the most powerful groups at the highest governing or top-brass levels in Chechnya and Ingushetia; yet her observations could be equally true for lower-level political and/or military groupings.

35. Just like Wahhabism, Salafism is a purist version of Islam within the Sunni branch (see on the similarities and differences between Wahhabis and Salafis: Ten Dam 2011: 245-246).

36. Even government of the Russian Federation has had to undertake deradicalisation programs vis-à-vis thousands of Islamic State (ISIS) recruits and (family) supporters throughout the Russian Federation —not just in its North-Caucasian territory—who have gone to Syria, stayed home or returned from Syria (see Sokirianskaia apud Jayakumar 2019).

37. In another audiotape Mashkadov speaks of the "clan factor, the Benoi factor" (Akhmadov & Daniloff 2013: 89). Erroneously or confusingly, Akhmadov and Daniloff note that the "Benoy clan is one of the biggest of *several* clans that make up Chechen society" (Ibid: 261 note 2, italics added). As we have shown here, scholars as well as leading and ordinary Chechens alike claim that Chechen society consists of at least dozens if not hundreds of clans and larger and smaller kin groups.

38. See note 35.

39. Possibly, distinct *gar* (clans) and *neqi* (sub-clans) and smaller kin groups (see note 6) within the *benoy* tribe may have joined Basaev's forces, while other distinct kin groups within the same tribe joined
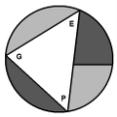
Kadyrov's forces at the time or eventually after Basaev's demise. It would be even more intriguing if it turns out instead that members from all distinct kin groups within the *benoy* tribe often or generally joined these two opposing forces in roughly equal measure. If so, many members of the same nuclear or extended families chose opposite sides as well, probably fracturing these families in the process. A fracturing of families by choosing opposite sides is typical of many a civil war. A huge literature exists on this phenomenon, like in the accounts of the American Civil War (1861-1865).

40. Actually, many of these exceptional researchers lauded by Nino Kemoklidze and others (Kemoklidze et al 2012: e.g. 1614-1615, notes 6, 7, 8, 9) I have repeatedly consulted and cited in my own research and publications having to do with the Caucasus.

41. Caspar ten Dam, comments on the 'Annual Conference 2015 of the Knowledge Platform Security & Rule of Law', www.ctdamconsultancy.com/uncategorized/invited-participant-at-annual-conferenceof-the-knowledge-platform-security-rule-of-law/ (posted 25 June 2015).

42. To reiterate, scholars generally discern the same social units, but apply different terms (family, clan, tribe, etcetera) for them (see Introduction and note 6). Thus most but not all scholars define the concept of 'clan' as the multi-household group with actual or perceived common ancestry.

43. See notes 20 and 22.

44. In this case the major transliteration problem "originates from the wide use of the Russian version of personal and geographical names" of originally Chechen terms, which complicates things as "Chechen and Russian are very different languages with different sounds" (Askerov 2015: x). Thus a "personal name in Chechen may be pronounced in English almost identically while being broken in Russian" (Ibid). See further note 22.
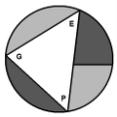
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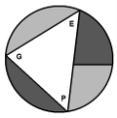
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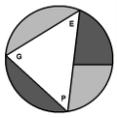
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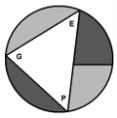
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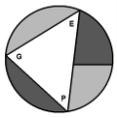
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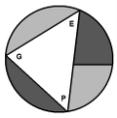
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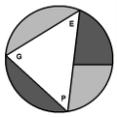
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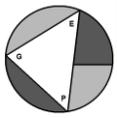
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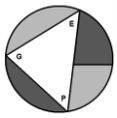
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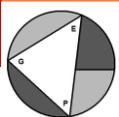
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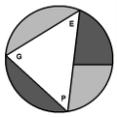
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